



**Communities
in Transition**

Area Research
Report 2023
Ardoyne

**Dr Brendan Sturgeon
and Prof Dominic Bryan**



**Northern Ireland
Executive**



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



co-operationireland
working for a future together



**The Executive
Programme on
Paramilitarism &
Organised Crime**



CONTENTS

• Acknowledgments	Page 3
• Introduction	Page 4
• Methodology	Page 5
• Research Findings	
Community Attachment	Page 6
Key Facilities	Page 8
Community Capacity: Getting Better	Page 10
Community Capacity: Getting Worse	Page 12
Community Safety: Points of Belonging	Page 14
Community Safety: Points of Threat	Page 16
Influence of Paramilitary Groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs	Page 18
• Endnote 1: Household Survey	Page 20
• Endnote 2: Spraycan Mapping Tool/PGIS Software	Page 21
• Further Reading	Page 22
• References	Page 22

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Authors would like to thank all the individuals who participated in the different strands of our fieldwork. In addition, we wish to pass on our gratitude to the range of Delivery Partners working on the *Communities in Transition* (CIT) programme, who helped organise the interviews and focus groups that supported the development of this Report.

We would like to thank those who contributed to the research fieldwork: Dr Lisa Faulkner-Byrne; Dr John Bell; Dr Philip McCready; Lucy Geddes; Dr Dàire McGill and Claire Heaney-McKee. Also, Dr Jonny Huck for GPIS services and Danny Treacy and the team at Perceptive Insight for undertaking the Household Survey.

Special thanks go to Co-operation Ireland and the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute For Global Peace, Security and Justice at Queen's University Belfast for their continued support, to The Executive Office NI (TEO) and key staff working on the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) for their advice and observations during the production of this document.

The Authors hope that the content of this Report offers a valuable insight into how people residing in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast feel about a variety of issues associated with their local area.

INTRODUCTION

The Research Team involved in the development of this Report were tasked with developing Area Reports for each of the sites where the Communities in Transition programme is currently active. Communities in Transition is one strand of the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime. The Executive Office NI leads the policy development of Communities in Transition, in partnership with Co-operation Ireland and Queen's University Belfast.

The programme aims to support areas where there has been a history of paramilitary activity and coercive control. The primary objective is to support the transition of these sites to a point where paramilitary groups no longer exercise influence, and their activity is no longer as prevalent. To achieve this ambition, Communities in Transition funds a range of over 30 innovative and community focused projects. These projects are designed to increase the capacity of each area and are categorised under the following headings: Area Regeneration; Capacity Building; Community Safety and Policing; Environment and Culture; Health and Wellbeing; Personal Transition; Restorative Practice; and Young People. The Area Reports will identify the on-going challenges that exist throughout each Communities in Transition site. We will also point to the key work that is aimed at stimulating sustained change in the areas.

ARDOYNE

Ardoyne forms part of the North Belfast Communities in Transition site, along with the New Lodge, but during the fieldwork, we discovered that the New Lodge and Ardoyne are locally interpreted as two very distinct sites. Consequently, we will submit two separate reports for this single Communities in Transition area.

Ardoyne experienced 85 deaths that were directly linked to the armed conflict in NI between 1969-2001 (CAIN, 2010). Underlying historical and contemporary violence is accompanied by high levels of economic disadvantage and deprivation at the individual, family, and spatial levels.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this Report is on presenting a 'bottom up' assessment of the key issues relevant to the residents of Ardoyne area. The focus is not on re-presenting the many very valuable pre-existing data sets that exist elsewhere. Such data sets provide important indications of the overall capacity of the area, but often fail to tease out the correlating lived experiences. In this Report, we wish to address this gap in our understanding of the Communities in Transition sites.

To appropriately engage with participants we designed a methodology that ensured their opinion was positioned at the centre of our work. We took a mixed methods approach that utilised PGIS Mapping Software, Qualitative Interviews and a Household Survey.

Participants were invited to identify and mark specific categories of place, such as where things are getting better, where things are getting worse, where they feel safe or unsafe using a 'spraycan' tool on a computerised map of the local area. The individual marked maps were then aggregated to generate a collective view of the site.

Recorded Qualitative Interviews were conducted in conjunction with the completion of the Spraycan exercise, allowing the Research Team to tease out the overall capacity of the area alongside correlating lived experiences, both positive and negative.

Participants in this qualitative element of our research were recruited with the assistance of Communities in Transition Delivery Partners and other local community groups. Interviews took place in local community settings in Spring 2022.

In this area 24 people participated the PGIS mapping exercise and 24 participated in Qualitative Interviews. Of these 14 identified themselves as Nationalist, 8 as Unionist and 2 as 'other'.

Household Survey – Overview

- 78 people from Ardoyne and surrounding areas took part in the Household Survey, carried out by market research company, Perceptive Insight in Spring 2022.
- 48 identified themselves as Catholic, 28 were Protestant and 2 identified as neither.
- 40 Participants were male and 38 participants were female.
- 48 participants were Nationalist, 24 were Unionist and 6 identified as 'other'.
- The participants were aged between 17 and 76.

Research Findings

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

In this section, we assess the ways in which participants feel attached to their local area.

Household Survey

Two key findings emerged from the Survey findings, which indicated that there was a strong sense of community attachment in this area.

- **67% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout Ardoyne.**

(on average, across all the other CIT sites, 66% agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout their respective area).

