Walls:
Space, Violence, and Conflict Culture in Northern Ireland

by

Maura Scully
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# Table of Contents

*Acknowledgments*  
2

**Chapter One**  
*3-12*  
*A First Glance into the Conflict in Northern Ireland*

**Chapter Two**  
*13-34*  
*Identity, Group Dynamics, and Space*  
Identity and Group Dynamics  
15-21  
Space, Place, and Territoriality  
21-29  
Prisons and Planning  
29-34

**Chapter Three**  
*35-73*  
*Place*  
Crossmaglen or Cross  
35-42  
Belfast or Beal Feirste  
43-58  
Londonderry or Derry: A Divided City  
58-73

**Chapter Four**  
*74-118*  
*Identity*  
Tiocfaidh Ar La: Our Day Will Come  
74-78  
A Protestant Nation for a Protestant People  
78-81  
Bandit Country: Cross  
81-89  
Belfast: Home to the Most Bombed Hotel in The World  
90-106  
Londonderry or Derry: We are Different  
106-118

**Chapter Five**  
*119-151*  
*A New Theory of Northern Ireland*  
An Island with a History of Unrest: Historical Precedent  
119-122  
Summer of 69: Riots and Reaction  
122-124  
Control and Confinement  
125-138  
Tribalism, Not Sectarianism and Conflict Culture  
138-147  
Reinforcement  
148-151  
Underneath the Ceasefire  
151

**Chapter Six**  
*152-168*  
*Transformations and Predictions*  
Lessons Unlearned: Ireland, Israel, and Iraq  
152-160  
Lessons to Come: Transformation  
160-168

**Bibliography**  
169-173

**Appendix A**  
*Clarification of Terms*

**Appendix B**  
*Pictures of Spaces*

**Appendix C**  
*Interview Process*
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Chapter One
A First Glance into the Conflict in Northern Ireland

The summer of 1969 was a turning point in Northern Irish history. The national civil rights campaign, started in 1964, was snowballing with support and attendance at events had skyrocketed into the 10,000s.\(^1\) It took one man’s death, the first death, to change the direction of the country altogether.\(^2\) His name was Sam Devenny and he lived with his family in the Bogside, a Catholic enclave that would become a stronghold for the republican and nationalist movement. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the police force for Northern Irish, burst into his house after chasing civil rights protesters into the area. They beat Sam, his wife, and children without cause or restraint. He died July 17, 1969, and 39 years later his youngest daughter still inhabits the same house.\(^3\) I stayed in this house in L/Derry, at the epicenter of the heart of the conflict, in the heart of the Bogside.\(^4\) Filled with history and hurt, the neighborhood transforms the way a person connects to this conflict.

Coming out of the house, you walk down Cable Street, where residents experienced nightly raids from security forces. Those same residents hid Irish Republican Army (IRA) members escaping after an attack, and where they experienced the loss of loved ones.

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1 For detailed information on the civil rights movement please see Appendix A.
2 It is under debate whether or not Sam Devenny was the first death, but for the purposes of this thesis I am considering his injuries to be the first significant death of the conflict.
4 The name of the city is a highly contentious issue. Republican, nationalists, and Catholics refer to it as Derry because that is the English translation of the original Irish name of the city. Protestants, loyalists, and unionists refer to it as Londonderry because that is what the Ulster planters changed it to. Since referring to the city as either Derry or Londonderry would be favoring a particular side, I have chose to refer to it as “L/Derry,” a term created by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen in her book *Our Places – Their Spaces: Urban Territory in Northern Ireland.*
At the end of the street, you turn right down Westland Street and are faced with the looming Ulster plantation wall, originally built by Protestant colonizers to keep the city safe from Catholics in the 1600s. The wall, along with its historical significance, appears ominous due to the large army base built on top of it, equipped with a lookout tower with six cameras to watch your every move down below in the Bogside. The real stomach churning fear comes from “Sniper’s Corner,” the corner of the wall where an army sniper used to sit ready to pick off anyone that looked like a republican paramilitary member. At the end of the Westland Street, you reach Rossville Street. This corner is where Annette MacGavigan was killed at the age of 13 by the British sniper at the top of the hill while she walked home from school. Apparently, to him she looked like a member of the IRA. Her larger than life mural now faces “Sniper’s Corner.” Turning to walk down the street, you are reminded of the Battle of the Bogside where teens with rocks and petrol bombs defended the area against police dressed in full riot gear. You are forced to remember the photos of the thirteen faces of the men who were killed during Bloody Sunday. Then you come to the last standing original facade of the Rossville houses, houses that existed before the conflict began. Its stark white background highlights the black words written on the wall, “You are now entering Free Derry.” Somehow it is this simple wall that brings a sense of strength to the members of this community, and they know that in this space, despite the threats and fear looming above from the wall, there is a bond, Free Derry is their sanctuary.

5 For definition of security forces and paramilitaries, please see Appendix A.
6 Interview 30 on July 18, 2007.
7 For detailed information on the Battle of the Bogside and Bloody Sunday please see Appendix A.
The conflict in Northern Ireland has persisted since the summer of 1969, and involves three groups: the Protestants, unionists, and loyalists; the Catholics, nationalists, and republicans; and the security forces.\textsuperscript{8} The main contention of the conflict is the existence of Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{9} The Protestants, unionists, and loyalists seek to maintain ties with the United Kingdom. The Catholics, nationalists, and republicans believe that British control of Northern Ireland is an occupation of their land, and they want to be a part of the Republic of Ireland. The security forces represent the British perspective to maintain control over the area. In broad terms, the conflict was fought over power, security, and recognition within Northern Ireland. Starting in 1969, the official armed conflict was waged until the Provisional IRA declared a final cease fire in 1997.\textsuperscript{10} The conflict has claimed over 3,600 lives up until 1998, and conflict related violence still continues today.\textsuperscript{11}

To understand the meaning of the Northern Irish conflict, the Bogside, and Sam Devenny’s house, one needs to step back to the initial division between Protestants and Catholics during the Ulster plantation imposed by England in the early 1600s. England, despite various skirmishes and uprisings, maintained political control of the island of Ireland since the reign of Henry VIII.\textsuperscript{12} Stability was relative, though, as the monarchy tried to impose control on the Irish people without their

\textsuperscript{8} For detailed information on each identity term please see Appendix A. While there were variations within each group as to who identified as what, I have chosen to generalize about each ethnic group as the British government and army during the conflict.\n\textsuperscript{9} For the purposes of this thesis, the term “the conflict” will be used to describe the modern day conflict from 1969 to the present. Please see Appendix A.\n\textsuperscript{10} The initial IRA cease fire was in 1994, but was rescinded after there was no acceptable political progress being made. The current cease fire has sustained since 1997.\n\textsuperscript{11} Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth. \textit{Northern Ireland’s Troubles: Human Costs}. (London: Pluto Press. 1999)\n\textsuperscript{12} Brendan Lynn and Martin Melaugh. “A Chronology of Key Events in Irish History: 1169-1799.” CAIN \url{http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1169-1799.htm} (Accessed 3/31/2008). Please see Appendix A of geographical definitions.
approval, and the most divisive policy change was the imposition of Protestantism as the official religion of a mostly Catholic land in 1560.\textsuperscript{13} No other area on the island was more rebellious than the province of Ulster, which incorporated the nine northern most counties whose tribal kings were still fighting to maintain control over their land. In order to put a final stop to the trouble caused by the Ulster natives, the English throne decided to create a new plantation in Ulster, flooding it with loyal Protestant subjects, mostly from Scotland. The local tribal kings, in fear of this plan, fled for their lives, in what is known as the “Flight of the Earls” in 1607.\textsuperscript{14} With the local leadership eliminated, the British authorities usurped all of the property in the area, dividing it out among the new Scottish planters of Ulster and pushing the Catholics out. The Protestant wave of domination was in full swing when James II took over the throne. A known Catholic and supporter of the religion, the King James reversed some of the legislation against passed Catholics, putting fear into the minds of the Protestants at what he might be willing to do if his reign was allowed to continue. In a challenge to the British throne, Protestant William of Orange led a revolt against James, leading to two of the most celebrated events in the Northern Irish Protestant culture: the siege of L/Derry in 1689, where thirteen apprentice boys shut out James from the Ulster walls, preventing him from taking back the Catholic stronghold, and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, where William finally defeated James and was subsequently offered the throne of England. This effectively ended any challenge to the political dominance of Protestantism.\textsuperscript{15} From this point on, the indigenous Catholics of the island of Ireland was consistently disenfranchised, unable

\begin{footnotes}
\item[13] Ibid.
\item[14] Ibid.
\item[15] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
to own land, to vote, or to freely practice their religion. Feelings of collective discontent and desires for rebellion would simmer throughout the country until they reached their peak in the early 1900s during the independence movement.

The Irish independence movement sought independence from British rule and influence for the whole of island of Ireland. An armed resistance was staged during the British involvement in World War I to take advantage of Britain’s distraction with the war. Prominent Irish figures like Michael Collins, Eamon de Valera, and Patrick Pearse were among the individuals who led the charge with the original division of the IRA, known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). After several years of armed struggle, both sides sat down to negotiate in 1921. Michael Collins and the other delegates returned with the Treaty of Peace between Ireland and Great Britain, in which Ireland would be divided into Northern Ireland, under control of the British, and the Irish Free State. The treaty was eventually ratified in Ireland by a slim margin. This led to the Irish Civil War from 1922-1923 in which pro-treaty and anti-treaty factions fought over the future of the island, dividing the country, neighbors, and sometimes even families.\textsuperscript{16} Despite the fighting, the fate of the island was already sealed. The country of Northern Ireland had been created. From the original nine counties of Ulster, Northern Ireland was limited to six in order to ensure a Protestant majority in the country. The Protestant majority provided for a pro-Protestant country as those who identified as Catholics or Irish were consistently marginalized. Pro-Protestant legislation included the making the right to vote contingent on owning property and little if any protection or support for renters, who

were mostly Catholic.\textsuperscript{17} Because of this, rising tensions within the country resulted in the development of a civil rights movement in the mid-1960s.\textsuperscript{18} The British reaction to the civil rights movement during the summer of 1969 was the catalyst that set the country a blaze in violence and conflict, as both republican and loyalist paramilitaries began to form. This situation of conflict has lasted until the present.

The tension that has plagued Irish history since British rule has long centered around the control over spaces, as it originated with control of the island. The conflict in Northern Ireland has taken on new dimensions of this historical conflict as space has become connected with identities, memories, and power, dramatically transforming the intensity and understanding of the original fight. The armed conflict has come now come to a close and the recent St. Andrews Agreement signed by all parties in 2006 has restored the authority of the Northern Irish government, seemingly putting an end to a struggle that has been going on for hundreds of years.\textsuperscript{19} Yet today, the conflict in Northern Ireland continues as more people are living in segregated housing than ever before, snf as more “peace walls” and surveillance cameras have been constructed. A steady level of low intensity violence continues between the groups persists even now. Elite action, mutually hurting stalemates, and political negotiations have had very little effect on these very crucial measures of ground level transition in Northern Ireland. This dilemma points to the underlying factor of the Irish struggle: space. The constructions and conceptions of space on multiple levels of analysis explain the development and perpetuation of the conflict. The power of space can be seen on the micro level at Sam Devenny’s house, which

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} See Appendix A for information on St. Andrews Agreement.
after thirty nine years still holds ideological significance for the area. While the sniper is gone and there are no more riots or house raids, those experiences are still intimately connected with people’s understanding and perception of space. Space transforms people, and just by staying for a short time in a space as powerful as the Bogside, you begin to understand why people took up arms.

Each area of the country was affected differently by the violence, but three areas stood out as the most volatile. The first is Crossmaglen, a small town in the heart of South Armagh along the border of Northern Ireland. The second is Belfast, the largest and most well known city in Northern Ireland. The last is Londonderry or Derry, the second largest city in the country and mostly Catholic. The three areas have some of the highest rates of violence in the conflict as well as some of the most dynamically polarized relationships. Combined, the areas provide a good over view of the different experiences of the conflict - rural, urban, Catholic, and Protestant - allowing for a more holistic understanding of space in Northern Ireland.

This holistic understanding extends into the research process, which was based in the conception of “thick description.”20 An understanding of the individual as well as the context is needed in order to allow for meaningful insight into the causes of this ethnic conflict. Therefore the research process for each area consisted of two major components. The first was studying each space, and getting to know the and understanding the geographic layout, the important markers and memorials, the murals and political graffiti. This consisted of taking pictures, drawing and observing maps, and taking notes. The second phase was a series of comprehensive and

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20 The research process is modeled on Clifford Geertz’s research philosophy. Please see “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.”
rigorous interviews with residents of each area. The interviews included people with varied perspectives and social positions. These interviews were designed to provide a social narrative that could be connected to the physical spaces: how they understand their own spaces and experiences, how they understand other spaces, and how they feel about neutral spaces, memorials, and transformation. The interviews truly shaped the content of this thesis, providing a rich insight that could never have been found in texts.  

The synthesis of these interviews constructed my understanding of space and the role that it played in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

The conceptions and impact of space in Northern Ireland are developed in layers. The layers, developed through each chapter, provide integral insight into the impact of the manipulation of space in ethnic conflict. The first layer is the theoretical understandings of identity, group dynamics, and space, and how these concepts change when they are put in the environment of ethnic conflict. As violence becomes an acceptable form of social interaction and a mode of transcribing the identities onto the different ethnic enclaves, group dynamics change in relation to both in-group and out-group associations. Concepts of space also change in relation to violence as areas become politicized through action and identity and develop classifications of place and territory. This foundation of theoretical concepts can then be used to develop understandings of real world examples.

The second layer is the understanding of place. In order to understand how people interact with space and how spaces shape people, the areas of Crossmaglen, Belfast, and L/Derry need to be understood in great detail. All three areas have been broken up into important sections or enclaves. The process of spatial control and

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21 For more specific information on the interview process please see Appendix C.
confinement used throughout the conflict drastically affected the appearance and meaning of each space. Every detail of the enclaves plays an important role in the conscious and subconscious understandings of each group that inhabits them. The third layer is the understanding of each group that lives within these spaces. Each community has a distinct identity within their place as well as an identity formed by outsiders. While each interviewee had his/her individual identity, the individuals were also linked to larger social groups. Overarching group identities, Catholic or Protestant, were woven within site specific identities, highlighting just how crucial space was in creating and reinforcing a social identity. The fourth layer is the synthesis of the roles space and identity played within the conflict in Northern Ireland. The British policy of control and confinement manipulated areas and changed the way that social groups within Northern Ireland interacted. The politicization of space through the construction of “peace walls,” army bases, and road blocks created isolated groups of working class enclaves. Faced with a loss of power and security, ethnic enclaves formed “conflict cultures” which territorialized their areas, provided a reinforcing sense of identity, power, and security. The territorialization of space was derived from a collective understanding that space was connected with power and survival. This cyclical process provides great challenges for conflict transformation or resolution. Meaningful change must incorporate with the transformation of space, which has become a container for practices of violence and memories that sustain the power of each conflict culture. The understanding of this process is also important as the policy of spatial control and confinement have become common practice in other ethnic conflict situations. The development of

22 “Conflict cultures” was term formulated out of my research. See Appendix A for definition.
similar policies in Israel and Iraq have sparked key indicators of conflict culture as people are reacting against the confinement of a concrete wall. All of these layers result in a more complete understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and can be extrapolated to other areas of ethnic conflict in order to prevent the cycle that has consumed Northern Ireland. While it was important that the paramilitaries put down their arms, meaningful change must first start with everyday spaces like on Cable Street, where Sam Devenny’s house is, and the other streets where people of the Bogside and people of Northern Ireland continue in conflict everyday.
As long as the field of international politics has existed, there has been a struggle between realist and liberal approaches to determine which paradigm explains the world more accurately. Realists focus on the power of the nation-state, viewing them as rational, unitary actors in an anarchic world.23 Liberals believe in cooperation based on their understanding that states are not the only actors in the international system as non-state actors and individuals can influence the behavior of nations.24 Yet both paradigms provide mediocre understandings of issues like ethnic conflict because of their limited approach. When trying to analyze current issues in international politics, like ethnic conflict, realism and liberalism are unable to provide substantial and meaningful dialogue.25 A third paradigm in international relation theory hopes to move away from this rigid debate in order to shed greater light on the actual workings of political problems. This approach is constructivism.

Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal unites of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective, rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are an important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics.26

23 For further understanding on the realist approach, please see readings by John Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz.
24 For further understanding on the liberal approach, please see readings by Joseph Nye or Robert Keohane.
25 While there could be debate about the inclusion of ethnic conflict in the field of international politics, this paper assumes there is a substantial connection. For further information see Stephen Ryan’s Ethnic Conflict and International Relations.
Constructivism, in its unique combination of sociological and political analysis, provides a new avenue for the understanding of international politics. It revives the idea that politics consists of the people who it is conducted by and for. Constructivism allows for a greater look into the behavior within states in order to understand its behavior on the world stage. In essence, all identities and positions taken on in international politics are constructed through intersubjective understandings of social relationships between states, non-state actors, and individual leaders.27

In gaining a better understanding on the volatile topic of ethnic conflict, it is important to approach this matter from a constructivist as opposed to realist or liberal perspective.28 The realist and liberal paradigms fail to consider the very specific social dynamics and identities that contribute to such polarized dynamics. These theories, in fact, can do more harm than good in trying to apply a generic band-aid theory across highly diverse cultures, conflicts, and societies. For example, Chaim Kaufmann, utilizing a realist approach, argues that, “restoring civil politics in multi-ethnic states shattered by war is impossible because the war itself destroys the possibilities for ethnic cooperation.”29 His suggestion is to build walls, permanently separating different ethnic communities from interaction. This limited approach literally and figuratively builds walls, preventing progress from occurring between communities and preventing scholarship from responding in a substantive way to the true nuances of the social divisions in ethnic conflict. A constructivist base to the

27 Ibid., 388
28 This thesis is not designed to be solely a constructivist theory, but uses the paradigm as a jumping off point because it allows for a truer understanding of issues within the ethnic conflict field.
field of ethnic conflict is able to break ground on multiple levels simultaneously, addressing issues within the state, community, and individual. Some may argue that this approach is too social and not politically oriented enough for a substantial reflection on international politics. Yet, the “processes of identity-formation under anarchy are concerned first and foremost with preservation or ‘security’ of the self. Concepts of security therefore differ in the extent to which and the manner in which the self is identified cognitively with the other.”30 Individual identity is therefore inextricably linked with international politics, and especially ethnic conflict, where it becomes a fight for a person’s life and for an identity that cannot be changed. With ethnic conflicts becoming the most violent human-created events of recent decades, it is necessary to approach it from an appropriate paradigm that will give it deserved substance.

Identity and Groups Dynamics

Scholars have been fascinated with the ethnic conflicts of Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, and South Africa for decades now. The literature found on these types of ethnic conflicts can rival the literature found on large scale nation-state wars.31 Part of the fascination seems to stem from the importance identity still demands in the realm of political groupings. In the age built on the clash between capitalism and Marxism, it should’ve been a natural progression that such topics like identity and ideology become consumed by the overpowering nature of economic influence. “It

31 See Joseph Ruane’s *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Ian Lustick’s *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands*, Anthony David Lowenberg’s *The Origins and Demise of South African Apartheid* or Jasminka Udovicki and James Ridgeway’s *Burn This House: The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*.
was widely felt that the homogenizing influence of the modern industrial state would be too powerful to allow the survival of those traditionalistic and narrow ‘tribal’ loyalties that flourished under agrarian systems.”32 Yet this transition to the modern industrial state could not outweigh the power of identity. Identity undeniably still plays a vital role in the way people view themselves and how they interact with others. The concept of identity is strongly connected to the study of ethnic conflict through the way people connect with groups and how those groups interact and develop within themselves and against opposition. Scholars have developed a substantial body of work on the working of group and social behavior, providing insight into a seemingly endless conflict as is found in Northern Ireland.33

In the process of gaining greater understanding on identity formation within group dynamics, it is important first to concretely settle on the notion of what the term identity actually means. Identity, for the purposes of this thesis, has been defined as the conception of the self as constructed through personal understanding, social interaction, and social roles. This definition highlights the two structures that are vital to the formation of identity: personal subjective understanding and location of a person among greater social networks. People understand themselves through multiple lenses, as the people of Northern Ireland continuously intertwine labels like Catholics, nationalist, and republican. In the case of ethnic conflict, the individual understanding of one’s identity is intimately tied with his or her feelings of safety, security, and power as lives are under both real and perceived threats. These identity

33 See Anthony Buckley *Negotiating Identity,* Mairead Nic Craith’s *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland,* and John Daniel Cash’s *Identity, Ideology, and Conflict.*
labels become weapons in themselves, providing power to the person identifying with the in-group and becoming threatening to the person in the out-group. Therefore, the understanding of one’s identity changes from a once fluid process between different social settings to a now rigid position, as social groups become polarized along very identifiable ethnic lines.

As much as each person living in these conflict zones experiences the conflict in uniquely personal ways, greater understandings, both politically and socially, come out in examination of the identity formation through group dynamics and actions.

Wherever they occur these ideologies touch intimately upon the constitution of political subjectivity; forming, at least potentially, a central aspect of individual identity. At the same time, they are also a central cultural form for the organization of political and social life. Hence, at once, they touch both individuals and whole social formations, and they do so in palpable ways.34

Groups are an important part of any society. In a unified and peaceful society, people belong to many groups without being highly dependent on their membership to one specific group. Within a divided society, social groupings become vital parts of social existence and personal identity as the state is no longer able to provide security or attract allegiance. Scholarship on this dynamic change can be considered to focus on the formation of group culture and group interest.35 A formation of group interest within a conflict zone is most notably recognized as a development of ethnocentrism.

The process of ethnocentrism can be understood as,

The official ideology operates as a new set of norms for the regulation of social interaction across the political boundaries of the state, increasing social distance between members and nonmembers. If it operates long enough and consistently

enough, its net effect is that of a self-fulfilling prophecy, creating a culturally homogenous and loyal ingroup surrounded by alien and unfriendly outgroups.36

This system of ethnocentrism that develops favors the creation of strong in-group loyalty through the creation of an all encompassing culture. Marc Howard Ross in his essay on identity in ethnic conflict labels this development psychocultural interpretations. “Psychocultural interpretations are the shared, deeply rooted worldviews that help groups make sense of daily life and provide psychologically meaningful accounts of a group’s relationship with other groups, their actions, and their motives.”37 This type of “in-group culture” incorporates historical accounts of group victimhood, symbols of group individuality, clearly identifiable characteristics of in-group citizenship, and, most importantly, demands a strong sense of group loyalty. The psychocultural interpretations create a cycle within group life that reinforces itself, preventing any legitimate challenge to a group’s existence. This unique cycle of group dynamics is why ethnic conflicts are some of the longest running conflicts of the modern age. People are unwilling and unable to change these, “non-negotiable cultural claims.”38

Group interests are not only directed inward, but also outward at a threatening out-group identity. Most scholars agree that it does not matter whether the out-group provides a real threat or perceived threat.39 The perception of this threat is the most important element, and can sometimes be much stronger than any rational potential attack. This out-group is constructed as a mortal enemy of the in-group, and in most

38 Ibid., 159
39 See Robert A. LeVine and Donald Campbell’s *Ethnocentrism* and John Daniel Cash’s *Identity, Ideology, and Conflict.*
ethnic conflicts this distinction can be “traced” back generations upon generations.

“We view protracted conflicts as ‘identity-driven,’ the result of an underlying ‘fear of extinction’ that grows out of the experience of being a vulnerable ethnic group living with memories of persecution and massacre.”40 The understanding of identity becomes very important here as through the different constructions of social groups, a person’s identity can change from enemy, to neutral, to favorable. Identity is not only what an individual chooses to construct, but also what social networks around the individual identify them as. Groups create elaborate histories of oppression and abuse by the out-group, when in most cases the polarization is quite recent. A system of distinction can also be created in order to truly tell who belongs where. Names, languages, holidays, or symbols are all things that are marked as the “enemy’s.” These create distinct social and cultural boundaries between in-groups and out-groups. Social boundaries can then become physical boundaries as understandings of space and place come into play. “In other words, boundaries can be symbolic spatial representations of some desired degree of social distance between peoples, and a group may differentiate among the numerous boundaries in its cognitive map of the region, viewing some as self-imposed, rigid barriers and others as neutral markers of cultural, linguistic, or territorial difference.”41

The creation of cognitive maps and group boundaries leads to the second half of the study of group dynamics within ethnic conflicts, and this is considered group

action.\textsuperscript{42} Group action within ethnic conflict is most visible in the development of collective violence against an out-group. Yet there is also a complex system that develops involving identity persecution and segregation. For one, groups will be segregated into different spaces, not only for living, but also for work and leisure activities.

The embedding of ethno-sectarianism is reproduced via the creation of discursive formations, which have established a systematic and conceptual framework capable of defining ‘truth.’ A significant number of those living in ethno-sectarian enclaves have been predisposed by processes of ethno-sectarian enclaving and the championing of the ‘home’ enclave a morally superior via an assemblage of symbols and distinct discursive practices.\textsuperscript{43}

Groups will also actively persecute members of the out-group. This group action looks similar to gang formation whereas individuals find strength in their own identification with their group and take to beating, harassing, or killing members of the out-group. This type of persecution, within the environment of ethnic conflict, can escalate to full scale violence between groups. This transition is important to highlight in the development of an ethnic conflict. The strength of the group identification within a system of polarized ethnocentrism creates an environment that can quickly allow for escalation of violence from smaller scale gang persecution. For with the confines of in-group out-group loyalties, a threat to the group becomes a threat to one’s self. “When group contention makes an issue of reputations for solidarity, previously uninvolved members become involved in violence at a higher


\textsuperscript{43} Alan Bairner and Peter Shirlow. “When Leisure Turns to Fear: Fear, Mobility, and Ethno-Sectarianism in Belfast.” \textit{Leisure Studies} 22 (July 2003): 209.
rate than when contention has remained one-on-one.” The resulting warfare reinforces the social boundaries in existence, creating actual threats as opposed to just perceived ones. This violence is especially pervasive when considering the sometimes tight urban environments it occurs in.

The closer the neighbors, and the stronger they are, the intenser is the warfare, and then the intenser is the internal organization and discipline of each…Men of an others-group are outsiders within whose ancestors the ancestors of the we-group waged war. The ghosts of the latter will see with pleasure their descendants keep up the fight, and will help them.

As group interest feed group action, the cycle of ethnic conflict begins. Identity and group dynamics are a vital and driving part of these uniquely violent conflicts, and in turn these identities are reinforced by the violence.

**Space, Place, and Territoriality**

Ethnic conflicts aren’t just about one group trying to fight for recognition. While most of the conflicts that have taken place over the past fifty years seem to be centered around a new type of identity based conflict, the importance of space and territory have not been eliminated, especially as these conflicts are inextricably linked with social and political identities. Identity groups in Northern Ireland, Jerusalem, and the Balkans were and are fighting over control of the country, a geographic area, just as they are fighting each other. This ethnic fight over land begs the question of how a space or an area could be connected with identities. Space exists in infinite ways and amounts throughout the world. The term space can be considered any

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physical plane that can be quantifiably measured. Different spaces include a room, a country, or even wide open fields. Space as a geographic area is constructed with different physical attributes like mountains, rivers, and fields. Yet as humans and social groups come to take residence and ownership over space, they manipulate it with constructed borders, urban spaces, or land marks. As societies interact with space they give it meaning, lending and creating a social understanding as well as a physical one. While modern societies may want to quantify space in specific geometric terms and markings, this social meaning that groups create with an area cannot be disconnected with the physical existence of the space. This is “the study of not the geography that we learn but the geography we come home to…the world of everyday experience that is the ground for decision-making and action in all realms of behavior.” Social understanding of space is just as important in mapping as buildings and coordinates are. Space becomes a container for multiple levels of meaning.

In trying to understand the intersection between space and identity in ethnic conflict, it is vital to comprehend how social experience of space is constructed, valued, and perpetuated. “It seems to be well established that physical space has no ‘reality’ without the energy that is deployed within it. The modalities of this deployment, however, along with the physical relationships between central points, nuclei or condensations on the one hand and peripheries on the other are still matters

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46 The term “quantifiable” used in this definition is not meant to construe a previously developed mathematical or geographic measurement, but is in fact meant to be understood as a collective social agreement of what a certain area denotes.

for conjecture." There are several aspects of social constructions of space that go into constructing a social meaning and “deploying” it in the area. The first are physical representations of the space: how the space is constructed, what does it produce, how does it function, who produced it. No production of space is for neutral purposes. Space represents the society that it holds. This connection is most clearly visible within the observations of urban spaces. Spaces in urban areas are constructed due to the purposes that it needs to serve (residential, business, public, etc.) along with the ideology that desires to control these practices. With the development of the modern, industrialized nation-state, there was a correlating development of the rationalized, modern building structure, designed to promote valued qualities like efficiency and capitalism. Some scholars would be so bold as to say, “Perhaps we shall have to go further, and conclude that the producers of space have always acted in accordance with a representation, while the ‘users’ passively experienced whatever was imposed upon them inasmuch as it was more or less thoroughly inserted into, or justified by, their representational space.” Power dynamics play a strong role in the initial production of space. Just like the creation of a street directs movement within space, impressions of power also direct the flow of use and understanding of space.

“Users” cannot passively experience a space because they help to form the second way in which space takes on a social meaning. The constructions of space have different meanings and effects on its users. All spaces are affected by its users through similar means, if not similar degrees. Power, in this respect, can be represented through the actual body of an individual, as the presence of a body.

49 Ibid., 45.
provides each individual with a form of agency. “Power is embedded in the situated practices of agents…Legitimation become performed and therefore contingent.”51 Through action, users can take control or be controlled by a space. Space interacts with this action through the forces of time and movement. People feel there is energy in a given area that differentiates it from other areas. This is why people rank cities like New York, Boston, or Chicago depending on how they “feel” in them. Some people are positively energized by a space, while others feel uncomfortable. The development of movement throughout the space plays a vital role in how users of the space interact and construct it. The concept of movement not only includes how people move in and out of the space, but also how they can flow around the space itself, and how concepts of authority and power control and are visible in the space. “Thus power is invested in the intersection of space…perception, and action.”52 This power over movement creates a scale of control, where social groups go from feeling very free, like in a public park, to highly confined, like in a prison or institution.

