



Communities in Transition

Area Research Report 2023 Shankill

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Northern Ireland
Executive



QUEEN'S
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BELFAST



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

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The Authors hope that the content of this Report offers a valuable insight into how people residing in the Shankill area of 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.

SHANKILL

Previous research (Sturgeon & Bryan, 2021) in the Shankill area has indicated that the area suffers from various type of inequality and deprivation that impact on most residents, including: consistently high levels of unemployment, implicit or explicit discrimination, difficulties accessing finance for insurance and/or mortgages, exclusion from adopting children, poor standards of mental and physical health and high levels of dependency on alcohol/prescription medication (Co-operation Ireland, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this Report is on presenting a 'bottom up' assessment of the key issues relevant to the residents of the Shankill 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. Interviews took place in local community settings in Spring 2022.

In this area, 22 people participated in our PGIS mapping exercise and accompanying qualitative interview – 20 of these individuals identified as Unionist and 2 as Other (neither Nationalist nor Unionist).

Household Survey – Overview

- 149 people from the Shankill and surrounding areas took part in the Household Survey survey, carried out by market research company, Perceptive Insight in Spring 2022.
- 70 identified themselves as Catholic, 70 as Protestant and 9 identified as Neither.
- 74 Participants were male and 75 participants were female.
- 75 participants were Nationalist, 70 were Unionist and 4 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

- **65% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout the Shankill area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 66%.
- **64% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt connected to their local area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 68%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **22 participants completed the Spraycan Mapping Tool.**
- **20 identified as 'Unionist' and 2 as 'Other'.**
- **Figure 1 demonstrates the extent to which community space is segregated in the Shankill area, on the basis of community identity.**
- **Unionist participants identified that their 'community' spans the space that is commonly considered to be within the boundaries of the Shankill area. Participants who identified as 'Other', marked space in the same way.**

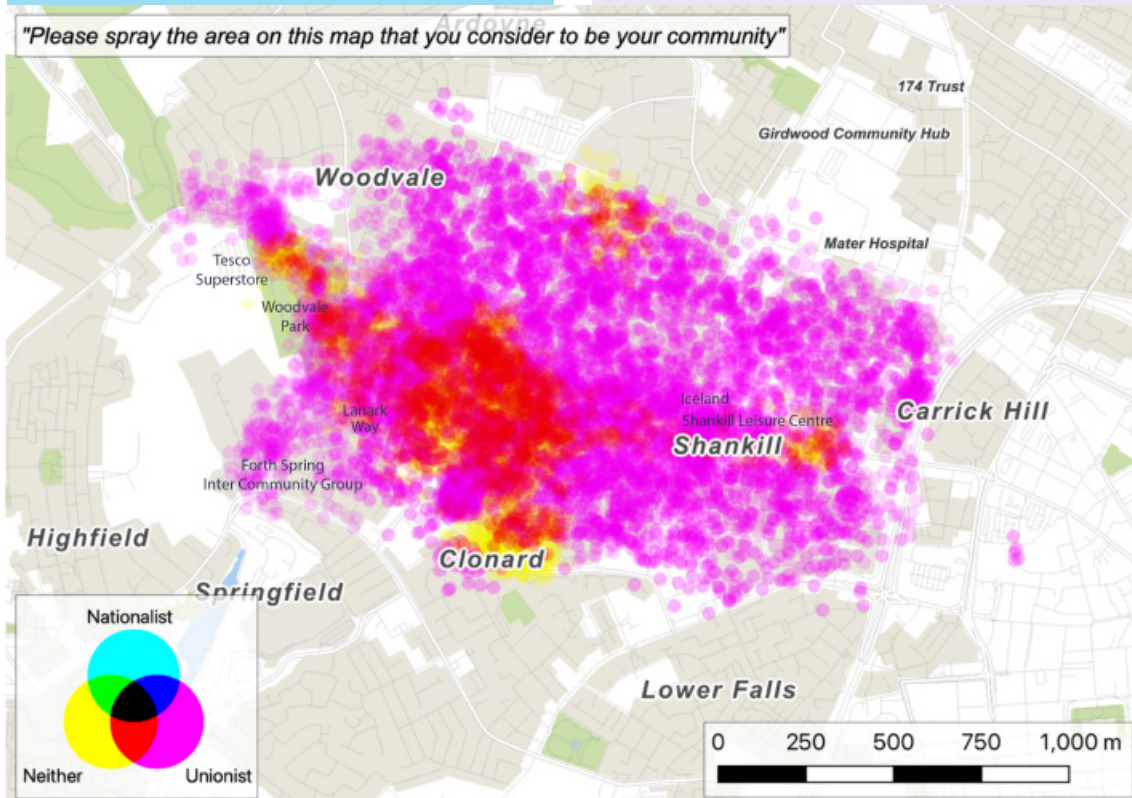


Figure 1: Community Attachment in the Shankill area.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants explained that the Shankill is best understood as three distinct areas – the Lower, Mid and Upper.