- **74% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt connected to their local area.** (the average response across all the other CIT sites was 68%)

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **24 participants completed the Spraycan Mapping Tool.**
- **14 identified themselves as 'Nationalist', 8 as 'Unionist' and 2 as 'Other'.**
- **Figure 1 demonstrates the extent to which community space is segregated in Ardoyne, on the basis of community identity.**
- **Nationalist participants identified that their 'community' spans the space that is commonly considered to be within the boundaries of Ardoyne. Unionist participants marked space in neighbouring Glenbryn in the same way.**

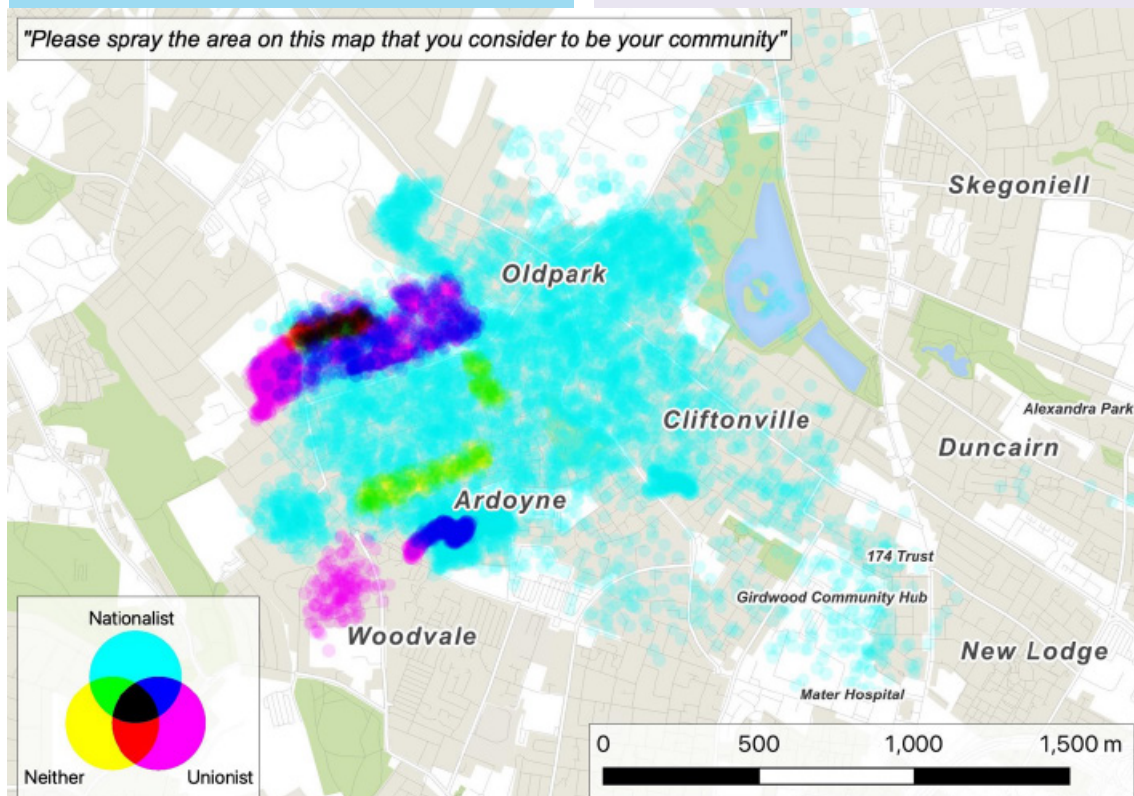


Figure 1: Community Attachment in Ardoyne.

Qualitative Interviews

The majority of participants felt that there were high levels of community spirit throughout Ardoyne, however they also pointed out that the area was best understood as a network of smaller communities – the rows of terrace housing north of Brompton Park were quite distinct from the Mountainview area on the far side of the Crumlin Road, whilst the Marrowbone area was seen as being fundamentally separate from everywhere else.

'People are very close in this area and if there's a big issue... whether it be interfaces or the awful suicides we, we come together... but in between those big moments... I mean, you just go about your normal way of life... you mainly spend time with friends and family.'

A number of participants explained that they were proud of living in the area and said that they would never want to leave. It was noted that where residents had the financial resources to move away from some of the most deprived spaces in Ardoyne, many chose to move into the Mountainview area or Deerpark site nearby. In this instance, they wanted a bigger home, but did not want to leave the greater Ardoyne area.

'I would never leave (Ardoyne)... all of my life is here... do you know what I mean? I help out at the school.... Our boys play for the football team and the GAA team and my husband helps out with both. We have a lot connections in this area.'

Participants were unclear why the area had been paired with the New

Lodge in the CIT programme, due to the perceived lack of connection between the sites.

When participants were asked if they would rather have seen Ardoyne paired with neighbouring Glenbyrn, few favoured this idea and pointed to the depth of need in Ardoyne alone (this included concerns about high levels of deprivation and crime).

The symbolic landscape was important. It was noted that while 'outsiders' might draw most attention to the anti-PSNI message associated with some murals, other images that reinforce the vision of a united community, are just as valuable.

Participants felt that the community infrastructure was only 'average'. While the New Lodge area had one dominant organisation, Ashton Community Trust, Ardoyne had a larger number of organisations that serviced different parts of the area.

'Yeah, I'm not sure. I think we have really good people working on different issues... whether it be interfaces... youth work... especially around drugs, but I'm not sure they're that well connected.'

Many noted that the Holy Cross Church continues to have a significant presence in the area and a range of different local priests have become key representatives for the area during their time serving in the site. This has included diffusing cross-community tension and dealing with complicated and sensitive internal problems, specifically the large number of suicides that have occurred throughout Ardoyne.

KEY FACILITIES

In this section we identify the key facilities that are important to participants. We probe how these spaces are utilised and ask whether there are places that people would like to use; but chose not to.

Household Survey

- 27% of our participants indicated they were involved with a Local Church.
- 18% were associated with a Sports Club.
- 16% were involved in a Local School.
- 8% participated in Neighbourhood Associations.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- Despite some Unionist participants pointing out concern about their sense of safety when using the Ardoyne shops, along the upper Crumlin Road (see Page 7), the majority of respondents identified the shops as one of the few 'shared' spaces in the site.
- For Nationalist participants, the shops and gym at Flax Street were important facilities. They also identified key spaces outside of Ardoyne, including: Cityside Retail Centre, the Waterworks and the upper part of Alexandra Park.

