

The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland

**Volume 12
2017**



**Centre for
Cross Border Studies**

ISSN: 2054-572X

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ISSN: 2054-572X

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FOREWORD

Dr Helen Johnston
Chairperson, Centre for Cross Border Studies



As in the previous year, the focus for the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) in 2017 was on “building and maintaining relationships within, across and beyond these islands” following the UK Referendum on withdrawal from the EU. This was the theme of our Annual Conference on 23-24 February, opened by then Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan and featuring a keynote address by Michael Russell MSP, Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe. Our annual conference has become an important event for those involved in working across borders and we were pleased to be able to welcome speakers and participants from these islands and beyond our shores to Armagh.

Since then, CCBS has been engaged on an almost daily basis with other organisations on the island of Ireland, the UK and in Europe to ensure that the social, political and economic implications of Brexit for the island of Ireland are understood by citizens and decision-makers. The Irish Government’s ongoing All-Island Civic Dialogue events were continued throughout the year and the Centre participated in sectoral seminars on Enterprise Skills Needs; Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation; Human Rights and the Good Friday Agreement; and the North West Region as well as Plenaries in February and September. CCBS Director, Ruth Taillon was a panellist at a Sectoral Dialogue hosted by the Department of Health in September. CCBS staff acted as rapporteurs for the sectoral dialogue event in July hosted by the Departments of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Education and Skills. Ruth also acted as a workshop facilitator at the Plenary session in February at which Deputy Director, Anthony Soares was a rapporteur.

Additionally, the Centre was invited and presented testimony to the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly; the House of Commons Exiting the EU Committee; the Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht; the Bureau of the Various Interests Groups of the European Economic and Social Committee; and the House of Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee.

Likewise, the Centre’s growing reputation as an authoritative voice on all things Brexit and the island of Ireland was reflected in the many requests to speak at numerous Brexit events hosted by academic institutions, business bodies, political parties and third sector organisations. There were also numerous interviews and information requests from Irish, UK and international press and broadcast outlets throughout the year. It is a reputation that has been built on the foundations of the production of evidence and analysis and shared through our own policy seminars aimed at policy- and decision-makers; our briefing papers and reports; and the Centre’s social media platforms.

Although the shadow of Brexit has loomed large over the Centre's work this year, we have nevertheless devoted significant time and other resources to fostering our relationships with colleagues at other European borders, internal and external. The Transfrontier Euro Institute Network (TEIN), of which CCBS is a founding partner, continues to be an important vehicle for sharing learning. In June, CCBS hosted a study visit as part of the *Platform for Cross-Border Dialogue* project, involving TEIN partners from the Poland-Czech Republic, France-Germany and the France-Spain (Catalonia) borders at which we shared our experience of cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding. The project aims to create a positive change in Czech-Polish relations related to the historical and political context of Cieszyn Silesia. The project is based upon the use innovative methods of cooperation to develop solutions for cross-border problems that are a legacy of historical political or ethnic/national conflict.

The Centre has also been involved in a Jean Monnet project, led by another TEIN partner, the University of Strasbourg. *Conflicts and Cooperations in the Border Regions of the EU* involves the exchange of experiences and debate on the role of the border in the European integration process and in cross-border cooperation. The project consists of a comparative analysis of conflicts and cooperations in eight cross-border regions: Upper Rhine (France, Germany, Switzerland); Mont Blanc (France, Switzerland, Italy); Manche and the Eurometropole Lille (France, Belgium, UK); Ireland/Northern Ireland; Cieszyn (Czech Republic, Poland); Viadrina (Germany, Poland) Catalonia (Spain, France, Andorra); and the Slovenia/Austria/Italy cross-border region. The November 2017 seminar focussed on Ireland/Northern Ireland and the Catalan region. It is planned to produce an *Encyclopédie des conflits et coopérations aux frontières de l'UE*, as a reference for students of European and International Studies and for cross-border practitioners that will include a chapter on the Ireland/Northern Ireland border region.

In October, TEIN and its associated partners the MOT, CESC and DG Regio/European Commission hosted a workshop as part of the European Week of the Regions and Cities: *Enhancing Capacities of Regions and Cities for Better Cross-Border Cooperation*.

CCBS Policy Seminars and Public Lectures this year also had a specific focus on maintaining and building on cross-border and transnational relations in the post-Brexit context. In May, the Oireachtas Joint Committee on EU Affairs hosted our seminar in Leinster House, *Models of Cross-Border Cooperation for a Post-Brexit Context*, that featured speakers from the Norway-Sweden border and the French Ambassador for Transboundary Cooperation. The Spring Lecture, held in partnership with the Robinson Library, took an historical approach. Prof Aidan O'Sullivan from UCD School of Archaeology spoke on *How did people in early medieval Ireland live together?* Returning to the present day, our guest speaker for the 2nd Annual George Quigley Memorial Lecture in June was Prof José Luis Iparraguirre, Chief Economist at Age UK, who spoke on how economics can help to make us feel human. At the CCBS annual talk for the John Hewitt Summer School, Mr Dominique Jan Searle, Gibraltar Representative to the UK talked about the human and political factors of the UK's dispute with Spain and how the future management of the frontier is critical for Gibraltar's population. *Healing, Learning and Citizens' Rights: Crossing Borders* was the theme of this year's CCBS policy seminar at the office of the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU in Brussels in October, at which Judith Thompson, Commissioner for Victims and

Survivors, outlined how the Commission was working with victims of the conflict and Kevin Hanratty, Director of the Human Rights Consortium, stressed the need for retention, protection or replication of EU derived rights. He also reminded listeners of the explicit references to the EU in the Belfast/GFA and the Northern Ireland Act. In November, CCBS, the Sweden-Norway 2014-2020 INTERREG Programme and the SEUPB organised a visit by a delegation of over 20 local and regional politicians from the Norway-Sweden border region; a policy seminar on the future of cross-border cooperation post-2020/postBrexit was part of the programme. Also in November, CCBS and the Centre on Constitutional Change hosted a 'Chatham House' event, *Reconfiguring UK-EU Borders: Facing up to the challenges of Brexit* at the University of Edinburgh. Dr Duncan Morrow presented our Winter Lecture, *A problem to every solution? Hard borders, reconciliation and Ireland's ethnic frontier* and launched this *Journal* in December.

Building relationships further afield, the Centre was delighted to welcome a delegation of young leaders from the South Caucasus to Armagh in June. The visit was organised by the Causeway Institute for Peace-building and Conflict Resolution International (CIPCR). Closer to home, CCBS Director, Ruth Taillon was one of the speakers at the launch of the *InSight* initiative that will explore the visual, natural and personal connections between South West Scotland, the Isle of Man, Cumbria and Northern Ireland/Ireland. It is anticipated that the *InSight* initiative will be the framework for future 'cultural dialogue' events between the different regions/jurisdictions linked by the Irish Sea.

Although constrained by limited funding, the production of innovative and high-quality research remains a priority for CCBS. We have continued our intensive work on Brexit, with research being undertaken in order to update statistical evidence provided in the Briefing Papers published in the run-up to the 2016 referendum, and to garner other evidence relevant to cross-border relations. CCBS has also undertaken significant analysis of the negotiating documents produced by the UK and Irish Governments, as well as the various EU institutions.