'I think the area is together in key moments... you know in reaction to particular incidents or whatever, but we do have three separate areas and I think if you go about (the area)... you'll find that there's probably different service delivery in each area. Each area will have its own people... its own community groups trying to provide.'

During the Spraycan mapping tool exercise, it was common for participants to mark just one of the Lower, Mid or Upper areas of the Shankill as the extent of 'their community', but many did mark the entire site. Those who marked the whole of the site indicated that they had lived in different parts of the Shankill at different stages of their life, while others indicated that they had family and/or friends spread across the site.

'Aye... like... I think it would be everywhere (participant's sense of attachment to the site). Me and my sister live in Agnes Street (Mid), but the rest of the family is up and down the road.'

Despite the area suffering from various types of inequality, participants stated that there was a significant amount of community spirit across the site (this was applicable to discussions about all the three stated areas of the Shankill and/or the area in total).

'I think people are together, yes... I think we all support one another. My sister lives just up the street. My best friend lives across the street. My mummy lives round the corner... and the neighbours... they're all friends. I wouldn't see everyone all the time, but you know... if there's a problem, they'll be there. Same at holidays... you know you'll see everyone.'

Some long-term residents of the area indicated that they were beginning to have doubts as to whether community cooperation and spirit was in decline in the area, but they suggested that they were buoyed by the reaction to both the Coronavirus Pandemic and the Ukraine Appeal.

'I think sometimes you begin to think that we're all drifting apart... and everyone is suiting themselves, but then you get reminders of how good and decent people still are. I think you got to see that during Lockdown (associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic). People worked out who was on their own... who couldn't get out and worked out how to support them.'

Some participants indicated that even within the three main parts of the Shankill, there are further distinct pockets of space and identity.

'You could split Mid Shankill up six times over.'

KEY FACILITIES

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

Household Survey

- **22% of our participants indicated they were involved with a Local Church.**
- **9% were associated with a Sport Club.**
- **5% were involved in a Local School.**
- **4% participated in Neighbourhood Associations.**

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Participants marked a number of key retail spaces throughout the site, including: Tesco at Woodvale and Iceland at Argyle Street. Participants also marked a variety of shops along the Shankill Road.**
- **Other key spaces included the Shankill Leisure Centre and Woodvale Park.**

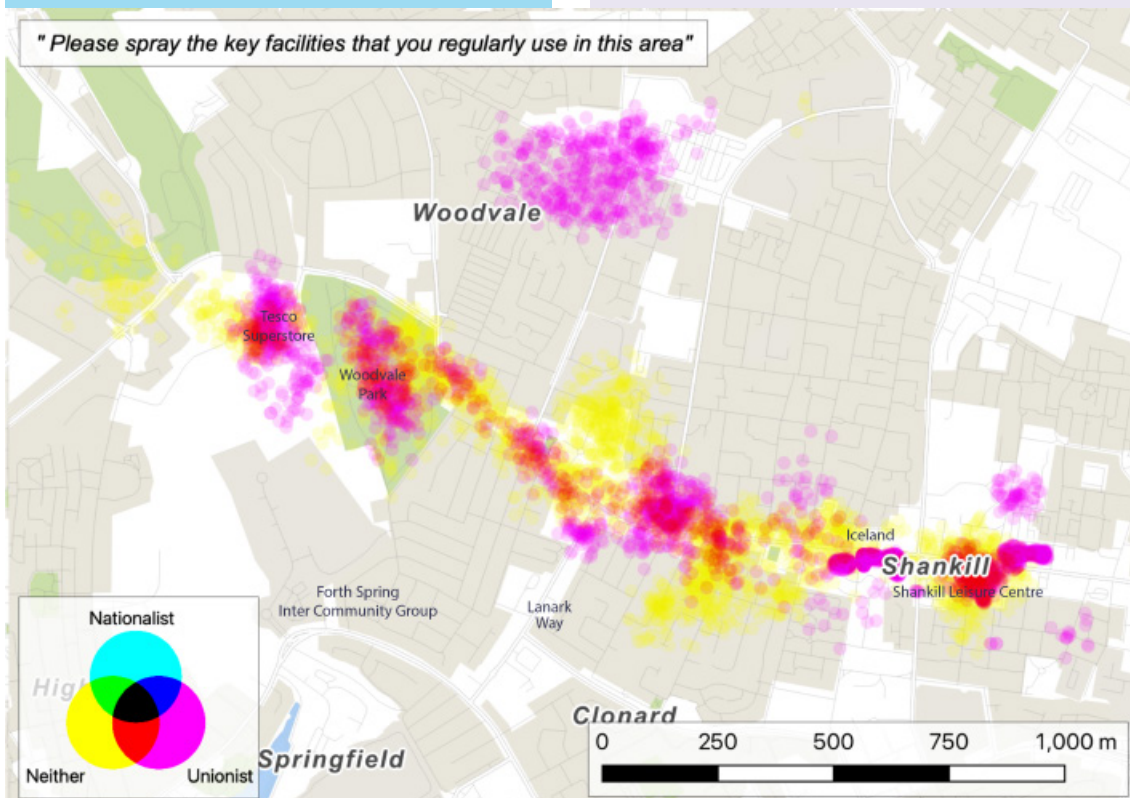


Figure 2: Key Facilities in the Shankill area.