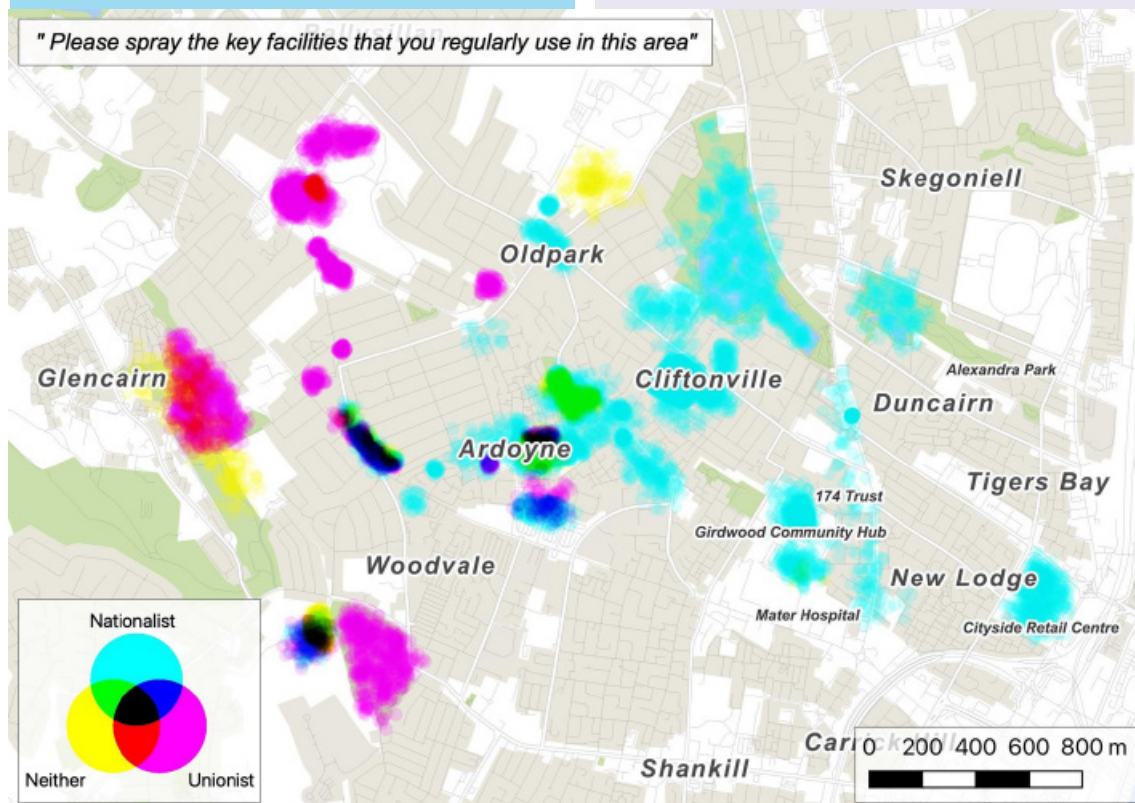


Figure 2: Key Facilities in Ardoyne.

- **Unionist participants were more likely to mark locations closer to their home. Ballysillan Leisure Centre, Tesco at Ballygomartin and Clarendon Playing Fields were all marked as important spaces.**

Qualitative Interviews

A large number of participants felt that the Ardoyne shops were an important part of the area and many residents visited at least one shop on a daily basis.

Participants from neighbouring Glenbryn were divided about their willingness to use these shops – some indicated that they did this regularly, but others indicated that they would not feel safe.

'I couldn't go down there... see even there, that playpark (near Cranbrook Court) just up from the shops, I couldn't even bring my son there.... No way. They would see us coming down the road... they would just know we don't belong there.'

The Holy Cross Church and its facilities remain important to many local residents, despite participants noting the decline in influence of the Catholic Church in other comparable locations. It was suggested that the importance of the Church is attributed to a number of priests showing leadership during periods of cross-community tension.

Most participants felt that while Lidl was widely utilised, they remain concerned about the amount of vacant lots in the Hillview Retail Park. It was noted that the failure to draw tenants to the site has been hugely detrimental to the early

optimism around the space. It had been designed as a location that would encourage cross-community interaction, but the lack of tenants leaves a 'hollow' feeling for some participants as they move around it.

The Flax Street shops were seen as being important to a large number of participants. These respondents also noted that the revamp of the space behind the shops was key for improving the range of leisure and gym spaces available to local residents.

Despite the establishment of a number of well-used gyms in the site, participants still wanted a leisure centre with a swimming pool. It was noted that most Ardoyne residents would not feel safe using the Ballysillan Leisure Centre.

Some younger participants indicated that they regularly used the football pitches at the Girdwood Community Hub, but older respondents said the space was informed by a poor consultation process that resulted in a perceived lack of 'ownership' of the site.

The Ardoyne Youth Club, Ardoyne Boxing Club and the Ardoyne Kickhams GAA club were all seen as important networks for residents – especially in providing spaces, opportunities and support for local young people.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

In this section, we identify the current community capacity that exists in Ardoyne, with a specific focus on identifying things that have improved within the area.

Household Survey

- **82% of respondents indicated that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.**
The average across all the CIT sites was 84%
- **67% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.**
The average across all the CIT sites was 50%.
- **37% of respondents felt the area would be in better condition in five years time.** The average across all the CIT sites was 29%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

In this section, we asked participants to identify the locations in their area where ‘things have got better’.