In September, Dr Anthony Soares (Deputy Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies) presented the findings from an ongoing Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust funded project, *Towards a New Common Chapter*. This project has been assessing the extent to which cross-border cooperation is independently valued and enacted at the grassroots level, and whether communities are setting their own priorities for inclusion in regional and local strategies on both sides of the border. Anthony's contribution to this edition of the *Journal* sets out an overview of the project and includes the text of *A New Common Chapter for cooperation within and between these islands* drafted by participating groups at the end of the second stage of the project.

The Centre is involved in a new transnational research project, *Territorial Impact Assessment for Cross-Border Cooperation*, also involving the Special EU Programmes Body. The University of Luxembourg will lead a consortium with six other research centres to assess the territorial impacts (ex-post) of seven EU cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes. Other partners are the CESCO, MOT and a selection of cross border regions and Interreg A programmes. The project aims to provide a high-quality cross-border citizens' information website containing information relevant to each jurisdiction and

explaining complex cross-border issues. The Centre is also in discussions to develop other project proposals with colleagues in Britain and Europe and other funding applications are pending at the time of writing.

The Centre continues to contribute to government policy objectives on both sides of the border. For example, CCBS Director Ruth Taillon chairs the *Graduating to Success – Cross-border Project Team* in support of the Department for the Economy's *Higher Education Strategy* for Northern Ireland. She is also a member of the Northern Ireland Commission for Victims and Survivors Research Advisory Group and the Oversight Group for the Irish Government's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

We also continue to respond to public policy consultations relevant to cross-border cooperation. Our contribution to the European Citizens' Initiative in August relates to and was informed by our work on citizen engagement in cross-border cooperation. The submission on the Juncker *White Paper on the Future of Europe* was an opportunity for CCBS to signal its continued participation in the development of the EU and its programme of work. Having already submitted evidence to this inquiry previously, CCBS made a submission in November to the re-opening of the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee inquiry into the land border.

Following agreement at the North-South Social Innovation Network Steering Committee meeting in March that a workshop on best practice in Social Innovation cooperation should be organised, an event related to the justice sector was held on 12 June in Loughan House (an Irish Prison Service facility). Over 50 people attended the event, representing Justice Departments, services, agencies and NGOs from both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. The event was also used to launch the Social Innovation mapping project the Network is supporting.

Through the Border People project, CCBS has continued to develop our work in support of cross-border mobility through provision of information, training and policy analysis. Early in the year, the project developed and delivered a new cross-border training programme for advisors located on both sides of the border. In March, Border People and the European Citizens Action Service based in Brussels jointly hosted a seminar to highlight how potential Brexit scenarios will impact on citizens. The Border People website contains over 500 pages and thousands of links to external sources. The UK's exit from the EU will impact significantly on this content. A complete overhaul of information and considerable technical redevelopment has now started (with support from the Irish Government's Reconciliation Fund) to keep pace with the anticipated changes in legislation affecting citizen's rights, entitlements and obligations. The Advisory Group continues to focus on two key issues: the cross-border implications of Brexit and of Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland.

CCBS has continued to provide secretariat services to two important cross-border networks: Universities Ireland and the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS). The SCoTENS 15th Annual Conference, *Educational innovation – the challenge of evidence-informed change*, took place in Dundalk in October. The SCoTENS Steering Committee used the conference as an opportunity to gather evidence from

delegates that will feed into a new qualitative evaluation of the network. SCoTENS provides 'seed funding' for cross-border research projects related to teacher education and this year supported nine projects with a total allocation of £34,000. CCBS also administers the annual North South Student Teacher Exchange on behalf of SCoTENS.

In support of Universities Ireland, CCBS administers the North/South Postgraduate Scholarships and the Universities Ireland History Bursaries. The History Bursaries along with the annual History Conference comprise the *Reflecting on a Decade of War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-1923* programme that commenced in 2012. This year's conference, on the theme *Propaganda and Mobilisation* on 18 November, was the sixth in the Decade of Centenaries series. An important element of the Centre's work on behalf of Universities Ireland is coordination of the Scholars at Risk (SAR) Irish section. In early November, SAR hosted an event, *Academic Freedom in Turbulent Times* at Maynooth University that heard from Syrian, Iranian and Turkish scholars who are now working in European universities.

Finally, I would like to welcome Mark McClatchey, who joined CCBS in April as Administrative Assistant and Milena Komarova who joined CCBS in June as CCBS Research Officer. The Centre was also pleased to provide placements through the Erasmus+ Programme for Martina Radova from the Technical University of Liberec, Czech Republic and Tobias Heyduk from the University of Applied Sciences in Kehl, Germany.

As always, I'd like to place on record my appreciation of the quality of the work carried out by Ruth and the staff of CCBS. I'd also like to acknowledge the important governance role of the Board and to thank Board members for their time and expertise in providing guidance and support to the Centre. I acknowledge the contribution of our partners and funders, particularly the Irish Government. Without such funding, we would be unable to address cross-border issues to the extent that we do.

The Centre for Cross Border Studies will continue to work practically to build and maintain relationships across borders. We will continue to share our experiences and expertise with and learn from our partners within, across and beyond these islands – whatever challenges the future holds.

Introduction

Ruth Taillon

Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies



As this issue of the *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland* is being published (early December 2017), there has been no functioning Northern Ireland Executive or Northern Ireland Assembly for almost one year, nor does there appear to be any prospect of their reestablishment in the near future. The immediate consequences of this ongoing political crisis are that there are no Ministers from Northern Ireland participating in the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations); there are no meetings of the North South Ministerial Council and while we have been told that Brexit negotiators have identified 141 areas of cross-border cooperation, it is not clear what all of these are, or to what degree that cooperation is continuing. Meanwhile, crucial decisions about funding and policy implementation for Northern Ireland are being taken by civil servants without Ministerial oversight and it is unclear how long these unsatisfactory governance arrangements will continue or what the implications for the future of cross-border institutions and cross-border cooperation will be. Similarly, we are going to press at a critical time for the Brexit negotiations as we await the December 2017 meeting of the EU Council that will decide whether ‘sufficient progress’ has been achieved to allow the negotiations to move from separation issues into the area of future relationships.

Our contributors here all reflect, from different perspectives, the experiences and identities of ‘borderlanders’ – people who live, work, travel and cooperate across borders as part of their daily lives. Likewise, in different ways, they reflect and address the issues and challenges faced by people in border regions. Janice Rose offers a perspective from the Anglo-Scottish border while our other contributors address issues in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border Region. Anthony Soares, Louise Kennedy and Paschal McKeown share the findings of separate consultations with individuals from what might be called ‘seldom heard’ and vulnerable sections of society that highlight their concerns and interests about cross-border cooperation and the potential impacts of Brexit. Two other articles report on the findings of studies undertaken on behalf of border region Local Authorities by Ulster University and Queen’s University Belfast respectively. These studies have provided important detail about the expected economic impacts of Brexit and the opinions and concerns of people living on both sides of the border, and who have differing views on the decision to Leave or Remain.