Qualitative Interviews

A number of participants indicated that local community groups, some which receive funding from CIT, have a significant influence in the local area, including: Lower Shankill Community Partnership, NI Alternatives, Greater Shankill Partnership and Impact Training were all directly referenced.

Participants attributed the influence of these groups to the amount of need that existed in the area – the groups were required to address a wide range of issues associated with the inequality in the area, including: unemployment, poor education outcomes, concerning health and wellbeing statistics. It was also suggested that residents are 'over-reliant' on groups of this kind due to the failure of relevant statutory bodies to properly address key issues. Moreover, participants also highlighted that there was a lack of related local political leadership on these matters.

'I think people are overly reliant on us (local community organisation), because they've nowhere else to go... do you know what I mean? I mean... during Covid... people needed information... when were the shops opening? How could they get their (medical) prescriptions? So, we got the information for them and distributed it through our social media profiles. But I mean there was no politicians around and there was no agency saying that they had the answers'

'I think the area really is in a terrible state... it's rotten. There's a lot of dereliction... big abandoned spaces... full of rats and dirt. We're

trying to get some funding in place to lead on getting these places cleaned up, because they just bring down the quality and confidence of the area. Imagine trying to sell a house near it. It's a statutory responsibility, but no one will take the leadership of it on... so it's left to us and other residents. It's a disgrace.'

'I'm just confused. If you go round to the other side of the peace wall... it's lovely and tidy... the grass is cut and there's no rubbish... round here... on the other side of the interface... there's a big open space full of rubbish. I mean... that's odd. Is someone cleaning up round there, but not here?'

A number of participants who were involved in community development discussed the importance of developing better communication at a local level, as well as with other Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist areas. The intention of such interaction was to maximise resources and disseminate positive stories and good learning.

'I think when you look across the interface... there's a community there... that has a message that is very easy to tell... whether that's at elections, whether they're trying to get funding or... if they've tourists in. There's alignment. I think we've missed a trick... we don't have that coherent message. We have pride in our culture... in our people. Maybe we've been too modest, but I think if the local (community) centres can work together then we can develop a clearer, fairer... and more positive message.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

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

Household Survey

- **88% of respondents indicated that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 84%.
- **58% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 50%.
- **43% of respondents felt the area would be in better condition in five years time.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 29%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **A number of participants indicated that the addition of new housing to the area was important to local residents, due to local demand.**
- **Participants also marked the Tesco at Ballygomartin, but a large number chose not to mark anywhere on the map and indicated that there was no particular location where things had improved.**

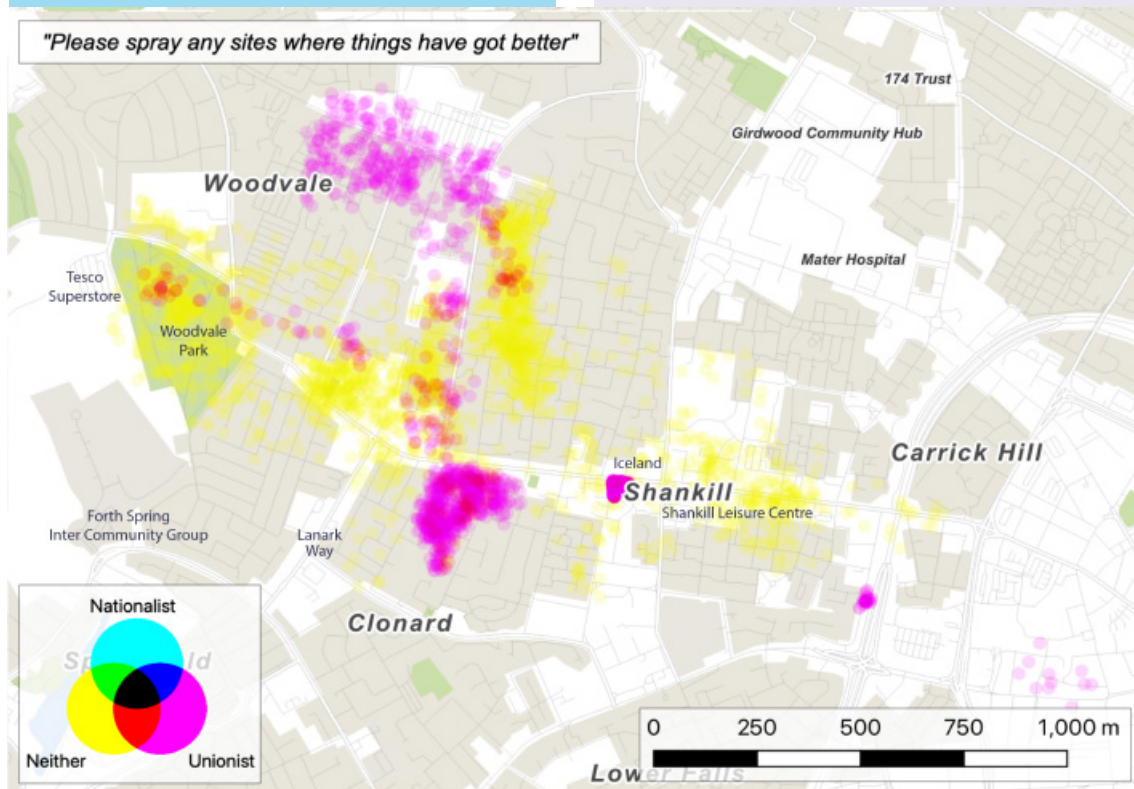


Figure 3: Locations in the Shankill area where things have got better.