- Nationalist and Unionist participants both felt there had been a substantial improvement in the area around Twaddell Avenue.
- Participants indicated that the decrease in sectarian tension, which had been evident during the marching dispute that lasted 1200 days, was a significant relief to everyone living throughout the area.
- Nationalist and Unionist participants also felt that there

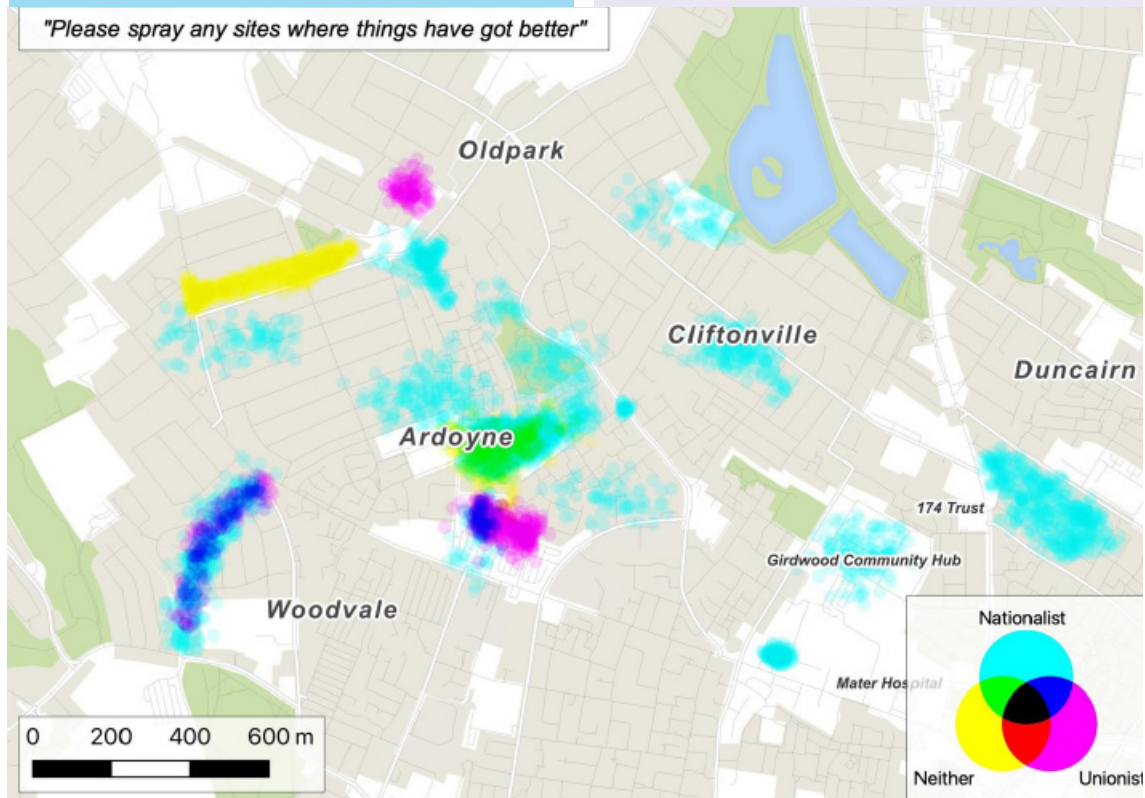


Figure 3: Locations in Ardoyne where things have got better.

had been improvements in the relationships near interface sites, in general – specifically at Flax Street.

- **The ongoing improvements to the Flax Street development were particularly important to Nationalist participants – almost every Nationalist respondent marked this area.**

Qualitative Interviews

Participants were very positive about the ongoing development of the facilities in the Flax Street area. The establishment of the Health and Wellbeing centre was viewed as being especially important.

'We need high quality spaces where we can bring the community together. We need places where people can feel safe and reassured about the direction the area is going in... certain spaces haven't been of the same quality as the service being provided. We've had a great boxing club... doing brilliant work with a lot of vulnerable young people... and they basically worked out of a ballroom above a bar. We need the spaces to support the services. That's what really makes good programmes sustainable. If parents hear their son or daughter is going to a boxing club in a bar... that has a completely different feeling to saying they're going to a leisure centre or community centre.'

A number of respondents from Ardoyne were positive about current cross-community relationships with neighbouring Glenbryn and Twaddell.

'There's a lot of very positive work happening around the interfaces just now... I think you can see that with the increased access we now have at the bottom of Flax Street. We've also one of our peace walls taken away¹ and there is far, far less tension now things have moved on at Twaddell. That was obviously... for a very long time... a serious issue that caused lots of problems and fear for many residents. We'll never be complacent, but there's lots of good work being done to support better relationships.'

¹ Northern Ireland Housing Executive have removed a peace wall at the top of the Crumlin Road, near the Holy Cross Church.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

In this section, we identify some key problems that have emerged in Ardoyne, which undermines the community capacity of the site.

Household Survey

- **Only 15% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.**

The average across all the CIT sites was 27%.

- **63% of participants indicated that in five years time, the area would be either in the same condition or worse.**

The average across the CIT sites was 71%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Nationalist and Unionist participants both marked concerns about the Crumlin Road.**
- **Respondents who marked the space in this way were more concerned about the decline of the road, in general terms, rather than any particular sectarian issue.**
- **In this instance, it was suggested that the lack of entry points and active spaces between Brompton Park and Flax Street created a 'chill factor' along the road.**