CCBS Research Officer Milena Komarova offers (p. 11) a personal reflection on Brexit and the “in/visible” UK-Irish land border. She notes that there is now a new border lexicon of Brexit-speak: ‘no return to the [hard] borders of the past’; ‘frictionless’; ‘invisible’; ‘seamless’; ‘frictionless’ – while at the same time the UK Government insists that Brexit means withdrawal from the customs union and the single market. She notes that in response, the EU has described this discourse as ‘magical thinking’. Dr Komarova questions in particular the notion of visibility and its relationship to the workings and effects of the

Irish border. In conclusion, the Irish border is fundamentally constituted through the interweaving of different regulative regimes created by the Common Travel Area, membership of the European Union, and the Good Friday Agreement. “While these may not be indivisible in principle, their separation comes at a price and will entail the inevitable reintroduction of both visibility and friction to the operation of the border.”

We reprint here, with permission, *Brexit and the Border Corridor on the Island of Ireland: Risks, Opportunities and Issues to Consider* (p. 24). Prepared by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre on behalf of 11 Local Authorities, the report is a particularly significant and timely contribution to the discussion on Brexit. The report focuses on the economic impacts of Brexit and throughout the document summarises the issues and actions to be considered by the Councils. Noting that cooperation between Councils on both sides of the border initiated and facilitated the authors in preparing the report and ensured that “voices, debates and suggestions from within the region are heard across the island,” the authors conclude with the warning that continuing that cooperation will be essential in order to develop and implement solutions to the issues raised.

Complementing the Ulster University report, is a second report (p. 63), undertaken by researchers from Queen’s University Belfast and commissioned by the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), a network of 8 Councils from the Central Ireland/Northern Ireland border. The authors present here the key findings from a small scale research project intended to give voice to the views and concerns related to Brexit of members of rural communities on both sides of the border. The project, for which research was carried out in Summer 2017, was “determinedly non-political and non-partisan,” “an opportunity to record the views of local communities who are ‘bordering on Brexit’ in a very literal way...” The study covered areas such as ‘crossing the border today’, ‘experience of EU membership’, ‘anticipating the personal impact of Brexit’, ‘anticipating the local impact of Brexit’, ‘the border and the peace process’, and ‘priorities for the Brexit negotiations’.

Janice Rose provides a perspective from the Anglo-Scottish borderlands (p. 78). In the context of the impending withdrawal from the EU and the UK’s Industrial Strategy, she argues that the unique location of Northumbria affords the scope to showcase rural economic development, the potential of which is further heightened by the emerging prospect of a North of Tyne devolution deal and a Borderlands growth deal. Northumberland “should be a hotbed of competitive small businesses and enterprises that cluster and innovate through digital networks, ... thriving at the forefront of prosperity and wellbeing.” She critiques the 2015 strategy, *The 10-point Plan for boosting productivity in rural areas*, that she argues could not succeed because it “completely disregards the contribution of environmental stewardship to rural productivity.”

Dr Pascal McKeown reflects on the challenges posed by Brexit for older people (p. 87). Age NI has gathered opinions and concerns of older people in Northern Ireland about Brexit; issues relating to freedom of movement, access to employment, social security, pensions and family reunification are of significant and particular concern. The article considers the issues that older people indicate are important to them and require greater attention during negotiations on Brexit: equality and citizens’ rights; the provision of health and social care services; pensions for older people from the UK living in EU countries and those

from the EU living in the UK; and the particular circumstances of older people and families living along the border.

In her article (p. 99), Louise Kennedy, explores the nature of domestic violence through the unique experiences of victims in border areas. She offers an analysis of how Brexit will impact on victims and survivors but highlights also, the problems posed by the stalemate at Stormont and suggests how violence and abuse can be tackled now, and following the UK's (and Northern Ireland's) exit from the European Union. The issues, Kennedy tells us, "are thrown into starkest relief in the experiences of domestic violence victims in border areas." Women's Aid deal with many practical issues: "Access to police, benefits, safety, health services and refuge in these cases is not always straightforward." Victims and survivors of domestic violence in border areas are likely to be distinctly affected by the UK's withdrawal from Europe.

Over the past two years, CCBS Deputy Director Anthony Soares has been working closely with ten grass-roots community organisations from both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, the result of which is *A New Common Chapter for cooperation within and between these islands*. His article (p.111) explains the background to and the rationale for this project. Dr Soares goes on to explain the process by which the participating groups drafted and endorsed *A New Common Chapter* that sets out a vision for cross-border, North-South and East-West cooperation, which has led to a vision of such cooperation and what it should entail. Their document is reprinted on pages 117-118. As the article concludes, with the UK's impending departure from the EU, it is perhaps more urgent than ever to ensure that spaces and opportunities for cooperation between communities exist in order to maintain relations within and between these islands.

In this issue of the *Journal*, we have called upon various members of the CCBS Board, an intern currently volunteering with the Centre and our former Director, now retired to review a number of books – four of which are about the Irish Border and three about Europe, Brexit and the UK.

I would like to thank all of our contributors for their insights and assistance, without which this Journal would not have been possible.

‘Now you see it, now you don’t’... And now you do again. *Brexit and the in/visible UK-Irish land border*

Dr Milena Komarova

Research Officer, Centre for Cross Border Studies

It is an early morning in July and my 16-year old daughter and I are travelling down the M1 from Belfast to Dublin. I am going there for work and she is with me for the ride; that and a nice day on her own in Dublin... As always, when near the border we play a little game of guessing – have we crossed it yet? We look for our first road sign in kilometers. Half way through the journey we stop at a service station we like and, while I queue up to pay for my petrol, I absent-mindedly look at the merchandise. Daughter has promised a friend to bring her some Taytos from the South. Apparently, those taste different. Perhaps I could buy them here? Distantly, my ears catch the slightly raised voice of the till attendant. I begin to tune in. From what I gather, a tourist, off the bus from Belfast, is trying to pay for her custom in sterling. Told that she cannot, she is confused. Why ever not? ‘This is Ireland,’ the till worker is saying, making no effort to hide her irritation now. ‘Euros!’ Perplexed, the tourist pays and moves away. The attendant is still wound up. She tuts and shakes her head as I step forward. ‘How do they not get it?’ she asks looking at me. I shake my head noncommittally.

Soon after I began writing this paper my mind returned to this story. It is one that goes to the heart of my interest here: (in)visibility and the Irish border. What that tourist and I had in common I suspect, bar both being female and not originally from these islands, was an experience of borders vastly different from what the retail assistant might have ever known in her lifetime, younger as she was than either of us. For the one word that was never mentioned was the one thing the tourist never saw on her way south – the border. In her mind, therefore, she couldn’t have been in another state. The border for her only materialised at the moment of that interaction, not a few miles up the road where, unknowingly, she had crossed the international borderline. That her genuine confusion should have been received so impatiently only shows how tightly linked the idea, practices and experience of borders are to sovereignty and national identity. That she should have been so surprised to find herself in another country, having experienced no border crossing she could identify as such, demonstrates how exceptional Ireland’s experience of border-making still is. What it also manifests, however, is the essential role of visibility in the human ability for recognition.