In connection with time in space, space also maintains a connection with memory. Even though a building, a farm, or a bridge is interacted with in the present, each space, each area preserves the actions of its past and suggests potential pathways for its future.

In the history of space as such, on the other hand, the historical and diachronic realms and the generative past are forever leaving their inscriptions upon the writing tablet, so to speak, of space…The space engendered by time is always actual and synchronic, and it always presents itself as of a piece; its

component parts are bound together by internal links and connections themselves produced by time.\textsuperscript{53}

This history is more than the versions of officially recognized in historical narratives as can be seen with the many famine monuments produced by the Irish government. This memory is more deeply in tune a social group’s understanding and constructing of their identities. “Ideological perception obtains a material charge from the force fields of politically codified space that directly mobilizes and channels action.”\textsuperscript{54} On a micro scale, this would be akin to a family’s feelings when passing by the site on the highway where their son was killed. On a macro scale in conflict societies like Northern Ireland, this means the creation of sacred spaces as well as no-go areas.\textsuperscript{55}

It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported.\textsuperscript{56}

Space, in connection with its user, is socially constructed through the interweaving of energy, movement, and memory. While the user is not confined by the physical representations of space, people also cannot fully construct the space they live in, and are forced to work and experience within the confines of their space, which has been constructed outside of their control.

\textsuperscript{53} Henri Lefebvre. \textit{The Production of Space}. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1991), 110.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., \textit{Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland} 27.
\textsuperscript{55} “No-go areas” was originally used as a term to define areas where the British army was not allowed to enter, as per an agreement between the community and the army. Once the British violated that agreement, the definition was transformed to be a commonly used term to mean areas that they felt unsafe in and were unwilling to venture into. These areas were spaces mostly controlled by opposing groups.
The combination of space, through its physical representation and social usage, transforms a space into a place, a transition to recognize the symbolic representations. There is an important distinction made in all space and social geographic literature in regard to the difference between space and place. Space, for the purposes of this discussion, is again defined as any physical space that can be quantifiably measured. In contrast, place, “To be in a place is to be sheltered and sustained by its containing boundary; it is to be held within this boundary rather than to be dispersed by an expanding horizon of time or to be exposed indifferently in space.” This distinction is important because it marks the transition within the social experience of space where that space is denoted with identity, creating a specific place. The construction of place is especially associated with memory, which creates a grounding force within the space and also a confining force to the associations of that place. The power of these connections is embodied in a place’s ability to signify through symbols and imposed meaning.

Space may be marked physically, as with animals’ use of smells or human group’s use of visual or auditory indicators; alternatively, it may be marked abstractly, by means of discourse, by means of signs. Space thus acquires symbolic value. Symbols, on this view, always imply an emotional investment, an affective charge…which is so to speak deposited at a particular place and thereafter ‘represented’ for the benefit of everyone elsewhere.

A demarcation of place is invariably a demarcation of power. The social group that has a symbolic connection to the place controls how it is experienced, how to enter and exit the space, and how the area’s image is publicly constructed. This power dynamic becomes especially important in a situation of ethnic conflict where space takes on multiple levels of meaning and therefore becomes infinitely more significant.

57 Ibid., 186.
in the fight. While power is still connected with space, it has been transformed into new and more complex ways.

A last and important step in the transformation of space is the process of territorialization. “Territoriality will be defined as the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomenon, and relations by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.”\(^{59}\) While the development of place attaches a space to certain memories, the development of territoriality is when power and control become the definitive social understandings of an area. Territoriality, like the creation of group action, becomes the active control and identification with an area by a social group. This development of territoriality brings a sense of control over the area as well as a feeling of power in not only being able to control the area, but also among individuals within the in and out-groups. “In fact, they do need space in the sense that they are located and take up area, but the need is territorial only when there are certain kinds of competition for things (in space). It is not competition for space that occurs but rather a competition for things and relationships in space.”\(^{60}\) The development of territorialization isn’t just associated with state power, but most dynamically among social groups. At the social group level, territorialization becomes more powerful as many of these groups lack any significant influence at the nation-state level. Instead of imposed boundaries, territoriality amongst social groups becomes boundaries understood and imposed through social processes, reproducing themselves within the confines of the identities they represent and choose to oppose


themselves against. Territoriality can be associated with segregation, which is a combination of active and passive separation of individuals. Within ethnic conflict, territorialization plays out, through the, “sense of the localized nature of territorial control and resistance, where the imperatives of communal and intra-communal difference, segregation, and exclusion still predominate over the politics of shared interests, integration, and assimilation.”

Territorialization among social groups creates boundaries that aren’t just cognitive, but acted upon. In a situation of ethnic enclaves, conflicting groups can then use this garnering of power in order to firmly establish their sense of security and control.

These developments are consistently played out within ethnic conflict societies, where area and identity become inextricably linked. The republicans and the loyalists in Northern Ireland have managed to connect their existence to the control of land. Palestinians and Israelis have done the same thing within Israel and the West Bank.

The notion that landscapes embody discourses of inclusion and exclusion is closely linked to the idea that manipulated geographies also function as symbols of identity, validation, and legitimation. Thus there are archetypal national landscapes, which draw heavily on geographical imagery, memory, and myth. Continuously being transformed, these encapsulate distinct home places, defined by their very differences to the Other.

This is invariably the connection that modern political conceptions of ethnic conflict misunderstand. While ethnic conflict has brought in new and complex issues of identity and group dynamics, scholarship rarely appreciates how this problem is not...
just connected with land control, but what space represents. This dynamic of place and identity, which manages to play out multiple roles and levels within conflict societies, often goes unnoticed even by the people who exist in the spaces of violence, which is part of its power as a perpetuating force. This is the system of power that has become largely ignored and understudied in the literature.

**Prisons and Planning**

There are two sociological subfields that have studied the connection of place and identity, and the findings of these fields can be extrapolated to the environment of ethnic conflict. The first theory is the understanding of total institutions. The definition of total institutions was initially created by Erving Goffman. It is meant to be understood as characterized by, “their encompassing or total character is symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors.”

“That space signifies is incontestable. But what it signifies is dos and don’ts – and this brings us back to power. Power’s message is invariably confused – deliberately so; dissimulation is necessarily part of any message from power. Thus space indeed ‘speaks’ – but it does not tell all. Above all, it prohibits.”\textsuperscript{65} Total institutions strip inmates of their ability to construct their own identity, and converts residents into a predetermined, submissive individual of the mass.\textsuperscript{66} In this way control becomes all encompassing. As compared with understanding of social constructions of space, the institution would be designed to confine individuals, to strip them of a sense of autonomy, and to reinforce what would be considered to be the power structure.

Foucault, in \textit{Discipline and Punish}, recognized this representation control of space through the pan-optic in prisons, where a prison is designed as if “big brother” is constantly watching inmates, dominating them from above.\textsuperscript{67} User constructions of space through their own interactions become intensely confined. Movement is limited to allotted paths authorized by an “other.” Time is considered to be the authority figure’s and not the inmate’s. The individual, in fact, is not considered autonomous enough to need or value time. Memory of the space is interestingly controlled. Whereas total institutions are constantly cycling through residents, their identities are not left upon the institution, only prescribed definitions of the self, “invariably a realization of a master’s project.”\textsuperscript{68} “Institutions concerned with the production of automatons (as political subjects) are in effect speaking to their own

\textsuperscript{65} Henri Lefebvre. \textit{The Production of Space}. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1991), 142
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., \textit{Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates}. 13
\textsuperscript{68} Henri Lefebvre. \textit{The Production of Space}. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1991), 164.
automatic reproduction as self directed institutions.”69 This creation of control within the confines of total institutions is present throughout society, and these institutions whether they be state government or group leaders, look to these controlling and confining mechanisms to reproduce the existing institution. In looking at the extremes of Goffman and Foucault, the application of total institutions in society can be understood with greater clarity.

Of course the other concept important to understanding total institutions is how inmates adapt to their new surroundings. Goffman cites a common bond that develops through experiencing such a confined lifestyle. “In addition to fraternalization among all inmates there is likely to be bond formation of a more differentiating kind. Sometimes special solidarities extend throughout a physically closed region, such as a ward or cottage, whose inhabitants perceive they are being administered as a single unit, and hence have a lively sense of common fate.”70 In essence, this creates a unique in-group out-group identity, whereas the in-group becomes the inmates that are controlled through the total institution. In this group, inmates can develop a type of “culture,” as much as is afforded to them through the dominating group. This comes out through a distinctive social code as well as unique signals and linguistic codes that differentiate them from the staff.71 There can also be the potential for revolts as garnered through the support of a strong inmate in-group. “Inmate solidarity may be strong enough to support brief gestures of anonymous or

71 Ibid., 55.
mass defiance.”72 This system of solidarity and defiance can be extrapolated for potential cultural patterns in ethnic conflict societies, where social groups also feel pressure under real or perceived systems of dominance.

The second important field from which we can build our understanding on identity and place is that of urban planning and planning in contested spaces. Urban planning must take into consideration many things when designing buildings, through ways, or open spaces. Because of the confined nature of urban environments, groups are constantly moving in and out of each other’s spaces. Despite this vast movement, areas inevitably become segregated through race, ethnic, or class boundaries. “One of the major roles of urban policy in such circumstances is to ameliorate urban conflict through an acceptable allocation of urban resources across ethnic groups and neighborhoods.”73 This task becomes increasingly difficult as ethnic groups in urban environments become increasingly polarized. While planning is portrayed as like a highly rationalized process, it too is couched in spatial expressions of power and control. Urban policy may in fact be the most powerful force driving a city’s population, for it is in fact a physical mapping of an ideology. Planning,

in a rather Foucaultian spirit, [can be defined as] the arrangement of space according to principles and goals determined by those in power. Some would argue that plans control the ‘free will’ of all citizens or community members. However, if those plans are spatial translations of the goals of a particular group…they obviously serve its interests.74

This display of power is especially apparent is zoning laws, placement of public spaces, the creation of monuments, and the commercial developments for a city.

72 Ibid., 58.
74 Tovi Fenster. “Planning as Control – Cultural and Gendered Manipulation and Misuse of Knowledge.” HAGAR International Social Science Review. 3.1. (2002):70
From the stand point of ethnically marginalized groups, this power display is apparent and palpable.

Urban planning typically involves three pathways in the face of contested spaces: to reinforce boundaries between conflicting social groups, to remain neutral, or to try to create residential mixing among populations. The reinforcement of boundaries between conflicting groups can be done in several ways. Resources like leisure centers, transportation, and divisions in voting blocks can be allocated separately to each socially identified area. Walls can also be built between the communities, and in the process, definitively separating the groups in conflict. This planning puts the state or policy maker in a manager position, occupying a clear position of power and control.\(^75\) Urban planning could also choose to remain neutral and ignore the contested spaces that have been marked out within the city. This could either exacerbate or ameliorate the situation depending on the conflict going on amongst the social groups. Urban planners could also actively encourage mixing between communities in order to try and eliminate the boundaries between social groups. This could potentially lead to the reduction of ethnic tension, as it tries to breakdown the polarization that is needed for conflict to exist.\(^76\) Therefore the role urban planning plays in an ethnic conflict society is multisided. It can help to create conflict, transform the space into peace, and establish distinctive positions of identity and power. Throughout the conflict in Northern Ireland, the government has chosen a policy of containment. “The main means toward conflict containment – the


condoning and formalization of ethnic separation through housing, planning, community development and ‘peaceline’ policies – appears to provide short-term stability at the expense of long-term opportunities for intergroup negotiation and reconciliation.”  

It is through the creation of problems and its potential for change that urban policy plays a large role in space and ethnic conflict.

These theoretical understandings of space and group identity formation have developed with great depth over the years. Yet these theories mean nothing without connections to real world situations. With this strong theoretical base, we can approach the topic of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and start to understand how the violence over a small green plot of land has sustained for over forty years. To understand the conflict and its people, we first must intimately know the spaces and places that formed them.

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77 Ibid., 207.
78 The phrase “conflict in and about Northern Ireland” is a “neutral” phrasing that was originally developed by the Healing Through Remembering initiative.
Crossmaglen or Cross

Some people call it “Bandit Country,” others call the area South Armagh, the Border, or even Ireland. Whatever the term used to refer to this small border county area in Northern Ireland, the connotations connected with the town are all the same: fear, awe, and a knowing nod of the border country experience. County Armagh is a small border county along the eastern coast of the island of Ireland. With the original division of Northern and the Republic of Ireland, the northern most province of the island, known as Ulster, was officially denoted as Northern Ireland. The province of Ulster contained nine counties, only six of which were considered to be a part of Northern Ireland.79 One of the counties kept within Northern Ireland, much to the surprise of people in and out of the area, was Armagh. The area of Armagh is a unique region in Northern Ireland because of its mostly Catholic, nationalist, and republican make up. This difference in demographics made the area of Armagh hostile to its inclusion within Northern Ireland from the beginning. Despite its rural nature and small population, the border region of County Armagh, known as South Armagh, became the region with one of the highest rates of violence in the modern day conflict in Northern Ireland.80 Unlike other areas of the country like Belfast or L/Derry, the conflict in South Armagh was largely between the British soldiers and the local IRA brigade. The border campaign waged against the British from 1956-

80 See Toby Harnden’s Bandit Country.
1962 was one of the first campaigns of the IRA since its reestablishment after the Irish Civil War. With its long and tumultuous history of violence and defense, the border region of South Armagh plays an important part in telling the story of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and no other area in South Armagh plays a more central role than the heart of the violence: Crossmaglen.

The border designed by the British between the North and South seems arbitrary, following no natural boundaries, crossing through farms, over mountains, and through roads. While crossing between the two countries today is no problem, during the conflict it was as if crossing into the North was crossing into a military complex. (See Appendix B Figure 3-1). There were custom posts and army check points along every major road. If posts weren’t set up, then the roads were blocked off with concrete, barbed wire, and fences or destroyed. “The roads are either being blown up, leaving large craters, or blocked with large metal tanks, which are then filled with concrete.” Despite the random feeling of where the border was placed, it was clearly delineated through the fortress-like creations of the security forces. It was through the region of South Armagh that most people visiting Northern Ireland would enter, as it is directly north of Dublin. In approaching the border of this country in turmoil, it was clear that Northern Ireland was an entirely different world than its southern counterpart.

Once into the region of South Armagh, there is a palpable difference in the feeling of the area. South Armagh is made up of beautiful green landscapes. The

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mountains and hills that dominate the region are stark against the mostly grey skies above. There are no skyscrapers, apartment complexes or even heavy industrial areas in this majestic region. It is dominated by the rural lifestyle of its people, a lifestyle that seems rarely to be touched by outside influences, except for the additions of cars, televisions, and computers. The landscape and its undeniable pristine beauty would seem to be a desirable draw for the thousands of tourists that visit the island every year for just this type of experience. Yet among the mountains and rolling green farm fields lie visual markers of South Armagh’s conflict entrenched state. One farmer recalled,

> There now stands a tower of concrete and corrugated iron, supported by scaffolding and protected by sandbags and barbed wire. Across the road, a television camera has been perched on a pole to monitor the movements of passers-by. Gaping holes have been cut in the hedges and withered trees litter the fields. This is the latest in a line of fortified observation posts strung across a vulnerable stretch of the border.83

During the conflict, every hilltop, instead of being topped with snow, was capped with a British army base. Because of the recent demilitarization process starting in 2007, almost all of the oppressive blocks of steel and concrete are gone. The only thing left to mark their existence is an Irish tri-colored flag, waving in the occasional wind.84 In the small rural area of South Armagh, there were a total of five military bases, 14 hilltop forts, and 31 spy posts that housed over 3,000 British army personnel, amounting to one soldier per eight citizens.85 These bases were part of the Hillsborough Wall, a steel ring around the countryside connected by cameras, spy

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84 Interview 12 on July 3, 2007.
posts, and helicopters. As attacks increased from the IRA brigade of the area, the steel ring would be tightened around the communities, choking off movement, privacy, and the local way of life.

While driving through the hillsides of South Armagh, the evidence of the conflict becomes more apparent as the landscape transforms from quaint Irish countryside to an occupied war zone. Residents lived with the constant sound of helicopters flying over head, bringing supplies and personnel in and out of the bases and towers. The IRA, over the course of its campaign, had managed to attack British trucks so well that the security forces were forced into the sky. The strong winds and deafening sounds rang throughout the county as the helicopter became the native bird of the region. While the presence of an army helicopter seemed out of place to a person coming into South Armagh, the residents of the area had to live with their existence twenty four hours a day. The army base centered in Crossmaglen was at one point the busiest helicopter base in the world.

Going along the roads, getting deeper and deeper into “Bandit Country,” there were road checks frequently on most cars and these checks would vary in severity. Surrounding most towns, the army, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) would all set up roads checks, stopping people from going about their daily life to harass them in a myriad of ways. “Stories of soldiers smashing cars windscreens, producing pornographic pictures to housewives and

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87 Field notes, Crossmaglen 2007.
88 The Ulster Defense Regiment was a branch of the British army, designed to replaced the B-Specials which were phased out at the start of the conflict. There are strong allegations of collusion against the UDR as they are accused of providing weapons and carrying out killings with loyalist paramilitaries.
young children passing through the checkpoints, minor assaults, etc. etc.” A normal ride going from the household to church would sometimes take half an hour because of road blocks. Sometimes even whole towns would be cut off from movement by army check points. This hostile environment was initially counteracted by the people of the area through the prominent display of tri-colored flags, IRA memorials, and signs to keep the British out. These were hand painted signs and crosses, protected and honored with the same vigor of any national monument. Most famously were the IRA warnings “Sniper on Duty,” located on strategic telephone poles throughout the countryside. From this paraphernalia, it is clear that the people of South Armagh do not consider themselves Northern Irish or British, but a misplaced extension of the Republic of Ireland. The only difference is that they had to continuously fight for their identity. This was the true environment that surrounds the area of South Armagh, and sets the scene for a visitor coming into Crossmaglen.

Crossmaglen is one of the larger towns of South Armagh, and yet as the bus leaves from the main station in Newry to its final destination, there are very few people on it. Crossmaglen is known as being the capital of republican activity in the area, and as the bus gets closer and closer to the town it becomes more apparent. Even in 2007, signs warned visitors, “Caution Sniper at Work.” Green, white, and orange letters mark the territory as IRA on several telephone polls. The colors black and yellow of the local Crossmaglen Gaelic football team are seen frequently, marking the territory as not only Irish, but also as “Cross.” The introduction to the town is a sign marking the entrance to Crossmaglen, first in Irish and then in English.

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90 Field notes, Crossmaglen 2007.
91 “Cross” is the local term for the town.
The first landmark, and a central feature to the life of the town, is the Catholic Church. The church, while it’s exterior indicates a typical church of the Irish Catholic faith, has its connections with the area’s history. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-2) The graveyard is scattered with victims of the conflict, one of them being the grave of Raymond McCreesh, a young IRA volunteer who was one of the first to die during the final hunger strike in 1981.\textsuperscript{92} (See Appendix B: Figure 3-3) On the church wall is a small mural, dedicated one defeat of the British by the IRA. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-4) As the road continues into the middle of the town square, there is a granite hunger strike memorial to the left and a huge poster dedicated to the “Roll of Honor” for the men from Crossmaglen who died in the conflict. The black and white photos from the twenty foot tall poster, of men both old and young, speak of the fathers, brothers, and husbands lost, all of whom the people of Cross knew. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-5) The town square is the center of Crossmaglen’s life. The storefronts that surround the square have clearly seen their fair share of bombs and shrapnel from the almost daily IRA attacks on the British army base that looms over the houses and stores of the town square. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-6) The square contains several pubs, each with their own following, most famously Short’s pub, whose proprietor was the famous local civil rights defender Paddy Short.\textsuperscript{93} The square surrounds a small green with benches. The clear focus of the green is a striking bronze memorial of a man rising up out of a phoenix standing defiantly in opposition to the British army base across the square. (See Appendix B: 3-7) The


\textsuperscript{93} Paddy Short was heavily involved in the civil rights movement, and continued his campaigning even after the dissolution of the NICRA. He was also involved in the Rangers campaign against the British army based. Paddy became the spokesperson for the town of Cross.
memorial reads in Irish and English, “Glory to all you praised and humble heroes who have willing suffered for your unselfish and passionate love of Irish freedom.”94 Surrounding the memorial statue are half a dozen flags including the Irish tricolor, the four flags of the four provinces, and the Starry Plough.95

The direction of the man in the memorial points the eye towards the intimidating, dominant structure of the square: the British military base. The base was built in the late 1960s, taking over the land of the houses and stores in front of it as well as the fields of the local Gaelic athletic club.96 The base resembled a strong fortress with tall fortified walls, a watch tower, protective fencing, and a camera tower to watch over the whole town and into the surrounding fields. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-8) While the base has been scaled back into a Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) building, in its heyday it controlled the climate of the town of Cross. Frequent attacks occurred from the IRA on the base as its outer walls were marked with petrol bomb blasts. Civil rights protests were staged against its usurpation of local land, and constant helicopter visits because nothing could be driven in or out of the base for fear of attack.97 (See Appendix B: Figure 3-9) This of course was all occurring as people lived within ten feet of the base itself, and the local Gaelic team played right in the base’s backyard. The Gaelic football team, the Crossmaglen Rangers, is the pride and joy of the town. The football club is well established, having been around since 1887. Its field was unfortunately taken over by the British

94 Field Notes, Crossmaglen 2007.
95 The Starry Plough flag is a blue flag with yellow stars that was originally used by the Irish Citizens Army and has since been adopted by the republican movement, mostly by the IRA or the Irish National Liberation Army, another prominent republican paramilitary.
96 Interview 15 on July 3, 2007.
army in the 1960s and was only fully returned during 2007 demilitarization. The plan was for the original base to take over the whole football area, but the base only took over the lower right hand corner. During the construction of the base, the army usurped the whole sports complex, driving construction trucks over the fields, turning them to mud. Throughout the occupation, the army restricted the whole area, what could and could not be developed, even the driveways were classified under the British army’s discretion. The football club house, which stands parallel to the base, is a source of great pride for the local townspeople. The building, while small, is covered with the accolades of the small Gaelic program and has become more like a community center than just a football club house.

There are five roads that lead out from the town square. All roads are lined with small houses, and soon stretch on into the fields of the surrounding farms. There is some graffiti on the walls and fences of the surrounding neighborhoods, but for the most part the curbstones and telephone poles that are typically painted in the cities of Northern Ireland remain bare. The identity of the people and of the strength of their bond as a community is clear upon experiencing the life of the town. The space of this beautiful farmland becomes a place with an identity intimately connected with their experiences against the British. While visitors may not know the whole story of the town upon arrival, they can quickly become aware of whose territory they are entering because, “Cross is Irish territory, Brits keep out.”

99 Field notes, Crossmaglen 2007.
**Belfast or Beal Feirste**

Belfast is the largest city in Northern Ireland. Located on the eastern coast of the country, a strong connection with the British Empire was fortified through its ports and shipping industry. When talking about the city of Belfast in any other part of the world, thoughts of the conflict, paramilitary murals, and car bombs readily come to mind. However within the city itself and on the island of Ireland, it is difficult to think of Belfast as a unified space. The city is broken down into its many distinct neighborhoods, which have histories, identities, and allegiances that are as strong and distinct as being from separate cities. While there are many different neighborhoods and areas of Belfast, the focus here will be on four readily identifiable ethnic enclaves involved in the conflict: the Falls, the Shankill, Ardoyne, and Sandy Row. Two other areas that will be touched upon are the city center and the Queens University district. These areas are important to understand in order to contrast the experiences of the residents in the conflict zones, and to appreciate how these people relate to the rest of the city. All of the areas of the city combine to create one of the most frequently studied urban conflicts, a city that despite its attempts to rebuild still has an undeniable history of conflict and hatred.

**“Public” Centers: For Whom?**

While there are so many different parts to Belfast, its city center and university district are the only two areas that most visitors to the city really experience. Despite the history of conflict and economic depression, the city center is surprising grandiose. It clearly bears the markings of a connection with a lavish European empire. The city hall, the central focus of the city center, is quite ornate with grand domes, Ionic columns, and gilding. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-10) The
storefronts leading out from the city hall are also quite architecturally ornate. In walking from the city hall to Queens University, there are several hotels, theaters, and up-scale restaurants along the way. Queens University is also a visible remnant of a former great European empire. The main building is of a similar style as the universities in England, and is surrounded by brownstones in neat little rows. The area clearly speaks to an upper and middle class lifestyle. While other major cities on the island of Ireland have similar ornate style buildings leftover from the days of British imperialism, a stronger British connection is apparent in Belfast, with its union jack flags, English street signs, and black taxis.  

Sandy Row: Territory of South Belfast Loyalists

Behind the brick townhouses and stores leading to the Queens University district is the neighborhood of Sandy Row. Sandy Row is a small, loyalist enclave in the south of Belfast. Once a community of over 1000 families, Sandy Row now consists of 600 families, growing smaller and smaller as it has been increasingly pushed in upon itself by the encroaching upper and middle class neighborhoods as well as the business district. The entrance to the community by Queens is marked by The Royal, a notoriously dangerous pub associated with the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). (See Appendix B: Figure 3-11) The UDA is the paramilitary in control of this section of Sandy Row. The other entrance is marked with an overtly threatening mural of a man in a balaclava with the words, “You are now entering loyalist South Belfast, Heartland of the South Belfast Ulster Freedom Fighters.” (See Appendix B: Figure 3-12) The main thoroughfare of Sandy Row is marked with the

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100 “Union jack” is a term used to refer to the British flag.
101 Interview 18 on July 6, 2007.
102 For a full understanding of the loyalist paramilitaries associated with the conflict, please refer to Appendix A.
traditional union jack colors of red, white, and blue along the curbstones, telephone polls, and through the many flags hanging from houses and stores. In comparison with conflict times, the current showing of loyalist colors was sparse. “It was dark by 3pm because all of the flags out blocked the sun.”\textsuperscript{103} The business district is quite sparse, since almost no one but the residents of Sandy Row venture into the area. The side streets are lined with small identical brick houses, most of which are public sector housing. At the end of all the streets is a tall brick wall running the length of the neighborhood, topped with the subtle touch of barbed wire. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-13) There are touches of political graffiti everywhere showing support for the local paramilitaries and denouncing the IRA, Sinn Fein, and the “Fenian bastard.”\textsuperscript{104} Down one side street is a little memorial to fallen members of the UDA, covered in poppy wreaths during the summer months, likening it to a real war memorial.\textsuperscript{105} On another street, the whole side of one house is painted with half a dozen paramilitary men in balaclavas armed with guns, ironically across the street from one of the few children’s playgrounds in the area.

The only connection to the other half of Sandy Row is a bridge past the Royal and on the right, beyond the Rangers Supporters Club as well as a local Orange Order Lodge.\textsuperscript{106} The men hanging outside the establishments are intimidating, as every outsider is assumed to be an enemy. The bridge that connects the two halves of Sandy Row is covered by a mural depicting on of the few important events that

\textsuperscript{103} Interview 18 on July 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{104} Fenian is a derogatory term used to refer to an Irish Catholic. The phrase “Fenian bastard” is quite commonly used within the loyalist community. See Appendix A.
\textsuperscript{105} Poppies are considered to be a Protestant symbol.
\textsuperscript{106} The Rangers Supporters Club is for the Glasgow Rangers, a football club in Scotland with long ties to the loyalist movement and its respective paramilitaries. The Orange Order is a centuries old Protestant order for men modeled after the Masonic Order. It too has had a strong connection with the loyalist movement through the prolonged conflict in Northern Ireland.
connects the loyalist movement: the working class Protestants involvement with World War I and II. This side of Sandy Row is controlled by the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The subtle change of paramilitary control is noticeable through the change of political graffiti and murals. As soon as a visitor encounters the main thoroughfare, they are greeted with dilapidated houses, abandoned by any resident except the spray paint markings of the local loyalist power. Murals are scattered around the different residential streets, sometimes memorials to fallen “soldiers” or sometimes in reference to the ownership that the UVF has over the neighborhood. There is very little on this side of Sandy Row except abandoned lots used for bond fire celebrations, a small school, and row upon row of small houses. By spending a few minutes in the space, the identity of the community at hand becomes clear, an identity so prominently displayed in all physical aspects of the neighborhood, an identity so entrenched in conflict survival. This is Sandy Row, home to the South Belfast Loyalists.

Falls Road and West Belfast: Gerry Adam’s Belfast

Sandy Row is unique in its location in Belfast due to its close proximity to the city center and university. Most conflict enclaves are located on the opposite side of the Westlink, the major highway that runs through the city. In crossing the overpass over the M-50, cars enter West Belfast and come into a completely different environment. The first enclave encountered is the Falls Road, part of West Belfast, which is home to the largest community of Catholics, nationalists, and republicans in the city. The first building within the Falls is Divis Tower. Divis Tower was built in the mid-1960s as public housing to accommodate the great need for social housing.
for Catholic families. The space itself became a conflict as it was the site for many riots, mayhem, and republican activity. “It was already a notorious slum. Rats ran on the balconies late at night. Soldiers had put out the lights in passageways between floors to thwart snipers, and drunk men and dogs urinated in the dark corridors. Police appeared only in armored jeeps and bulletproof jackets.” Because of Divis Tower’s prime positioning in West Belfast, the British army decided to build a base on top of the twenty story building, which became the site for the spy post over the area. The base was a visible display of British power, literally and figuratively, over the working class neighborhoods of the area.