Qualitative Interviews

Although participants in the Spraycan mapping exercise were unable to identify clear points in the local area where they felt there had been improvements, they did feel as though those working throughout the area were starting to better understand how they might address the variety of problems that exist. For instance, as referenced in the last Section, there was a sense that local community groups are increasingly willing to work together to find solutions for local issues.

'I think that's (local collaboration) really key to our chances (of improving the area)... I mean I don't think that's always been the case. In-fact, I would go so far to say that some of our (community) groups were actually competing with each other... not just for funding, but also for control. I think there's been a recognition that the problems are so severe that we're going to need everyone.'

'Yes, I think there's much better interaction (between local community organisations). I think you're more likely to see a joint funding application. You're also more likely to see a group at one end of the road say to another that they have someone who has a need or problem that the other group is better setup to support... you know I mean? Better signposting? That's it... you know it's a case of a group having someone who can't get a job... if they can't them one, then who has an opportunity... who has a training scheme?'

Participants often indicated that the improved connections between local community groups was often due to the need of the area or to enhance a funding application, but they also credited a number of younger community leaders for being more opening to working collaboratively than some of their predecessors.

'The spark isn't quite out. There's still hope... I think we've some really impressive young people in the area... who are highly motivated... who don't have some of the same hang-ups as previous leaders. They see a problem and they try and find a solution. It's nothing to do with control or who people should or shouldn't interact with.'

'Some of the young people coming through in the area have great potential. They have fresh ideas. They're more willing to do genuine cross-community work... not just for funding... they want to help get that transition that has happening... get people from over there to tell us how things are. We've similar problems, but we've applied different solutions... let's find out what's worked for us and what's worked for them. I think our young leaders are much better networked to learn those lessons and they're much more open to trying a good idea from somewhere else and trying to apply it. Again... I think there's sometimes been a reluctance to try something from somewhere else, because local groups didn't want to admit they didn't have all the answers... they definitely wouldn't have wanted to have 'borrowed' an idea from across the way.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

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

Household Survey

- **Only 20% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%.

- **57% of participants indicated that in five years time, the area would be either in the same condition or worse.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 71%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **A number of participants marked the whole of the Shankill Road area when asked to indicate where they consider things have gotten worse in their local community.**
- **Participants were most likely to mark Lanark Way (mainly due to the riots in Easter 2021) and the main body of the Shankill Road (mainly due to the perception that the shops had declined in appearance and were no longer good value for money).**