I grew up in a world where state borders were walls. To me it was as simple as that. Not that I ever saw a wall like that – I just imagined that if I ever got there, that’s what it would look like. But to even get there you had to have an actual passport and you only got issued

with one of those if your application to travel abroad was approved by the authorities. That is you needed a 'valid' reason to travel, and even then, generally speaking, only to other countries from the Eastern bloc. Occasionally, when one was able to acquire a passport, somewhere along that wall, I imagined, a door would open. With creaking. Only ever so slightly. Never for a long time and almost as if just to spite me. I was the daughter of a military officer you see, and those did not just wander willy-nilly outside the country, without a perfectly good reason. Wanting to travel and see the world was no such reason. When I was 17, only months older than my own daughter is now, and midway through my graduation year, walls began to fall. We saw that on TV but it was not *our* experience for a while after, because said door was still locked, only this time from the outside. The border now looked less like a wall and more like a tough visa regime or a humiliating queue in front of an embassy. The idea that one could ever cross any state border without realising it was unthinkable.

To be clear, I am not comparing the Iron to the Emerald curtain. Unlike the former, the Irish border was, in the words of James Chichester Clark,¹ never intended by any government 'as a major international frontier'. 'It was others' he said, 'who piled brick upon brick along that wall so we could scarcely see or comprehend one another'. However, while borders are of their time and place(s), (ie historically specific and ever changeable phenomena) encoded in his words, and in the stories recounted above, are commonalities between borders that I want to pick upon:

First, borders, even state borders, are never made by states alone. The 'border work'² of others, from till workers at petrol stations and confused tourists, to smugglers, army check points, or masked gunmen in bushes, makes borders what they are. And that is – systems of rules that regulate not simply behaviour at borders³ but who, what and how is deemed to fall on one side or the other of them. Here the means by, and places at which, these rules are enacted and enforced are an essential part of the practice of borders and shape the effects of their regulative order on the movement not just of people, but of all kinds of other flows, say of goods, services or information.

Second, borders have their permissibilities – that is to say different rules apply to different people and things, often in a complex and hierarchical manner.

Third, as the common imagery of 'walls' and 'curtains', the continued use of passports and visas, or indeed the absence of (checks on) either suggest, borders have their in/visibilities. That we are only able to perceive borders in the terms of tangible material things, suggests our continued common-sense understanding that borders must be seen in order to work. This is an illusion, and one that I want to discuss. I will not over-labour the point itself, for scholars have long told us that 'borders do not have to be visible to all in order to be effective'.⁴ If nothing else, the vignette above demonstrates this point. The invisibility of the Irish border has not made it ineffective. It has simply changed what and how it regulates, and the kind of effects it has. There is something, therefore, to be said or asked

That we are only able to perceive borders in the terms of tangible material things, suggests our continued common-sense understanding that borders must be seen in order to work. This is an illusion ...

about the effects of visibility itself on borders. Specifically, about the present and future (post-Brexit) in/visibilities of the Irish border. We could ask, for example, to what use and by whom are the in/visibilities of this border put to work in the present context? What kind of a border will they make for?

Having followed, over the course of the past year, the ins and outs of public, media and political debates, as well as the general UK government Brexit-speak, I note there is now a rich vocabulary in place to describe, refer to, euphemise, or generally (avoid to) talk about the border. This new border lexicon draws profusely on the tropes of texture and visibility. Descriptions that have acquired some notoriety include phrases such as ‘no return to the [hard] borders of the past’, ‘frictionless’, ‘invisible’ and ‘seamless’, at the same time as the United Kingdom has pursued a ‘hard’ Brexit by stating it would leave both the single European market and the European customs union. In response, some in the EU have even described this discourse as ‘magical thinking’, to denote the irreconcilability between the invisible border’s symbolic and practical function of supporting the peace process, and the necessity to control trade flows through (and at) the border in a post-Brexit UK–EU relationship.

The invisibility of the Irish border has not made it ineffective. It has simply changed what and how it regulates, and the kind of effects it has.

In what follows I want to question some of the *en vogue* political vocabulary widely used to refer to what would be the UK-Irish land border after Brexit. I wonder for instance, about the meaning of the commonly (ab)used and vague notions of ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ border. I do not find them particularly helpful. While they may have served a purpose in the immediate aftermath of the 2016 Referendum on leaving the EU, is it still appropriate for us to continue discussing what the border will look like, what it will do, who, what and how will be able to (not) cross it, and under what conditions, in such metaphorical terms? What exactly is the measure for border ‘softness’/‘hardness’? Can we apply these blanket terms for all the different aspects of life that a border regulates? Similarly, what exactly do ‘frictionless’ and ‘seamless’ – such oft-repeated descriptions of the border, mean? And, lest we forget, the use of these particular notions would sometimes go together with another border descriptor – ‘invisible’.

I am particularly interested in this latter notion of visibility, and its relationship to the workings and effects of the Irish border. Visibility itself has been defined as a ‘complex field of social action’ separating what is noticeable, perceptible (and therefore, knowable) from the imperceptible.⁵ The in/visibility of something can be created by a variety of means – from physical space, material structures and technology, to the positioning of bodies, gestures, interactions and, vitally, language. Political discourse on the Irish land border after Brexit, it seems to me, often creates its own in/visibilities, an ‘optics of the State’⁶ that obfuscate the uneven practices and experiences that borders are manifested through. It also suggests the idea that the border is a geographical line. As such, it obscures the fact that borders are also located and projected away from the actual borderlines that abut state territories.⁷ The ‘optics of the State’ created through such a vocabulary, I would suggest, is itself a form of bordering, already produced and practiced through the process of Brexit negotiations and government discourse around them. We must ask therefore, not simply what kind of a border we will see after Brexit, but what part of the border, will

remain invisible? How and where will the border really be crossed? What will those border crossings, look like? What agencies/institutions will enforce that? What will that mean for me, as opposed to what it will mean for you?

‘Seeing like a border’

Our traditional understanding of borders is that they are what occurs at the edges of a state, limiting and delineating its territory.⁸ Only in the last few decades have border scholars begun asserting that borders exist at multiple sites within and between states; mean different things to different people; and work differently on different groups. Borders, in other words, are diffuse. More recently, border scholars have suggested that international borders can be understood and are enacted through a range of specialised networks, themselves part of an all-pervasive process of globalisation, including the global capitalist system of transactions and other numerous mobilities and flows. ‘[A]nd because access to networks (and restrictions to said access) can act as a bordering mechanism: those not on the network... are excluded from important circuits of information and economic exchange.’⁹ Crucially, borders are not just material or concrete. Though they can be traced in physical space, they also exist in the form of legal texts, government discourse and practice, and cultural symbols, or mundane interactions. ‘The border is an abstract, material and virtual interface ... that consists as much of fences or rivers as [of] concepts or political rhetoric, of ways of operating detection equipment, verifying passports and maintaining databases’.¹⁰

Crucially, borders are not just material or concrete. Though they can be traced in physical space, they also exist in the form of legal texts, government discourse and practice, and cultural symbols, or mundane interactions.