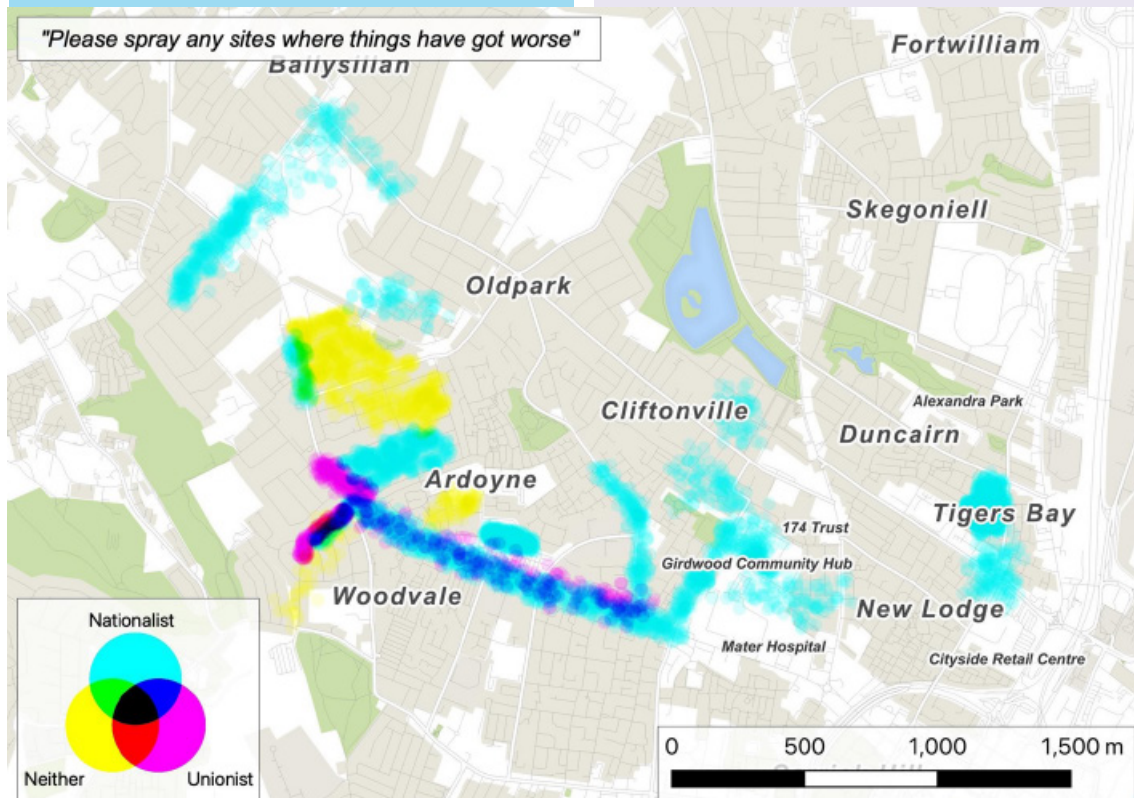


Figure 4: Locations in Ardoyne where things have got worse.

- **Other participants who marked the rows of terrace housing between Brompton Park and Alliance Avenue, suggested that the housing needs to be upgraded in a similar way to the revamp that has been taken place in the New Lodge.**

Qualitative Interviews

Almost every participant identified the poor socio-economic condition of the area. It was stressed that none of the current problems associated with health and unemployment are new problems and there has been very little progress on these issues over a prolonged period of time.

'This is an area with lots of problems.. all sorts of issues associated with poverty, unemployment and substance abuse, but for me the biggest issue is what I describe as the poverty of aspiration. That's the biggest issue... that's what keeps us in the condition we're in... and it's probably why things will also eventually get worse.'

When participants were asked to consider why certain problems have proved so hard to overcome, they were largely split between feeling that statutory bodies either 'didn't care' or that they had 'wasted' large amounts of money on the 'wrong' type of initiatives.

'It's incredibly frustrating... when my mother grew up in the area, there was lots of unemployment and crime. Then I grew up in the same (conditions)... and my son and daughter are also going to experience the same thing. I think that's what Council and everyone doesn't get... these aren't new

problems, yet they continue to launch another programme... that looks similar to the last one and did nothing for the majority of us.'

'I don't think they really get it. I went to a thing in Girdwood (Community Hub) recently... and they talked about poverty, unemployment... and the areas where it had gotten worse. I said to them: 'but it's always been bad here, so 'getting worse' in other areas... that, that's not relevant to the problem here... but that's where they are. They'll delay doing something, because they want something that will work everywhere. I just can't see how that's possible. You mentioned New Lodge earlier... and we're similar... but our problems and theirs are quite different.'

Respondents were concerned about the amount of intergenerational trauma that exists in the area. One participant claimed that residents 'live in a bubble'.

'This bubble helps us all survive some of the poor conditions we live in, but it comes at a price. It overstates the past and creates an overreliance on ourselves... those of that mentality don't want help. They'd rather complain and suffer, because that's what builds the mentality... the mentality that we're together. For me, I'd rather my kids had a good education... and the chance to get a job.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

In this section, we identify how participants feel about the issue of community safety in Ardoyne, with a specific focus on locations where people feel safe.

Household Survey

- **67% of respondents felt that local residents abided by the rule of law.**
The average across all the CIT sites was 61%.
- **76% felt that improved lighting and alleygating would make them feel safer, while 55% said improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.** The average across all the CIT sites was 60% & 59%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **52% of participants indicated that their sense of safety was largely aligned with the community identity of their surroundings.**
- **60% of Nationalist participants identified the entirety of the Ardoyne area and much of Cliftonville as being 'safe'.**
- **59% of Unionist participants were more likely to feel safe throughout Glenbryn and along Twaddell Avenue.**
- **The only space where both some Nationalist and Unionist participants felt safe was in and around the Ardoyne shops.**