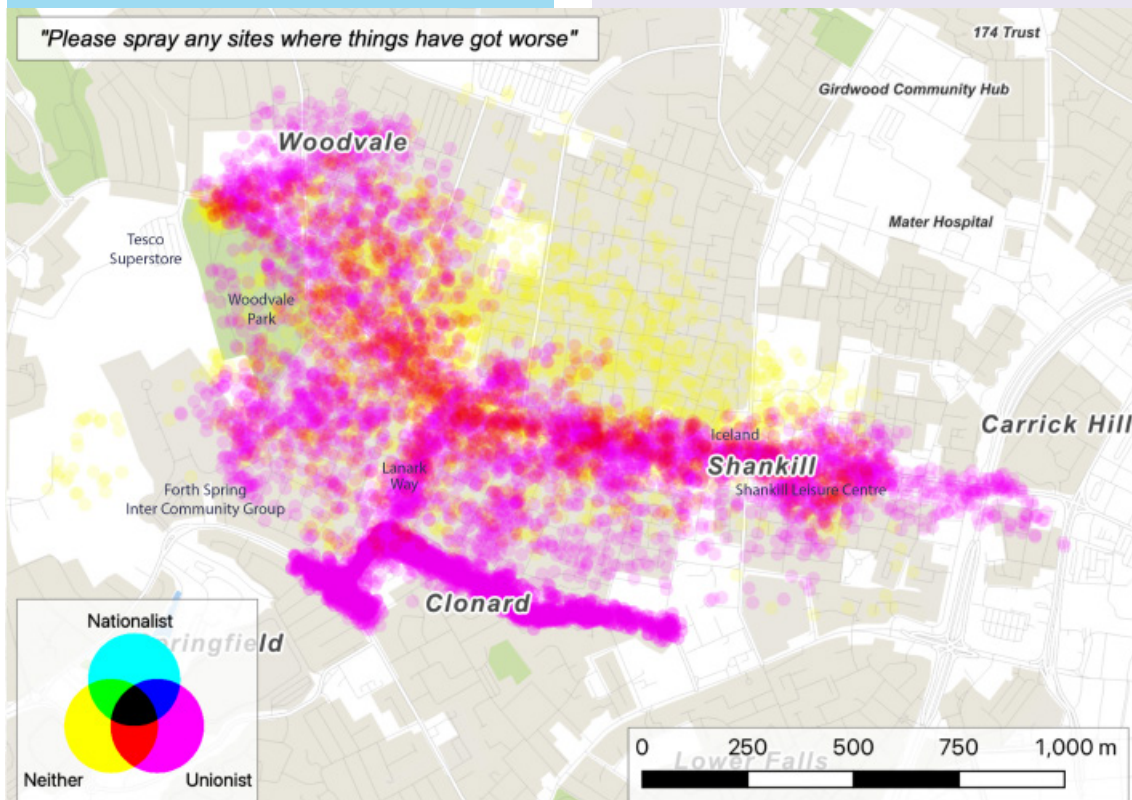


Figure 4: Locations in the Shankill area where things have got worse.

Qualitative Interviews

Almost every participant indicated that they were concerned by the scale of inequality and deprivation that existed throughout the site, specifically: drug addiction, levels of unemployment, standard of education outcomes, poor health outcomes, overall look of the area and the amount of housing demand in the site.

'Drugs are the biggest thing on this (Shankill) Road. Awful. They are absolutely everywhere. People's lives are completely ruined by it... not just their lives, but also their family's lives. I can tell you stories of lots and lots of people who had problems with drugs in the Shankill (area). Unfortunately, I can't tell you about many people who we were able to help. It's very, very hard. You're not just dealing with the addiction itself... you would need to address why they got there in the first place. You need to look at the fact that they can't get work... that they might be from an abusive or broken home. We have to get real about the scale of the problem, but we also need to be realistic about why they had the problem in the first place.'

'It's just filthy. The whole area... rotten. Walk up and down the road... there's spaces where shops have been boarded up and just left... then there's big open spaces full of needles and rubbish. I mean... Jesus... you don't get that in other places. Go over to the Falls... I mean... I'm sure they'll tell you they've problems, but it looks like another world entirely. We've rubbish and dog muck up and down the road.'

'I love the Shankill, but the future isn't bright. Not at all. The place is stinking. It's corrupt. Young people with any potential are straight out the door. There's nothing here for them. My son... he moved out toward Dundonald... and it really upset me that he didn't stay locally. You know? I had visions of my grandkids living in this street and being in and out of the house, but the more I thought about it... it was the right choice. What's here for him?'

'We have the perfect storm here of people not being able to get a job or not being qualified to get a job and lots of them just turning to crime... or drugs... or alcohol... because at sixteen that's it. They don't have qualifications... they won't get a job... some can't even get on a training course. We had one (training course) here and people had to come off their benefits to participate, but there was no guarantee they would get a job and they would then have their benefits reassessed... if they did have to reapply.'

'It's mad, but even with all the problems... we still don't have enough homes. You'd think people would want out... and I'm sure some young ones do... but a lot of people want to stay near their families... near where they've come up... and we can't even do that. We can't give someone a home. A good quality house. Look at some of those new ones... some of them are facing the peace wall... Like why is that? Go to the other side... they don't face in... they face out. I mean what's going on there? Why would someone do that? You start to think it's a conspiracy or something.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

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

Household Survey

Respondents to the Survey were largely positive about the spirit of the community, regarding how it addressed incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- **67% of respondents felt that local residents abided by the rule of law.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 61%.
- **79% felt that improved lighting and alleygating would make them feel safer, while 82% said improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 60% & 59%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Despite identifying a wide range of concerns about different issues that exist in the Shankill area of Belfast, which have been covered elsewhere in this Report, a large number of participants indicated that they felt safe throughout the entirety of the site.**