Let’s consider, for instance, a person arriving to the UK from either the EU, or from outside it. To begin with, in the former case they will not need to be granted a leave to enter (or a visa), while in the latter, they will likely need such a permission. Thus, the mere entry will be a vastly different experience in each case, both in preparation for and during the act of crossing the international borderline. However, this in itself is only the beginning of a multilayered complex process of establishing and enacting the conditions under which a person would be able to remain in the country. For that to happen, they need to find a home and be able to reside there, register with a GP, find a school for their children, find employment, or enroll on a course of study, and so the list continues. Every step of this way depends on the existence and enactment of rights which will depend upon, and differ according to, different citizenships. The border, we can say, comes into existence at the moment of decision at each of these points regarding whether or not a right exists for the respective person that can be enacted. Mundane interactions between people and any kind of public (social, political or state) institution therefore, begin to perform the function of borders. If no right exists then the person cannot ‘pass through’, they are not granted an access to the network, and a form of interaction or a transaction is stopped. Indeed, as the UK Government have themselves explained, ‘immigration controls are not, and never have been, solely about the ability to prevent and control entry at the UK’s physical border. Along with many other Member States, controlling access to the labour market and social security have long formed an integral part of the UK’s immigration system’.¹¹ Note,

therefore, how freedom of movement is in this instance defined on the basis of one's relationship to economic activity. The broader point here is that freedom of movement in itself is a differentiated concept. Its regulation through borders is the result of a series of discreet decisions taken at various points in time and space (within and without the territory of a state, at and beyond geographical borderlines) on the basis of a wide range of legal and policy rules and practice.

Certainly, the movement of people is but one discreet example of what borders regulate, and how. We might say – of how borders are defined in relation to, and function through, movement. Another, equally obvious one, is that of goods. One does not need to be an expert in international trade to appreciate that 'free movement' is a similarly complex and highly differentiated notion when applied to goods. Several separate but interrelated aspects of regulating such movement apply to the case of the Irish land border after Brexit, and will need to be taken into account: Goods imported into, or exported from the UK from/to either the EU or from/to anywhere else will be subject to tariffs, and to import/export duties, that will need controlled through customs posts at the border. Whether these checks are performed at the geographical borderline with Ireland or elsewhere, while not insignificant (and I will return to this later), is only partially the question here. The legal and policy regulations that enable the functioning of customs control and the infrastructure to perform customs checks will need to exist. Their mere existence represents the border and, however in/visible, when enacted will create friction to a greater extent than currently experienced. Such a friction can look like any one of a series of things – from time delays along the supply chain, to the cost of servicing the process on both the public purse and on private businesses, and the effects experienced by each and anyone of us in terms of where, when, how and at what cost we will be able to consume a product. Furthermore, a future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU, and with any other UK trade partner, may involve the elimination of tariffs and other restrictive regulations of commerce on most but *not all* products that *originate from within* the respective Free Trade Area *only*. This means that duties as well as rules of origin checks and regulations will still apply, at the very least against third countries. Border controls, therefore, will still be needed at any new FTA's internal borders in order to differentiate between originating products (entitled to duty-free access) and non-originating products (on which duty is payable).¹² Commentators have pointed out in this respect that '[a]s long as the North is outside the EU and its customs union, and the Republic is inside, there will have to be border controls between North and South to rule out trade diversion'.¹³

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The above discussion demonstrates, I hope, that borders operate in a diffuse way, weaving together various intersecting visible and invisible flows. While it hints at how vastly complicated the question of regulating the 'connective potential' of borders is, even with respect to discreet areas such as the movement of people or of goods, it undoubtedly only

begins to scratch the surface of such matters. One of the issues here is that, in the real world, different types of flows (of people, goods, capital, services or data) are not as readily separable as they may be for the purposes of analysis on paper. International trade in goods or services, for instance, also necessitates the movement of people. This can be difficult for the governance of national/state borders as these must answer to often conflicting demands and expectations in regulating different flows. For instance, borders are often 'required to be both open for business and closed to terrorists and traffickers'¹⁴ or 'illegal migrants'. Though in this process, the regulation of one type of flow can *de facto* affect the regulation of others in a myriad of unforeseen or undesirable ways, it can equally be purposefully wielded for the achievement of political ends. Think for instance of the most recent announcement regarding new measures introduced by the UK Government requiring banks and building societies to carry out checks on current account holders, establishing if they are in the UK illegally.¹⁵ Note also that the performance of such checks is by definition invisible to the public eye yet, in substance, this is clearly a form of border control. There exists an inexhaustible list of examples of how the regulation of one type of flows may affect that of others – as a rule, as a practice or as an experience. Border openness and permissibility – the characteristics of borders that tend to be qualified as 'frictionless', 'seamless', 'hard' or 'soft' – are, in this sense,

not easy to operationalise, as the rules and ease of border-crossing typically vary across different categories of people, countries and goods. Different bordering and de-bordering practices exist simultaneously and create complex patterns. Openness, thus, is a relative term made meaningful by comparisons of implementation practices over time and across specific border contexts.¹⁶

Pertinently to our interest in the Irish border post-Brexit, the above also suggests that the ways in which a border works, and its perceived effects are affected by the degree of its in/visibility. The actual or even imagined visibility of a border can invite or deter an attempt to cross it, dramatically change the experience of crossing it, and shape its meaning and symbolism in one's mind. This is why in/visibility is often used as a tool of border-making. For instance, Rumford¹⁷ suggests that the UK Government's investment in recent years in e-borders, offshore borders and juxtaposed borders, as well as the maintenance of EU borders by the border agency Frontex (through boats patrolling the Mediterranean, for instance) are means of border regulation designed to ensure the differential treatment of different flows. While making for a formidable barrier to those beyond UK/EU borders, these border-making processes and practices do not necessarily register 'in the consciousness of', or impact upon, 'those living on the inside'. Thus, at the very least, they cannot be questioned or become objects of scrutiny by a public oblivious to their existence. It is, therefore, 'certainly the case that the invisibility of (some) borders, including national state borders, is deemed desirable (by some)...' and has selective effects on different groups of people.¹⁸ Consequently, in Rumford's apt expression, we must learn to 'see like a border' – a way of seeing that teaches us to understand the impact of visibility on the functions, workings and effects of borders.

Why is the UK-Irish land border invisible?

I am, however, by no means suggesting that the 'out of sight, out of mind' principle of border-making can only have sinister control effects. The border's lack of visibility in the

Irish case, for instance, has had an enormous positive, practical and symbolic significance. Given the nature and history of the political and 'ethno-national' conflict on this island (essentially, a conflict about the legitimacy of British sovereignty over a part of the island), it is arguably by becoming invisible that the border has cemented the peace process.¹⁹ In recognition of the critical importance of this 'invisible and open border',²⁰ all parties to the Brexit negotiations have repeatedly stated and agreed on the view, first articulated by the European Council,²¹ that 'the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland' require 'flexible and imaginative solutions..., including with the aim of avoiding a hard border'. In turn, the UK government, have called for 'devising new border arrangements [that] respect the strong desire... to avoid any return to a hard border and to maintain as seamless and frictionless a border as possible'.²² Why then, we may ask, given such a unanimity of political will, has the problem of what to do with the Irish border, when it becomes an external EU frontier, become such 'a mess wrapped in a confusion inside a conundrum'?²³

Part of the answer lies in understanding the contemporary nature of borders as networks of interconnected flows. From this perspective, the UK's exit from the EU is of necessity an exercise in separating and further differentiating between the four freedoms of movement its borders regulate.²⁴ They must be made to answer the new requirement to be even less open to people (whether migrants, refugees, traffickers or terrorists), while remaining as close as possible to the status quo in how flows of capital, goods and services are treated. However, the relational nature of borders and the interrelated effects of their regulatory mechanisms complicate this task enormously. To understand this interconnectedness in the Irish context we need to appreciate that the Irish border itself is constituted through crisscrossing border regimes, ie different systems of rules and practices that define and regulate its functions, its governance and its degree of openness.²⁵ The present-day invisibility of the Irish border is the result of the over-layering of these different border regimes.