Along the Falls Road, dozens of black taxis now can be seen driving tourists to visit the famous murals of the republican movement. Several decades before, this street would have been dotted with republican “soldiers” instead, out on patrol. While they are now a tourist curiosity, the main wall of murals along the Falls have long been home to symbols and values of the republican movement connecting it to other international independence movements like the Palestinians and Basques, as well as displays of their Irish heritage. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-14) Across from the murals is a republican memorial garden with jet black slabs engraved with the gold names of fallen members of the republican movement. Also in the same city block is the republican museum, the Bobby Sands mural, and the Sinn Fein office. Continuing up the Falls Road, there are splashes of political graffiti in support of the
IRA, against the RUC or PSNI, and demands for a united Ireland.\textsuperscript{112} (See Appendix B: Figure 3-15) Above the business and store fronts along the Falls Road, there towers a concrete and steel wall. This wall separates the Catholic population of the Falls Road from the Protestant population of the Shankill. The wall was built by the British army in order to separate the two communities after the riots in the summer of 1969, under the assumption that the division would eliminate the violence. The barrier, once built, became the line of violence, where remnants of car bombs, petrol explosions, or shootings could be seen running parallel to the wall. There are several openings along the wall with thick iron gates, which could be mechanically closed to shut off the communities during imposed neighborhood curfews of the 1970s or even at times that violence threatened, a practice that still occurs today. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-16, 3-17) Even with the British plan for demilitarization of the country, the wall itself has grown several feet in the past few months, much of it topped with intimidating barbed wire or iron spikes.\textsuperscript{113} The wall has been there so long it now blends in with the residents’ everyday lives, a green iron backdrop to the conflict going on around them. The so called “peace wall” has not created a peaceful environment by any means.

As the Falls Road continues into West Belfast, there are several other landmarks along the way including a facility used by both Protestant and Catholic communities, a rare find in all of Northern Ireland, the Royal Victorian Hospital, known to be the best hospital for reconstructive knee surgery after all the practice its

\textsuperscript{112} The RUC was the police force of Northern Ireland for the majority of the Troubles. The PSNI has been established since the 1998 Agreement. Neither force has been accepted by the nationalist and republican communities who have frequently been harassed and wronged by the police.

\textsuperscript{113} Interview 31 on July 19, 2007.
staff has had with paramilitary knee capping.114 This section of the Falls Road area also contains several landmarks telling of its Irish heritage including Clonard Monstary and the Culturlann, an Irish language and cultural center. In the heart of republican territory, it is rare to find a building façade on the main road that isn’t decorated with a mural, memorial, or political graffiti. Throughout the conflict, political graffiti was a medium used by the silenced republican and nationalist community to speak and debate, if not in the papers or other venues then on a brick wall. This tradition continues today as issues like policing have become hot topics.115

It becomes clear without traveling too far into the area that the Falls Road community is quite confident of its identity and is readily willing to share its story with outsiders. While the main thoroughfare through the large community is now crowded with political tours given by Coiste or the West Belfast Tourism office, the Falls was once the thoroughfare to the mass funerals of fallen republican heroes, civil rights marches, and the Provisional IRA, whose members walked the streets armed and in uniform.116

Even now an occasional official funeral procession, with uniformed IRA men, can be seen marching up the Falls to the Millstone Cemetery, now home to many of the victims of the conflict.

The Falls is home to the largest groups of Catholics, nationalists, and republicans in the city and it developed into a self sufficient community, with grocery

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114 Paramilitaries on both sides would hand out punishment beatings to people who betrayed the organization or the community. Knee capping was the traditional punishment where victims would be shot in one or both knee caps.

115 The British government banned newspapers and television stations from quoting members of the IRA or Sinn Fein because they were associated with acts of “terrorism.” Therefore, even when Sinn Fein was officially a political party its elected officials could only be filmed, while their voices were edited out.

116 Coiste is a republican ex-prisoners organization focused on educational and reconciliation projects, including guided tours.
stores, shops, mechanics, and schools because of its isolated position during the conflict. The community consists of a mixture of public and private sector housing. The houses that exist today are no indication of how the Falls community used to look during the conflict where hundreds of families were compacted into a small area. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-18) Housing estates, throughout the conflict, resembled bomb shelters in third world countries rather than neighborhoods in the United Kingdom. “Segregation is worse now than it was twenty years ago… And so dilapidated homes, some without bathtubs, some with toilets in the backyard, were in great demand when I moved to west Belfast [in the early 1980s], while nice homes in other areas were unacceptable because their location was considered risky.”117 Some housing plans that would have eased the tension were abandoned due to the potential security threats they might raise.118 For most of the community, the housing situation in the Falls made Catholics feel confined and isolated, forcing the community to turn in on itself and become what to some might have seemed like a separate nation.

The Falls is viewed as the heart of the republican movement in Belfast, home to Gerry Adams, a prominent republican leader and many people’s “hero” during the greater part of the conflict. Conflict transformation efforts have focused on the Falls community because they assume that to fix the Falls would be to fix republicanism. Yet clearly the stamp of the Irish republican movement is far from gone off the walls of the Falls.

Shankill: the Heart of Working Class Loyalism

If the Falls is considered the “heart of republicanism” in Belfast, the Shankill is the “heart of loyalism.” The Shankill is one of the larger working class loyalist

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118 Ibid., 8
communities in Belfast, located directly behind the concrete wall along the Falls Road. Despite the similar experiences that both the Falls and the Shankill communities went through during the conflict, there are clear physical and mental divides between the two communities. Walking up the Shankill, there are strong splashes of loyalism evident in all directions. The curbstones and flag poles are painted with union jack colors. Red, white, and blue are seen all over the Shankill area, as the colors featured prominently in the loyalist communities as opposed to republican communities. “I have fond memories of curbstone parties. When Diana got married, we had a big block party. It was a really big community thing,” with bond fires, painting, and a celebration of community spirit.119 (See Appendix B: Figure 3-19) While the beginning of the Shankill is mostly a residential neighborhood, further up the road there are several businesses and service centers. As opposed to the Falls Road republicans that used graffiti splashes as political messages, the Shankill graffiti is dominated by a discourse between the multiple loyalist paramilitaries in an effort to stake out their walls and territory. One wall reads, “Anyone caught defacing loyalists murals will be severely dealt with.” (See Appendix B: Figure 3-20) The paramilitary story is continued throughout the loyalist murals that are displayed all over the Shankill, especially on the outer facing walls of houses. Many of the murals are dedicated to fallen “soldiers” of their campaign. The images are both shocking and intimidating of men dressed in combat black with balaclavas and armed with guns, threatening passers-by. In contrast to republican murals, the loyalist murals still have heavy elements of violence as almost all figures are armed. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-21) The most famous image from the Shankill

119 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
is the UDA sniper, the central mural in a large open square containing half a dozen other homages to the loyalist experience. The sniper was painted to appear as if his gun is following the visitor as he/she walks through the courtyard. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-22) Mixed in with the more violent murals are a few murals depicting the important milestones in Protestant loyalism, including the siege of Derry, the victory of William of Orange over King James, and Queen Elizabeth’s portrait. The violence along the walls portrays how the neighborhood of Shankill views its story. It creates a whole different atmosphere when experiencing the area. This community understanding is intimately connected with how visitors to the area are affected. One day a visitor from Scotland stopped me on the main street in the Shankill to ask me about the area. When he found out I was American, he was relieved to confide in me about how uncomfortable he felt being a Catholic in the area, unsure of his safety.

As the neighborhood continues past the main courtyard of murals where tourists are brought to “understand” the Shankill, the culture and identity of the area is evident in the many displays of loyalism that continue throughout the area. While conflict reconstruction money has been poured into the Shankill, the neighborhood still has the appearance of a working class run down community with abandoned industrial areas, run down storefronts, and boarded up houses. Compared to its state during the conflict, the present Shankill looks well developed. The area was frequently bombed by IRA attacks throughout the conflict. Bombs meant for loyalist paramilitaries often took unintended victims like Saturday morning shoppers, school children, and football fans. The Shankill has also been ravaged with the sparks from loyalist paramilitary feuds. Killings and attacks within the community would also be
frequent as the UDA, UVF, and Ulster Fighting Force (UFF) vied for territory to hold onto. This violence left many of the public areas destroyed, not only physically but emotionally, creating an atmosphere of tension. The Shankill residents were consistently forced to continue and rebuild.

Towards the center of the Shankill Road lies a large park set off from the street. This area contains graves from generations upon generations of Shankill residents, some stones dating from the plague as well as World War I and II. In the center of this garden is the statue of Queen Victoria, a statue that resonates with many of the residents of the Shankill. The park, while seemingly unkempt, is noted as a place of pride among residents, who connect with being a part of the long history of the Shankill.

The heart of the Shankill community is set back from the “peace wall,” unlike the community built along the Falls Road. Walking towards the wall, away from the center of the neighborhood, there are mostly small residences, but very little activity, unlike the bustling main street of the community. Most of the houses along the wall are abandoned, too dangerous to live in for even the most desperate Protestant families.

On the Shankill, the grimmest sight of all was the peace line at Cupar Street. In one stretch of row houses, every roof had caved in, so as you stared at the row from a distance, it looked comical…Yet those peculiar structures were of the utmost significance to Belfast, to Northern Ireland, to the United Kingdom, and above all, to the people of Clonard and the Shankill. Those deformities were the brick portion of the peace line, all the stood between gunmen of one side and gunmen of the other.120

120 John Conroy. *Belfast Diary: War as a Way of Life.* (Boston: Beacon Press. 1995), 113. Clonard is the section of the Falls community up by the Clonard monastery. The Cupar Street is also close to that area.
There is a quietness in the area. It is strange to find walkers along the wall since residents from either community would never feel safe walking near or through the walls. This pathway would have been targeted by rocks, petrol bombs, and republican paramilitaries. No longer just concrete, the wall is now covered in messages from visitors all over the world, hoping for peace and writing memories about victims and loved ones. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-23) Yet the wall was never meant to be a physical “blog” for conflict sympathizers, but a way to control two hostile neighborhoods. The Shankill was also designed similarly to the Falls, where it could be sectioned off at any time that the British army designated. The aerial views of both communities look like animal pens, fenced in along all sides by some sort of control be it the wall or a base. Up close, the wall is an immense, concrete structure, about twenty to thirty feet and then topped with green fencing and barbed wire. It has become a permanent fixture for both communities, and will continue to be for a long time to come. The signatures along the wall do not seem to comprehend the immensity and the meaning of such a barrier among the two communities.

**Ardoyne: The Fish Bowl**

One of the neighbors to the north of the Shankill is the Ardoyne, a small republican enclave in North Belfast surrounded by loyalist neighborhoods. The area has been enclosed upon itself, through inner and outer forces. Despite its size, Ardoyne was one of the most violent neighborhoods throughout the conflict.

Ardoyne was like Noah’s Ark because you always had to travel around in pairs…The district was so demonized, marginalized, and hemmed in. The area was very tightly defined and the boundaries ran from the Cliftonville Road, by Alliance Avenue, Ardoyne Road, Crumlin Road, and down to the
Bone on the Oldpark Road…Cliftonville Road became known as ‘murder mile.’\textsuperscript{121}

It is most commonly associated with the trouble over Holy Cross school, in which Catholic elementary school students were victimized because their route to school was through a neighboring loyalist area. The Ardoyne is a predominately Catholic, republican, and nationalist area, surrounded by loyalist enclaves. While the housing type is now mixed, throughout most of the conflict the area was made up of the working class poor who lived in public sector housing. The Falls is a place for tourists to go and see the republican side of the conflict, but no outsiders would ever come to visit Ardoyne, including most residents of Belfast. Sometimes it is even hard to get a taxi to drive there.

A long time resident of Ardoyne described the area as such: “The Ardoyne was designed like a fish bowl. The British army established a base at the top of the hill with huge watch towers and cameras to watch over all of us below.”\textsuperscript{122} The army base on top of the hill could be seen from neighboring areas of the Ardoyne. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-24) The base was high above the area of North Belfast, with a children’s playground now in front of it. The hill then steeply drops into a valley where the residential area of Ardoyne starts. The houses then rise up the other side of the hill, where the opposite hill top is capped by the Holy Cross church, school, and several shops for locals. The houses are lined up in horizontal rows, which gave the British army an easy way to observe any action that was occurring in the streets.

Between rows of houses there were small hidden alleyways, which IRA members

\textsuperscript{121} Ardoyne Commemoration Project. \textit{Ardoyne: The Untold Truth}. (Belfast: Beyond the Pale. 2002), 198.
\textsuperscript{122} Interview 24 on July 11, 2007.
described as being perfect for the republican movement.\textsuperscript{123} “This was the ‘water’ in which the ‘fish flowed.’ It made Ardoyne, if briefly, uncontrollable and uncontainable.”\textsuperscript{124} There were two entrances to the Ardoyne during the conflict, one at the top of the hill and one towards the side. These entrances were constantly monitored by security force check points. Many times the area was completely sealed off, due to a supposed “security risk.”

Whole streets would be cut off and any movement in or out of the area was prevented…These became the sights and sounds ingrained on people’s memories: armed British soldiers, often in full riot gear, spread in lines from path to path down the narrow streets of Ardoyne, moving slowly and ominously forward, the roar of armoured vehicles and the shouts of barked orders in the middle of the night as another raid began.\textsuperscript{125}

There is a wall all along the north side of the Ardoyne separating the nationalist community from the loyalist community of Glenbryn.\textsuperscript{126} Similar to the Shankill-Falls divide, this wall has a heavy presence, made of steel and wiring fencing, but does not prevent stones, bricks, and sticks from flying over the wall, many of which are still thrown over.

With the wall there, a person could cross into the loyalist counterpart of the Ardoyne, since the two communities are so close. The area of Glenbryn has similar style housing to its republican counter part, almost all are public sector or rented. The houses surround an empty lot, once housing for the formerly large community of Glenbryn, now used for bond fires and mayhem. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-25) The community is a much smaller one than the republican Ardoyne across the wall. The

\textsuperscript{123} Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
\textsuperscript{124} Ardoyne Commemoration Project. \textit{Ardoyne: The Untold Truth}. (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications. 2002), 49
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{126} The area is now referred to as the Upper Ardoyne, yet during the conflict was called Glenbryn. Since the area was referred to as Glenbryn during the conflict, I have chosen to also refer to the area as Glenbryn.
UDA controlled area has painted red, white, and blue curbstones and flags, except in the recently redeveloped areas where the city has put fancy lamp posts and hanging flower pots. This area has very few murals and almost no shops for the residents. Both communities are cut off islands in North Belfast.

Republican Ardoyne surprisingly has very few displays of tricolors, and this lack of green, orange, and white has been present throughout the conflict. A resident even said there are more tri-colored flags that fly today than there would’ve been in the 1970s. There are several murals along the outer house walls throughout the Ardoyne. Many of these murals within the residential areas are hidden from view, but contain small memorials or prayer gardens, signaling that their messages are more for the residents than anyone else. The visible murals depict the neighborhood’s connection with Irish civil rights movements, Celtic mythology, and Gaelic sports. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-26) While there are now strong cultural messages through this form of artwork, the murals, up until fifteen years ago, used to look quite similar to those that now dawn the walls of loyalist neighborhoods. Graffiti is also quite prominent throughout the neighborhood, a common form of expression for most of Ardoyne’s youth.

There is very little in the way of services or public spaces. The top of Ardoyne contains its main grocery store, bakery, and pharmacy. The lower part of Ardoyne contains some bookies, small conveniences stores, and shops as well as a beaten looking community center containing the community’s health services.

There was no entirely safe route through Catholics areas from Ardoyne into the city centre. One outcome was that many people seldom (if ever) went out

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128 Bookies are local betting establishments.
of the district. People shopped, socialized, and essentially lived in what was a relatively small and overcrowded area…People were acutely aware of when and where it was more or less dangerous to be…Fear was never very far away.129

The streets are the main place for adults to socialize and converse, and for the children to play football or tag. As a small island in the middle of loyalist communities, the Ardoyne continued to try and survive as the names of victims continued to pile up within their community.

**Derry or Londonderry: the Divided City**

Both visitors to the country of Northern Ireland, and even some residents, think that there are two cities, one named Derry and one named Londonderry. Even though the terms Londonderry and Derry both refer to the same city, this geographic separation may just as well be the case when describing the communities that consider themselves residents of Derry as opposed to residents of Londonderry.

Coming into the city from Northern Ireland, L/Derry is approached through Waterside, or the East Bank.130 It is the side not often considered when discussing the city of L/Derry, and this neglect has lead to great tension between the two halves. The Waterside contains mostly residential areas, with a rundown shopping district and the abandoned remnants of a former military barracks. Much of the area is rundown and has been for years of neglect. The few pubs that survive on the Waterside are intimately associated with their own paramilitary following. The main police station for the city is found on this side because the republican communities

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129 Ardoyne Commemoration Project. *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth.* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications. 2002), 197-8
130 The two sides of the city, the Waterside and Cityside, are now commonly referred to as the East and West Bank respectfully. These terms not only refer to the division by the River Foyle, but are also a clear reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, of which the republican community actively identifies with the Palestinians and the loyalists the Israelis.
like the Bogside and Creggan pushed them out of the Cityside, also known as the West Bank. There are some positive areas of improvement in the Waterside like St. Columb’s Park, which includes a conflict transformation center, as well as the Waterside Theatre. The Waterside, despite its cohesive appearance from the Cityside, is made up of small ethnic neighborhoods that all boarder each other. To an untrained eye, there might be no difference between one side of a street to the other, but to the residents of the Waterside, and of L/Derry, there are sharp divisions among the small communities. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-27)

Once farm land, the Waterside has over the years of the conflict become a place for people from the Cityside to flee from the violence. The Waterside is made up of mostly Protestant communities pushed out by real or perceived threats from the Cityside. In recent years, more and more Catholics have moved to the area, creating new dynamics between opposing enclaves. Protestants are now fleeing up the hill into the surrounding countryside. Newly developed housing estates have now been claimed as loyalist or nationalist with the ceremonial hanging of a union jack flag before families even move into the houses. The Waterside neighborhoods are a mix of working class and middle class families, public and private housing. While some of the neighborhoods are mixed, the majority of the communities are segregated. These segregations are marked by painted curbstones, telephone poles, and flags. There are some murals scattered around the area, but most are found in the loyalist neighborhoods. These murals depict the local paramilitary power, the UDA, as well
as important historical moments including the Apprentice Boys and US presidents connected with the Protestant movement.\textsuperscript{131} (See Appendix B: Figure 3-28)

The Waterside did not play an important part in the conflict in L/Derry, as most of the violence occurred on the Cityside. Yet the Waterside is now part of the remaining story of the conflict, where low intensity violence continues to play a large part in the daily lives of the citizens of L/Derry, and the community of the Waterside is now the group that feels alienated and silenced.

\textbf{City Center: Within the Walls}

The city of L/Derry is home to the famous walls of Ulster. The huge stone walls surrounding the original city center were built to protect the city after it was conquered by the Protestants through the Ulster plantation. While L/Derry’s center has expanded outside the walls, the massive stone structure still remains a major defining feature of the city’s landscape and culture. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-29) Today, the walls are used as a tourist attraction to Northern Ireland’s second largest city, but throughout the conflict the walls were a source of tension and oppression. A tour of the walls would start at the Guild Hall, the building that housed the city council for most of the conflict’s history. The Guild Hall has also been the site of many sit-in protests and marches as it is a symbolic source of power. At several points the building was seized as a stand off between Catholics demanding housing and the Protestant dominated government.\textsuperscript{132} The building, from the outside, does not look like a traditional government office. Its façade is covered in dark red brick.

\textsuperscript{131} The Apprentice Boys is a private, Protestant order much like the Orange Order that originated in L/Derry. It is in commemoration of the 13 apprentice boys that closed the walls of L/Derry to prevent King James and his army from coming in. This lead to the victory of William of Orange who eventually took over the English throne. Several US presidents are connected with the Ulster-Scots Protestant movement, including George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt.

\textsuperscript{132} Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
and decorated with ornate carvings, gothic high windows, and a distinctive clock tower. The building looks more like a church than a city council building, echoing the complex religious connections that L/Derry has been built on. Directly across from the Guild Hall is a row of cannons, either original or replicas of the cannons used during the siege of L/Derry. Underneath the cannons on the wall, there is a new addition to the structure: a memorial plaque to all the victims of the conflict. Placed by a former Sinn Fein mayor, the plaque was designed to be a “neutral” commemoration to start the healing of the city, but like everything else from the conflict, nothing can be “neutral.”

Continuing along the wall, the structure is surrounded by the backs of buildings as the life has outgrown the confining space inside the walls. There are iron fences that can close off traffic along the walls at any given point. In coming along the stretch of wall by Butcher’s Gate, one of the several entrances in and out of the walled city center, residents connect the space with many memories from significant events during the conflict, as it leads directly down to the Catholic enclaves. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-30) The walls used to be home to a large military base, facing the Bogside and the hill leading up to the Creggan, both neighborhoods associated with strong republican and nationalist movements. The military base was a large steel structure with high fortifying walls and several camera towers to observe all the occurrences around the city. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-31) Along the wall in front of the base, soldiers used to be on watch, walking back and forth along the wall. To the far left, the corner of the wall is called “Sniper’s Corner” because it was where the sniper used to hang out and shoot at “republican targets” in the Bogside, but several

133 Interview 4 on November 22, 2006.
times the so called republicans would be young children. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-32) Also along this stretch of wall was the famous statue of the Rev. George Walker, who was the governor of the city during the siege. His statue towered twenty seven meters over the surrounding area, pointing his finger at the lowly Catholics below.\(^\text{134}\) It was blown up by the IRA in the 1970s, in such a way that Rev. Walker spiraled down on himself.\(^\text{135}\)

Continuing along past “Sniper’s Corner,” the wall is sandwiched between the military base and the Fountain, the last remaining loyalist enclave on the Cityside. From the wall, people can see into the Fountain area, almost like looking down into a fishbowl. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-33) The Fountain can be entered from four different places, one of which is a locked gate by the Bishop’s Gate along the wall. From the far corner along the Fountain estate, there is a clear view of the Waterside and the surrounding fields. Down below there are glimpses of the run down shirt factory that used to be a major economic hub for the surrounding neighborhoods. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-34) Past the Fountain towards Ferryquay’s Gate, there is the old St. Columb’s Cathedral, the Protestant church built by the Ulster planters ironically from the stones of the former Catholic church that they tore down.\(^\text{136}\) The church is the last historical marker as the walk along the Ulster wall is now incorporated in the new developments going on in the city, including a shopping mall, several restaurants, and the Millennium Forum, a new arts and theater initiative.

\(^{135}\) Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
\(^{136}\) Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
Stepping down from the wall, there are four main streets within the walled city center. The streets branch from the four main gates of the walls: Ferryquay Gate, Bishop’s Gate, Shipquay, and Butcher’s Gate. The gates, once used to close off the city center from Catholics in the 1800s, are now just pathways between the walled center and the neighborhoods just outside. The streets intersect in a cross that is considered the “center” of the city: the Diamond. \(^{137}\) The Diamond is surrounded by shops, housed in buildings clearly leftover from its former connection with the British Empire. At the center of the Diamond lies a war memorial to the men who gave their lives during World War I and II. \(^{138}\) This memorial frequently has a wreath of poppies placed in front of it, but is only a memorial for the Protestant population. There are several other historically significant buildings in the general area of the Diamond. One of them is the Apprentice Boys lodge. This lodge is located down a side street right along the walkway facing the Bogside. The lodge has a memorial to the thirteenth original apprentice boys. Any man throughout the world who chooses to be a member of the order must come to this lodge in order to officially be a part of the order. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-35) Another historic section in the Diamond area is the Craft Village. Designed to be a central location for socializing in L/Derry by a local community activist, the space has been treated with apprehension by the community because of the feeling of confinement that visitors get. St. Columb’s Cathedral is located over by the Fountain side of the Ulster walls. Not only was St.

\(^{137}\) City centers created by the British in Ulster were called the Diamond, and considered central open spaces. Field Notes L/Derry 2007.

\(^{138}\) The soldiers supplied by Northern Ireland to the British Empire during both World War I and II were mostly Protestant soldiers because the Catholic Northern Irish did not support the war as the Republic of Ireland did not, and abstained from supporting it. Therefore all World War I and II memorials throughout the island are considered to be associated with Protestantism, and have become sectarian in the North.
Columb’s built with stones from the original Catholic church of the area, but the Cathedral, in true English Protestant fashion, is a shrine to military and war victories of past generations, especially to the apprentice boys. All of these monuments have connotations, positive or negative, to the residents of L/Derry, but one thing they all have in common is how the history of these spaces still resonates with their uses and understandings in L/Derry today.

**The Fountain: Loyalism’s Last Stand**

The Fountain is a small community of approximately 200 families that lies right outside the walls of L/Derry. Once part of a large working class Protestant community on the Cityside, it is the last remaining Protestant community left on the nationalist West Bank. Along with this downsize in community, the Fountain neighborhood is now a walled-in area. The current population is made up of the very young and the very old. Originally, the Fountain was filled with hundreds of families, especially young ones, but now the population is made up of those who chose not to or didn’t have the means to flee to the Waterside during the initial Protestant flight. Along several sides of the Fountain, there are thirty foot steel fences, creating a cage like setting within the area. One of the four entrances is through a gated pathway under the wall that gets locked, even today, at night. Upon entering the Fountain through the gate, anyone’s first glance will acknowledge that this isn’t the average neighborhood. The estate is all public sector housing, and until a recent redevelopment was cramped and seemingly unlivable. During the conflict, there used to be large flats, housing up to 600 families along with rows of cramped brownstones.\(^{139}\) The houses along the outer edges of the estate are protected with

\(^{139}\) Interview 28 on July 17, 2007.
extra fencing over the walkways and windows. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-36) The walls are still frequently covered with paint splatters and burn marks from things being thrown over the walls.

As the estate continues, there are strong visible ties to its loyalist tradition. Curbstones are all painted red, white, and blue as well as telephone polls, electrical boxes and parking posts. There are several murals within the Fountain, mostly related to historical events of the Protestant movement in Ulster. Previously these murals would all have been UDA murals, but the topic has changed as the paramilitary has less presence. The one remaining paramilitary mural is the red hand of Ulster, the traditional sign of the UDA, along the wall of the Cathedral Youth Club, a well known recreation and community center for the people of the Fountain. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-37) There is also a small school behind the youth club. Children from the Fountain are either schooled there or bused across the river to a school with a Protestant majority. Within the Fountain, there is the remnant of an old shirt factory, once a major employer of the Fountain, Bogside, Brandywell, and Creggan residents. The abandoned warehouse is now home to tattered UDA flags. There are two other entrances to the city center from the Fountain as the neighborhood is in the center of the city. Yet people rarely enter or exit in and out of the Fountain into the city center. It is its own community, closed off from the rest of L/Derry.

**The Bogside: The Real Heart of Republicanism**

The area of the Bogside is synonymous throughout the island and the world with a strong republican, nationalist, and Catholic community. The events that occurred in the Bogside during the late 1960s and early 1970s can be considered
some of the defining moments of the conflict, not just for the city of L/Derry but for the rest of the country. Looking down on the Bogside from the top of the Ulster plantation walls, people can get a clear glimpse of a community truly designed by the conflict. While the physical make up of the community has changed drastically through recent redevelopment, the effects of history are still evident in creating what the Bogside is today.

The Bogside was originally created in the siege of L/Derry when all of the Catholics were forced outside of the city walls into what was then a bog. The community took up residence there, and through subsequent years of blatant gerrymandering was confined to this area outside the city center through blatant gerrymandering. The neighborhood of the Bogside became an overcrowded residence made up of a large confined Catholic voting block. The housing in the area became cramped and overcrowded, unfit for any living situation. “The 1960s and 70s was a redevelopment of the housing to upgrade toilets which were outside at the time. There were sometimes 16 people living in a house designed to fit 4.”

In the late 1960s, housing in the Bogside stretched up the hill almost to the Ulster wall. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-38) Due to increased pressure by residents for better housing situations, the Housing Executive of the area built huge flats, the most well known being the Rossville Flats. Similar to what occurred in Divis Tower in Belfast, the residence of Rossville became the headquarters for republican activity, and the local IRA division took over the top floor. Upon looking at the Bogside from atop the Ulster plantation wall, the physical layout of the Bogside appears to be organized by security concerns. All the streets are lined up so the military bases from atop the wall

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or the opposing hill could look down the streets for “potential republican activity.”

Many of the houses could be looked into as well. The streets are narrow enough to be quartered off by RUC or army tanks parked in front of them, and tanks were frequently seen driving through the streets and over fields after the initiation of Operation Motorman.141

The street closest to the hill leading up to the Ulster wall is called the “People’s Gallery,” and it seems to be the community’s response to all that is represented by the walls. There are ten brightly colored murals spanning the facades of the houses. These murals were painted by the now world renowned Bogside Artists and depict the major events that the Bogside community went through including Bloody Sunday, the hunger strikers, Operation Motorman, and the Battle of the Bogside.142 The murals are joined by a granite monument to the hunger strikers, flanked by the infamous, “You Are Now Entering Free Derry” wall.143 (See Appendix B: Figure 3-39, 40, 41) Also along this street is where the Battle of the Bogside occurred as well as the killings during Bloody Sunday. Glenfada Park, now home to the Bloody Sunday Museum, was the residential courtyard where four of the men killed during Bloody Sunday were chased into and shot. While the area’s murals are mostly embodied in the work that the Bogside artists have produced, there are touches of political graffiti and tricolors throughout the area. The curbstones are

142 See Appendix A for descriptions of events.
143 The Free Derry wall is the last remaining remnant of the row of houses that used to exist behind it. The Free Derry wall is a symbol of the autonomy that the area tried to maintain from British and Stormont control. It was a place for community meetings, protests, and still remains an important part of the community. See Appendix A for an understanding of Free Derry.
painted in green, white, and orange and there are flags flown representing the “Irish Free State,” the Basque cause, the Starry Plough, and the Palestinian Liberation Movement. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-42) The roof tops facing the wall are spray painted with RIRA territory or CIRA territory declaration. One entrance to the Bogside, down from Butcher’s Gate, has a spray painted message: “RUC Keep Out, INLA Territory.” Due to the history of the community with the British army and the RUC, the police are still unwilling and uninvited into the Bogside, and will only come into the area if absolutely necessary.

The houses in the area have traditionally housed mostly working class families, and almost all the housing in the area was public sector housing until recently when the Housing Executive offered some individuals the opportunity to buy their own house. Many of the residents have lived in the Bogside all their lives, having connections to the area going back generations, making the history of the area quite embedded in the space. Similar to the construction of the Ardoyne, there are small alleyways between the compact rows of houses. These dark alleyways, covered in graffiti and trash were once safe havens for much of the IRA activity that went on in the area.