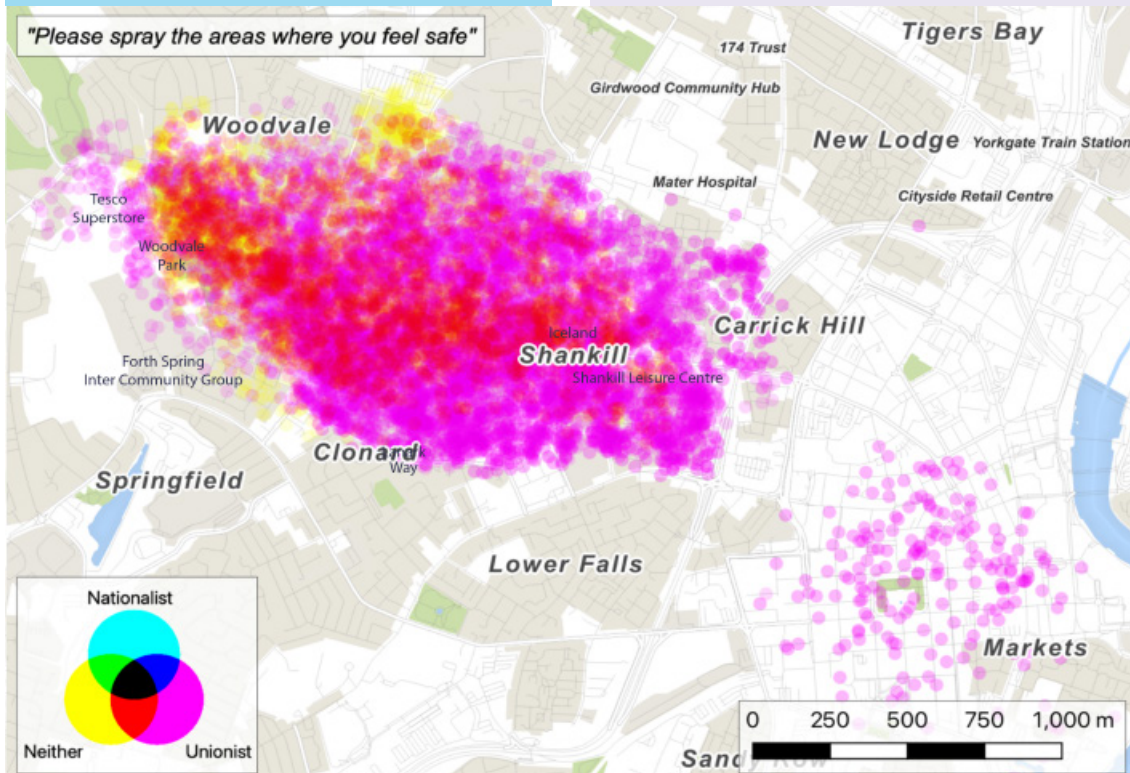


Figure 5: Locations in the Shankill area where people feel safe.

Qualitative Interviews

Most participants indicated that they felt safe in the Shankill area of Belfast, despite being aware of a wide range of problems that exist in the area.

Participants generally stated they attributed their sense of safety to their familiarity with the area. Crucially, most were long-term residents of the area and that enabled participants to develop strong social bonds in the area. Moreover, participants explained that they knew 'how to stay safe'.

'Being here a long-time... you know, that's quite something... in terms of the relationships you develop. It makes you feel safe... it makes you feel that you've got people you can rely on... if something were to go wrong... you know you've got support.'

'I think long-term residents... like myself... and my family... you're not naïve to the area. You learn how to stay safe... where to go... where to avoid. I don't leave my house and decide not to go somewhere... or think I'll go this way, because I need to avoid a certain place. You just learn these things and then that awareness is plugged into you.'

Participants also indicated that aside from the disturbances at Lanark Way in Easter 2021, current cross-community relationships are largely positive. Many attributed this to the work of peace walls groups being funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and the Community Safety projects funded by CIT.

'Yes, far better (than they had previously been)... much better. I think we were all shocked by what happened last Easter... there wasn't a huge build up to that.'

'I think people look to the CIT groups and the IFI groups to take a lead. That's quite a big responsibility, because fundamentally the reason they look to these groups is because they've lost confidence in the police or Council. I think that's good for the groups in some way, because it gives them an important role, but you need to be careful... you know if something happens to one of these people... what then? They're kind of working in the shadows.'

'This is the best they've (cross-community relationships) been for a bit. I think people take that for granted... well things are ok then, but there's lots and lots of contact happening all the time to keep things ok.'

'We're ok right now... I mean, yeah, it's ok, but I do worry where it's going. You know... if we don't make progress on Brexit... on the Protocol... where's next?'

Although a number of participants indicated that they feel safer now, in general terms than they did during the peak of the Region's conflict (mainly due to a decline in violent crimes), many noted that there were a number of issues (specifically drugs) that still made them feel unsafe and anxious about the future of the area – see next Section for more details.

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

In this section, we identify the feelings participants had about the issue of community safety in the Shankill area of Belfast, 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:

- **39% felt ASB was a problem in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 55%.
- **42% believed that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 57%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **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 – specifically along much of the Falls Road, Carrick Hill and Ardoyne.**