One such system of rules and the associated practices is the Common Travel Area (CTA), originally created in 1923 in response to the potential disruption to the movement of people between these islands, resulting from the drawing of the border around Northern Ireland. The regime of the CTA dictates that British and Irish citizens are free to 'move between the two jurisdictions, and thereby reside and work in either... without the need for special permission'.²⁶ This has introduced one layer of openness to the border as it has meant no passport checks for such citizens, though checks on others have variously continued, until much more recently. As the Irish Government have pointed out, these arrangements have 'been essential in enabling people of Irish identity not to have to assert British citizenship rights in Northern Ireland in order, for instance, to establish the right to permanent residency in the place they were born or, following Brexit, the right to live and work there at all'.²⁷ This is important as it demonstrates how by defining and regulating the application of citizens' rights within a jurisdiction (and not just at the borderline) a border regime affects every important aspect of one's life and work, including relationship to place.

The UK and Ireland have also been part of a common border regime within the EU since 1993.²⁸ This has included a shared subscription to the *acquis communautaire* with its four freedoms of movement, and has resulted in further opening the border through the

removal of customs checks (linked to common membership in the single market), equal rights of each country's citizens as EU citizens, forms of supranational governance and the introduction of a number of EU funding programmes addressing the particular social and economic deficits of the Irish-Northern Irish border region. Politically, participation in this common EU border regime has gone a long way to improve bilateral relations between the Irish and UK governments, while facilitating the functioning of the Good Friday Agreement (1998). As such it has also shaped the peace process on the island in practical and symbolic terms, as well as in terms of rights and entitlement. Economically, it has meant an advanced degree of market integration throughout the territory of the island.

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Another all-island border regime was created by the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) itself which institutionalised an equivalence of rights as EU citizens for both British and Irish nationals, formalised North/South institutional governance, and enabled all-island cooperation in specific sectors. When, after the signing of the GFA, security checks at the border also ceased, the Irish border all but disappeared from view – a fact of weighty symbolic importance, particularly cherished by Irish nationalists and one which has meant that the legacy of fear, suspicion and restricted mobility in and around the border region, resulting largely from ‘the troubles,’ has been given the chance of transformation. The GFA has thus cemented the openness of the border not only symbolically and politically but also socially.

In practice, the CTA, EU membership and the GFA have each created *interweaving* tiers of economic, political and social cross-border relationships which have together contributed to the land border's invisibility and openness. As Katy Hayward has suggested, the freedom of movement (customs free, visa free) across the border for services, goods, capital and people, has meant that for nearly 20 years now, the impact and experience of any variety of border-crossing²⁹ have not been much more significant than those of the internal UK borders.³⁰ For all of these interlocking reasons, the present status quo of the Irish land border is, indeed, vital to the continuing normalisation of relationships on the island.

The border ‘optics’ of political discourse

I want to return now to the question of how political rhetoric ‘constructs’ the idea about the UK-Irish land border after Brexit, and the kind of imagery it fashions about what the border will be: what it will look like, how it will operate, what it will and will not do, and for whom or for what? To this end I will briefly discuss some aspects of the *Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper* published by the UK Government in August 2017 in preparation for the first round of negotiations with the EU. In particular, I want to consider three of its main sections, dedicated to the Belfast (‘Good Friday’) Agreement, maintaining the Common Travel Area and associated rights, and avoiding a hard border for goods.

The Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement

The government recognition of the fundamental importance of the GFA, in all of its parts, to continuing stability on the island is, of course, of enormous significance. However, while putting an inordinate emphasis on the Agreement's importance in principle, the paper successfully avoids discussing how exactly the mechanisms, institutions and relationships established through the GFA will be affected by the UK leaving the EU. One possible interpretation of this *invisibilisation by omission* is that the Agreement is not deemed to be affected, let alone under threat, by Brexit. (If so, however, we might ask why was it important to stress at such extraordinary length and repetitiveness the mere commitment to upholding it? Should that commitment not have been self-evident?) Another possible explanation is that had it spelled out the specific effects of Brexit on the Agreement, the document would have, by necessity, illuminated the 'interlocking and interdependent' nature of 'all of the institutional and constitutional arrangements'³¹ it provides for, thus revealing the extent of the challenge involved in changing some of the mechanisms that have enabled its functioning.

For instance, one of the most fundamental achievements of the GFA, is defining citizenship and rights in a way that disentangles 'national identity from its expression by residence in a nation state'.³² The Agreement's ability to do so hinges upon the guarantee of equal rights for Irish and British citizens, while the content of this equivalence is provided by virtue of their common EU citizenship. There are, for example, a range of significant rights and equality protections in the areas of employment law and non-discrimination, which are enshrined in EU law, and presently apply both north and south of the border. This equivalence of rights has been critical to both improving North-South relationships and to the very ability of divided communities in the north to accept the legitimacy of the Agreement itself.³³ It is incumbent upon the UK Government, therefore, to discuss in specific terms if and how the equivalence of rights guaranteed by the Agreement will be copper-fastened after the UK has left the EU and when EU law no longer applies. While the Government may have recognised that '[a]s long as Ireland remains a member of the EU, Irish citizenship also confers EU citizenship',³⁴ the Position Paper makes no mention of the rights of Northern Ireland citizens who choose not to exercise their right to an Irish passport.³⁵ How, then, will the continuation of their equal rights throughout the territory of the island be guaranteed?

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Significantly also, as previously discussed, the question of citizens' rights is an essential aspect of the functioning and openness of borders. It is, therefore, also fundamental to its future. Avoiding a discussion of how the equivalence of citizens' rights north and south of the border can be continued after Brexit obscures the degree to which the mere question of these rights, and of the Good Friday Agreement that guarantees them, are fundamentally questions about the remaking of the Irish border.

Maintaining the Common Travel Area and associated rights

It is striking that, while rightly recognising the importance of the continuation of the

Common Travel Area (CTA), and the associated rights of Irish and British citizens to travel, reside and work in each others countries, the UK Government defines the CTA as ‘*a special border-free zone*’.³⁶ As previously suggested, far from being a border free-zone, the CTA is a particular kind of border regime – a system of legal rules and practices extending far beyond the borderline and applying throughout the territories of each the UK and Ireland. It regulates many important aspects of the lives of British and Irish citizens while residing in each other’s states. The CTA thus constitutes the border in a particular way for specific groups of citizens. It does not remove it. Crucially, of course, this border regime does not apply to citizens who are neither Irish, nor British, nor does it apply to any other type of movement, beyond that of people.