“Public” Spaces
The Bogside neighborhood flows up the hill to the Creggan, another neighborhood that has a strong republican history. In between these two neighborhoods, are two important spaces within the history of the city: the Derry City

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144 RIRA is the Real IRA and CIRA is the Continuity IRA. These are factions of the original IRA, and these paramilitaries remain active in their fight against “the occupation.” See Appendix A.
football stadium and the cemetery. The football stadium is home to the Derry City football team. This team is a beloved part of the city’s identity, although its following is mostly Catholic and nationalist. Because the football field is located in between the Creggan and Bogside, it is in a strongly nationalist area that does not respond well to police presence. Therefore the Derry City team is the only team in Western Europe to not have an official police presence at its games due to the security risk. The City stadium is completely community run. It is a modest size stadium without much seating or covering, but on game nights the atmosphere of the stadium and the city is transformed with excitement.

The other landmark space to the city is the cemetery. This cemetery is a public cemetery where both Catholics and Protestants alike are buried side by side. The cemetery is built on a large hill. Walking up the hill through the graves is like walking through a history book of the city of L/Derry. There are graves dating back generations to all different walks of life. Coming to the top of the hill, the history of the conflict can be unveiled in the dark engraved stones. While the lower half of the hill was dominated by Protestant graves with names like Robert, Smith, and Stewart. The top half of the hill is clearly a space where Catholics have taken over. There is a row of Celtic crosses, all dedicated to the “servicemen” of the IRA who lost their lives during the conflict. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-43) Further back, the INLA has a similar memorial with a statue of an armed and uniformed “solider”

145 The term Derry is being used here because the football team is called Derry City and has no affiliation with the term Londonderry.
146 Field Notes, L/Derry 2007.
147 There is a strong culture surrounding the identity of names. Most people judge a person’s identity based on their name as either Catholic or Protestant before the fact is even confirmed. Names like Liam, Patrick, or Catherine would be Catholic. Henry, James, or Elizabeth would be Protestant.
standing over the graves. (See Appendix B: Figure 3-44) These ethnic markers have stirred up tension in a space that was originally designated as public and “neutral.” Walking through the rows and rows of graves, there are names that pop out from the black stone that can be recognized as victims of Bloody Sunday, as a child killed by plastic bullets, or even as a member of the B-Specials killed in service. Catholic graves tend to be more ornate with decorations, flowers, and personal mementos placed in front of the marker. They also can frequently be recognized by their Celtic crosses and grave stones written in Irish. Protestants in L/Derry are now reluctant to bury their loved ones in a space that they view marked with sectarianism and dominated by expressions of paramilitary culture. Protestants who already have family members there avoid visiting their graves for fear of getting attacked or harassed. “Public” cemeteries, throughout the rest of Northern Ireland, are typically considered a space where sectarian divisions can be laid to rest, possibly as close to a neutral zone as possible. Yet in L/Derry, the space has been marked with an identity through the remembering, honoring, and claiming of victimhood.

**The Creggan: Where the Marches Start**

The Creggan neighborhood is often left out on tours of the city because the rich history of the Bogside consumes people’s attention. Yet this large nationalist community that tops the hill over the Bogside plays an important part in telling the story of the republican movement in L/Derry. Originally the Creggan was built to accommodate the overcrowding of Catholics down in the Bogside. In walking through the Creggan, the estate is much more spread out than its Bogside neighbor. The area is still quite rundown despite the new housing redevelopments being done.

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148 B-Specials were a branch of the British army specifically for Northern Ireland, which was disbanded in 1970 and recreated into the UDR.
Walking through the main throughway in the Creggan, there are several shops, community groups, and a youth athletic club, designed to keep the local kids out of paramilitary activity. Also in the area is the local shopping mall, as well as several industrial complexes, and the local schools. While these buildings make up the estate now, there also used to be two military bases that topped the hill of L/Derry. “It was a hastily constructed fortress of corrugated metal, surrounded by miles of jagged, rusting barbed wire, interspersed with pillbox type sangars, where young Brit’s eyes scanned hungrily.” 149 These bases were the central source of manpower for Operation Motorman on the Cityside of L/Derry. Tanks roamed over football pitches and residential streets declaring the neighborhood under army authority. Check points were set up by the military as well as the IRA, both designed to “protect the area.” (See Appendix B: Figure 3-45) The community experienced its fair share of intimidation and control from the security forces. “Like most houses in Creggan, the Kyles [name of family in the area] were raided regularly and there was a bucket of water mixed with vinegar permanently outside the front door to counteract the effects of CS gas. Gun battles were a frequent feature in the neighborhood.” 150

There are very few murals in the area, and a small granite monument to the hunger strikers and dead volunteers of the IRA. There are some remnants of tri-colored flags and painted areas, but these are few and far between. More than the physical décor of the area, the Creggan is home to important historical points in the history of the conflict. This is the neighborhood where all of the civil rights marches originated, including the march that occurred on Bloody Sunday. Even today,

150 Ibid., 63
marches in memoriam or in protest start in the Creggan. The Creggan is also home to
the Catholic church where the Bloody Sunday victims and most victims of the
conflict were buried. The church holds strong memories for all residents, each of
whom have at one time gone in to bury a loved one who died from the violence.

The Creggan was home to a large republican, nationalist, and Catholic
majority and including mostly young families during the 1960s and early 1970s.
While the rate of killing was lower in the Creggan than it was in the Bogside, the
residents of the Creggan were alongside those of the Bogside throwing stones.

All the ancient hatred built up into a head of steam. Families lived, raised
children, and died there…The estate became a jungle with a potential threat
around every corner; it could be a bomb in a car, a sniper, a plain old brick in
the head or foul abuse. The place had as many mood swings as a depressive.
One moment, the streets would be clear and eerily quiet – you knew in your
bones there was something, somewhere, going down. Other times it teemed
with activity like a disturbed anthill, everyone and his dog were on the
streets.151

The experiences of the conflict flow through all the streets and houses of the Creggan
just as the tanks drove through their estate. The road from the Free Derry wall starts
in the Bogside and winds its way up to the Creggan, connecting the two prominent
neighborhoods in the creation of a Free Derry city.

**Space and its People**

The spaces of Northern Ireland are diverse in their experiences and their make
up. Some like the Bogside or the Ardoynne are highly manipulated and constructed
urban landscapes. Others like Crossmaglen and the Waterside are created through a
mixture of experience and control. All of these spaces have changed from their
original states during the height of the conflict. Written descriptions, in the end, can’t

2000), 273
do justice to all that is experienced in a physical space, especially one so plagued by violence and conflict. Even through the drastic changes of recent redevelopments, the communities still view their areas and other areas in similar ways. With a greater understanding of the spaces of Northern Ireland, it is now time to appreciate the identities that were formed by and helped to form these places. Despite physical changes to these places, identities are not as easily reconstructed as a row house.
Chapter Four  
*Identity*

While the violence of the conflict in Northern Ireland started in the summer of 1969, the conflict is built upon ethnic identities and cultures that have been established and evolving for centuries, since even before the initial Ulster plantation. There are some scholars who claim there are no important differences between the Irish Catholics and the Ulster Protestants.\(^{152}\) Yet in spending time with people from both the Catholic and the Protestant side of this conflict, it becomes evident that there are distinct differences, and more importantly the people of Northern Ireland insist on these differences. These cultural disparities have drastically effected how the conflict has played out, and to a large extent are the primary cause of the ethnic polarization that exists today even with the current ceasefire. It is important to understand and appreciate the cultural differences that define the two different sides in the three areas of high violence (Crossmaglen, Belfast, and L/Derry) in order to then comprehend how space has transformed each area into its own distinct community.

*“Tiocfaidh Ar La” – “Our Day Will Come”\(^{153}\)*

The Catholic side of the conflict is culturally defined by its connections with the Catholic church and its Irish heritage. The identification with being nationalist and republican, while they defined much of the movement during the conflict, are political aspects to the Catholic dimension. The use of the term nationalism would normally refer to the thoughts individuals have when caring about their identification

\(^{152}\) See *Negotiating Identities* by Anthony Buckley and Mary Catherine Kenney

\(^{153}\) Tiocfaidh Ar La is a commonly used Irish phrase that means “Our day will come.”
with a nation and the actions they take in seeking self determination.\textsuperscript{154} In its usage, both the Protestant and Catholic movements would be considered nationalist.\textsuperscript{155} Republicanism, as it is understood in this context, was also associated with the political movement of the Irish paramilitaries and later the Sinn Fein political party.\textsuperscript{156} Despite the strength of these ideologies, it was the culture of the Catholic movement in Northern Ireland that became the strong and binding force for the success of the political movement both within the communities of Northern Ireland and for the success of the movement internationally.

Catholicism and Protestantism are the most readily differential cultural markers between the two communities. By calling this community “Catholic,” does not mean that its members are strictly religiously Catholic, and in fact many of the activities of the republican movement were condemned by the leadership of the Catholic Church. There is nothing intrinsic to Catholicism that violently opposes the existence of Protestants, as evident in the hundreds of communities across the world where the two religions live together peacefully. However, there are some specific connections to the history of Catholicism within the island of Ireland that have played roles in forming the culture of the Irish movement in the North. Catholicism has long been a persecuted religion in Ireland. From the initial invasion by the King of England in order to civilize the “savage Irish,” Catholicism has been persecuted,

\textsuperscript{156} Republicanism can be understood as the political ideology that believes that a republic is the best form of government. A republic is focused on the rule of law, the rights of citizens, and popular sovereignty.
outlawed, and demonized by the British. During the days that the practice of Catholicism was outlawed, prayer rocks were used to mark where the priests said mass within the secret confines of the woods. Prayer rocks are still considered highly spiritual spots as reminders of past trials. Even if the practice of religion is no longer outlawed, the connection with Catholicism for the Irish people has always been associated with struggle, and this struggle mentality has continued throughout the conflict up to the present.

The other dynamic of Catholicism that has affected the culture of the republican movement is the construction of community loyalty. Catholicism, by design, is very community oriented. Its parish structure, along with the hierarchy of priests, bishops, and the pope, create a very collaborative system both on the local level as well as connecting the Catholic community nationally and internationally. The Irish republican movement has benefited from this unique community-oriented society. Although living in very separate regions of the country, the republican community has always maintained strong connections with each other, unlike their Protestant counterparts. While fractioning and feuding has defined the Protestant paramilitary movement, there was little comparative feuding between the different factions of republicanism, and this feuding never seriously undermined the larger movement. This community-oriented nature has also benefited the republican

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158 Field Notes, Crossmaglen and South Armagh 2006

159 There are several branches of the IRA including the PIRA, RIRA, CIRA, and the INLA. Even though they all came out of the initial Official IRA and its historic Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), there were violent feuds among the branches. These feuds were frequently covered up by the branches of the IRA, and therefore the IRA appeared to be a more unified force comparatively to the loyalist paramilitary movement. For more information see IRA: A History by Tim Pat Coogan or Armed Struggle by Richard English.
movement as it hopes to transform itself during the peace process. There are dozens of different organizations within the republican community that work collaboratively across geographic boundaries, sharing resources, ideas, and funding, granting the movement comparatively more success than its Protestant counterpart.

While Catholicism has been used as the main label throughout the conflict, the group’s connection with its Irish heritage is the identity that has created the strongest cultural base. “My neighbors are haunted by the living, haunted by the dead, haunted by myths and legends and history. The conflict defines their lives. Men and women say they are Catholic, describing not their churchgoing habits but their political beliefs: they are Irish, not British.”160 There are so many aspects about the Irish ethnic heritage that is celebrated visually, mentally, and physically within the Catholic communities of Northern Ireland. Irish traditional music can be heard coming out of different venues at least one if not every night of the week. Murals celebrate the connections with the mythic Cuchulain figure, a hero in ancient Irish legends.161 The Irish language was also revived along the streets of Belfast, L/Derry, and Crossmaglen, sometimes used as a strategic tactic against the security forces. These cultural markers are celebrated and valued regardless of where the Irish are.

One distinct part of the Irish identity that played a vital part in how the conflict became connected with space is the Irish connection to their own land. The stereotypical image of the Irish is a farm family with their own plot of land and little white house with a thatched roof. While the majority of Irish do not live like that, there is a small truth in the stereotype. The Irish are intimately attached with

161 See Appendix A.
property. This attachment is so pronounced that the people on the island as a whole refuse to live in apartments. One man involved in the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland described it as, “Asking a person to live in a second floor flat is like a death sentence. I can’t get anyone to move in there. People want their wee gardens.”

Rossville Flats and Dove Gardens in L/Derry, and Divis Tower in Belfast were all horrific failures because they were apartment structures. From the initial Ulster plan to the development of the Rossville Flats, the control over land was taken away from the Irish. They were forced off farms, out of houses, and into cramped apartments, a process which represented the ultimate loss of control. This last stage of loss of control created atmospheres of mass chaos that the experience fed into the growing republican violence. By the time the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was ready to demolish or restructure the flats, the buildings were all but empty. Rossville Flats, for example, could house up to 700 families. “These were a complete failure. There was probably only 100 people left in Rossville by the time we were ready to demolish it.”

This cultural desire for land and for a house played a role in the development of the Irish relationship with the British as they controlled, manipulated, and constructed spaces in Northern Ireland.

“A Protestant Nation for a Protestant People”

As the term “Catholic” is used as the most obvious ethnic marker between the two groups, so too is the term “Protestant.” The tenants upheld by the Protestant church do not directly effect the Protestant movement within Northern Ireland. In

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164 A commonly referred to quote from Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and his own Free Presbyterian Church.
fact, there are many different branches of Protestantism that people follow including Presbyterianism, Calvinism, and Ian Paisley’s Free Presbyterian church. One quality of Protestantism that is attributed to the formation of the Protestant movement is its focus on individualism. From its initial break with Catholicism, Protestantism has always promoted an individual’s relationship with God and therefore a sense of individual responsibility. Within the framework of individualism as promoted through the greater network of the religion, the Protestant movement in Northern Ireland has multiple factions and identities. Not only are there multiple allegiances within the Protestant community, but some consider themselves loyalists, some call themselves unionists, some believe themselves to be British, some Ulster-Scots. There are also several different branches of the loyalist paramilitaries like the UDA, UVF, UFF, and Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). This trait of individualism created very separate enclaves of Protestant groups. Unlike the Catholic community’s relatively strong national network, the Protestant community can be generalized as having separate experiences from their locations in L/Derry or in Belfast, and there was not always that broader sympathetic connection that might be heard within the Catholic communities.

Beyond the ethnic marker of “being Protestant,” there is a very deep cultural story behind the understandings of loyalism, unionism, and Ulster-Scots and their experiences of space. Since the initial plantation, the Ulster Scots struggled to maintain control over the area as the native Irish tried to reclaim the land from a foreign crown. From this the Protestant community has been defined as having a
“siege mentality.”165 This mentality is the belief that the group is constantly under attack or the threat of attack. Therefore Protestants have always felt the need to defend themselves not only from the powerful “Holy Roman empire,” but also from the dominant cultural Irish nation that wants to persecute them.166 For example, in response to a question about what is the base for the conflict in Northern Ireland, a Protestant man responds,

Well in my opinion the Church of Rome is behind it and their greed for power – that’s what I would have thought started it all. Though they would say they weren’t backing the IRA, I think that you would find if you study it that they do back the IRA in Northern Ireland, very much and they won’t condemn them… I think if you follow all through the world where there’s troubles, you’ll always find a Roman Catholic priest coming up somewhere.167

The Protestant community has constantly feared being absorbed into the Republic and then becoming extinct. “The language of loyalism is a language of fear of betrayal.”168 This fear is constantly a part of the rhetoric of the Protestant community, and has motivated the violence throughout the conflict. Because of the “siege mentality,” the group has created a connection between the land that they control and the power that they maintain within the country. The more land they have the more powerful they are, and therefore the greater their security is. Since the initial plantation, the success and strength of the movement has been directly connected with the Protestants’ ability to control and maintain their influence over the land and by extension pushing the Irish off the land. In translation to the modern

166 The Catholic community is consistently referred to as the “Roman empire” in reference to the pope in Rome.
dilemma, Protestants still connect their power and survival within the country to land control. This plays out in interesting and powerful ways for the development of the Protestant movement.

**Bandit Country: Cross**

On official maps and lists, the town is called Crossmaglen, but residents of the area call it “Cross.” Upon arrival, visitors quickly realize they are labeled as outsiders, and they are being watched. The town is made up of a small number of families that can date their presence in Cross to generations before the partition of Ireland. “History resonates with the people, whether they admit it or not, and it really changes how they view themselves.” One woman, although she had lived there for forty years with her husband, said, “Oh no, I am not from Cross.” This is how serious connections to the area are taken. It is a closely knit community where outsiders are readily labeled by their distinguishing clothes, accents, or mannerisms. Outsiders are not only labeled, but are watched and questioned as visitors to this town would’ve been treated with suspicion as no one came to the heart of “Bandit Country” during the conflict. The people of Cross, because of their experiences, are not lacking in strength or confidence. During my brief time in Cross, I was pulled aside on street corners, and called at from cars. People asked me why I was reading in the square earlier or why I was reading “that” newspaper. It becomes quite clear to any visitor of Crossmaglen that the town is still living and breathing the conflict. As the

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169 The term “Bandit Country” became widely used to refer to the South Armagh region after the publication of Toby Harden’s book *Bandit Country*. While many people still use it to refer to the region, the locals find great offence to its connotations and didn’t appreciate his book. Field Notes, Crossmaglen 2007.


172 Field Notes, Crossmaglen 2007.
community that was forced to grow under the shadow of an army base, Cross had its fair share of “defects” because of the experience.

The presence of the British army base along with the constant helicopters, tanks, and general disruptions from the security forces changed the small farming town of Crossmaglen into a hardened fighting community. The basic way of life was altered in ways that eventually became normality for the residents of Cross. One man who has lived in the area his whole life described how he arranged his house, which was located near the base.

It became a part of your life. I arranged my daughters’ room so that the beds were away from the window in case there was shooting. My wife and I had a plan with what to do when the shooting started at night. They were to get on the floor and we had a knock so that they would know it was safe to let us in the room. Sometimes a rocket landed in your garden.\(^\text{173}\)

The people most affected were those that lived right next to the army base in the center of town. Not only did they deal with the presence of the base and its helicopter and tank visits, but they also had to endure constant IRA attacks on the base. One man said, “I remember the first time the helicopter came past the house, and I remember saying to myself ‘Oh it will come back.’ Sometimes it would be 30-40 times a day – even now I still wake up at night and think I hear it. The sound never leaves you.”\(^\text{174}\) Some families chose not to send their children to school because of a check point established right outside the entrance way. Check points in the town were quite frequent, disturbing the flow of people’s everyday lives, and continued right up until the first cease fire in 1994. “There were three types of check points. The RUC which was a very formal interrogation. The army, which was a very rough

\(^{173}\) Interview 15 on July 4, 2007
\(^{174}\) Interview 11 on July 2, 2007.
stop, and the UDR where you would be scared you wouldn’t make it out alive.”

Frequently, the town was completely shut off from the outside, where the army would not let anyone in or out of the town. The army would destroy roads to prevent people from moving in and out. “They used to put boulders on the streets and destroy roads between the North and South, but people would just come out with shovels and redo the streets, and go on.” The community was consistently forced to adapt and regroup as everyday actions and interactions were laced with challenges directly placed on them by the presence of the army.

The presence of the British army along with the retaliating IRA created an oppressive and sometimes consuming conflict environment. In attempting to talk to and understand the residents of Crossmaglen, the conflict seemed to best be described through the little details people relayed. The defining sounds of the helicopters as they flew low over the town dozens of times in a week. The smell of mortar fire and petrol bombs as the IRA attacked the base regularly. The sight of not just the base within the town, but other bases up in the hills, with twenty four hour surveillance on the small town. The taste of the communion at the multiple funerals that the townspeople attended at the local church. Finally, the experience of the check points as people were pulled out of their cars, searched, beaten, and held at gun point. When asked why they didn’t move, not one resident of Crossmaglen said that they would leave. People loved the community and the memories of their small town life. “I grew up in the square. It was a wonderful place, a great sense of community. We would

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175 Interview 15 on July 4, 2007.
play in the fields and then knew everyone in the square.”\textsuperscript{177} There was also a sense of defiance by staying. “Couldn’t move out – it was his land [in reference to her husband] and the British were the people that should be moving. I never even thought of it.”\textsuperscript{178}

This unconventional lifestyle created two avenues through which the people of Cross found unity and common cause. The first was through the Crossmaglen Rangers, the local Gaelic football club, and its grassroots civil rights campaign. Upon entering the town, the colors one sees are not green, white, and orange as would be expected by a republican stronghold like Cross. Instead, they were black and yellow, the colors of the Rangers’ team. Everyone in town is a Rangers fan. Asking residents if they like the Rangers is almost as insulting as asking if they are Irish. “Cross Rangers are the most successful team in South Armagh – triumph over adversity, everyone wants to be a Ranger.”\textsuperscript{179} The Rangers team, in fact, have embodied the adversity that the residents of the town have had to go through. The football pitch for the Rangers is located directly behind the square in the center of town. Both fans and players of the club had their fair share of frustration and anger towards the base. Helicopters would land on the fields, even during play time. After a period of time, the children of Cross got so accustomed to helicopter landings that they wouldn’t even raise their heads. No development could be done on the field because it was considered a security threat. Beyond the treatment on the physical space of the club, the players were targets of the army. They would be stopped outside of their houses

\textsuperscript{177} Interview 12 on July 3, 2007.  
\textsuperscript{178} Interview 13 on July 3, 2007.  
\textsuperscript{179} Interview 15 on July 4, 2007.
and interrogated. It was assumed by the British that if you were a Rangers player, you were also a republican.

There has been constant discrimination against members and supporters of the club. Two weeks ago a 22 year old man coming from a shop after buying a bag of chips was stabbed seven times by four people…Three days later four soldiers from the army base were charged with the attack…There were other occasions when up to 20 or 25 soldiers emerged from that undergrowth sending people running in fear. At times young children were looking down the barrels of guns of the British soldiers while matches were in progress.\textsuperscript{180}

There was a rule in the league that if a team was fifteen minutes late for a game they forfeited, but a special exception had to be made for Rangers games where teams could be held coming and going by security forces for hours.\textsuperscript{181} The harassment and attacks of the Rangers team and fans, only made the symbol of the team all that more meaningful to the town, representing something far more powerful than football. It was a triumph.

The team thus represented the troubles that the community lived through. It also became a rallying point, not only for the spirits and hopes of the community, but also for their strength. A civil rights campaign was launched when the British army decided to use the club’s land. “There would be protests around the base – we had to make our presence known. It would be about getting the British out of the community, we would walk around the base. It was important to ignore them and comply but hate them and make them know it.”\textsuperscript{182} The campaign eventually led to a civil suit by the Rangers club to get the land back, supported by the Gaelic Athletic

\textsuperscript{181} Interview 15 on July 4, 2007.
\textsuperscript{182} Interview 13 on July 3, 2007.
Association (GAA). These stands in Cross were small, but nationally recognized.
A local civil rights worker and publican, Paddy Short, was frequently sought after for
interviews by BBC, Fox News, or CNN for his campaigns in the community against
the British army. It was through the outlet of the Rangers that people were able to
rally and assert their strength, as well as socialize as a community. “The Rangers
were what kept this community together and what people could focus on and look
forward to.” The team also symbolized a kind of fierce loyalty to the area. As one
man described, “It is local pride. People always wear Cross colors – you never see
[the jerseys of] English teams like you would see in the South or in the city.” So
the club of the Crossmaglen Rangers became and remains a unifying symbol for the
people of the area. Through the club, people found independence and pride in place.
It was something as small as a football pitch that really allowed the community an
outlet for resistance. The residents could literally draw a line on the field and dig
their heels in, for this was their territory. Thus it was fitting and representative of this
relationship is when the British army finally left this year, the Crossmaglen Rangers
played and won the night before, earning them front page news over the troops
pulling out. “It shouldn’t have been any other way.”

The second avenue that symbolized the unification of Cross, recognizable
from the territorial signs on the way into Crossmaglen, was the republican movement,
most specifically through the IRA. “South Armagh has a different form of

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183 The GAA is the overarching sports association similar to the NCAA for all Gaelic games including
Gaelic football, hurling, and camogie, women’s hurling.
187 Interview 9 on July 1, 2007.
republicanism. Its very family oriented so people were brought up on it. I can remember going to parades and commemorations since I was very small. It was something you had to do.”188 The republican movement was very strong and prevalent in Crossmaglen, both politically and through the paramilitary.189 Most people who I met would consider themselves republicans or could’ve at least identified themselves with the republican movement at one point or another. Despite the mythical place name of “Bandit Country,” not everyone was in the IRA. “People were afraid to come to Cross because they thought people were hanging out of windows with guns.”190 Yet everyone knew someone in the IRA, if not a family member or themselves, then a close friend or neighbor. While the violent tactics of the IRA were controversial, the opinion of the community can be characterized as being supportive of them. “Even if you knew who was in the IRA, you had to side with them.”191

The republican movement was for the most part over shadowed through the bulk of the conflict by the headline grabbing tactics of the IRA. The IRA in Crossmaglen, and throughout South Armagh, was a much different organization than the IRA run in Belfast or L/Derry. Because of the area’s rural and farming landscape, it was a uniquely unbalanced battle. Attacks on helicopters would be from fields or cattle pastures. Guns, bomb materials, and other supplies were hidden in barns or feed sheds. The attacks on the base in Cross were frequently done from a small

188 Interview 14 on July 4, 2007.
189 It is vitally important to make the distinction between being a republican and being in the IRA. Many people follow the political ideology of the republican movement without supporting the goals and methods of the IRA.
190 Interview 13 on July 3, 2007.
191 Interview 13 on July 3, 2007. In reference to the British coming into the pub asking people to name active republicans.
alleyway directly across the square. “The attacks on the base said the IRA rules South Armagh.” In a way, the IRA did. Compared to the other campaigns around the country, the IRA in South Armagh, and especially in Cross, was winning. While the British troops were still present, they were paralyzed in the same way that they paralyzed the community. They couldn’t drive anything in or out of the base. No soldiers could be on the ground without risking a potential IRA attack. Everything, including the cigarettes that the soldiers smoked, had to be transported by helicopter in and out of the base.

For the citizens of Cross in many ways the war is still going on for them. The suspicious nature of the townspeople isn’t just because they are in a small community, but reflects an instinct developed over years of being under attack. A good example to illustrate this community trait is their suspicion of informers and traitors. The British army tried to infiltrate the South Armagh IRA several times, the most famous one being Captain Jack Nirac. Captain Nirac was thought to be a successful candidate because he spoke both Irish and English. Most people in Cross spoke and speak Irish on a regular basis. Yet, every single townsperson seemed to have a story about how he tried to fit in. Unfortunately his obvious identity as an outsider led to his abduction at a local pub, the last place he was ever seen.  

Townspeople prided themselves in their ability to call his bluff, asserting their community’s strength even under occupation. There were all sorts of coping mechanisms the community developed in order to create a distinctive divide between

192 Interview 10 on July 1, 2007.
193 Interview 11 on July 2, 2007.
in-group and out-group membership. Cross has a language that is a distinct mix of both Irish and English known by only residents of the area, which was used to warn people of reporters, potential informers, or suspicious stranger.\textsuperscript{196}

The oft-repeated motto of Cross is ‘Hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing.’ It is strange in a community where everyone knows everyone else’s business. But it is understandable in a place where in the last 10 years three local men have been shot as informers, where the SAS is still believed to be active, and where in the past four years three local men have disappeared without trace.\textsuperscript{197}

The stories of Nirac and others highlight not only the strict divide between insiders and outsiders in the area, but also the paranoia of the community as it tried to protect itself from one of the most powerful armies in the world or anyone who tries to challenge their claim to the space they’ve inhabited for generations.

Unlike Belfast, where the natural development of the urban area has the possibility to change the context of the environment, Crossmaglen is still the small town square with the store facades that have visible damage from past explosions. The recent deconstruction of some of the army base as well as the hill-top bases has changed the area, but that change has not set in with the people, who still hear the helicopters flying over-head. While the famous sniper sign is no longer up, the markings of ‘IRA territory’ are still there. One of the most vehement peace activists that I interviewed was surprisingly very supportive of the IRA sniper signs in the area. “Because then people coming in from the South had to know what we were dealing with and how we had to live.”\textsuperscript{198} It is what they are still dealing with, and struggling to find a way out of.

\textsuperscript{196} Interview 10 on July 1, 2007.
\textsuperscript{198} Interview 13 on July 3, 2007.
Residents of Belfast are never from Belfast. They are from Sandy Row, the Shankill, or the Falls. By laying claim to a specific place identity, they consciously connect themselves with the past and present of that neighborhood. Each area has distinctly different histories that shape its residents, and the people of these areas want to be sure that this is how they are understood. Despite these geographic distinctions, there are common themes and experiences that run throughout the whole city of Belfast as the conflict shared a similar pattern of violence and persecution within the city. One of the most prevalent commonalities is the fear of central spaces like the city center or Queens University. These spaces are not viewed as public or neutral to them, and most residents of all four conflict zones prefer to travel longer distances, away from those areas, in order to shop or socialize. It is the different perspectives on these shared themes that created the distinctly different neighborhoods of Sandy Row, Shankill, the Falls, and Ardoynè that residents identify with.

“I’m from Sandy Row.”

My hostel was right on the corner of Sandy Row across from the notorious Royal pub. When people discovered that, they would stare in shock at the thought of staying in Sandy Row. Many people even offered to escort me home because of the ‘dangerous streets.’ Walking through Sandy Row for the first few times, as with Crossmaglen, you are quite aware of your identity as an outsider. Any identifiable

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199 The Hotel Europa was at one point the most bombed hotel in the world, as it was the place where all of the reporters and dignitaries stayed.
piece of clothing or jewelry could brand an individual as either on the side of the Protestants or the Catholics. One afternoon I got the opportunity to help the Sandy Row Community Group serve tea and snacks during a July 12th celebration, and it was in those few hours of conversation and interaction that I could begin to separate the violent image propagated by outsiders of the community from the true identity of the area.201

Sandy Row is an isolated enclave surrounded by several republican and nationalist areas as well as what is referred to as the “Golden Mile,” a strip of the city that includes many night clubs and restaurants. Because of this, the area developed a strong Protestant “siege mentality” because it is being constructed as a loyalist island among a sea of encroaching communities. One resident compared Sandy Row to a bog, “just left to sink in on itself.”202 The community is very old in comparison to newer developments around it. Many residents can date back their families in Sandy Row to before WWI. In fact, one woman told of the time during WWII when a bomb was accidentally dropped on her house.203 “Since WWII Sandy Row has had a conflict reputation. They don’t know how to get out of it. The men and women here are very hard.”204 The residents of Sandy Row are extremely hardened by their experiences with the conflict. Their daily lives are constructed around habits they developed for survival.