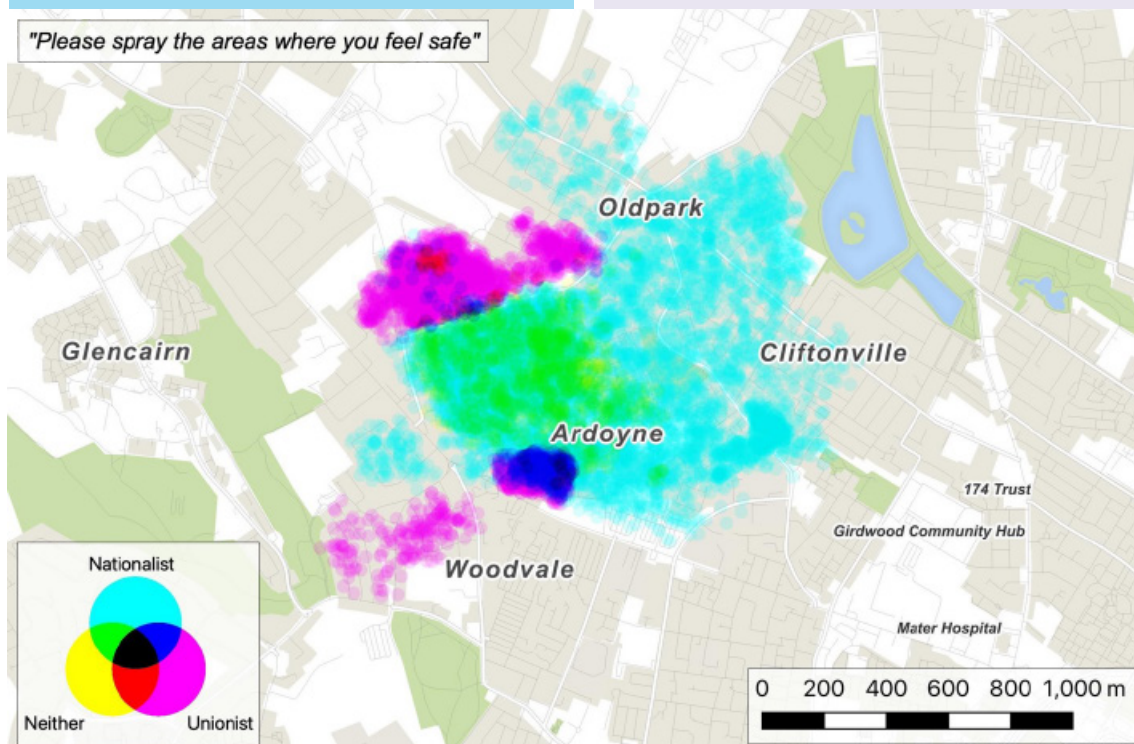


Figure 5: Locations in Ardoyne where people feel safe.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants regularly indicated that the spatial environment was very important to their sense of belonging and subsequent feeling of being safe.

'I think the area has just a feel... you have Holy Cross that kind of overlooks everything. Even if you're not religious, I think that's quite poignant. Then the rows and rows of houses... I know people up and down every row. So that makes me feel very safe as I move about.'

A number of participants felt the fact they and many of their friends and family were long-term residents of the area, afforded them an important sense of belonging – and subsequently a sense of safety.

'I don't drive, but I also never feel the need to leave the area... everything is here... and I think the area has a flow, from the (Ardoyne) shops down to Oldpark Road. It's kind of self-contained. We were made to feel that way and that's created... you know... that mentality that we've everything we need.'

Respondents also noted that the symbolic landscape was key in reinforcing the sense of togetherness that exists in the area. The large amount of murals that exist throughout Ardoyne were very important to the majority of participants.

'They remind you... they remind you that we're together. We have the anti-PSNI ones, I think that message is clear... that might not be my particular opinion, but I think more important... more important are the ones that celebrate the sense of community. Look at the one at Ardoyne shops (a scene that celebrates the local community). I think people will talk about the anti-PSNI ones, but there's also a large amount of religious symbols (see Berwick Street). They would probably be more important to most residents... our Easter services follow the Stations of the Cross that run along that road (Berwick Street). We have the Joe Gormley one as well (footballer for Cliftonville)... so the idea that everything is about scaring people into supporting dissidents and not the PSNI... that's simply not true.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

In this section, we identify the feelings participants had about the issue of community safety in Ardoyne, with a specific focus on locations that made them feel unsafe.

Household Survey

While the respondents to the Survey indicated a number of concerns about their local area throughout their responses, there were two significant issues identified by a significant number of respondents:

- **72% felt ASB was a problem in the area.**
The average across all the CIT sites was 55%.
- **76% believed that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.**
The average across all the CIT sites was 57%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- Like the previous section, participants understanding of threat appears to be largely linked to community identity, with respondents often stating they would be 'unsafe' in the territory of the 'other' community.
- Nationalist participants were most likely to feel unsafe throughout Glenbryn, across Twaddell Avenue and along the Shore Road. Unionist respondents indicated that they would feel unsafe throughout Ardoyne and along the Ligoniel Road.

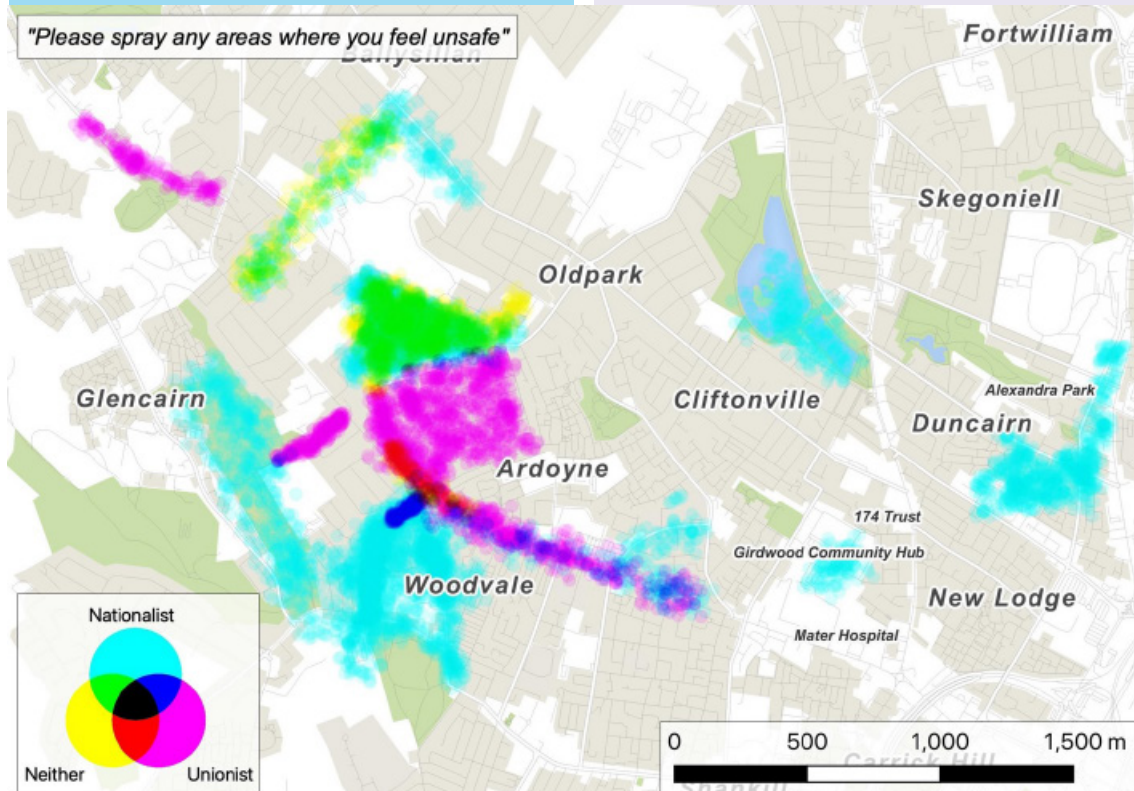


Figure 6: Locations in Ardoyne where people feel unsafe.