Referring to the CTA as a ‘border-free zone’ therefore misrepresents the diffuse and relational nature of the Irish border and the practical consequences of Brexit on the operation of the CTA. Experts have suggested, for instance, that since ‘[m]ost economic and social entitlements of Irish citizens in the United Kingdom currently arise from their position as EU citizens’, the continuation of a special status for Irish citizens in the UK after Brexit will not be automatic. Instead, there will be a need to *ensure* this status by revising current CTA legislation, amending the Immigration Act of 1971 and introducing further legislation to protect the social and economic rights of Irish citizens.³⁷ Additionally, though under the terms of the CTA the movement of UK/Irish citizens will continue, in principle, not to be subject to passport checks at the UK–Irish border, any form of customs checks that will need to be introduced as a result of the changing arrangements for the travel of goods will affect the travel of people. While the UK Government have suggested they ‘will seek to ensure that individuals travelling to the UK from the EU, and vice versa, can continue to travel with goods for personal use as freely and as smoothly as they do now’,³⁸ it is necessary to discuss how this can be achieved without introducing additional degrees of friction or visibility to the border.

Avoiding a hard border for the movement of goods

Finally, in the section dedicated to ‘avoiding a hard border for the movement of goods’ the UK Government proposes that potential models for the land border are developed on the basis of key principles, such as: ‘aiming to avoid any physical border infrastructure in either the United Kingdom or Ireland, for any purpose (including customs or agri-food checks)’. Yet, in discussing this matter, the Government does not begin to address what experts and commentators³⁹ have understood to be the challenges of this undertaking. Among others, these include the question of how and where can the necessary customs infrastructure be built in a way which both addresses security concerns and is able to deal with the movement of people across the border that international trade necessitates.⁴⁰

The latter point in particular goes, again, to the heart of the interconnected nature and effects of different types of flows that a border regulates. It is it not per chance for instance that the EU deems the four freedoms of movement forming its *acquis* to be indivisible. This is based on the understanding that for trade and economic integration to thrive it is not enough to harmonise external tariffs and internal standards and regulations. What is also necessary is non-discrimination of the movement of labour.⁴¹ It is therefore likely that by restricting, or even introducing border controls on the mobility of people, the border will also create friction for trade. The document’s silence on this matter obscures both the above likelihood and the practical impossibility of rebuilding the Irish border outside of

the EU customs union and single market, while avoiding any physical border infrastructure in either the United Kingdom or Ireland.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to query the substance and, indeed, the effects of the political discourse which has developed, since the EU Referendum in 2016, around the question of what is to be done with the UK–Irish border after Brexit. A central idea in this discourse has been that the border must remain ‘frictionless’. To understand what this means, however, and the conditions under which it is achievable, despite the UK leaving the European single market and customs union, we need to properly acknowledge what borders are, how they operate, and therefore, what likely effects will Brexit have on the border.

Our knowledge of borders suggests that they extend much beyond what is visible to the naked eye in geographic space and can be found ‘in every instance when/where a legal, political or socio-cultural regulation is applied to different types of flows’⁴² (eg of people, goods, services, information, capital). Such flows intersect in a myriad of ways and constitute complex networks. Thus the vocabulary of ‘hard’/‘soft’, ‘frictionless’ or ‘seamless’ borders in effect refers to the degree of their openness or permissibility; that is, the ease with which access to such networks can be ensured. Border scholars stress, in this respect, that border openness is a relative term: it typically varies across different categories of people, countries and goods; different bordering and de-bordering rules and practices crisscross and create complex patterns; and it is only meaningful by comparison over time and across specific border contexts.⁴³ Furthermore, there is a complicated relationship between visibility and openness of borders, such that each can affect the other but, again, in ways that vary across different groups of people, and depend on the spatial, material, and practical aspects of border enforcement. Any claim, therefore, that a fundamental change in the legal regulation and status of a state border (such as the one that Brexit represents with respect to the UK–Irish border), can result in retaining its present degree of openness, without a further discussion of the resultant differentiated effects across different categories of people or goods, and relative to spaces and practices of border control, misrepresents the reality of state borders as diffuse political and social *practices*.

The implication of such a misrepresentation, ie that borders are ‘easily identifiable’ and ‘visible for all to see’, to use the words of Rumford, ‘obscure[s] key dimensions of bordering processes’.⁴⁴ In the case of the Irish border, what remains hidden from view is the extent to which (in its present degree of invisibility and seamlessness) it is fundamentally constituted through the interweaving of different regulative regimes created by the Common Travel Area, membership of the European Union, and the Good Friday Agreement. While these may not be indivisible in principle, their separation comes at a price and will entail the inevitable reintroduction of both visibility and friction to the operation of the border.

Notes

- ¹ As quoted by Harvey et al, *The Emerald Curtain* (2005) Triskele Community Training & Development.
- ² C. Rumford (2012) 'Towards a multiperspectival study of borders' *Geopolitics* 17 (4), 887 - 902.
- ³ E. Berg and P. Ehin (2006) call such a system a 'border regime'. See 'What Kind of Border Regime is in the Making? Towards a Differentiated and Uneven Border Strategy' *Co-operation and Conflict* 41 (1), 53 - 71.
- ⁴ Rumford (2012), p. 887
- ⁵ A. Brighenti (2010) *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- ⁶ As used and discussed by M. Amster (2008) 'The social optics of space. Visibility and invisibility in the borderlands of Borneo', *Space and Culture* 11 (2), 176-195.
- ⁷ E. Balibar (2002), see footnote 6; Rumford (2006) 'Introduction: Theorizing Borders' *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (2), 155 - 169.
- ⁸ K. Meena, (2014) 'Locating Borders in an Age of Global Flows: Is Border Thinking/Instance Everywhere?' *Eurasia Border Review*, 5(2): 61-80.
- ⁹ Rumford (2006), p. 156.
- ¹⁰ Meena (2014), p. 72, referring to Shield's *Boundary Thinking*
- ¹¹ HM Government (2017) 'Position paper on Northern Ireland and Ireland', p. 11
- ¹² See B. Lucey's apt comments on this at <https://brianmlucey.wordpress.com/2017/09/23/4-layers-of-complexity-in-northern-ireland-after-brexite/#respond>; Also, A. Swinbank, at <https://tradebetablog.wordpress.com/2017/01/>; and P. Mac Flynn (2017) 'Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the EU Customs union', NERI Working Paper Series N47, at www.NERIinstitute.net
- ¹³ K. O'Rourke, <http://www.irishconomy.ie/index.php/2017/02/16/brexit-customs-unions-and-borders/>
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ BBC, 22/09/2017.
- ¹⁶ Berg and Ehin (2006), p. 3. See footnote 3.
- ¹⁷ Rumford (2012), p. 892. For a full reference see footnote 2.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ After all, as Kolossov and Scott note, state borders both manifest and enact national sovereignty (with its presumed alignment between territory, national identity and political community). See V. Kolossov and J. Scott 'Selected conceptual issues in border studies', WP 4, EUROBOARDSCAPES Project, <http://www.euborderscapes.eu/>
- ²⁰ HM Government (2017) 'Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper', p. 13.
- ²¹ In their Art. 50 guidelines for Brexit negotiations, released back in April 2017.
- ²² HM Government (2017) 'Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper', p. 14.
- ²³ B. Lucey, <https://brianmlucey.wordpress.com/2017/09/23/4-layers-of-complexity-in-northern-ireland-after-brexite/>, 23 September 2017.
- ²⁴ In contrast to the famously inseparable four types of freedom of movement, underlying the *acquis communautaire*.
- ²⁵ This idea of a 'border regime' is based on the work of Berg and Ehin (2006), see footnote 3. A more detailed discussion of the matter can be found in M. Komarova and K. Hayward 'Managing Mobility: The implications of redefining the Irish border as an external border of the European Union', *Geopolitics*, forthcoming in 2018.
- ²⁶ ROI Government Info Note on the CTA, p. 2
- ²⁷ Ibid, p. 1.