201 The 12th of July is a Protestant celebration of the victory of the Battle of the Boyne between the Protestant challenger, William of Orange, and the Catholic contender, James, for the thrown of England. Because of the polarization of the conflict, the holiday has become very violent and very sectarian. See Appendix A for parading. Interview 20 on July 9, 2007.
202 Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.
203 Interview 16 on July 5, 2007. Several German bombs were dropped on Belfast during WWII.
204 Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.
Most people from the city of Belfast refuse to cut through Sandy Row simply because of its reputation.

If you were a stranger walking down this street a few years ago, it would be assumed you were a ‘Fenian bastard’ and you would have been picked up and dealt with. Many were killed this way. There was one time that a Catholic was up at the bookie’s up the road, and some guys from Sandy Row came into this pub right across the street where the heavy hitters would spend their days. You know what I mean – snipers. And they told them about it – the head guy said, ‘Well you go take care of it then.’ And that is how it was dealt with.²⁰⁵

Sandy Row residents are very protective of their area as they view it as their own territory to maintain. They are fully prepared to challenge anyone coming in that is different from the accepted and safe identities associated with the neighborhood.

While the residents embody and perpetuate the siege mentality of the area, it is the paramilitary strength within Sandy Row that sustains it. The presence of the UDA, and the UVF on the other side of the highway, is penetrating. All walks of life had connections with the paramilitaries. Every business, up until a few years ago, was required to make payments to the UDA.²⁰⁶ Walking into the area, the organization has made clear that this is UDA territory. The UDA is effectively the law and order of the area, and is committed to maintaining this territory as theirs for the organization truly believes they are a defensive institution. The UDA is analogous to an army protecting its national borders; only instead it is the perceived threat of a Catholic and Irish take over.²⁰⁷

During several mornings visiting the John McMichael Center, a local ex-prisoner community center run by current or former members of the UDA, there were several death threats being dealt with as well as a punishment sentence being dealt out

²⁰⁵ Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.
²⁰⁶ Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.
²⁰⁷ Interview 17 on July 6, 2007. In reference to why the UDA is still an active paramilitary.
in connection with an attack on a 15 year old boy the night before.\textsuperscript{208} Not only are the people of Sandy Row protective against invaders from the outside, but they are also fearful of venturing out, even if it is for police protection. “This is a closed community – they feel as if it is fine to stand out in front of here or up the street at the Royal all day.”\textsuperscript{209} By tradition, the men of Sandy Row have stood outside the Royal all day, everyday, in a way marking the boundaries of their territory. This practice continues today as the sons and grandsons of the men of Sandy Row believe this is an honorable destiny. The university attrition rate for this neighborhood is quite high, and performance in school is down in comparison to other neighborhoods in Belfast. Many in fact drop out, and can be seen standing on the corner in front of the Royal.\textsuperscript{210} The people of Sandy Row continue to experience levels of low intensity violence that maintain the conflict mentality, as opposed to a post-conflict society. The people of Sandy Row feel safer being in a community where they are protected, where their identities as loyalists, as Ulster-Scots are not only protected, but valued. The residents of Sandy Row even separated themselves from connections with other loyalist communities, including the famous Shankill. “People from Sandy Row are very resentful of them because all of the money for post conflict work being poured into the Shankill – it is as if people believe that if you fix the Shankill you fix loyalism. But what about Sandy Row, Tiger’s Bay – we get nothing.”\textsuperscript{211} Residents of the area have developed a system of reinforcing anger and fear of “the other,”

\textsuperscript{208} Field Notes, Belfast 2007.  
\textsuperscript{209} Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.  
\textsuperscript{210} Interview 16 on July 5, 2007.  
\textsuperscript{211} Interview 17 on July 6, 2007. Tiger’s Bay is another small enclave loyalist community located in North Belfast.
which creates a pride in themselves and this pride is deeply connected with their experiences in the place of Sandy Row.

In a community that frequently looks back to the wartime days of WWII, it is difficult to accept change. Throughout the conflict, the neighborhood can be thought of as a fortress, enclosed by its physical separation from the rest of the city with walls, highways, and barbed wire as well as the community’s own hardened collective memory, further strengthened by the presence of the loyalist paramilitaries. “It is easier to call them ‘Fenian bastards’ and blame the outsiders as an enemy than deal with our own problems.”212 In a time of relative peace, the residents of Sandy Row can try to take the time to unravel this identity they have wrapped up in a conflict mentality. Yet with the UDA still an active and powerful force within the community and the loss of power they feel as an ethnic island, this process of change will be long and hard. Sentimentality aside, the people of Sandy Row are more complex than outsiders assume, and even while making tea with them, an act that is repeated in households all over the island everyday, the hardships, the scares, and the implications of the conflict are still ever present.

“I live on the Falls.”

The Falls is the largest republican and nationalist enclave in Belfast. Located in West Belfast, it spans from the Westlink highway to the Milltown Cemetery. Even though the community is much bigger than Crossmaglen or Sandy Row, the area of the Falls still has its own strong sense of community. This sense of community seems to be shaped in two different ways: in asserting their position as Irish and as from the

212 Interview 17 on July 6, 2007.
famous republican Falls, and as just victims of the conflict that they have had with the British and with the Protestant Shankill.

“The conflict with the British goes back hundreds of years. It is deeply entrenched in the community and it is very important to know our history, but we can’t dwell on it.”213 The history of the conflict definitely shaped how the community of the Falls has come to understand and justify its position. “It was never sectarian on the republican side of the conflict. It was about a long history of British taking land, occupation, and colonization. They needed the Ulster Scots to come over to keep control of the land.”214 The people of the Falls, along with the majority of the republican population in Northern Ireland, make a direct connection between the initial occupation by the British and the current occupation during this conflict as a continuous cycle of oppressive colonization. The actions of the British served to direct how the community viewed the role that the British played in the conflict as well as how the Falls viewed its own identity. The British designed the area so that at any point it could be closed off from the city center. They established curfews, built the ‘peace wall’ higher and higher, and carried out internment raids on the houses. The community was left feeling targeted and victimized. “While the area used to be cut off geographically, it is now cut off psychologically, cut off by the West Link and the military check points. They could close off the community at anytime. Now people just don’t go anywhere.”215 The conflict changed how people led their lives, how they interacted with the rest of the city, and established in their minds that the conflict was a just war.

213 Interview 22 on July 11, 2007.
The Falls community also felt under threat from the loyalist community along the Shankill. While the loyalist communities of Sandy Row and Tiger’s Bay were in opposition to the Falls, the Falls community mostly considered itself in conflict with the Shankill. Originally, the two communities were interwoven. Most people couldn’t tell where the Shankill community began and where the Falls ended. “When you look at pictures from the old Falls and Shankill, you can’t tell the difference between the two. They both have the same houses, the same dirty kids, the same butts hanging out of their trousers. The differences were created.”216 Yet once the wall was built, interaction between the two communities was reduced to petrol bombs, bricks, and car bombs. “Even though they are right across the wall, I haven’t walked down that street in forty years. Once I was doing a joint tour up the Shankill and I was very aware of the people outside, drinking and shopping and watching. It wasn’t like anything was going to happen to me but I still felt it.”217 While cross-community work is sponsored by the reconciliation movement, generations since the erection of the “peace wall” have never met a Protestant, especially never socialized with a “Prod” from the Shankill.218 The community of the Shankill certainly targeted Catholics on the Falls. Yet republicans from the Falls also targeted the Protestants of the Shankill. It is a hatred built on stereotypes and sustained by examples of violence.

In the face of all this polarization, the Falls community has a dynamic and flourishing cultural and identity that binds them together. The community very much identifies itself with its Irish roots. The West Belfast Tourist Office, the tourist office

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216 Interview 18 on July 6, 2007.
218 Prod is considered a slang derogatory term used in reference to a Protestant.
specifically for the Falls, is presented almost all in Irish. Its headquarters is right next to the Culturlann, the Irish language and cultural center, where people can get a cup of coffee and talk in Irish, listen to historical lectures, or participate in Irish dance lessons or the local Irish language radio. “Irish language was redeveloped because of the prisoner’s interest. There is a big Irish cultural connection in this part of West Belfast…this connection with culture is very important to for the republican movement.”219 People are incredibly proud of their Irish identity. The community seems to find a sense of strength and agency through their blatant displays of identity and culture. The residents of the area also have a strong Catholic connection, as the Falls is home to the Clonard monastery, a very influential church throughout the conflict. The priests of the area, while not condoning the actions of the republican movement, were involved in their communities in ways that the Protestant parish leaders never were. The church still has been able to maintain a strong parish due to its actions during the conflict.220

The residents of the Falls are more than eager to share their knowledge of history and Irish language with strangers and want them to understand the “full and true” experience of the Falls, as a way of reaffirming the legitimacy of their position in the conflict. This almost overwhelming sense of ‘Irishness’ can be perfectly illustrated in the murals and visual devices that surround the area. This tradition of murals is now internationally known, where dozens of people come to the Falls each day on “political” tours in order to connect with the famous colorful republican art. “The murals are a great way of telling the community’s history and it is a great way

219 Interview 22 on July 11, 2007. He is referring to the prisoners from the internment campaign that were imprisoned in Long Kesh. See Appendix A for more information.
of getting people to understand their story. They are positive messages of cultural experience.\textsuperscript{221} The political graffiti is also held as a proud part of the area’s history.

Political graffiti started in the 1980s when people in the area were allowed to vote and elect Sinn Fein representatives. Since the Sinn Fein was not allowed to make public statements, their voices were always dubbed over. The messages got written out on the walls. The messages were especially focused on the hunger strikers. It was a way to let people be heard and it still is the same forum.\textsuperscript{222}

Within these visual forums, the residents of the Falls also expressed connections with other international movements against occupation.

There is a strong affinity with the Palestinian movement. I would primarily be involved with the republican movements in occupied lands – they were also abused by the British military…Ireland always felt a strong affinity with occupied territories like South Africa, Turkey, Basques.\textsuperscript{223}

While the republican movement has always had strong international sympathies, it is only in the Falls and in the Bogside in L/Derry that these connections are really promoted and displayed. These connections make the republican movement seem like a greater ideological fight, not just about their freedom, but also the elimination of all occupied territories.

The Falls community has an interesting psychological development that mirrors its physical make up. Like the towering wall and steel gates that surround the neighborhood, it has clearly been shaped by the violence and oppression the residents have experienced throughout the years of the conflict. The wounds from memories of the conflict still resonate today, never mind when violent Protestant groups like the

\textsuperscript{221} Interview 19 on July 9, 2007.
\textsuperscript{222} Interview 19 on July 9, 2007. The exact suggestion of the 1980s isn’t accurate. For information on the hunger strikers please see Appendix A.
\textsuperscript{223} Interview 19 on July 9, 2007.
Shankill Butchers were in the heyday of their bloodshed.\footnote{In 1972, the Shankill Butchers was a gang that was formed of murderous loyalists from the Shankill who would kidnap Irish Catholics and torture and kill them. This gang was one of the examples of the most extreme forms of violence that went on during the conflict. See Allen Feldman’s \textit{Formations of Violence}.} It has become life as usual.

Murders faded quickly, and the ones I remembered were the ones that occurred in and around my usual haunts, the deaths of children, and the deaths laced with some particularly tragic detail…There term ‘acceptable level of violence’ became a standard refrain in the North…”There is an unhealthy disregard for bomb scares…Now its hard to keep people away from an area that has been blocked off because of a scare.’\footnote{John Conroy. \textit{Belfast Diaries: War as a Way of Life.} (Boston: Beacon Press. 1989), 5.}

In the midst of this violent and restrictive atmosphere, the Falls community managed to develop and nourish a strong identity as not only Irish Catholics, but also as people of the Falls. This is shown through the vibrant life on the walls. The community has crafted itself in the position as the victim, of violence, prejudice, and injustice. They were persecuted by both the British and the Protestants, not just throughout the conflict but since the initial colonization of Ulster. This victimization allows them a certain form empowerment. While they are clearly victims, the residents of the Falls choose to stand proud as they did in the face of many enemies throughout the conflict because they feel justified in their plight.

\textit{“I am from the Shankill, but not a Butcher.”}

In crossing through the gates from the Falls, you enter the Shankill. While the Shankill community is on the opposite side of the wall and the conflict, both communities share strikingly similar characteristics that have shaped the collective identity in the area. The Shankill is also one of the largest working class Protestant neighborhoods in Belfast. “Families in the Shankill go back generations – very close knit community. There was never really any violence [referring to pre-conflict]
because everyone knew everyone – settled situations privately.”

As they described themselves, the, “Shankill is made up of stubborn, resilient people…Never would meet a nicer group of people – always smiling even if they had experienced some horrible things in their life.”

Yet the Shankill is also home to some of the most notorious and brutal killers of the conflict including the Shankill Butchers and Johnny Adair.

The area therefore has a complex history of pride and strength in combination with loyalist traditions and devoted unionist mentality.

People from all areas all over Belfast, whether it be the Falls, Sandy Row, or a professor at Queens, all similarly described the community of the Shankill as prideful and resilient. In talking to the people of the Shankill, they display a sense of pride coming from the area. This presence of pride in place comes in strong contrast to the place itself. The residents themselves recognized how derelict the area has become throughout the conflict, with no jobs, high unemployment rates, and “during the Troubles the Shankill had to fight for every penny.”

Part of their pride can be attributed to the notoriety of the area throughout the conflict, as the Shankill could easily be classified as the loyalist area that drew the most attention throughout the conflict. Whether or not residents agreed with the violence, it gave the community a unified sense of might and fortification against as seemingly encroaching republican movement and unacknowledged manipulation by elite Protestants in government and British power. “Loyalist terrorists see the growing Catholic community as encroaching on their traditional strongholds and have become increasingly violent in

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226 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
227 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
228 Johnny Adair, also know as “Mad Dog,” is the leader of the main branch of the UDA in the Shankill portion of Belfast. See CAIN website. http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/uorgan.htm
229 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007
defense of what they view as Protestant territory.” Their connection with the place was twofold: in defense of their identity and in pride of their history as a community.

This pride also came from a strong sense of cultural identification with certain symbols of the Protestant movement. These symbols, while relatively few, provided the area with a sense of self and connected their community with a stronger British identity that in many ways is not reciprocated by the British. The most notable symbols were the use of blue, red, and white paint colors that have penetrated every available space over the years. Symbols were used to both mark territory for out-groups and also to create a sense of unity with the in-group, strengthening cultural identification. Other symbols were King Billy, Queen Victoria, the Battle of the Borne, as well as WWI and II memorials. In fact, when asking a woman from the Shankill what her favorite part of the area was, she described the Queen Victoria statue in the park. “It’s so peaceful and silent. People are buried there from all over the map, from the time of the black plague up until now.” Residents of the Shankill consistently connect with historical references, as if manufacturing for themselves a strong cultural tradition that they didn’t have before the conflict started. Comparing themselves to an incredibly cohesive Irish culture, the people of the Shankill have managed to become a symbol in themselves of the loyalist community. This is why everyone understands and respects the Shankill’s identity in a very similar way.

While the republican community is very quick to highlight the injustices put upon them, the injustices measured against the loyalist communities are for the most

231 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
part hidden. “The days of the Troubles were crazy – bombings, shootings, targets at pubs. I distinctly remember the morning of the Shankill bombing. My mother was out shopping.” The loyalist communities were not targeted by the British and the RUC in the same way that the republican communities were because of the strong relationships between the loyalists paramilitaries and the British. Given its location, the Shankill community was an “easy” target for republicans. The republican paramilitary movement did a significant amount of damage to the community, affecting everyone’s lives somehow through their experiences of violence. “There are no neutral spaces on the Shankill – every place was targeted at one point. There was violence from the upper to the lower Shankill…Every area has a memory of violence. ” In a telling comment, when asked to described the Shankill, one man said,

The wall – it speaks volumes. It was put up along a mixed road without thought and separated everyone. Now it is built higher and higher in the past 12 months. The gates are at least kept open now but they used to close at 9 pm. I called it the Shankill Zoo [during the conflict] because once the gates were closed this community would go crazy. Violence, everything.

While the Shankill community is classified as being full of pride, there is an undercurrent of fear and distrust, paralleling the atmosphere of Sandy Row. More than any other people interviewed, the residents of the Shankill classified almost all areas in Belfast as no-go areas.

I would only go to the Falls to go to the [Royal Victoria] hospital but I would only go in a car. I would not go to the Ardoyne. You have to be careful

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233 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
234 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
235 One of the questions asked during interviews was, “What areas if any do you feel are no-go areas? If so where and why? If not, why?”
where you are and what you say – there is peace but not that much peace. I remember one time my father went to the hospital to pick up a prescription and the girl was lovely to him until she saw the red hand of Ulster tattooed on his arm and she went from being all sweet and helpful to cold.\textsuperscript{236}

In some senses, it is as if the gates were still closed to the community. Despite its pride in itself, the residents of the Shankill have an acute awareness of place, of where they feel safe and where they do not. “You could tell a person’s religion by which side of the street they were walking on. We could figure out where they were coming from and where they were going. You became a big target.”\textsuperscript{237} The Shankill would rather target others than be targeted themselves from the conflict. They lack the strong connection to a cultural identity that the republicans have benefited from in finding an internal strength. Now the British and elite Protestants have distanced themselves, and all the Shankill area seems to have left is their devotion to their symbolic Shankill struggle.

\textbf{“I am from the real Ardoyne.”}

The Ardoyne is the republican counter-part of Sandy Row. It is a smaller enclave that went through a great amount of violence, especially recently, because of its status as an ethnic island among loyalist communities.

Ardoyne is like a village…It is a very tight-knit community with very close relationships. It takes its identity from the spires of the Holy Cross chapel…They can’t identify with the state or with the whole of Ireland. So the only identity available to the people of Ardoyne is a local identity…This was an island community.\textsuperscript{238}

The residents of Ardoyne were extremely affected by the violence that occurred. They effectively were under attack from the British army, the RUC, and the loyalist

\textsuperscript{236} Interview 17 on July 5, 2007. The red hand of Ulster is a symbol typically associated with the loyalist movement and is the favored symbol of the UDA.

\textsuperscript{237} Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.

\textsuperscript{238} Ardoyne Commemoration Project. \textit{Ardoyne: The Untold Truth}. (Belfast: Beyond the Pale. 2002), 287.
paramilitaries who somehow got through the road blocks set up by the army into the community.

The people of Ardoyne would be very afraid to go out of the area – they expect everything to be brought to them. This was a legitimate fear before when you were afraid of your son getting shot when he went out, but they have gotten so used to it. Now their whole world is this little community. 239

Glenbryn, a small loyalist enclave to the north, has been calling now itself “Upper Ardoyne.” The idea of Ardoyne throughout Belfast is associated with high rates of violence as the republican island struggled to hold onto this small territory.

Defending your neighbours was what it was all about in Ardoyne. This is an area with a militia mentality because of its geography. Our location dictated everything. We were surrounded and we had to stand up for ourselves because there was no one else to do it for us. That’s Ardoyne. 240

The people have struggled to hold onto their community throughout the conflict, and now added to this struggle is an appropriation of place name by Glenbryn, a community disconnected from the republican and nationalist traditions associated with Ardoyne.

Unlike the vibrant cultural nature of the Falls, the Ardoyne only developed this strong cultural connection with its Irish identity recently. “The tricolors haven’t been around since probably fifteen years ago. Even then they never really caught on in the area. It was even rare to see flags around here – there are probably more now than there was five or ten years ago or even when I was growing up.” 241 The murals that were here in the conflict were very paramilitary oriented, and this paralleled the nature of the conflict in the area. Unlike the Falls area, which could rely on its size as a source of strength, the Ardoyne was constantly under attack and under surveillance.

239 Interview 24 on July 11, 2007.
240 Ibid., 26.
“People fear going into the city center. They feel safest in the middle of the community. The interface areas are more dangerous. If they wanted to, a gang could attack anyone on the outside. It was harder to get at you if you were in the middle of the Ardoyne.”242 There really was no space for the cultural bravado displayed by the Falls. The unique experience of the Ardoyne drew the community into a culture within itself as a fortification against its vulnerability.

The community’s experience can best be represented by the experience of the Holy Cross school. The Holy Cross Girls school is the local Catholic primary school for girls of the republican Ardoyne. Their route to school is along a street that is at the top of the loyalist community of Glenbryn. The loyalists accused the community of using the route as a cover to attack their residents. They started to protest and taunt the girls and their parents as they went to school.

It was the most horrific incident that happened to the area. You were never supposed to involve the children. It was always about the right to go to school…The loyalists never called off their protest. It is just suspended for now. It means they aren’t willing to give up the fight. There is a bitterness there. The schools have security gates. The kids can’t play outside. They are still attacked coming and going.243

It is how the world remembers Ardoyne and how those of Ardoyne remember the struggle, having to fight for everything that they need and being persecuted while doing it. The people of the Ardoyne are incredibly strong individuals. “Everyone knew someone or had someone die. Even areas you thought could be neutral were affected.”244 This has created a community that is constantly fearing and waiting for the next attack. Even during the time I was there, there were stones and bricks being

244 Interview 24 on July 11, 2007.
thrown over the “peace wall.” Recently, there has been a trend of teens committing suicide by hanging themselves. In the week or so that I was there, four teens were found dead or in the process of committing suicide. The community, as created by its collective experience of the same place, is now intensely linked through its entire history of violence. “The injury and insult inflicted by the British army were not therefore lived individually but passed rapidly into a common pool of feeling and memories.”245 Even with the new generation, the community of the Ardoynne is still suffering from being in the fish bowl, completely vulnerable to the out-groups.

**Londonderry or Derry: We are Different**

The continuous battle over the place name of Derry or Londonderry is evident of the broader contention over the city’s identity. As with Belfast neighborhoods, the Waterside, the Fountain, and the Bogside and Creggan, seem to almost be communities of separate cities as each are semi-self-contained areas that refuse to interact with one another, but understand themselves in opposition to those same communities. Ironically, the Ulster plantation wall is the new, post-conflict symbol that the city is using for promotion, and this is the same symbol that developed the city’s understanding of inclusion and exclusion, siege and conflict, and Protestant versus Catholic.

**The Fountain Under Siege**

The Fountain, while a part of a rich history of Protestant communities on the Cityside, is the last standing Protestant and loyalist community.

The Fountain used to be a lovely close knit community. People really relied on each other. Some would do the baking, some would do the knitting. There

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245 Ardoynne Commemoration Project. *Ardoynne: The Untold Truth.* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale. 2002), 47.
was always interaction on Bishop’s Street with the Catholics. The Catholics would come into the Fountain for work at the shirt factory. Back then there were about 2800 people – now there is only 360 or so.246

It has consistently been made up of mostly working class families, all employed by the many shirt factories or shipping industries in the area. Currently, the Fountain community is surrounded by a fence like wall that probably reaches 25 to 30 feet high. This wall creates a cage like effect around the community, symbolically turning the Fountain into a caged animal at a zoo, and the community in many ways acts like this.

People liked to reminisce about the days of the Fountain before the conflict. Some of the residents’ favorite places were tied to their cultural connections with the historic landmarks of the Ulster walls and St. Columb’s Cathedral.247

We used to have huge flats were the school is now – they were in horrible condition where mostly young families lived…I was born and lived in the area and was forced to move out almost over night.248

It was this mass exodus sparked by Catholic unrest to the Waterside that started the change in the community.249 Since the demographic change, the community’s whole life both mentally and physically has been restricted to the small area they resided in. Because of this, the residents of the Fountain are very defensive of their territory and their lifestyle.

The Fountain area is filled with a victimhood and siege mentality. They are always blaming others for their problems and never seeing issue with themselves and their behavior. The mentality is reinforced by all of the money and support they get pouring into them. The collective mentality of

246 Interview 28 on July 17, 2007.
247 Interview 28 on July 17, 2007 and Interview 3 on November 22, 2006.
249 The forced exodus is highly disputed in different areas. Most people from the Bogside and Creggan denied that the residents of the Fountain were ever threatened. Yet most people from the Fountain and former residents on the Waterside claimed they had to leave over night. There are no substantial facts either way.
the community creates a space that is very unhealthy. No one in that community is energized to stop.250

Many people from outside the Fountain view the community in a similar manner.

The area is showered with funding and support, unlike many of the needy areas on the Waterside, and yet has an air of defiance and defensiveness.

It is like their last stand. There are mostly old people who have lived there forever and refuse to give up their land. They are unwilling to accept help. They are completely distrusting of other people who come in whether they are Protestant or not. It is like a person with anorexia – you try to give them help but sometimes you have to watch them die.251

Even an insider’s perspective seems to echo other citizens of L/Derry.

There is a sense of defeat, a deep seated anger at what happened to them. They didn’t know that they were being abused. They had a choice between lowly Ireland or a powerful British empire that the sun never sets on. They wanted power and all the benefits that came with it. The pivotal expression of not having power was at Drumcree – it was an outcry of defining their space, of needing a victory. In the Fountain, a person has to go into the RUC, UDR, or UDA or they have to leave. There are very limited options. Nothing to grab onto to gain power except for violence.252

The residents of the Fountain are deeply attached to their area and at the same time are being strangled by it. In taking on the position as “loyalism’s last stand,” their defense of place is connected with centuries of struggle that they fear could end in their demise. They would rather die fighting than ever think of moving out.

In the city where the famous siege of L/Derry occurred, securing a win for William of Orange, the community of the Fountain still lives this historical struggle at the foundation of their own understanding of themselves. It is difficult to identify a community culture that roots its entire existence around a collective fear. Children are not allowed to leave after 4 pm unless by bus or taxi. The Cathedral Youth Club,

250 Interview 4 on November 22, 2006.
251 Interview 34 on July 20, 2007.
252 Interview 6 on November 23, 2006. See Appendix A for understanding of Drumcree incident.
the center of activity in the community, hosts kids from as young as five to as old as thirty because people’s fear cement them to this place. Any semblance of a Fountain culture seems to be lost to the memories of pre-conflict residents. A musician from the area said,

I am currently writing songs about the Fountain in order to keep the culture and the area alive. I think eventually the Fountain will cease to exist and I want to make sure the memories of who they are, what they were, and where they were are kept alive. There is a strong sense of shared community and sense of belonging there. It is the center of loyalism – a symbol important to all Protestants worldwide, the last hold out. They were scammed – they really have no power in the end even though throughout the whole thing they thought they did. They were used by elites as pawns and now are not sure what to do to fill the void. It is the same with Hong Kong ‘Yes, thank you for everything we really appreciate it, now can we have our passports back.’

The whole community was completely changed by the conflict. Their identity before as a vibrant, thriving close knit area is now a distant memory to what they have become. It is only a matter of time before the community will self-destruct, but for now it is pacing back and forth like the caged animal that everyone is watching from the outside of the high fences.

“You are now in Free Derry.”

The community of Free Derry has always been acutely aware of space and its connection with power.

The city was designed to make the minority the majority. The Ulster walls are a haven for thieves. They implanted people here. The walls represent the triumphant, to keep Catholics out…There was a curfew bell. Catholics were allowed into the city center to shop and do business, but forced to leave when the bell chimed at 8pm. It was done up until the 1950s.

The Bogside was a neighborhood built directly on a bog.

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253 Interview 6 on November 23, 2006.
254 I have chosen to discuss the identities of the Creggan and Bogside communities as one area because their population make up and experiences are so similar that they have the same path of development throughout the conflict.
255 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
The original Bogside was a little village...farm community oriented. The slaughter house was right up the street and sheep or cows would pass my house on their way there...It was still farm country, but in 1962 and ‘63 the redevelopment into the new flats changed the area. The whole area was designed to keep Catholics in the same ghetto and outside the city walls.256

The residents of the Bogside, and later the Creggan, were aware of the discrimination, and it became a part of their understanding of their identity. “I always knew that Catholics were discriminated against. I knew at age five about gerrymandering. It was always a fact.”257 Yet it wasn’t the discrimination that turned the Bogside community into the hotbed for IRA activity. “The Bogside was always a peaceful community. The active police force in the area actually had to close down because there was not enough activity. I think it was in the Derry Journal in ‘64 or ‘65.”258 It was due to the British and Protestant-run city council reaction to the civil rights movement in Free Derry that the community felt the need to turn violent. 259

We drew a white peace line around the area to separate it from the British military. We were surrounded by steel walls, look-out towers and check points. We had to be a self-sustaining community with our own government and rule of law. The only way to take back our rights and power at the time was through violence. At first people in the community were afraid of being Irish...because of conditioning not to be proud of Irishness under British rule. Now people take pride in Irish culture and nationalism.260

The reaction by the people was to create a “Free Derry,” a space all their own with their own government, security force, radio station, newspaper, and culture. They created an identity as the people of “Londonderry” rejected them. The idea and bond behind Free Derry still exists, and there is a whole different feeling stepping into the area, as there is an undeniable community bond.

256 Interview 2 on November 21, 2006.
257 Interview 33 on July 20, 2007.
258 Interview 33 on July 20, 2007.
259 See Appendix A for information on civil rights movement.
260 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
Within the turn to violence, the people of Free Derry became intensely invested in their fight against the British. “I hope the work I did isn’t in vain for them [the residents of the Bogside]. My mother was born in bondage. I was born in bondage. I did this so the unborn don’t have to live through this.”

This personal connection represented the personal aspect of the conflict in L/Derry as the events of the conflict affected everyone on a very personal level, unlike some urban areas in Belfast that could escape the chaos. This trauma still resonates in most people, the memories of having lost someone important or the violence they saw. A brother of one of the Bloody Sunday victims said, “For a long time I couldn’t walk in here or past the place where Michael died. This square here was just too enclosed and people died. It was too painful.”