- **There were additional sites also marked as 'unsafe' that appears to be less to do with perceived community ownership. As discussed elsewhere in this report, the area along the Crumlin Road between Brompton Park and Flax Street was considered to be of a poor standard. The lack of entry points and active spaces made people feel generally unsafe.**

Qualitative Interviews

As identified in the previous section, many participants felt safe moving throughout 'their' community, but when discussing interface areas and spaces associated with the 'other' community, they were much less confident.

'There's just some places I wouldn't go... never down Twaddell or up to the Iceland or Swimmers at Ballysillan (Leisure Centre)... I just wouldn't feel safe... or wanted. You know that's quite clear. It's 'their' area... they've marked it. I'll just leave it there.' (Living in Ardoyne)

'I would never, never walk through Ardoyne. Ever. I might drive through it, but I don't need to and I'd also be panicking in-case I broke down.' (Living in Glenbryn)

It should be noted that although participants were largely proud of their area, they did identify concerns about crime and particularly anti-social behaviour (ASB).

'ASB is so bad round here. Really bad. Litter is really terrible and we just have lots of young people hanging around. We have so many young people in the area and probably not enough for them to do. We also have lots of alleys and dark spaces where they can just hang about. I don't think they're actually doing much... but they do make people feel anxious.'

Drug related crime was also seen as a serious problem and was perceived as being at least partly responsible for the large amount of suicides that have happened throughout the area.

Participants felt that points of dereliction and abandonment also caused some anxiety for local residents – this included concern about the lack of tenants in the Hillview Retail Park and the general decline of any active spaces along the upper part of the Crumlin Road, between Brompton Park and the Flax Street interface gate.

'People generally feel quite safe on a lot of arterial routes in Belfast... whether that be the Antrim Road or somewhere else. That's largely because there's a perception that these routes don't belong to particular anyone, but it's also because there's a lot of activity. There's nothing along the Crumlin Road – you walk along it and you're probably the only one walking it. If you see someone else and you're on your own, particularly at night. It's very chilling.'

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED CRIME GANGS

In this section, we present the ways in which participants felt that paramilitary groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs have an influence in Ardoyne.

Household Survey

- **24% of respondents felt that young people living throughout Ardoyne were under too much influence from paramilitary groups.**
The average across all the CIT areas was 32%.
- **40% felt that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in the area.**
The average across all the CIT areas was 34%.
- **26% felt that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence in their area.** The average across all the CIT areas was 27%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Both Nationalist and Unionist participants indicated that paramilitary groups and organised crime gangs had a considerable presence throughout Ardoyne and the surrounding area.**
- **Nationalist participants felt that the groups were active right across Ardoyne, in Tigers Bay, along Twaddell Avenue and throughout Glenbryn.**
- **Unionist respondents indicated that the groups were active in upper Ardoyne, between Brompton Park and Alliance Avenue. They also identified a paramilitary presence in Glenbryn.**

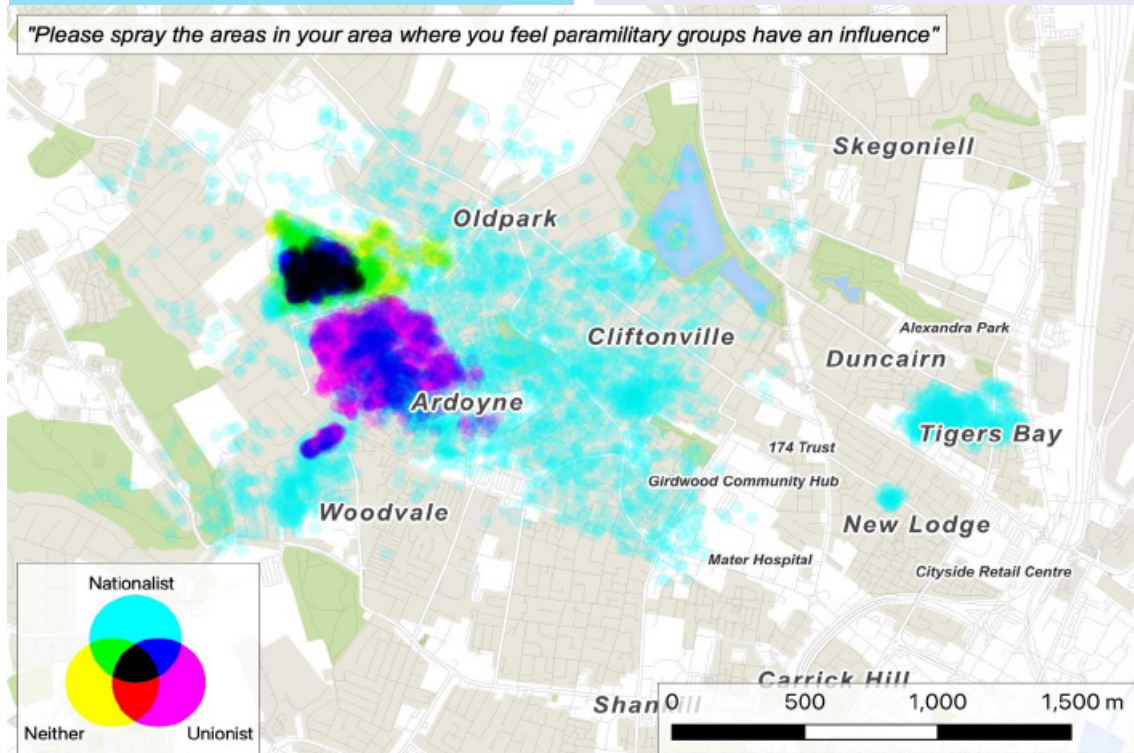


Figure 7: Influence of Paramilitary Groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs in Ardoyne.