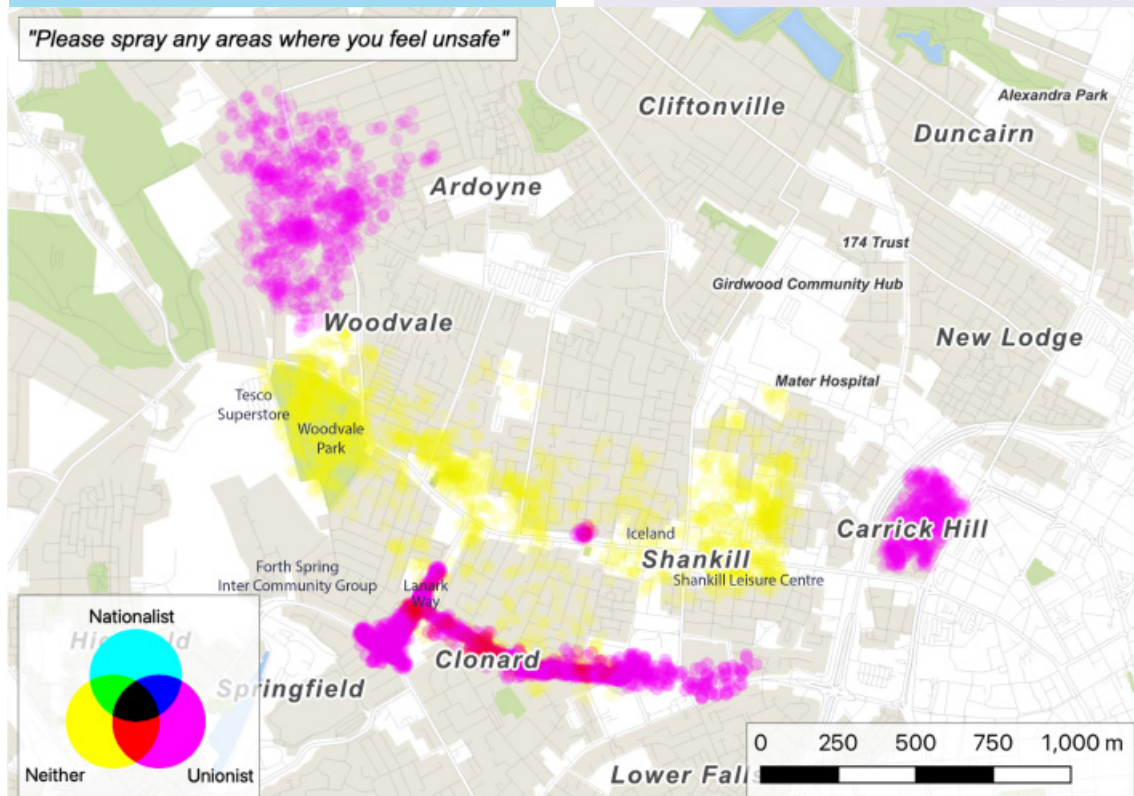


Figure 6: Locations in the Shankill area where people feel unsafe.

Qualitative Interviews

Most participants indicated that they felt anxious near peace walls and/or points of the symbolic landscape (flags and murals) associated with the 'other' community.

'Yeah, I just tense up. When I go near the interfaces, if I go through the gates... yeah, very anxious. I turn the volume down in my headphones if I'm walking or put down the button in my car if I'm driving. You know... nothing has ever happened, but you just worry... ah, especially if someone seen me coming across for a hospital appointment or whatever. It sounds mad, like who would be interested in me, but you just worry they're watching people come and go... and if you were passing back and forward... maybe they'd follow you to see where you were going.'

'Everything about their (Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community) flags... murals... it just makes me feel very uneasy. Straight away... you know you don't belong. It's very intimidating. Is it the same in this community for them? It must be... I'm sure it is.'

Most participants also indicated that there were aspects of their own area that also made them feel uneasy or unsafe. These concerns were commonly associated with youth violence, drugs and a lack of confidence in the police.

'I always felt safe round here... always, but I've seen things in the last few years that make me really uneasy. I saw two young fighting outside a bar and went over to break it up... then suddenly one of them pulled out a knife. I thought to myself afterwards, what if he'd plunged me? You know what I

mean? Since then I've found out that lots of young people living throughout the area carry knives... so I'm much more conscious to keep clear.'

'I think people locally... they're done (with the Police). I think the confidence is gone. I think the link in the chain is broken. I think most people would consider them to be a Catholic force. And you can debate that, but look at the difference in the way they treat the two communities. I was up last Easter (2021 riots) when they were breaking up the fighting and they were much rougher with the young protestants. I think whether it's been to appease Sinn Féin or whatever... but there's so sympathy or care for Protestants and I think there's now a lack of trust and that feeling that they don't represent us. I mean I wouldn't call them, no.'

'I would think that most people living locally are less worried about Catholics and more worried about drugs... I think drugs (are) definitely the biggest problem... by a distance that we face. I think we're out of our depth in trying to resolve it. We're dealing with sophisticated criminal gangs and I don't the response in return mirrors that. I think we need to get real about the scale of the problem... as I say, we're out of our depth.'

'Drugs... without a doubt (biggest problem in the area). It's the most profitable business in the area. it probably touched every family in some way... It's the biggest enterprise in the area... the buying and selling of drugs... there's nothing close.'

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 the Shankill area of Belfast.

Household Survey

- **51% of respondents felt that young people living throughout the Shankill were under too much influence from paramilitary groups.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 32%.
- **46% felt that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 34%.
- **46% felt that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence in their area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Most participants felt that paramilitary groups had an influence and presence across the entire of the Shankill.** Participants marked specific bars/pubs which they defined as ‘paramilitary bars/pubs’ – in this instance, they suggested that everyone locally was aware of this and those who chose to use or not use these pubs/bars did so intentionally (demonstrating their opposition or support for the groups).