One man, when he smells vinegar chips, always remembers the day that Manus Deery, a 13 year old boy, died in his arms after being shot by a British sniper. The memories of the place stay with the people. “Space around here is very important. If walls had ears…, walls hold memories and the negativity associated with them is built up through the centuries. The whole area is transformed…, the air is actually gray and full of negative energy.” These memories are, for many people, the grounding of the conflict in their lives.

Since the conflict started in Free Derry around a dialect of rights and political philosophy, the people of Free Derry have consistently expressed their understandings of the conflict in very symbolic and proactive ways. For example, one of the first republicans of the movement had insight into the symbolic nature of
the buildings, as he considered them to be built from a loyalist perspective and viewed by a republican.

A lot of buildings in the area are associated with oppression and domination. The Guild Hall, the first thing you see when you walk in the door is Queen Victoria, or as I like to call her, Queen Famine. The bastion of unionist rule until 1972. They need to take the imperialist trappings out of it – this is Ireland, we are Irish. Stop discriminating against Irish heritage and culture. The Apprentice Boys hall, source of oppression. The First Presbyterian Church, source of oppression. All strategically placed to face the Bogside, locations were deliberate. Why do the marches start where they did? Why did they place the war memorials in the center of the city when the loyalist area is on the Waterside?264

Much of the movement’s symbolism also was navigated through the power of space and territory. The simple act of painting a white line around the territory of Free Derry to establish their own sense of sovereignty is a highly symbolic gesture towards the British as well as the Protestant-lead City Council.265 Because the people of Free Derry were without most rights, the movement focused on basic concepts to create a system of empowerment throughout the community in the most basic of ways. One man, heavily involved in the formation of the IRA in L/Derry, said, “I am proud to walk around and I make no excuses for where I live, or for being Irish or my dreams. There are no no-go areas for me. I walk through the Fountain frequently.”266 The movement for the people of Free Derry instilled in them a type of strength that they didn’t have before because from the start the movement was about empowerment. “The Catholics shaped this city the way it is today. The Troubles created different neighborhoods and areas. It made how the city is dispersed the way it is.”267 The people of Free Derry took new ownership over the spaces of the city, and challenged

264 Interview 2 on November 21, 2006.
265 See Appendix A for information on Londonderry Corporation.
266 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
267 Interview 26 on July 17, 2007.
the base for constructing different spaces like the Walker monument. This instilled power and confidence in the residents’ sense of place in the area.

Parallel to the system of empowerment runs a strong conspiracy culture within the Free Derry community. Most people adamantly believe that the British designed the structure of Free Derry so it was easily monitored by the army bases on the top of the wall and hill.\textsuperscript{268} Another conspiracy theory is that on the Bloody Sunday the British army specifically targeted young males in order to assassinate potential IRA members. This strong distrust of the British and loyalist communities still remains a large part of why the Bogside and Creggan remain the community “Free Derry” because they don’t believe justice has been done to them from the hardship they endured.\textsuperscript{269} This distrust and suspicion affects the way that the area of Free Derry is willing to progress in all different aspects of the people’s lives. One man I was interviewing wanted to talk at his local pub. As we sat in a dark corner someone passed us, and my interviewee turned to me and said,

It is good we are talking in this bar. This is the only bar in the city I would talk like this in. You always have to know where you are and who is listening. You have to have a safe space to talk in, not that I am paranoid or anything but there needs to be a safe space.\textsuperscript{270}

Just through his side comment, I realized just how drastically the experiences people had in the conflict affected their everyday existence. It established patterns of

\textsuperscript{268} The Housing Executive denies that there could’ve been any involvement by the security forces and that neighborhoods are designed with certain basic security characteristics in mind. Whether or not this is true, the majority of Free Derry still believes that their neighborhood was structure by the security forces.

\textsuperscript{269} There is a distinction made by most people in L/Derry between Protestants and loyalists. “I am fine with religious differences. I don’t care, in fact I would like the Protestants to stay, but I hate the loyalists because they are Irish born. Why are they loyal to a British state?” Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.

\textsuperscript{270} Interview 2 on November 21, 2006.
“normal” behavior that are really just adaptations to an extremely traumatic and shattering situation.

Derry was destined to be the start. You have to cross the river to get to the North. All the roads lead to Donegal…Derry was always a Catholic stronghold – the largest consolidation of Catholics in the area and in the North. It is where the war started and ended. It wasn’t about the Derry people but the geographic proximity, the way the area was mapped that made it prime for revolution.271

Free Derry was prime for revolution because of its location, because of the amount of Catholics in the area, and the blatant gerrymandering done by the Protestant-run City Council. Yet, whether it was about the Free Derry people or not does not take away from the effects that the conflict had on them. The experience of forty years of violence created at the one end a community that was stronger and took ownership over the city. On the other hand, there is now a community more restricted by its own experiences, and that has created a new culture based on conspiracies, distrust, and trauma. For the families that walk down Rossville Street everyday where the victims of Bloody Sunday were killed, where dozens of other children and republicans alike were killed, the peace accords have not ended these memories and these recent injustices.272

“I am from the Waterside, not L/Derry.”
“The Waterside is made up of diverse pockets of communities. They all live quite close together. You could move up one street between loyalist and tri-colors.”273 While there are areas within the Waterside that identify themselves as republican or loyalist, the violence of the conflict did not transfer to the Waterside in

271 Interview 33 on July 20, 2007.
272 Rossville Street is the main street in the Bogside. It is the location of the Free Derry wall, the Bogside Artist murals, formerly where the Rossville Flats were as well as the Bloody Sunday massacre and the Battle of the Bogside.
273 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
the same way that it was visible on the Cityside. There was and still is a good deal of
discrimination, prejudice, and low intensity violence. Originally, the Waterside was
mostly made up of Protestants, and more recently some Catholics, who wanted to
escape the violence and chaos of the West Bank.274 Because of this, the Waterside as
a community consistently felt ignored. The culture on the Waterside seems to
develop around feelings of fear, resentment, and alienation, not only from the
Cityside but from each other. Most of the residents of the Waterside do not feel as if
they are part of the city of L/Derry, and fear going to the other side of the river.
“Many people fear going over the Cityside. They go elsewhere to do shopping and
such. It was my first time shopping on a Saturday afternoon in years. There was a
gang of Celtic boys goings around – it was very intimidating."275 This fear prevents
people from the two sides interacting unless it is under reconciliation pretenses. Not
only do people fear going to the Cityside, but they fear each other. A map of the
Waterside provided by the City Council would not accurately represent the
Waterside. Because the communities have created such complex enclaves, there is a
separate community mental map that allows locals to know what areas are safe, what
areas are not, and whose’ territory is whose’. “Even if they aren’t wearing something
to mark you out there is still a fear that they will know who you are because you are a
stranger. Even when driving in the car through the area, I am wary if I turn around or

274 The two sides of L/Derry have been called the East and West Banks: the East Bank referring to the
Waterside and the West Bank referring to the Cityside. The connections to the Israeli Palestinian
conflict are important as the republican movement openly supports the Palestinian side and the loyalist
movement therefore has grown in support of Israel.
275 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007. Celtic is a football team from Glasgow that is commonly associate
with the republican movement and the IRA. Young boys wear the jerseys in order to identify
themselves as Protestant or Catholic. In many areas they are banned.
get lost that they will know." While Protestants dominated the area originally, the relatively new population of Catholics coming over creates a renewed sense of angst and fear that the original Protestant communities are under attack.

Protestants are now moving farther and farther out. There is a great fear that is will end up like the Fountain. The Protestant enclave so desires to hold onto its territory. That is why they want to mark new estates as Protestant before anyone moves into the houses because then this is our territory. So while an outsider, even a person from the Cityside, might not know the territories of the Waterside, the fear of identity is strong enough to create a culture of definitive mental boundaries for the residents.

Along with this feeling of fear there is a sense of alienation from the people of the Waterside. They don’t feel like they actually reside in the city of L/Derry, but a completely separate area. “All the history and community is on the otherside. Even the Orange Order and Apprentice Boys are on that side. We really have nothing to draw people over here. We feel disconnected.” One man, working an initiative called the Waterside Alienation Project, listed several issues that Waterside residents feel have long alienated them from the Cityside. These issues include school uniforms, the city cemetery, movement within communities, flags and painted curbstones, sports tops, and lack of representation on the City Council. This alienation is also between communities on the East Bank because while people talk about the Waterside as one unit, it is in fact highly separate communities that struggle to have relationships with each other and with their counterparts on the Waterside. “Most communities have separate community houses and football pitches. They

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276 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
277 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
278 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
279 Interview 34 on July 20, 2007. See Appendix A for information of Waterside Alienation Project.
don’t come together [with the funding they get].” 280 This form of alienation is due to a conscious desire not to know the other. The truest representation of this divide is the River Foyle, which is the river that divides the city into two halves. The river is a permanent physical barrier to the symbolic barriers the residents have created.

Lastly, this feeling of alienation and fear creates an environment of resentment. The Waterside population, because it has been neglected for so many years, has substantial reasons to feel resentful of the Cityside communities. “A few years ago we demanded 40% of the funding because we had 40% of the population. Previously we used to get just 5%.” 281 A lot of this resentment has to do with funding and attention, especially as struggling working class communities on the Waterside have watched the Fountain drown amongst its massive funding.

Some Protestant communities feel connected with the Fountain and the representatives of this side would support them, but the community here would be a little resentful because of all the money being poured into the Fountain. They are such a small community that they get too much – yes I would say resentful. 282

This resentment also occurs with the Catholics communities as they don’t feel connected with the Free Derry community that gets most of the attention. 283 This resentment, in combination with strong sense of fear and alienation, should create concern. It creates the same atmosphere that was present for the neighborhoods of the Fountain and Free Derry at the start of the conflict. “Groups feel the need to start violence in order to get funding. There is an attraction to interface areas. They start

280 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
281 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007. This is in reference to City Council funding.
282 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
283 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
riots to make them seem more desperate.”\textsuperscript{284} In a highly divided environment, this low intensity violence has the strong possibility to escalate into something greater.

**Group Identity Formation in Place**

Each area, from Crossmaglen to the Fountain, has its own distinctive identity as created from their experiences throughout the conflict. These identities also play into a larger dialogue of republican, Irish, and Catholic versus loyalist, Protestant, and Ulster-Scots group dynamics. Group identities have changed since the initial violence of 1969, but they also serve as reinforcing dimensions in perpetuating the state of conflict that exists today. This existing state of conflict points to an important link between space and identity within ethnic conflict. With the minute understandings of the areas of Crossmaglen, Belfast, and L/Derry, we can now step back to understand the over-arching trends and themes of the conflict and how space effects and is affected by such violence.

\textsuperscript{284} Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
Despite the appearance that the conflict in Northern Ireland has ceased, each of these areas is still dealing with high levels of segregation, prejudice, and low intensity violence. The perpetual nature of the conflict calls for a reevaluation of our current understandings. It was initially through conversations and spending time living in these enclaves that the issues surrounding space were revealed to me in subtle, but vital ways. In looking at the issues of the conflict through a spatial lens, traditional theories of identity, politics, and development can be understood in ways that can shed light on the perpetuation and persistence of the conflict.

The Island With a History of Unrest: Historical Precedent

The six provinces of Northern Ireland, and even the island of Ireland as a whole, are no stranger to revolutions and riots. The Irish rioted against British occupation every ten years or so since the end of the 1800s. Protestant and Catholic groups fought and rioted against each other in Northern Ireland for hundreds of years as well.

Riots not only occurred at predictable times, but they also had a predictable form. They consisted largely of episodes of invasion and defense between Protestant and Catholic areas…Such riots could also include incidents…[such as] the eviction of Catholics living in Protestant areas and of Protestants living in Catholic areas. When the troubles erupted in 1969, and more so in the early 1970s, the same nineteenth century patterns of riots were to be found.

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285 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
One example of these riots was in June 1920 where five people were killed and 100 people injured.

The rioting was a continuation of the disorders of Friday night when Nationalists and Unionists were engaged in clashes for several hours and the military had to be called out. The military remained in what were considered the danger zones, but notwithstanding its presence the disorderly elements held sway for some time.287

The history of tension between the two communities extends back to the formation of exclusive group identities. The people of Northern Ireland have never had a unified understanding of themselves as a country. The distinctions between Protestants and Catholics, made all the more apparent by discriminating legislation in favor of the Protestant majority, were always reinforced in the terms of the colonizer and colonized, the ruling and oppressed. Despite this pattern of social unrest, the summer of 1969 was a turning point in the pattern of violence.288

While the rhetoric of each group says otherwise, the Protestant and Catholic communities weren’t always diametrically opposed groups. There is substantial proof to point to strong relationships between Protestants and Catholics, prior to the conflict, even in spite of a history of residential segregation.289 In Belfast, both Catholics and Protestants from the older generations reminisce about their friends that now reside “on the other side of the wall.”

I go to the Andytown leisure center as I like to keep fit. Look, it’s simple. I go there because it’s close. I meet with my old mates who are Catholics and


288 The independence movement of the early 1900s and the Irish Civil War were not waged with the same ethnic divisions that the modern day conflict has dealt with. “As time passed, and the state remained, most nationalists decided on a reluctant acceptance of the need to come to some accommodation, at least in the short term.” John Darby. Northern Ireland: The Background to the Conflict. (Syracuse: Appletree Press. 1983), 21.

289 Residential segregation was a prominent practice before the conflict broke out in 1969. This is no indication of discrimination and prejudice practiced in each area, just their living and leisure habits. See F.W. Boal “Territoriality on the Shankill-Falls Divide, Belfast.” Irish Geography 6.1. (1969).
we hang about the leisure center. I knew these people before the Troubles and I have always kept in with them.  
People who were able to develop relationships with the other side are able to see the members of the group outside a conflict context. Another man remembers,

I never feel afraid. There are decent people there who I have known for a long time. I know that if anyone said anything to me that my friends would look after me. We get on fine…But you see young ones; they don’t know what Prods [Protestants] are like. They never knew them the way I did.

In L/Derry, people can testify to the relationship between the Fountain and the Bogside, where people would work and spend their leisure time together along a street that is now considered an “interface.” “There was always interaction on Bishop’s Street shops with the Catholics. The Catholics would come into the Fountain for the work at the shirt factory.”

She described people meeting in the bookies, at the shops, butchers, and bakeries that were eventually torn down to erect a fence between the two communities. Even in Crossmaglen, the relationship between the army and the townspeople was much more peaceful before the great build-up of the base. One person recounted how one town of South Armagh celebrated Christmas with the British soldiers.

Prior to the divisions in 1969, there were significant cross community relationships where people from the Protestant community and Catholic community had developed friendships or at least respected each other. These relationships were not born out of a unified community spirit or sense of nationality of the groups.

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291 Ibid., 214
because the Catholics and Protestants still lived in segregated housing. \(^{293}\) 67.3% of Catholics and 73% of Protestants live in areas that are 81% or more Catholic or Protestant. Only 10.7% of Catholics and 7% of Protestants live in areas that would be considered “mixed,” or a 60/40 split between the majority and minority group. Instead, these relationships all centered around their development in common public spaces. People met each other by going to the same leisure center, the same bakers, or the same pub. It is in these common spaces that definitions and restrictions of identity were broken down. As opposed to being labeled a Protestant from the Shankill, individuals could identify with each other while participating in the same social practices. In L/Derry, there was a commonality found among people in the workplace as Protestants and Catholics both worked side by side in the shirt factories. \(^{294}\) Relationships centered around these shared spaces and shared experiences disappeared during the late 1960s and early 1970s as spaces became increasingly controlled and ethnically marked.

**Summer of ’69: Riots and Reaction**

The riots of 1969 came in the middle of a civil rights movement initiated by the Catholics. The movement was inspired by civil rights movements going on all over the world, especially the developments in the United States. The Catholics in Northern Ireland formed the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) that organized a mass campaign,

> a universal franchise for local government elections…and the ending of the company vote, the re-drawing of electoral boundaries to end gerrymandering;

\(^{293}\) Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh. *Belfast: Segregation, Violence, and the City.* (London: Pluto Press. 2006), 59-60

\(^{294}\) The workplace commonality could not be found in Belfast as jobs were notoriously given by preference of religion, favoring Protestants.
the introduction of laws to end discrimination in local government employment; a compulsory points system for public housing to ensure fair allocation; the repeal of the Special Powers Act; and the disbanding of the wholly Protestant police reserve the Ulster Special Constabulary.  

The original movement was not designed to be specifically about Catholic rights, but more about the collective desire for working class rights. Civil rights supporters did not intend for the movement to spiral into sectarian terms. “The original movement had no republican or nationalist connection, but it was just young kids wanting change, making a statement. Then the RUC and British reaction to the movement was changed to a republican and nationalist direction.” While the campaign was not violent, it was met with the violent force of the RUC and eventually the army. Even in this initial stage, local and national authorities used a policy of controlled movements and spaces as they restricted the NICRA or other grassroots groups’ demonstrations and marches.

The marching season of July and August was the initial spark that started the rioting throughout mixed areas of Northern Ireland. It seemed as if overnight, violence and fear escalated to become another riot in the cycle.

A riot erupted in the Catholic Bogside (which later became known as the ‘Battle of the Bogside’). Violence then spread to Belfast. On August 13, Catholics attacked police stations in West Belfast and erected barricades…After a night of extreme violence during which Protestants burned down Catholics houses in Conway Street and Brookfield Street in the West of the city, the first troops disembarked in Belfast. Their first task was to interpose themselves between Catholics and Protestants along what would later become the first peaceline. 


296 Interview 33 on July 20, 2007.

297 The parading season for Protestant celebrations is in July and August. See Appendix A, parading.

Like opposing magnets, Catholic and Protestant communities separated almost overnight. In Belfast, hundreds of families who once lived in mixed areas fled to “safe zones” among their own, creating a large refugee population.\(^{299}\)

Catholics began to be burnt out of their homes, despite the close presence of the RUC. By early August dozens of Catholic families had been forced out of Chief Street, Cambrai Street and Leopold Street…At the same time a number of Protestants had to leave the area surrounding Hooker Street…When this failed, they liaised with some families and groups in Protestant areas to arrange for people to swap their homes. Lines were becoming more clearly drawn, both politically and physically. Temporary barricades began to appear each evening on the roads facing onto Disraeli Street area.\(^{300}\)

These lines, considered temporary solutions by the communities that constructed them, soon became permanent fixtures, architectural features of their skyline. With official decrees from the British and Northern Irish governments, these divisions became recognized and formalized in the minds and in the lives of the people living in the permanently divided communities. Following the active instatement of the British army in August 1969, the wall of the Falls-Shankill divide was completed in less than a month’s time.\(^{301}\) The wall along the Glenbryn and Ardoyné neighborhood was completed in 1971, and stood more than forty feet high by the 1980s.\(^{302}\) The walls in Northern Ireland since their first use in 1969 have kept growing, getting higher, thicker, longer with each passing month.\(^{303}\)

\(^{299}\) It is undetermined whether or not the same type of refugee migration occurred in L/Derry as well because of conflicting testimonies from interviews with both sides.

\(^{300}\) Ardoyne Commemoration Project. *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth.* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale. 2002), 20-1


\(^{303}\) Interview 31 on July 19, 2007. Nine have been built and eleven have been built stronger since the 1994 cease fires. Owen Bowcott and Mark Oliver. “Another brick on the wall.” *The Guardian.* July 4, 2007.
Control and Confinement

The construction of the walls was not the only development that created an atmosphere of controlled space, but the British effort in Northern Ireland created a whole system of confinement and control in order to cope with the spread of violence throughout the country. This system was constructed in two major ways. The first was through the developing and constructing of physical controls of space. The most noted physical control was the construction of “peace walls.” These “peace walls” were built along what were considered to be interfaces between opposing groups. In 2005, there were 25 interfaces in Belfast alone.\(^{304}\) This number has increased drastically as the British have decided to replace their military presence with the fortitude of concrete, iron fences, and barbed wire. The presence of the walls is looming in height and width, and yet most people who live near the walls said that they forgot they were even there. “We don’t even recognize it. When we step out side and look, we just see a green wall.”\(^{305}\) The walls don’t have to be recognized anymore to have drastic subconscious effects on the community. The system of “peace walls” has not prevented violence between the two divided communities. In fact, it just reconstructs how violence is carried out. Petrol bombs, stones, and bricks are objects that frequently make trips over the height of the walls. The walls made violence across the interface anonymous, allowing each group a certain sense of freedom to attach whenever they pleased. Violence prevailed despite the walls. One third of all deaths occurred within 250 meters, 70% within 500 meters, 80% within

\(^{304}\) Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh *Belfast: Segregation, Violence, and the City.* (London: Pluto Press. 2006), 62. For a definition of “interfaces” please see Appendix A.

\(^{305}\) Interview 21 on July 10, 2007.
the interface areas, and 90% in Protestant or Catholics enclaves. The wall has clearly perpetuated violence, rather than prevented it, and has played a defining role in the rates of violence within the surrounding areas.

For many residents of segregated places, the borders between unionist/loyalist and republican/nationalist spaces are not merely boundaries between communities but important instruments in the definition of discursively marked space. Interface walls are not interpreted as protective barriers that impede violent enactment…The immediate impact of interface walls is to create social, political, and cultural distance between communities. The capacity of such boundaries to turn small-scale physical distances into expansive symbolic signs of cultural and political differentiation is both significant and undeniable.

In their unmistakable power, the walls dominate the landscape of Belfast. The concrete marks off definitive ethnic enclaves initially for control, but this separation has caused an unmitigated level of “acceptable violence.”

The walls are frequently called “peace walls” by the media, but the residents only use the term jokingly. Instead, a better term is the one used by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE): environmental walls. The walls do create an environment, and for the communities forced to live beside the concrete or iron, they are a physical and symbolic reminder of the control they are under. The residents are boxed in: shut in not only from the opposing community, but by the British army who initially built the wall, and who symbolically still control it.

The NIHE claimed that these walls were constructed in response to local demand. But community leaders denied any such demand. As Brian Feeney of the Social Democratic and Labour Party pointed out, they did not feel protected by the wall, but on the contrary were worried about being hemmed

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307 Ibid., 57.

308 While the NIHE is now in charge of the building and financing of the “environmental walls,” the British army was the original builder of the longest standing peace walls in the conflict, and typically the people of the community see it representing their authority and not the authority of the NIHE. This sentiment is especially prevalent when discussing the walls with republican or nationalist communities.
Not only do the communities connect the walls with a sense of control, but the British and Northern Irish governments have not hid this connection. It is not simply symbolic, but strategically significant that as the British army pulls out its troops, more and more environmental walls are being constructed and reinforced.

The peacelines that British soldiers built and continue to build are the sorry and inevitable outgrowth of a policy successive British governments have pursued since Partition: they acquiesced in the creation of the sectarian state; they supported it as long as they could…The peacelines are, in every sense, a British creation. The presence of one is inextricably linked to the presence of the other.

The walls created unnatural restrictions, barriers within the communities where shops and leisure centers and workplaces used to be. These concrete and iron structures became the first and most widely recognized implementation of control within post-1969 Northern Ireland.

Another major aspect of architectural control within Northern Ireland was the development of housing plans. A large portion of individuals, especially those living in ethnic enclaves that were associated with high rates of violence, lived in social or public housing. This housing was designed and allocated by the NIHE after it inception in 1971. Housing in Northern Ireland today is completely different from the housing in Northern Ireland during the conflict. Many structures were redeveloped in the 1960s and 1970s, some of which was deemed highly problematic by its residents. Housing structures, like Divis Tower and Rossville Flats were

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designed in the 1960s, when the policy of gerrymandering was highly influential in determining Catholic or Protestant housing. For the most part, people wanted to live with their own communities. As the NIHE allowed them the choice of housing estates, most people choose to live within their own group of Catholics or Protestants. 311 While segregation was self-imposed in this sense, the physical structuring of the housing units was imposed upon the communities. The Bogside is a very visual example of physically manipulated housing for security reasons. The houses are arranged in linear rows, which allows clear visibility to anyone from the base. Streets are also mostly organized around cul-de-sacs or dead ends. There are a few easily controlled entrances and exits in and out of the community. While the Bogside is an easily recognizable example, there are dozens of communities across the country that seem to be constructed in a similar manner. An expose on the military designs of housing units was published in *The Guardian* in 1982, with a specific focus on the design of Polegass, a Catholic neighborhood in West Belfast.

He described how cul-de-sacs had been designed to facilitate the movement of military vehicles and how pathways through the estate had been built with unusually deep foundations to allow heavy Army vehicles to travel along these ‘pathways.’ Polegass had also been built with limited entry and exit points, thus allowing it to be quickly sealed off for any security operation. 312 The article implied that there was an intentional design by security forces to control and manipulate how people lived, how they moved and functioned in their communities, and to provide an advantage for any security force that may need to quickly control and confine the estate’s residents.

The NIHE emphatically denies that this connection between security forces and residential planning ever occurred. “The military was never involved in the architectural designs of the housing. Personal security of the families involved was a strong factor, but many estates were built in the same way pre-Troubles.”313 The NIHE referenced that all major cities and towns consider strategic planning, using the example of Washington D.C.’s layout.314 There is currently no proof that security forces or British or Northern Irish officials were involved in the planning of housing estates. However, whether or not this claim is true does not change the perceptions on the ground. Most people who live or lived in these housing estates during the conflict believe that they lived in manipulated and controlled spaces.315 This perception of control shaped how people felt about living in their space and about how they interacted with their community. Even the simple act of exiting or entering a space, is considered by residents to be constructed not just by an outside force, but an oppressive authority that is exerting its power and control. The impact of constantly being watched and observed also takes a toll on the community, as every movement one must fear being considered a potential “security risk.” “The sense of being constantly watched, listened to and having every aspect of their lives observed and recorded cast a shadow on the community. The consequences of this (not least in terms of early death and ill-health) echo down to the present.”316 In Free Derry as well, people in the Bogside were very aware and fearful of the fact that they were being watched all the time. Throughout the years, many innocent victims, including

315 Field Notes L/Derry, 2006.
316 Ardoyne Commemoration Project. Ardoyne: The Untold Truth. (Belfast: Beyond the Pale. 2002.), 66
children, were shot at because the security forces claimed they thought these people were a threat to security. This constant presence of “big brother” also stripped residents of their own sense of personal privacy. With cameras and watch towers, the community below came under the careful control of the ‘other.’ In this environment, the reaction was that the communities in “controlled” areas to try to take back their spaces.

A crucial part of the development of a community is the structuring of roads and road blocks. In Belfast and L/Derry, there are main highways that divide sectarian areas from non-sectarian areas. In Belfast, the Westlink Motorway was constructed dividing West Belfast, which includes the Shankill and Falls Road, from the city center. It was constructed in the 1980s, after a decade of debates on its development.317 Not only does the construction of the Westlink physically separate West Belfast from the rest of the city, but it also cuts off traffic coming into and out of the area, physically isolating the communities even more.

Catholic West Belfast is virtually sealed off from the rest of the city, a development that the residents of Belfast have not been consulted about nor given approval to. The British Army and the police apparently have been consulted. The Motorway takes traffic by and no longer through working class West Belfast…The Motorway is in fact a permanent ‘Peace Line’ separating the Catholic and Protestant districts.318

In L/Derry, a highway goes right through the first section of the Bogside, parting at the Free Derry wall. The development of the road could be considered a physical separation of “problem” areas from the Protestant city center. Not only were roads constructed, but they were also demolished. As common practice around the area of

Crossmaglen, many roads were physically blocked off with concrete, barbed wire, and tanks.

The British then brought in heavy digging equipment and dug deep trenches, six inch by six inch steel girders were put in place in the trenches. Steel wire rope was then laced through the girders and the trench filled up with concrete. Imbedded in the concrete was half a ton of solid cement blocks. Some of these blocks are still to be seen around the border roads.\textsuperscript{319}

The road blocks were an intentional move on the part of the security forces to control the movement of the area. The true official motives behind building of highways to separate spaces cannot be proved or disproved, but, like housing, it is again a commonly held belief among individuals living in those cut off areas. Road construction and demolition added to an atmosphere of control and manipulation of the communities. It is especially symbolic when cutting a community off from the city center, cutting them off from the prominent sources of economic, political, and social power with the culture of the community. West Belfast, even today, continues to feel cut off from the city center as a plan for a new public tram stops right at the very end of their community.\textsuperscript{320} These understandings of manipulation cannot just be discredited as “conspiracy theories.” Instead, it should be recognized that understandings of space and environment had profound impacts on how residents perceived themselves and reacted to others in the conflict.

Movement is a vitally important aspect of space. Space and time are two concepts that are experienced in a symbiotic relationship with each other. Space isn’t just physical, but exists on multiple levels as it is experienced through its past, present, and future all in the now. People treat and interact with spaces differently.

\textsuperscript{320} Interview 19 on July 9, 2007.
with varied understandings and uses of time. A space is produced by time and the understanding of time is produced in a space. Therefore, movement and the ability to move within a space, thus experiencing time, becomes a process of social construction on and by the social agent. Movement is a very real experience of abstract concepts that play out in everyday life. A strong portion of the security forces’ physical control of space was through its manipulation of movement by taking control of their time and access. “To be able to make a person wait is, above all, to possess the capacity to modify his conduct in a manner congruent with one’s own interest. To be delayed is in this light to be dependent upon the disposition of the one whom one is waiting for.” The security forces managed to control a community’s experience of time in several ways, not only trying to mitigate paramilitary activity, but also using it to display their absolute authority. In the everyday lives of the residents of these enclaves, this restriction of movement became the most forceful example of control and created strong feelings of frustration, fear, and anxiety.

The most common form of control was check points, which was a practice where security forces would pull over cars, stop people, check their IDs, ask them questions, and many times physically and mentally harass them. In L/Derry, a walk from the Guild Hall to the Bogside, which is around 300 feet, would sometimes contain four check points. Crossmaglen residents were plagued by their local check points. “When you went out you have to be prepared to stop two or three

323 Interview 29 on July 18, 2007.
times, being searched, guns in your face. There was constant surveillance.”324 Later on in the conflict, paramilitaries set up their own check points, to use the same mechanisms of power that the security forces had over their people.