Qualitative Interviews

Despite the positive community sentiment displayed elsewhere in this Area Report, almost every one of the participants in the Qualitative Interviews indicated they were concerned about the level of influence paramilitary groups or organised crime gangs have in Ardoyne.

'Everywhere... they're everywhere. I could basically mark the whole of Northern Ireland (in the Spraycan Mapping Tool).' Participant 18

'There is no specific place, they're everywhere. They are dirty. There is no good side to them.'

It was suggested that their most common practices, included: money lending, drug dealing, 'taxing' the local community (this involved demanding money from local businesses and local drug dealers).

'It's non-stop. Once they know what you can pay, they'll always just increase it. Then once you've paid it off, they'll not let go... they'll almost demand you take more money. They want to keep you in their pocket.'

Many participants felt that there was a significant difference between 'paramilitary groups' active during the main period of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the more accurately defined 'organised crime gangs' that are now active in the area.

'They don't care about the community... they don't care at all. The people who protected this area when it needed to be protected, had the support of the community. They defended the area... these guys don't care what state Ardoyne will be in if they keep extorting people. They just care about money now... no plan beyond that. Definitely no political or social vision. It's just money and they're reckless... there was a lad shot recently... a punishment shooting... it turned out that they had the wrong guy!'



ENDNOTE 1: Household Survey

BASELINE SURVEY DATA (AGGREGATED ACROSS ALL CIT SITES)

1. 66% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout their area.
2. 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt connected to their local area.

KEY FACILITIES

3. 13% indicated they were involved with a local church.
4. 14% were involved in a local sports club.
5. 9% were involved in a local school.
6. 5% were involved in a neighbourhood association.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

7. 84% indicated that that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.
8. 50% felt that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.
9. 29% felt that their area would be in a better condition in five years time.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

10. 27% agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.
11. 71% indicated that their area would either be in the same condition or worse off, in five years time.

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BE- LONGING

12. 61% of respondents felt that local residents in their area abided by the rule of law.
13. 60% indicated that changes to the local environment (including alley gating and/or extra street lighting) would help make people feel safer in their area.
14. 59% suggested that improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

15. 55% indicated that anti-social behaviour was a problem in their area.
16. 57% indicated that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILI- TARY GROUPS AND/OR OR- GANISED CRIME GANGS

17. 32% felt that locally based paramilitary groups had too much influence on young people living throughout their area.
18. 34% indicated that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in their area.
19. 27% noted that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence on their area.

ENDNOTE 2: SPRAYCAN MAPPING TOOL/PGIS SOFTWARE

The 'Spraycan' software constitutes a Participatory GIS (PGIS) interface that permits participants to answer spatial questions by drawing onto a Google map (or satellite image) using a 'spray can' (or 'airbrush') tool, as opposed to using traditional map-based drawing tools such as points and polygons.

The significance of this approach to participatory mapping relates to the way in which members of the public typically think about the world around them, and how this contrasts with the way in which we typically store these places in GIS software. People tend to think about the world in terms of places, which are typically vaguely defined, in that universally accepted and unequivocal boundaries cannot be determined for them. This is because places are defined by the individual perceptions, experiences and cognition of the participants, and so the extent of an area will necessarily vary between them.

Place-based models contrast with the space-based approaches that are used in typical GIS software, which require precision in the location and boundaries of these places. The use of such space-based representations for vague places enforces an 'artificial precision' (after Montello et al., 2003) onto them, resulting in a poor representation of the place in question – which will impact upon any subsequent interpretation and analysis. It has also been shown that people find it difficult to convert their place-based thoughts and feelings into spatial representations in this way, meaning that the imposition of

this 'artificial precision' also acts to reduce the quality of the data.

In order to avoid these negative effects, and the resulting challenges from incorporating findings into policy, we can use alternative map interfaces that are designed 'for purpose', of which the 'Spraycan' is a prominent example. In this case, participants can add data to the map without consideration of precise boundaries, as well as allowing them to change the density of the 'paint' (denoting variation in strength of feeling, for example). This approach facilitates either qualitative (e.g. Huck et al., 2019) or quantitative (e.g. Huck et al., 2014) interpretation, and has been applied to a range of environmental and socio-cultural problems worldwide, by a variety of organisations, governments and universities.

FURTHER READING

More information about the software and its motivations can be found in the following publications:

Huck, J.J., Whyatt, J.D. Sturgeon, B., Hocking, B., Davies, G., Dixon, J., Jarman, N. and Bryan, D. (2018). Exploring Segregation and Sharing in a Divided City: a PGIS approach. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 109:1, 223-241

Huck, J.J., Whyatt, D. & Coulton, P. (2014). Spraycan: a PPGIS for capturing imprecise notions of place. *Applied Geography*. 55, p. 229-237

Evans, A. J., & Waters, T. (2007). Mapping vernacular geography: web-based GIS tools for capturing “fuzzy” or “vague” entities. *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 7(2), 134-150.

Montello, D. R., Goodchild, M. F., Gottsegen, J., & Fohl, P. (2003). Where's downtown?: Behavioral methods for determining referents of vague spatial queries. In *Spatial cognition and computation* (pp. 185-204). Psychology Press.

REFERENCES

Shirlow, Pete (2010) *Fear, Mobility and Living in the Ardoyne and Upper Ardoyne Communities. A Report by the Mapping the Spaces of Fear Research Team at the University of Ulster* (PDF). Belfast: North Belfast Partnership Board and the Economic and Social Research Council (Violence Research Programme). Accessed 1st December 2022. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/community/survey.htm>



Communities in Transition

For enquiries contact:

Dr Brendan Sturgeon
Research Fellow

**Senator George J. Mitchell Institute
for Global Peace Security and Justice at Queen's
University Belfast**

**School of History, Anthropology,
Philosophy and Politics**

**Queen's University Belfast
BT7 1NN**

Tel: 02890 975052

Email: b.sturgeon@qub.ac.uk



**Northern Ireland
Executive**



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



**The Executive
Programme on
Paramilitarism &
Organised Crime**