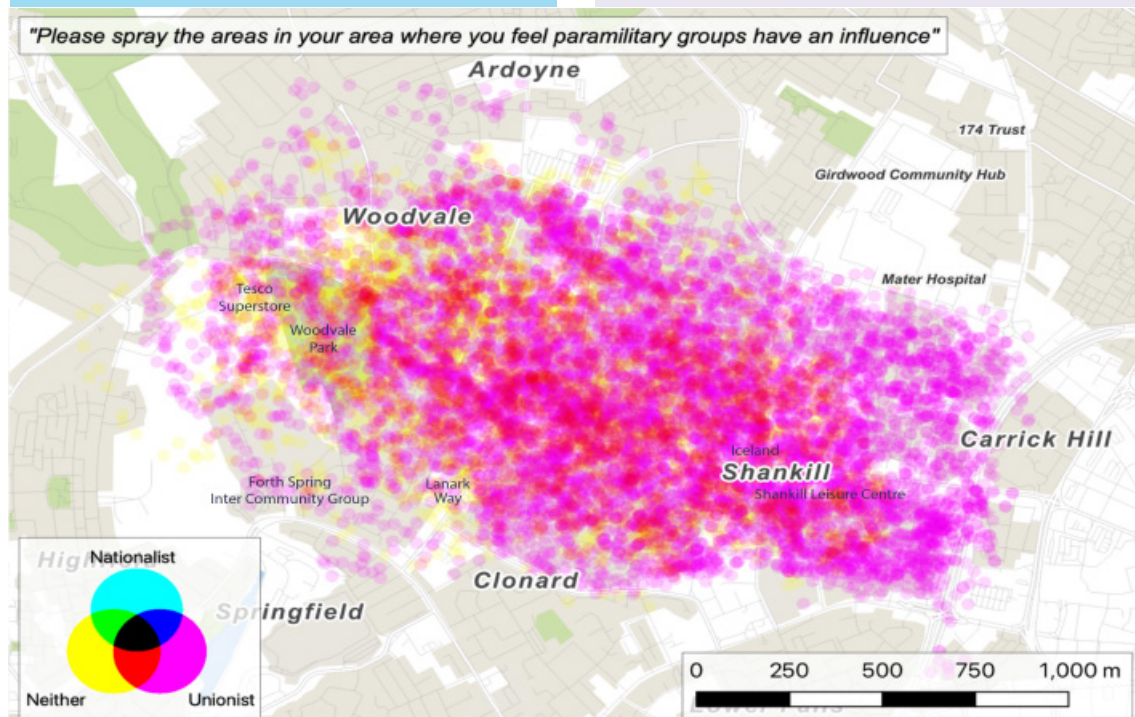


Figure 7: Influence of Paramilitary Groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs in Derry/Londonderry.

Qualitative Interviews

In line with the data collected via the Spraycan mapping tool, every participant indicated that paramilitary groups had at least some degree of influence on the Shankill – the majority indicated that this influence was significant.

'They're into everything... really... everything. I don't think there's one thing that happens that they're not aware of... or where they're not involved. The minute that something would come along that shows any potential... any hope... where there's a chance to make money... or control the area... they're straight in. Sometimes it's subtle... you know: 'we can pay for that' or 'we'll take care of that for you'... then other times... it's... 'that's ours... we'll run this from now on'!... I think it generally depends on who's involved. If... they don't want to rock the boat... cause it's someone who's well liked or connected... it'll be the soft touch, but if it's someone... if it's someone with no real backing... and they've got something that's caught on... they'll run right over the top of them.'

'I call... them you know... the faceless men... all over the community. They're there and they haven't gone away. In the past... when there was a robbery... and there was no police force that people could call, they could come along and deal with it. Now... it's different.'

'Let's call a spade a spade... when there's lads protesting the protocol or whatever... I can go round and say: 'Move'... until I'm blue in the face... and they won't. When these other elements come along and say: 'Move'... straight away. They're away.'

Participants indicated that the activities they were most commonly involved in, included: drug dealing, extortion of local businesses and money lending.

'They say they're against drugs, but they're selling more of it than anyone.'

'I know a family... and one lad killed himself, because he owed them £100... one hundred pounds... I mean... that's how much one life is worth... one hundred pounds.'

Most participants were frustrated by the persisting role and influence of the paramilitary groups and wanted a more visible response from the PSNI and relevant statutory bodies.

'I mean... the dogs in the street know who's who... so why does nothing happen? They say you have to build a case... these groups have been doing what they're at for 30... 40 years... how long does it take to build a case?'

'If you speak to other people in the area... they'll tell you that the police will say... to your face that they ask these (paramilitary) groups for information about crime... let that set in... they ask a criminal gang for information about what crime is happening in the area... and then they wonder why the local community don't trust them or phone in when somethings gone wrong'

ENDNOTE 1: Household Survey

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

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 BELONGING

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 PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED 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.

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Co-operation Ireland. 2018. *Building Capacity to support transition in the Shankill* (Belfast: Co-operation Ireland).

Sturgeon, B. & Bryan, D. (2021). *Communities in Transition: Mid-term Review* (Belfast: The Executive Office NI).



Communities in Transition

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