Another form of restricted movement was the curfew. The Falls Road and Shankill both had curfews where the gates were shut at different times when the British army decreed it. As one resident described it, “I called it the Shankill Zoo because once the gates were closed the community would go crazy.”325 Historically, curfews were common restrictive practices as the Catholics of the Bogside would be forced outside of the city center every night when the church bell rang.326 These forms of control were incredibly disruptive to the lives of the people in the communities. What would be considered a simple trip to the grocery store anywhere else, became an ordeal involving guns. “It stopped us from moving and living. As it went on I got more and more annoyed.”327 Another form of time and movement control was house raids, carried out by the security forces during the period of internment. Soldiers would burst into houses at all times of the day and night, disregarding any sense of personal property or privacy.

But it is hard to take people coming into your home singing and treating it as if it is not yours. They acted as if it wasn’t my home. I remember one time one of them just went to put the teapot on himself. Then I went in the other room and some of them were sat there using our polish to blacken their boots. They just did what they wanted; your house was not your own. You were always waiting for a raid.328

324 Interview 14 on July 4, 2007.
325 Interview 17 on July 5, 2007.
326 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
327 Interview 15 on July 4, 2007.
The check points, house raids, and curfews didn’t diminish the levels of violence occurring in these communities, but instead brought increased frustration, fear, and camaraderie among the individuals in the communities. The restrictions placed on people’s movements took away their power and agency as individuals and subjected them to the physical constraints and authority of the security forces. People’s time was literally and symbolically devalued as insignificant. Having to attend a meeting or church or a football game as in the case of the Crossmaglen Rangers, became secondary, almost insignificant to the whims of the security forces as people were forced to stop. People had no privacy, no sense of personal space. They were stripped of the very things that most citizens of a country take for granted as defining them as individuals.

The physical creations of control and confinement used in this conflict were systematic and planned. The intentional or unintentional consequences drastically changed the environments of the neighborhoods in all three areas, Belfast, L/Derry, and Cross. The choices made by both the British and Northern Irish governments dramatically changed the way in which the conflict unfolded. Instead of being part of a larger historical cycle of temporary uprisings, the developments of the summer of 1969 turned into a full scale internal war. By systematically segregating and oppressing the areas involved in the conflict, security forces managed to set into motion a powerful cycle that lead to the perpetuation and strength of the conflict. The change of space in the community democratized the causes of the conflict, involving not just former members of the IRB, but all individuals on either side. This was not just a war of the IRA or the UDA as the media and government would like the
international community to consider it. Instead, it was a war of the people. Despite the preconceived notion that the IRA started the conflict, the organization didn’t gain strength until 1972 after the Bloody Sunday massacre in L/Derry, an event which sparked such a backlash within Irish communities that the next few days there were enlistment lines for the IRA running around the block.329 On the loyalist side, the UDA was originally designed as a community defense league, where lawyers, dentists, and dock workers would join together and practice “battle” formations on the local football pitches.330 The period of internment, initiated in 1971, became a watershed period for democratized violence as communities were being terrorized at all times of the day or night, as security forces broke into homes to find “suspects,” failing to see any barrier between the community and the paramilitaries.331 People took to heart the challenges and demands each community, loyalist or republican, faced.

Violence became a necessary and sanctioned tool to use in order to defend against the security forces and to find some sense of security and control. Violence in the Northern Irish conflict was either carried out by the paramilitaries, or by individuals that attacked along interfaces or ganged up against outsiders. The paramilitaries were initially created for the protection of the communities. Even people against the use of violence found themselves siding with and approving of the tactics of the paramilitaries because the groups were seen as being there for their protection.

329 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006.
330 Interview 18 on July 6, 2007.
331 Internment was a policy created by the British, which started in 1971. See Appendix A for more information.
Violence is treated as psychological artifact and surface effect of the origin. The value-imbued character of the origin legitimates or delegitimates violence by endowing social actors with a predetermined normative character that is absorbed, like osmosis, from the origin.\textsuperscript{332}

The origin of the conflict-level violence was the not the existence of an enemy group, but the actions taken by the British and security forces to control the communities. These actions lead by example, creating the atmosphere of a conflict environment as well as the motivations to support such an intensity. Even now, the majority of the British army has left, but the remaining physical structures of the conflict continue to legitimate this force of violence.

Beyond its initial use for defense, violence became a force that transcribed social understandings onto physical planes. The act of violence as well as the memories and history that it created heightened spatial identification. For example, an act of violence from the Ardoyne Catholics on Glenbryn would create boundaries, as well as reinforce an understanding of what is Catholic and what is not. This process drew from the initial policy of the British to restructure the physical spaces in Belfast, L/Derry, and Crossmaglen, managing to politicize the spaces people lived in. By creating enclaves and readily identifiable conflict zones, spaces were then connected with specific social identities, with power, and with contested histories. No longer were they just neighborhoods, but these areas were now contested areas, connected with a specific ethnic and political identity. The social groups then acted on and reinforced this politicized understanding of space. Through this, areas, in fact, became territories, understood as belonging to a specific ethnic group.

Space...is seen to function as an object that hosts historical ‘truths’ and collective discourses. Community and history, for this group, serve as micro-territorial constructions, which reinforce the way in which geography presents sectarian hostility as a valid politicization of space. Among those who advance sectarian discourses the materialization of residential segregation into spatial constructs is imperative in order to functionalize and advance topographic conflict.333

The population of each enclave could not escape its identity because it was confined to itself. These understandings were imposed by outsiders, both official rhetoric and out-group stereotyping. People also understood space reinforced by an in-group culture that embodied its social experience, experiences intimately connected with violence and conflict. These social experiences in Northern Irish enclaves were experiences of violence, death, gun fights, and balaclavas. Spaces were connected with experiences and labeled as Catholic, Protestant, Bogside, or Cross. As a newly understood territory, residents developed an innate attachment to the space, as it was no longer just a space but their place. The understanding of each space as a place progressed to the understanding of place as a territory. The process of control and confinement classified space as the main source of power and security in this conflict. The accumulation of territory was understood as the key to survival.

Territoriality is the geographical expression of social power...It is a form of control or enforcement which ‘uses area to classify and assign things’ and it works by controlling access into...the specified areas. In doing so, it reifies power, de-personalizing social relationships. It...gives relationships of power a greater tangibility and appearance of permanence.334

Space is powerful and represents power. It can be understood as a sanctuary for some and simultaneously be a place of fear for others. The process of politicization and

333 Peter Shirlow. “‘Who Fears to Speak’: Fear, Mobility, and Ethnosectarianism in the Two ‘Ardoynes’” The Global Review of Ethnopolitics. 3.1. (2003): 86
territorialization, developed through the medium of violence, drove the direction and intensity of the conflict.

The process of politicization of space also allowed for a heightened process of democratization of the conflict, which reinforced the rhetoric coming from each group. The democratization of the conflict has been the driving force in the longevity of the violence and segregation. Without the people’s support the paramilitaries would be no more.

The barricade/interface, divorced from calendrical associations, was a prescribed place for chronic violence. The subsequent erection of ‘environmental barriers’ by the British government did little in the way of reducing the attraction of violence to this type of space. The politically charged interface ceased to be an expression of community identity and began to regulate community experience.\(^{335}\)

These two processes acting simultaneously, through the policy of the reconstruction of physical space, created a whole new system of social dynamics in Northern Ireland. The politicization of space tied all areas into the conflict, whether or not they were involved in paramilitary activity. The new political identity of space linked places with group power, garnering strength for the Catholic or Protestant cause. By then territorializing spaces into places, groups developed new found senses of security and stability. This system would carry its separate communities separately into the 21st century as each area became tight knit ethnic enclaves reinforced by environmental walls, road blocks, watch towers, and housing estates.

**Tribalism, Not Sectarianism and Conflict Culture**

Sectarianism is the adjective attached to most discussions of ethnic conflict. The term tribalism was used frequently by residents interviewed on the conflict in

Northern Ireland. “It isn’t a sectarian conflict…but really it is tribalism. Defense of the territory against invasion.”

Tribalism can be understood as loyalty and belonging to a group that one share’s a common ancestry, culture, and political allegiances. Sectarianism can be understood as excessive attachment to one’s group, to the point of discrimination, hatred, and prejudice of other groups. In comparing the two terms, tribalism and sectarianism, the former seems to accurately highlight the system that created the escalating violence. The concept of tribalism speaks to the relations going on within the Protestant and Catholic groups. In the face of the physical changes going on around them, the communities of Belfast, Cross, and L/Derry felt and saw that they were being stripped of any power they had associated with their own neighborhood and home. The communities were being controlled, boxed in, told when and where they can enter and leave. The groups from both sides of the conflict who lived in these areas and were involved in most of the violence were working class communities. They had no economic power. Unemployment at the start of the conflict skyrocketed to a loss of almost 40,000 jobs, and the rate of unemployment in Northern Ireland was between 5 and 7.5%. Communities also had no relative political or social power. The British, who resided across the sea, still played a major role in the decision making within the country at the time. The Northern Irish political elite did not represent the communities in the same way that the Protestant Unionist Party (PUP) or Sinn Fein do now. This was a conflict started on the heals of the civil rights movement in the country, where Catholics were

336 Interview 1 on November 20, 2006
337 Definitions established from literature review as well as the Oxford English dictionary.
339 The PUP is the loyalist paramilitary political party.
just trying to gain the right to vote. The working class community clearly recognized they had no power from the start.

Culturally, both the republican and loyalist movements located conceptions of power in land and the ownership of land. Therefore, in the face of more marginalization and control by security forces, neighborhoods were faced with the idea that their own homes were no longer theirs. The communities believed it was vital to control and protect their territory as the only symbolic form of power left for them. Derived from historically developed Irish and Ulster plantation cultural values, territorialization of their neighborhoods was linked to their survival as an identity, as a tribe. It was a way to protect themselves from what was threatening them, whether it be the Protestants, Catholics or security forces. To regain a sense of power, the working class communities in controlled neighborhood developed a sense of territorialization over these areas as well as a highly complex way of expressing this ownership. This process of territorialization is displayed throughout the communities in the form of murals, ethnic colors, graffiti, and flags. The changing of place names was also a strategic way to denote “control” over an area by controlling the land.\footnote{Catherine Nash. “Irish Placenames: Post Colonial Locations.” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers. 24.4. (1999): 460-2.} The displays instantly express to the visitor who has power over this space and who that group identifies with.

The identity symbols are part of a larger discourse developed by the two communities, Catholic and Protestant, in the form of “conflict cultures.”\footnote{“Conflict cultures” is a term I developed to describe the group identity formation that was occurring. For a definition please see Appendix A.} These cultures served multiple purposes within the life of the communities. The culture
created a cohesive, strong, and loyal community where members felt connected, inspired, and protective of the culture and their identification with it. The culture also served to protect the community from the threatening outside, whether it be the security forces or opposing paramilitaries. While all cultures in some form aim to include and exclude, a conflict culture expresses it exclusion through the medium of violence, whether it be through physical attacks on outsiders or through identity symbols connected with their understandings of violence and victimhood. The culture provided a strong identity that members of the community could lean on in time of threat and fear. This security also came with the understanding that they would defend their community in a time of need. With the existence of a strong and united identity, there would be no threat of extinction or assimilation into opposing British or Irish cultures. “Segregation provides the ability to invest faith within place and to acquire cultural companionship. In effect, it creates a sense of homeliness within which residents imagine themselves to be at one with their neighbors and community.”

The development of a “conflict culture” also provided communities with a way to assume some type of autonomy within the confines of control. Since their political, economic, and now spatial power was taken away from them, this new unique culture provided them with a form of social power. They could include and exclude people. In a sense, Protestants and Catholics tried to create completely separate nationalities. Cultures tried to counter the immediate physical power of the walls, check points, and army bases going up around them.

The development of a strong conflict culture was not only to ensure cohesion within the group, but was also used to claim their territory and develop a sense of power over their area. “Markings of territory are like a dog peeing – all the flags, the painting of the curbstones, the signs are just peeing on their territory and they are doing the same down the road with the loyalists.”343 In the system of tribalism, each tribe has to mark its territory. As the violence progressed, conflict cultures reinforced the developing sense of territoriality over their area. It was never about the hatred of the other, but the defense of a scared group. The other could’ve been anyone, and it would not have changed the message of the conflict culture.

Violence, symbolized or practiced, in this performative context is identified as the appropriate medium for colonizing the outer margins of community space, while kinship and residential structures are reserved as the central ordering apparatuses of the internal community proper.344 Security and safety were scarce and became the most important commodities, commodities that could only be found in the membership of a conflict culture. This linkage can be seen as cultural connections within enclaves grew stronger throughout the conflict, as more walls, more bases, and more check points were created. The development of a conflict culture was an adaptive reaction to the control and confinement mechanisms that were developed at the beginning of this conflict as it provided a sense of protection from the outside and a sense of autonomy within the in-group.

Conflict culture on either side of the wall celebrated differentiating aspects of their identities. Some scholars claim that the Protestant and Catholic sides of the

343 Interview 12 on July 3, 2007.
conflict are not very different, but clearly the two sides developed very different understandings of themselves.\textsuperscript{345} Because of the religious and racial similarities between the two groups, it would be easy to dismiss them as similar. While to an outsider the differences might seem indistinguishable, a person who has lived on an interface for fifteen years, the differences are what have shaped his/her life. The conflict cultures developed around several important symbols, cultural markers, and values that each community rallied around and held to be sacred. These markers were not necessarily about hate, but held as symbols of strength. Even the murals with weapons are intended to show the group’s military might. While the cultures may be different, they were constructed and reinforced through similar means (i.e. murals, story telling, etc). The cultural symbols were also meant for the same purpose, to reinforce the in-group. Some of the cultural traits stemmed from historical references, but became polarized and ethnically identified as groups scrambled for distinctive cultural markers during the conflict.

Catholics, republicans, and nationalists have a very strong and distinctive culture. In many ways, it seems more cohesive than its Protestant counterpart. They celebrate their Irish and Celtic connections. Orange, green, and white are not only the colors of the “Irish Free State” flag, but the colors that a true nationalist would symbolically bleed. Murals spoke of Gaelic athletic games, historical events like Cuchulainn or prayer rocks, and Irish music and dancing.\textsuperscript{346} Generally in places where there were no tricolors painted or flashy murals, as in Crossmaglen, it was because to question their identity as Irish was in their minds absurd. Language, the

\textsuperscript{345} See Negotiating Identity by Anthony D. Buckley and Mary Catherine Kenney.
\textsuperscript{346} Prayer rocks were rocks in the forests that priests said mass at when the practice of Catholicism was deemed illegal in Ireland. They are still very sacred places to the Irish today.
ultimate key to cultural expression, was important in the conflict culture. There was a
great revival of spoken Irish among nationalists and republicans. Interest started as
men were imprisoned in Long Kesh during internment, a prison of intense
confinement where republicans found themselves reading, studying, and reinforcing
their conflict identities. The revival of Irish language was not only in speech, but
visual as republican areas replaced British signs with the original Gaelic names,
reconnecting to the Irish way of naming areas by its geographic distinctiveness.
“Place names each tell their own story. Language is very important. We don’t really
have the capacity through language to talk about big things because we don’t
understand them. We don’t have the same understanding of the same words.
Language is a very important mark of territory here.” Catholicism also played a
role in the lives of the republican community. Priests, whether active or passive, did
have a voice throughout the conflict. Churches were places of solace during riots,
burn outs, and other tragedies. Whether or not the commandments of Catholicism
were followed, the people preached their belief in it.

The Irish Catholic community frequent promoted specific traits and values
that they believe represented their journey. They would talk about the great leaders
of the Easter Rising and the Irish Rebellion. Their heroes would be simple men, yet
great leaders of revolutions intended for the people. They would sacrifice everything
for honor. Traitors were treated as distinctly evil. Nothing was worse than being a
traitor or informer. The IRA made sure this was reinforced through punishment-
beating and knee capping. Lastly, memorials and monuments became a large part of
the republican culture, and a significant development for the reinforcement of that

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347 Interview 12 on July 2, 2007.
culture. Monuments and memorials were created to fallen soldiers of republican paramilitaries, hunger strikers, child victims, and many were more generalized, created for the “people that lost their lives for Irish freedom.” These memorials serve as celebrators of the culture’s strength and values. They also reinforce belonging within the group. “Memorials are put up now as a way to bring people in because if a friend or brother are up there you have to be a republican in the way that they want you to be.”

The Catholic side developed a strong, central conflict culture that allowed community members to celebrate their belonging while reinforcing the victimization that they have experienced not just in Northern Ireland, but throughout history. In a societal position that seemed completely oppressed, the conflict culture that developed within the Irish Catholic community reinforced and empowered their position in the conflict.

Loyalist culture was designed to reinforce and empower its community as well, but through different symbols and cultural markers. The loyalist culture was very much centered around commonly held values of duty, loyalty, and honor. While there were certain values that were held near and dear, it is difficult to distinguish a unified and collective culture that surrounded the loyalist movement. The case of the loyalist conflict culture is a clearer example of the development of culture under conflict than the republican movement. This is because loyalists clearly had a very hard time developing a common identity and finding symbols that reflected their ethnic group. Prior to the conflict, they never had to consider themselves a distinct group. Many people from both the loyalist and republican sides observed that the loyalist movement seemed to struggle to find a culture to rally around, especially in

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the face of such a powerful and strong culture as was displayed by the Irish Catholic community. Initially the community had divided allegiances, some favoring their identification with Britain and some favoring their identification with Ulster. “The reluctance of…Ulster people to confront with honesty their own place in history and, in particular, to question the true nature of their link with Britain…It was thus that official unionist identity remained defined largely by the otherness of the catholic nationalism of the Irish Free State.”349 The loyalist movement then created a culture defined by “otherness.”

This sense of otherness developed through decades of the conflict as more symbols were brought into support a more unified understanding of the loyalist movement. Originally, the culture surrounded the images of significant historical victories like the Battle of the Boyne and the siege of L/Derry and the celebrations that surrounded the commemoration of these events. The loyalist movement started in resistance to perceived threat from the Irish Catholic community, and heightened by their collective siege mentality. This resistance was eventually felt by everyone. Originally, loyalist paramilitaries included a whole range of social classes as doctors, dentists, dock workers, and factory workers all walked side by side in military formation during the first days of the UDA.350 Paramilitaries used values like “notions of male discipline and understanding the need for personal sacrifice.”351 Culture was then built around common understandings of what it meant to be and to survive as a loyalist. These common values and understandings were, “a case of

350 Interview 18 on July 6, 2007.
351 Ibid., 888.
‘suffering for righteousness sake.’”³⁵² Later, the loyalist movement took on symbols that highlighted their cultural values in such events as the Battle of the Somme, which wasn’t used significantly as an icon until the 1980s.³⁵³ Recently, there has been a movement to recognize the dialect of Ulster-Scots as an official language of Northern Ireland. Rarely used in the same way that the Irish language had been used throughout the conflict, the campaign for language recognition reflects just how hard the loyalist community is working to create a unified cultural front. As the republican movement is gaining more credibility and confidence within the current power structure of Northern Ireland, the conflict culture of the loyalist movement is starting to gain similar recognition. Feeling the threat of siege growing, the loyalist movement uses murals, monuments, and ceremonies to reinforce their identity’s history and legitimacy. The loyalist identity is truly a culture developed in conflict.

The mechanisms set in place by the British authorities and security forces created perpetual violence instead of pacifying the situation. The violent and invasive reactions of the security forces sparked a response from the Protestant and Catholic communities to react with violence. By politicizing space through controlling physical space and movement, spaces were transformed into places identified with polarized ethnicities and histories. This developed territories out of the ethnically identified areas, where the boundaries were reinforced through developing conflict cultures. The whole process created a strengthened conflict environment that has continued until today.

Reinforcement

As the conflict continued, behavior and identity were reinforced through violence and control. Reactions by the opposing group and by security forces helped to reaffirm the newly created understanding of space and identity. Violence escalated as security forces attacked communities and paramilitaries retaliated. It created an endless cycle of escalation in which more controls were put on communities. Walls were built higher, check points were increased in frequency. Conflict cultures became more embedded in the communities, as the group needed to maintain the sense of power that seemed to ebb away as the British took control of Northern Ireland on March 30, 1972 at the start of the bloodiest year of the conflict. Acts of violence and memories of the conflict began to imprint themselves on the spaces in which the people of Belfast, Crossmaglen, and L/Derry lived. Out of thirty-six interviews, not a single person could name neutral spaces within the limits of the conflict zones.

There is no such thing as neutral spaces, even people who try to create neutral spaces are fooling themselves. Everyone had a stake, a roll, or an opinion, even the suburbs who tried to turn a blind eye couldn’t because they still favored one side.

The space of each area became a place, transformed by memory and experience. The places were constructed through physical creations of control as containers for violence and the perpetuation of violence.

355 Neutral spaces were defined as spaces untouched by the conflict, without connections to either side of the violence or a particular violent incident. It was a standard question I asked to all interviewees. See Appendix C.
The perimeter closes in from without; it en-closes by keeping things contained within its limits. Second, that which is thereby contained is located in a field upholding whatever specific action takes place in it. This field is sustaining from below, as it were. It stands under specific actions as a matrix of support, helping them to cohere as single events or as a concatenated set of events occurring just here and nowhere else. Memories formed mental boundaries around the areas, creating safe spaces and unsafe spaces. These connections helped to form how people understood themselves in a place. Some places would always be connected with horrible tragedies like Bloody Sunday, while a certain bus route or walk home could be considered threatening. The imprints of space reinforced the politicized nature of the different areas in Northern Ireland. Still today it is difficult to transform the meaning of a place because of the meanings of place are so ingrained in both individual and collective identities.

As memory, history, and space interacted within these three areas of Belfast, L/Derry, and Cross, they created conflict mentalities and environments that reinforce those collective group identities. The impact of these mentalities and environments can best be understood through the creation of mental maps. Mental maps labeled areas and groups with understandings that were reinforced by each group’s conflict culture. A Catholic from Glenbryn (Upper Ardoyne), for example, knew which spaces were safe to go and where it was not safe. The attacks in the area were mostly carried out by the republicans, not the security forces. It was understood that the border between Glenbryn and the Catholic Ardoyne was never to be crossed. “If I knew that my neighbour was shopping in Fenianville (Ardoyne) I would take a pounder (hammer) and knock his head off his shoulders. Those shops down there give

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money to the RA (PIRA).”

Because areas were cut off from each other, they created distorted understandings of the group on the other side of the wall. Even though the Shankill and the Falls, the Fountain and the Bogside are going through similar problems, the barriers between the communities created an isolated container of perspectives. Mobility was determined by areas that were considered safe and unsafe due to experience and identities linked with those places. Most people from the conflict areas have specific “no-go zones” that are associated with fear and violence. As with the example of Glenbryn, “Only 20% of those surveyed in Upper Ardoyne would use their closest facilities, all of which are located within Ardoyne.”

The residents from Glenbryn do feel safe traveling to loyalist neighborhoods in the area, especially the Shankill, because the tribes are similar. Restricted practices of mobility continued to reinforce conflict cultures and divisions along these cultures as no one experienced the community outside their own because the security forces constricted them and then their own communities did.

It is in this sense, too, that the disquisition which constitutes ethnic division, in the study areas is reproduced through what are essentially ‘lived experiences’…a reactive consciousness is not simply reproduced through ideology itself, but also in relation to mobility through physical and spatial terms.

Mental maps were fashioned around the new physical maps of the post-1969 control environment, and reinforced through experience and memory throughout the conflict. In relation to the historical practices of mapping and systematic ordering that the British have done to the island of Ireland, so too was Belfast, L/Derry, and

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359 Ibid., 84.
Crossmaglen ordered in a way that was easier for security forces to control the area. These physical constructions laid the base for mental constructions of conflict that developed a strong system of perpetuation.

**Underneath the Ceasefire**

Headlines in international newspapers claim that the conflict in Northern Ireland is over. While the PIRA has handed in its arms and the country is being demilitarized, there are still strong undercurrents of the conflict that have not gone away. The physical system of control and conflict culture that subsequently developed are still present. While there are no more check points, there are walls that continue to grow and an ever present use of cameras. It was not the IRA nor the UDA or UVF that created the conflict, but the undercurrent of community feelings and perceptions as drawn out by the restrictions in space and movement. Therefore there is still a very strong conflict mentality that exists within these communities, which sustains a constant level of low intensity violence throughout Belfast, L/Derry, and, on a smaller scale, Crossmaglen.

Physical space is so affected by the conflict and there is a negativity there. What people read, what they see on the news, hear and experience are constantly associated with the area. Therefore people react negatively in negative areas that they have heard about. It makes it a self perpetuating cycle.361

This self perpetuating cycle is still a part of the conflict, it represents the main issues that the sides have struggled for over the past 38 years, and will continue to struggle unless there is a move to transform not just through community building, but through spatial change.

361 Interview 4 on November 22, 2007.
Lessons Unlearned: Ireland, Israel, and Iraq

The front page news headlines about bombings have turned from Northern Ireland to new regions of the world, especially Israel and Iraq. While the conflicts are in different geographic regions with different historical, religious, and ethnic tensions, there are strong similarities between the three conflicts where we can apply conclusions from the conflict in Northern Ireland. Both Israel and Iraq are facing deeply polarized ethnic communities with radical groups. International efforts to stop the conflict in these areas have resorted to the same tactics used throughout Northern Ireland by the security forces. For example, currently there are large scale construction efforts in parts of Israel and Iraq that are building walls to divide polarized ethnic identities. Accompanying these walls are check points, security cameras, and watch towers in order to control and limit the movements and interactions between opposing communities. While designated by governments as “security measures,” these walls are hardly simple concrete structures, but carry complex meanings for the people who build them as well as for the people who live near them. The impact of these movements should be understood in light of the experiences in Northern Ireland, as the effects of the concrete and barbed wire will outlast the “initial security intent” of those involved at present.

Israel and Palestine are two groups who have been in conflict over power, security, and identity. Both communities are connected to the same piece along the
Middle Eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea. In 2002, the Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, decided to build a 790 km wall to separate the Palestinian areas of the West Bank from Israel. The wall is proposed to be built the length of the boundary between the two communities, with an elaborate system of trenches, barriers, security cameras and gates designed to provide “maximum security” for Israelis against bombings. The elaborate system “was important in preventing suicide bombings and that every day that passed without its completion endangered the lives of Israelis.” The official name of the fence in Hebrew is “kav ha tefer” which translates to “the seam zone,” but most Israelis aptly call it “the separation fence.” Naming is an important symbolic practice in conflict zones as it signifies power and position. In this case, the “seam zone” refers not to a joining of two different communities under a collective understanding, but instead represents a permanent separation of the sides.

Not everyone is as pleased with the construction of the fence as the Israeli government. Both the United Nations (UN) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have issued decrees condemning the building of the wall. The ICJ in its statement against the wall declared that it was a violation of the Geneva Convention, as well as,

It further considers certain fears expressed to it that the route of the wall will prejudice the future frontier between Israel and Palestine…It finds that the construction [of the wall], along with measures taken previously, . . . severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to

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364 Ibid. “Fence to be Completed Only by 2010.”
self-determination, and is therefore a breach of Israel’s obligation to respect
that right. 366

Palestinians also find the construction of the wall problematic. Its dimensions were
arbitrarily chosen by the Israeli government without consultation with Palestinians,
neither the representatives of government nor the people living on the border. The
wall now divides farmers from their fields and villages from their wells. In the case
of Qalquilya, a town along the border which is now completely walled in except for
one entrance and exit, the city, “has become like a big, open-air jail.” 367 Many
Palestinians are angered by the wall, and it has become a final visible statement of the
opinions of the Israeli government.

In the same way that Protestants and Catholics used to interact before the
development of “peace walls,” so too did neighboring Palestinians and Israelis.

‘I have been in Israel 30 years and there was some kind of relationship. I
knew many Arabs, visited their villages, drank coffee in their houses. They
drank coffee in mine. It is not necessary to love one another. But we do have
to find a way to coexist.’ He thinks the fence might help at the margins, ‘but it
is not a solution.’ 368

The creation of the walls solidified the divisions, and given the nature of the conflict
so symbolically and visibly driven by spatial control, this move by the Israelis is one
with dangerous consequences.

But this is the looking glass world of the West Bank where you can own
something and yet have no rights over it. One day armoured Israeli jeeps
arrived with a digger and imposed a curfew on the villagers. Concrete posts
started appearing in the ground. A couple of months later, Abdul Hafez and
the other farmers found notices pinned to trees. They were confiscation
orders, naming the pieces of land that were to be seized for the wall. 369

366 International Court of Justice. “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied
368 Ibid., “Set In Stone.”
369 Ibid., “Set In Stone.”
In the same pattern of Northern Ireland, land confiscation and imposed curfews appeared in the West Bank. Also with the arrival of the wall, check points have been established by the Israeli army as well as privately hired guards. “Seventy two percent of the surveyed communities complained of regular verbal abuse and humiliation by IDF soldiers at the gates. Twenty four percent reported damage or refusal of entry of agricultural products.” The wall is projected to be finished in 2010, and already the wall is creating tension where there were working relationships. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far from over, and with the creation of the wall there seems very little hope of dialogue between the two communities as it would have to be powerful enough to pass through barbed wire, cement, and an electrical fence.

Despite its archaic origins as far back as the Roman Empire, governments today have resurrected the building of security walls as the newest solution to ethnic conflict. With the continued conflict in Iraq, the United States has decided to build walls between the Sunni and Shia groups in order to prevent further sectarian violence, against the objections of the Iraqi government. “‘The Americans will provoke more trouble with this,’ one resident, Arkan Saeed, told the BBC. ‘They’re telling us the wall is to protect us from the Shia militia and they’re telling the Shia they’re protecting them from us.” This plan is part of the new “counterinsurgency operation” that the United States is carrying out in Baghdad and the rest of Iraq and it would be, “using barricades to create ‘gated communities’ that could only be entered

with newly issued ID cards.” In fact, this exact strategy of “conflict resolution” was modeled after the British actions in Belfast. “The US insists it will be a temporary barrier, made of moveable sections. But each giant concrete segment weighs 6.3 tonnes.” The heavy concrete wall, three miles long and twelve feet high, has been called many things: peace wall, barrier, prison wall. Like in Belfast and L/Derry, the communities being divided are beginning to see the consequences of the new US counter insurgency tactic.

It would be an understatement to say that the Iraqi communities involved feel less confident about the ability of the concrete to solve the underlying problems of Iraq society. The simple fact that these walls are built at night gives the act an underlying air of suspicion. “They [Baghdad specialists and citizens] say such barriers would worsen the lives of thousands of Iraqis and would increase violence. ‘When they build barriers, automatically they are assuming the existence of religious and ethnic differences in Iraq, reinforcing the fighting groups’ beliefs.’ The walls not only create divisions, but also feelings of confinement in an already chaotic city.

“I resent the barrier. It will make Adhamiya [suburb of Baghdad] a big prison…This will make the whole district a prison. This is collective punishment on the residents of Adhamiya.” Despite the insistence from United States’ officials that the walls

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will be temporary security measures, it should be clear from the experience in Belfast that walls, once put up, do not come down easily. Walls, security check points, and surveillance become ingrained in people’s lives transforming them through memory and experience. This seems to be only the start of “gated communities” in Baghdad.

“The conflict resolution business is in decline and the concrete industry is taking its place.” Peace and reconciliation efforts have taken a back burner to policies of spatial control in two of the most heated and violent ethnic conflicts in the past decade. In a similar vein to the start of the conflict in Northern Ireland, the building of the first wall solidifies a trajectory within the conflict space. The physical barriers and controls lead to more symbolic break downs of relationships, trust, and a desire to stop the violence. While it started with a wall in Belfast, Baghdad, and Jerusalem, it will only progress to more forms of control and confinement, couched in the rhetoric of “security measures.”

Various experts call the building of barriers and watch towers, “an admission of failure.” Such a diagnosis is too simple. While officials claim the policy is improving security, it’s interpreted by the communities as arrogance and ignorance. The ability to pen in groups within a city or establish watchtowers with 24-hour surveillance and snipers is a clear display of power. It establishes the position of superiority that a group believes it has, and creates a system of maintaining and reproducing that sense of authority. Walls are not just visual power displays, but also highly pervasive ones. As with the case in Northern Ireland, they create mental maps, transforming space into places with specific identities and meanings. The official

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rhetoric claims that walls, surveillance, and check points are purely for security, defense against paramilitary violence. If the walls were created purely for security measures, there would be no barbed wire or electric fencing. The barriers and security measures would also have been mutually negotiated agreements instead of imposed constructions. As with the security forces in Belfast, the creation of spatial controls comes with a very definitive expression of power underlying its establishment.

This expression of power is obvious to many residents, and their reactions reflect their understanding that they are living in barred communities. In both Palestine and Baghdad, complex cultures of graffiti and mural art have developed that mirror similar developments in Northern Ireland. These budding conflict cultures are using these visual actions to start grounding their own community identities in a dialogue of independence and resistance.

The writing on the walls challenged Israeli claims to surveillance, constituting a glaring index of the Israeli state’s inability to observe and control every place. In circumventing censorship and setting up a direct relationship with a public, graffiti invited an active response from readers…Graffiti were the silent narrative accompanying acts of resistance yet were themselves an act of resistance.

Since the construction of walls in the Roman times, controls of space were never just security measures but displays of power, and this development becomes not a cessation of violence within ethnic conflict, but a further politicization of space along ethnic lines.

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The reactions of both Palestinians and Iraqis to their new spaces of confinement are ones seen before: in Northern Ireland. It is through the ignorance of decision makers that the concept of “peace walls” and controlled space could have been considered viable solutions to conflict resolution. The conflicts in Israel and Iraq started from different premises. Israel’s conflict with Palestine has been an ongoing issue for decades, only to be heightened recently by the increased use of suicide bombs. Iraq’s conflict started recently, with the United States invasion to overthrow Saddam Hussein. While the tensions between the two sects of Islam in Iraq had tension throughout the Hussein reign, the chaos that has developed surrounding U.S. military involvement in the areas has increased tensions and a perceived need for gathering strength and power at any cost. Even though the conflicts in Israel and Iraq are between different groups, the progression of the conflict, under a policy of spatial control and confinement, can only be predicted as all too similar. Conflict cultures are already developing throughout the newly confined spaces; graffiti art and mural art are being used to territorialize spaces. Anonymous violence over barricades and the development of localized paramilitaries are also present. By politicizing space in a way that defines power, who has it and who doesn’t, the process of territorialization is reinforced though its own boundaries as communities are presented with increasingly confined options of space and movement. “For Palestinians, graffiti were an intervention in a relationship of power. As cultural artifacts, graffiti were a critical component of a complex and diffuse attempt to overthrow hierarchy; they were Palestinian voices, archival and interventionist.”\textsuperscript{381} The understandings that have come out of Northern Ireland have not been used to develop better conflict.

\textsuperscript{381} Ibid., 140
management. As the Catholics and Protestants are still confined by physical and symbolic barriers, so too will the communities of the Israelis, Palestinians, Sunnis, and Shias be. Despite its apparent plainness, the concrete that forms new walls, new checkpoints, and new watch towers has started another wave of complex connections within two of the world’s hottest conflict zones, and little if anything has been learned from the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Lessons to Come: Transformation

A common response from people in Northern Ireland when asked about the conflict is, “Oh it’s long over, if only you had been here a few years ago you would’ve seen some action.” While the high intensity violence has been over since the PIRA cease fire, the conflict is not over. It still shapes how people live their lives. The spaces they walk through and the places that they see require them to relive their experiences in the conflict everyday. There is no neutral space left, as people’s mental maps constantly identify spaces and groups in terms of conflict-based dialogue. Money and resources are pouring into Northern Ireland in hopes that the country will be able to patch itself together as a major success story among modern ethnic conflicts. Cross community work is being done between all different types of Protestant and Catholic communities. Most of the conflict transformation work fails to actually transform the communities and settings. People still remain in separate spheres, surrounded by a reinforced conflict culture that they grew up with, their parents grew up with, and that they have taught their children. This cycle has lead to constant levels of low intensity violence. “Groups feel the need to start violence in order to get funding. There is an attraction to interface areas. They start riots to
There is a plethora of creative and energetic conflict transformation work being done throughout the country, but people still live in conflict communities where their identities are linked with territory, memory, and place. The question now becomes whether or not space, so politicized by connections with memory, violence, and experience, can be transformed out of a conflict situation. Can space be de-territorialized, especially with the remnants of spatial control and confinement still intact? Do the citizens of Northern Ireland want it to be? How can a person’s or a group’s memory be changed?

From the beginning, the British used land as an important marker of power and identity. The unique process of colonization in Northern Ireland linked identity and land, making it more than just a contested resource.

In such a process the colonized is typically passive and spoken for, does not control its own representation but is represented in accordance with a hegemonic impulse by which it is constructed as a stable and unitary entity. This is not all: bringing it within the confines of knowledge, making it knowable, robs the colonized...of contradiction and depth, to be left drained and empty under the gaze of the conqueror.383

In the development of the modern day conflict, the people of Northern Ireland were still confined “under the gaze of the conqueror” as an elaborate system of spatial control was developed in order to control and suppress the ethnically charged communities of Belfast, L/Derry, and Crossmaglen. In response, conflict cultures developed for both Protestant and Catholics ethnic enclaves as strong systems of inclusion and exclusion. These cultures were intimately connected with the spaces, turned places, that people lived in and experienced. “Ideological perception obtains a material charge from the force fields of politically codified space that directly

382 Interview 27 on July 17, 2007.
mobilizes and channels action.” The “action” is now a constant level of low intensity violence throughout the region. Low intensity violence includes different forms of harassment, sectarian beatings, and interface attacks. This low intensity violence is a part of the everyday lives of conflict communities, and flows under the radar of the government when compared to the more dangerous paramilitary violence. The cycle of conflict has not been broken as the spaces of conflict are still in tact, and ignoring these important community problems will only make the situation in Northern Ireland worse.

There have been some attempts to transform space within Northern Ireland in the form of memorial and monument creation. Monuments and memorials have the potential to provide closure for events, but in Northern Ireland this process becomes problematic. Memorials and monuments have been set up throughout the country to remember the dead as well as different events and sacrifices. Monuments, unlike memorials, have broader historical connections beyond the modern day conflict. The Ulster walls in L/Derry, for example, are a prominent monument now being used to draw tourism into the city, as the City Council is trying to depoliticize the meanings that the walls have within the community. Memorials are for the most part used to commemorate the sacrifices and dead of each side. Despite their somber connections, memorials and monuments are always couched in desired meanings and messages. Who is the memorial for, who is it being sponsored by, what is its intended audience, and where it is placed all become part of the dialogue to understand the memorial beyond its’ engravings. Even cemeteries, seemingly neutral spaces to lay rest to

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loved ones, have become highly politicized and symbolic spaces as one side wants to claim victimhood over another. One of the most interesting memorials in all of Northern Ireland is located in the center of Crossmaglen. The statue is of a man rising out of the ashes of a phoenix to remember all those who died for Irish freedom.

The meaning of the man resting his foot on the Bird of Destiny and lifting up with it is obvious. It is the knowledge of Irish culture and history which has fed the patriots and given them, with the enthusiasm for their cause, the desire and the will to pursue an ideal never abandoned and lying deep into the soul of every Irishman worthy of the name.385

The memorial, while glorifying the sacrifices of those “freedom fighters” for Irish freedom, also is a defiant statue of power against the British army base positioned across the square. With its clenched fists and upwardly turned chin, the bronze figure is a sign of strength and resistance from the community.

Memorials and monuments can embody the past and help communities to heal by being a physical container for memories and victimhood. Yet,

Commemoration doesn’t necessarily move people forward if they are selective about it. The memorials up in the Creggan, the H-block, and IRA memorials about Bloody Sunday…It is an important action to help free mental space which can feed into the physical one. Commemoration as a space – I feel as if it can tell the story wrong. It creates victimhood and feeds into the hatred and anger of the situation.386

Memorials can also help to solidify a place’s position as a conflict space. Because of their sacred nature, memorials can’t be altered or removed without great insult and contestation. They are used to keep people engaged in the conflict. A memorial’s statement of history, while it may be inaccurate, remains a powerful and “official” marker of that group’s story. Some initiatives have been started to try to create

386 Interview 4 on November 22, 2006.
common forms of recognition. The organization Healing Through Remembering, a collaborative initiative working on five different healing processes for the conflict, deals with a whole array of problems when it comes to remembering and memorializing space. They have to be extremely cautious in the wording used on publications and in the meeting sites they choose, a concern that was even present in choosing the site of their offices, which was designed to appear open, as the organization didn’t want to appear as if they were hiding anything.\textsuperscript{387} So far the process of remembering is not connected with the process of healing, but only a perpetuation of tribal divisions. The process of change must overcome the current system of remembering, which re-inscribes the conflict culture and divisions. True transformation must turn towards the physical transformation of space and the social transformation of narratives.

Already, former conflict sites are being looked at to transform Northern Ireland into another great Western European power-house. Long Kesh, for example, is the former prison used during internment and through the end of the conflict. Its design is reminiscent of a concentration camp, with half circle tin barracks that housed different paramilitaries. The design of the prison was used to disorient and disrupt the loyalties that these people had to their respective conflict environments. The site of Long Kesh is associated with great pain, emotion, and sorrow for not just former internees, but the families and friends who visited and remember those difficult times. In an effort to move on from such conflict environments, the government is in the process of demolishing the prison in order to potentially build a sporting facility. This plan has caused great controversy on all sides as groups are

\textsuperscript{387} Interview 23 on July 11, 2007.
debating about the implications of the site and its possibilities for transformation. This type of debate is going on across the country as developers are trying to take over former conflict spaces in order to make profit and progress.

While the transformation of very identifiable conflict spaces is complex and so far unsuccessful, there are two very interesting ways attempts at transformation that have the potential to challenge current notions of both physical space and social narratives. The first is an option created by the NIHE that allows people who have been living in their public housing for more than twenty years to buy their house at a reasonable rate. This provides the opportunity for many struggling working class families to finally own property. “Now the houses are stunning because people take pride in the ownership of the house.”388 Giving people the ability to physically control something as close to their identity as their own home diminishes the need to find power and security in territorializing the neighborhood. People can take pride in their investment and break away from the greater group conflict culture, reducing its strength. The physical transfer of power to people through the owning of a house could actually be a significant way of creating meaningful change.

Another path of transformation is the rewriting of cultural experiences. Most of the events and people that are meaningful to the history of Northern Ireland have distinct tribal connotations. If people were willing to relearn these social narratives, then the understandings of Northern Irish history could be collective as opposed to exclusive. For example, the original fight between William of Orange, a Protestant, and James, a Catholic, could be understood as a fight between the defender of the parliament, or the democratic process, and the monarch, or divine rights. In this

388 Interview 4 on November 22, 2006.
reevaluation, it is no longer about religion, but about secular political processes. In fact, it was about defending the rights of the common people.\footnote{Interview 33 on July 20, 2007.} By challenging people’s traditional understandings of events that construct polarized conflict cultures, there is potential to challenge and disrupt the acceptance of the culture itself. These are just two examples of potentially powerful and meaningful ways to transform a conflict society so ingrained in measures of control and confinement.

On its face, Northern Ireland may be a post conflict society, yet on its streets and in its neighborhoods it is still grappling with the issues that have driven the violence for so many years. In many areas, especially in Belfast, L/Derry, and Crossmaglen that are discussed here, people are not over the conflict, they still live with it every day. It dictates where they buy their food, what bus route they take, and where they go to the gym. These attitudes and cultures are no longer reinforced by paramilitary and security force violence. The reinforcing factor is now the place, the space that people live in, that they connect with. Spaces throughout Northern Ireland are still being controlled. There are more walls, more barbed wire, and more cameras than ever before. While the British army has left and the bases are being deconstructed, their replacements are fortified police stations that still resemble the oppressive and controlling nature that an army base any where else in the world would look like. This conflict will not end until there is a disconnect between space, violence, territory, and identity. This must happen with the people who live in Crossmaglen, the Shankill, the Ardoyne, and the Fountain. It does not matter if the government is able to finally sit at the same table if the people are not able to shop at the same store. Until people are willing to recognize and discuss the importance that
space has in creating and perpetuating the conflict, then there can be no meaningful transformation of conflict.

A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions, or political apparatuses. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space – though its impact need not occur at the same rate, or with equal force, in each of these areas.²⁹⁰

In breaking free of decades of violence, the post-conflict work in Northern Ireland cannot stop with traditional conflict management techniques. Instead, it must be able to transform current places into new spaces, which are unmarked with physical or social connections to a particular identity.

The system of conflict management brought to Northern Ireland by the British, and now used in Israel and Iraq, does not solve anything but instead politicizes the environment that people live in. Despite the amount of post conflict work being done in Ireland, thus far there has been no meaningful change to the system of control, conflict culture, and territorialization. There is still a strong undertone of violence that children are being bred into. One man who was interviewed about the Ulster walls in L/Derry called them a “haven for thieves.” His virulent reaction to walls built over three hundred years ago just speaks to the depth in which this conflict has been ingrained in people’s understandings, both horizontally in their own experiences and vertically in their understandings of their past, present, and future. While most writings on the Northern Irish conflict end on a positive note, this is not the reality. The conflict is still being played out in very real ways; there has been no transformation that breaks the country away from its violent

past. This is exemplified in the development of new housing estates that are marked with union jack or tri-colored flags even before the first house is sold. Until people’s understandings and experiences of space can change, they will still live their lives confined by the walls in their lives and in their minds.
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Appendix A: Clarification of Terms

Battle of the Bogside: occurred between August 12-14, 1969 in the Bogside in Derry. There were riots by the Irish in the Bogside because of the Apprentice Boys celebrations, and the RUC entered using water cannons and tear gas to control the rioters. The residents retaliated with stones and bricks. This eventually escalated into a full-scale battle as the RUC didn’t have the man power to contain the action. Barricades were set up around the area and the residents held strong against the RUC until the deployment of British troops to the area on the 15th of August.

Bloody Sunday: occurred in the Bogside on January 30, 1972. A civil rights march started in the Creggan and worked its way down into the Bogside, potentially a crowd of around 10,000 people. The Parachute Regiment of the British army established a road block along the street into the city center. As the march tried to cross, the army pushed them back with rubber bullets, water cannons, and tear gas. Some people from the crowd reacted by throwing stones and bricks. The Parachute Regiment retaliated by shooting into the crowd. The army killed thirteen unarmed men and injured seventeen more individuals, chasing the residents into the Bogside down Rossville Street and shooting into Glenfada Park, an enclosed residence. No army personnel have ever claimed responsibility or blame, and the Bloody Sunday Inquest is still going on today.

Catholic: a sect of Christianity that believes the figure of Jesus is a savior and the authority and power of the pope at the Vatican. Almost all Irish, whether or not they practice identify as Catholic. 90% of the Republic of Ireland is Catholic and 44% of Northern Ireland is Catholic.

Civil Rights movement: the movement started in the mid-1960s and went up until 1972, when Bloody Sunday occurred. The movement focused on gaining recognition for the status of Catholics in the country and getting basic rights like the right to vote and better housing. Up until this point, the right to vote was reserved for property owners, none of whom were Catholic. The formation of the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in 1966 was the driving force behind much of the movement, organizing protest marches and demonstrations. Most of the rallies were outlawed by the government and in 1969 the British army was sent in.

The conflict: is the most recent violent conflict which spanned the years of 1969 – up until the present day. While many people refer to this era as “the Troubles,” this same term was also used in reference to the rioting and violence that went on during the 1920s partition era. In this thesis, in order to avoid confusion, “the conflict” is used to refer to the modern day violence, unless otherwise specified.

Conflict culture: a group identity developed out of a conflict situation in which security is scarce and violence is an acceptable tool of social practice. The culture defines strict in-group and out-group identities with highly selective membership. It includes high expectations of loyalty from its members, highly suspicious of outsiders, and a reinforcing system of cultural practices that justifies and perpetuates the conflict that
developed it. This could be a polarization of an existing culture or a formation of a new culture in the face of a security crisis.

**CIRA**: Continuity Irish Republican Army, split off from the PIRA in 1986 due to a disagreement over the PIRA’s constitution. The CIRA claims that they are the only real extension of the original IRA. This paramilitary is still active.

**Cuchulain**: a mythical Irish hero, the first story of is of him as a child. Cuchulain killed a local landlord, Culain’s vicious hound dog. In return, the child offered himself as a guard dog for Culain and he became known as Cuchulain or Culain’s hound. The figure is used many times in the Irish republican and nationalist movement, and a statue of Cuchulain is at the site of the GPO, which was the hold out for the Easter Rising movement of 1916.

**Fenian**: derived from an old Irish mythic hero, the term Fenian, once used in reference to Irish revolutionary militias is now used as a derogatory reference towards the Catholics and Irish in Northern Ireland.

**Free Derry**: is used to refer to the area of the Bogside. The concept was created during the summer of 1969 when the rioting caused great unrest in the area. Residents barricaded the borders of the area in order to create an idea of a separate no-go area where the security forces could not enter. It became a self contained community with its own patrol force, community justice board, newspaper, and even a Free Derry radio. The army eventually broke through the barricades and entered the area. The initial concept of Free Derry still remain intact, even up until today.

**Hunger Strikes**: a republican campaign will interned in Long Kesh prison. Originally the British decided to house the paramilitary members as political prisoners, but change the policy in 1976 and treated all members as prisoners. The hunger strike was the last in a long line of strikes including the blanket protest, where “soldiers” wore only their blankets and not the required prison uniforms, and the dirty protest, where “soldiers” would smear their feces along the walls of their prison cells. The original hunger strike was in 1980, but republicans were taken off it through promises Margaret Thatcher made to IRA negotiators. Once they realized she would not fulfill these promises, members resumed their strike in 1981. The first man to die was Bobby Sands, and ten men in total died until it was called off in October of 1981. The events surrounding the hunger strikes were watershed moments for the support of the republican movements.

**Interface**: the boundary between two opposing ethnic groups. Interfaces may be defined by an environmental wall or they may be open, green spaces used to separate the polarized groups. These areas have high incidents of violence.

**Internment**: was a practice initiated by the British several times in Northern Ireland to round up people suspected of threatening activity. The most famous period of this policy was from 1971-1975. There would be lists of suspected, mostly republican, activists that would be rounded up, interrogated, and imprisoned without trial or evidence. During this
period 1,981 people were detained and 1,874 of these were Catholic or republican. (See Martin Melaugh. “Internment: Summary of Main Events.” CAIN http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/intern/sum.htm (Accessed 4/4/2008)) The campaign ended up inspiring more support of paramilitaries as many innocent people were mistreated and interned through this period.

**INLA:** Irish National Liberation Army, established in 1974 after the OIRA ceasefire. The group also had very strong groundings in Marxist and socialist movements going on through the island. The paramilitary did declare a ceasefire in 1998, but still remains armed. It is one of the paramilitaries with rising membership as Sinn Fein accepted policing this past year.

**Island of Ireland:** used to refer to the entire thirty two counties that make up the island. It is not in reference to any political body, now or in the future. The term “Ireland” is used mostly in reference to the Republic of Ireland, and therefore this thesis chose to use the “island of Ireland” in order to distinguish between the two.

**Londonderry Corporation:** The Londonderry Corporation was the political body in charge of the city. Run by wealthy Protestants, the Corporation was behind the blatant gerrymandering within the Catholic dominated city. Catholics were confined to one voting district, limiting the number of representatives on the Corporation.

**Loyalist:** a person who is loyal to the crown of England. People who are loyalist are not necessarily involved in paramilitary activity, but almost all of the paramilitaries would define themselves as loyalist.

**LVF:** Loyalist Volunteer Force, established in 1996 after a break with the UVF. The group declared a ceasefire in 2005, but still remains armed.

**Nationalist:** a person who takes pride in being Irish. This term is in broader reference to social and cultural unification and appreciation. Nationalists also believe in a united, independent Ireland.

**Northern Ireland:** used in reference to the six counties of Ulster that have remained under the domain of the United Kingdom. The term “north of Ireland” is used by republicans and nationalists while the term “Northern Ireland” or “Ulster” is used by loyalists. Despite its sectarian implications, the term “Northern Ireland” is being used in this thesis because of its international recognition and relative neutrality.

**OIRA:** the Official Irish Republican Army, the original branch developed out of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, active during the Irish independence movement of the early 20th century. It was a Marxist and socialist organization that declared a cease fire in 1972 when its members though the violence was straying from their original intent.

**Parading:** Northern Ireland has a season of parading in July and August that focuses on mostly Protestant celebrations, although there used to be a Catholic celebration in early
August that has since been phased out. Parading is an exceptionally contentious issue in Northern Ireland as Protestants celebrate major victories over Catholics, especially the Battle of the Boyne which happened on July 12, 1690. Protestants like to parade through Catholic areas, the biggest day being July 12th. The parades, since the conflict, have been connected with loyalist paramilitaries as well as blatant hatred towards Catholics. One example is the K.A.I. blood and thunder band, also known as the Kill All Irish band. Parade routes frequently go through Catholic areas and this celebration has caused mass riots, protests, and several deaths.

**Protestant:** a sect of Christianity that believes in the figure of Jesus as a savior, but does not believe in the pope’s authority. The Protestant religion is based on the philosophy of Martin Luther, and emphasizes an individual’s connection with God as well as an individual’s responsibilities in life.

**PIRA:** Provisional Irish Republican Army, the branch of the army that continued after the OIRA declared a cease fire. Also rooted in a philosophy of socialism, the PIRA was the main branch throughout the conflict and is what most people refer to when talking about the “IRA.” The PIRA declared a cease fire in 1994 under the leadership of Gerry Adams.

**RIRA:** the Real Irish Republican Army, established in 1997 when the leadership did not agree with the renewing of the cease fire agreement. They believe in the fight for a united Ireland using physical force. This paramilitary is still active.

**Republic of Ireland:** used in reference to the remaining twenty-six counties of the island under the government of Dail Eireann, the parliamentary body of the Republic. Also referred to as Southern Ireland or the Free State, the term “Republic of Ireland” is being used in this thesis because it is the internationally known legal name.

**Republican:** a person who believes in the existence of a united Ireland, under the Republic of Ireland’s authority. Being a republican does not necessarily have to include being a member of a paramilitary organization, although most Irish paramilitary members were republican.

**St. Andrew’s Agreement:** an agreement reached at the St. Andrews talks in 2006. This is the first agreement signed by all political parties, including the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein, who are diametrically opposed to each other. The St. Andrew’s Agreement finally reactivated the Northern Irish government and gave support to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which is the controversial follower of the RUC.

**Security forces:** a broader overarching term used in this thesis to refer to the British army, the UDR, the RUC, and the B-Specials, a special reserve police force that was disbanded in 1970 for misconduct. While each branch had different duties, their interactions with the residents in the conflict enclaves overlapped quite often. The British army would’ve been the most active branch of the security forces as it had the most authority.
**UDA:** the Ulster Defense Association, established in 1971 as a defense league against the possible reunification of Ireland. Some claim that the membership at one point reached 40,000 men. The paramilitary was the strongest loyalist paramilitary. It declared a ceasefire in 2007, but refuses to disarm in case of a potential future fight.

**UVF:** Ulster Volunteer Force, established in 1966 to fight against the IRA. The group is connected with the Ulster Volunteers of World War I. UVF denounced the fighting in 2007, but will not hand in their weapons.

**Unionist:** a person who supports the union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Unionism is typically associated with political parties in Northern Ireland.

**Waterside Alienation Project:** a community initiated research project to determine the problems that Waterside residents are having and to suggest specific recommendations for improvement or amelioration. Many of the findings were issues related to things identified with a specific conflict culture like bus stops, the city cemetery, school uniforms, and sports jerseys. Recommendations from the task force were to develop neutral understandings of these everyday things and sites of transition from the ethnic conflict past.
Appendix B: Pictures of Spaces

Figure 3-1: Army base in Crossmaglen

Figure 3-2: Catholic Church in Crossmaglen

Figure 3-3: Raymond McCreesh’s grave

Figure 3-4: Mural on church wall to IRA victory
Figure 3-5: Republican Roll of Honor

Figure 3-6: Scorch marks on the outside of an army base
Figure 3-7: Irish freedom fighter memorial

Figure 3-8: View of Cross army base from football field

Figure 3-9: Civil rights protest outside Cross army base
Figure 3-10: Belfast City Hall

Figure 3-11: The Royal Pub in Sandy Row

Figure 3-12: A mural as you enter Sandy Row

Figure 3-13: Wall at end of residential district
Figure 3-14: Falls Road murals

Figure 3-15: Political graffiti on Falls Road

Figure 3-16: “Peace wall” as seen from the Falls Road

Figure 3-17: Gate along “peace wall” between Falls and Shankill closed
Figure 3-18: Divis Tower, after the deconstruction of the army base

Figure 3-19: Shankill Road

Figure 3-20: Message from the UDA paramilitary on the Shankill
Figure 3-21: Loyalist mural on the Shankill

Figure 3-22: Sniper mural in residential courtyard on the Shankill

Figure 3-23: “Peace wall” from Shankill side
Figure 3-24: The former entrance to the army base and remaining watch tower

Figure 3-25: Men and boys of Glenbryn piling wood for a bonfire

Figure 3-26: One of the murals along the outer facing house walls

Figure 3-27: Waterside, red, white, and blue curbstones are an indicator of a change in enclave
Figure 3-28: Iron Maiden mural on the Waterside and UDA tag marking who owns the wall

Figure 3-29: Real cannons from the siege facing the Guild Hall along the Ulster wall

Figure 3-30: (Above) Former pedestal for Rev. Walker statue along the Butcher’s Gate stretch of wall

Figure 3-31: (Right) Outer wall of the army base on the Ulster wall
Figure 3-32: View of Bogside from Sniper’s Corner

Figure 3-33: “Fishbowl” of the Fountain, the fences and cameras around the neighborhood

Figure 3-34: (Right) Abandoned factory and UDA flags

Figure 3-35: (Left) Apprentice Boys building right next to the British army base
Figure 3-36: Fencing around the houses in the Fountain

Figure 3-37: Cathedral Youth Club with the Red Hand of Ulster mural, the symbol for the UDA

Figure 3-38: A view of the Bogside and the Ulster wall
Figure 3-39: A scene from Bloody Sunday where residents are trying to carry out a young boy who has been shot.

Figure 3-40: A young boy with a gas mask and petrol bomb, a scene from the Battle of the Bogside.

Figure 3-41: Free Derry wall.
Figure 3-42: Flags flying over the Bogside, the Palestinian flag and Irish republican flag

Figure 3-43: IRA memorial to fallen republican “soldiers”

Figure 3-44: INLA memorials to fallen soldiers
Figure 3-45: IRA check point in Free Derry

Figure 3-46: An army tanker roaming in the Creggan during Operation Motorman
Photo Bibliography

- Figure 3-1

- Figure 3-6

- Figure 3-8

- Figure 3-9
Appendix C: Interview Process

I conducted a total of thirty six interviews with people in Belfast, L/Derry, and Crossmaglen during the summer of 2007. Seven of these interviews were done during my Independent Study Project during my study abroad time in Fall 2006. Since the topic was similar and all interviewees understood that their answers would be used in my research, I chose to also include their perspectives. The people I interviewed ranged from paramilitaries members, community workers, or just local people I stumbled upon. Each person set up their own time and place for an interview. All interviews were conducted with the same basic structure of questions, which were made area specific to each person. The questions were designed to be vague enough to elicit a dialogue about their experiences, while guiding them to explore different notions of space. While I stuck to the basic questions, many interviews lead in different directions depending on the interviewee’s interests. My procedure and questions were approved by the Institutional Review Board. All transcripts and personal information from the interviews are known only by me as I felt it was very important to maintain their privacy and allow each individual to feel free to discuss their experiences. Below are my interview questions:

What was [specific area] like during the conflict? How has it changed? How do you feel about it? What was the community like during the conflict?
How do you think history plays a role in the area, if it plays a role at all? What was the area like pre-conflict?
How long have you lived here for?
What do you think of [opposing areas with the city]? Why?
Do you think there are neutral spaces here? If so, where and why? If not, why not?
What do you think of the flags and curbstones? What do you think of the murals and graffiti? What do you think of [name specific monuments and memorials]?
What do you think of [specific spaces in the area like football stadium etc.]?
What do you think of the walls? How do you feel about the army base and watch tower?
What were the check points like?
What is your favorite place in the area? Why?
What do you think of the conflict transformation process going on?