- ²⁸ Replacing the EEC of which the two countries were members since 1973.
- ²⁹ Of the geographical variety of which there almost 30, 000 a day.
- ³⁰ Obviously, with some exceptions for non-EU nationals.
- ³¹ The Good Friday Agreement, 'Constitutional Issues', p. 3.
- ³² CAJ (2017) 'Brexit and Northern Ireland: A briefing on Threats to the Peace Agreement', p. 3.
- ³³ Ibid, p. 1.
- ³⁴ Position paper, p. 5
- ³⁵ As pointed out by CCBS in their public response to the position paper. See <http://crossborder.ie/?s=northern+ireland+and+ireland+position+paper>
- ³⁶ HM Government (2017) 'Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper', p. 7.
- ³⁷ Ryan, B. (2016) 'Written evidence. Submission to House of Lords European Union Committee inquiry on *Brexit: UK-Irish Relations*', p. 8.
- ³⁸ HM Government (2017) 'Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper', p. 8.
- ³⁹ K. Hayward, M. Campbell and R. Murphy (2017), 'The Irish Border as a Customs Frontier after Brexit', <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/irish-border-customs-frontier-after-brexit>
- ⁴⁰ Hayward and L. Tannous, 05/09/2017 'Softening a hard border: lessons from North America for post-Brexit Ireland', <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/09/05/softening-a-hard-border-lessons-from-north-america-for-post-brexit-ireland/>
- ⁴¹ See discussion in *The Economist* on the work of Bela Bassa, <https://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21711327-why-free-movement-labour-essential-europes-economic-project-economic> Dec 8th 2016
- ⁴² C. Johnson et al (2011) 'Interventions on rethinking 'the border' in border studies', *Political Geography* 30, 61 – 69, p. 64.
- ⁴³ Berg and Ehin (2006).
- ⁴⁴ Rumford, (2012), p. 891.

Brexit and the Border Corridor on the Island of Ireland:

Risks, opportunities and issues to consider

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This report on the risks, opportunities and issues to consider as a result of Brexit was commissioned by the eleven Local Authorities that comprise the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border Corridor. We reprint it here with permission.

In their Foreword to the report, the Local Authorities note that

“there is no doubt that the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border area will be most impacted by Brexit. Potentially the border will have an EU/Non EU international frontier right through its middle. This will present particular challenges which must be anticipated and dealt with.”

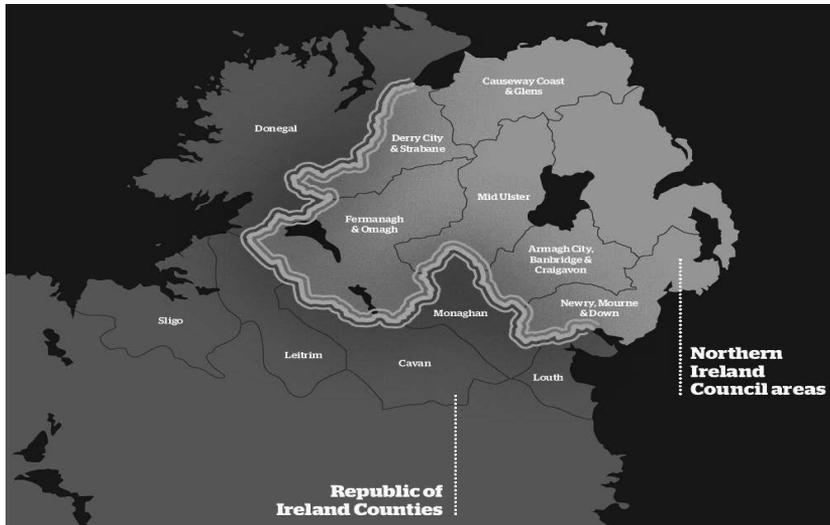
“As the Brexit negotiations continue the Border Corridor Local Authorities, elected members and officials, are committed to lobby and advocate for the needs of our region on an ongoing basis. These needs must continue to be reflected at the highest levels of government, in Ireland, Northern Ireland, London and Brussels. We anticipate that joint work between the Border Corridor Local Authorities will consolidate over the next few years as clarity emerges on the actual shape of Brexit.”

1. Background to the report

Following the result of the June 2016 United Kingdom [UK] referendum to exit the EU there have been extensive discussions across the island of Ireland and beyond as to the impacts of this decision. The Irish border and the region around it have been at the centre of this discussion. In late 2016 the County and District Councils along the Border Corridor (see Figure 1), led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, agreed to ask the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre [UUEPC] to undertake research into the potential impacts of the Brexit decision across the Border Corridor as shown in Figure 1.

The UUEPC have completed the data collection and analysis, consultations (to identify likely areas of impact) and some provisional estimates of future employment in the Border Corridor for this report. The initial forecasts are based upon the existing economic profile of the region and the likely risks and opportunities for its economy given the future position of the region along an external border between the EU and an ex-member state (the UK). The research also recognises the current extent of integration across the Corridor in many areas of social and economic life, such as trade, daily commuting for both public services

Figure 1: Map of the Border Corridor and Council areas



Source: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

and work, and cross-border shopping and tourism. The report concludes with some considerations as to what actions might be taken by the Councils and other government and non-government stakeholders to ensure that any opportunities arising from Brexit might be grasped as well as minimising negative impacts which could arise from changes to trade and other policy areas.

2. Introduction: Brexit and the story so far

2.1 Brexit

The shockwaves of the result of the UK's referendum on EU membership continue to be felt and debated.¹ However, the timetable² has now been established. Article 50 was triggered on 29 March 2017 and 'divorce negotiations' between the UK government and the European Commission opened on 19 June 2017. Unless there are any dramatic U-turns, changes of heart or extensions to the timetable, Brexit will take place by the end of March 2019.

However, the narrowness of the UK vote to leave and the fact that a majority (56%) in Northern Ireland (NI) voted to remain ensure that the politics of Brexit will be troublesome for negotiators. The Remain vote had a majority in 11 of the 18 NI parliamentary constituencies. Of the eight constituencies along the northern part of the Border Corridor only one (Upper Bann) voted to leave with many of the others returning large Remain votes (for example 2:1 in South Down).³

There is a recognition among all parties to the Brexit negotiations that one item on the agenda has a particular consequence for the island of Ireland: the future nature of the Irish border. The public recognition of this by the two chief UK and EU negotiators has followed months of lobbying and persuading by political parties in NI and the Irish government and others in local government. In NI, the special conditions due to the border, cross-border commuting, the need for a secure energy supply, the continuation of EU funding (estimated to be worth £3.5bn up to 2020) and the exposure of the agri-food sector were all laid out in the August 2016 letter from the then First and Deputy First Ministers to the UK Prime Minister.⁴ Although the Executive has since collapsed and, at this time, remains absent from the discussions, a 'Brexit unit' is present in the Executive Office to present the NI case to Whitehall and also to work with the Irish government and officials through the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), on any cross-border matters.⁵

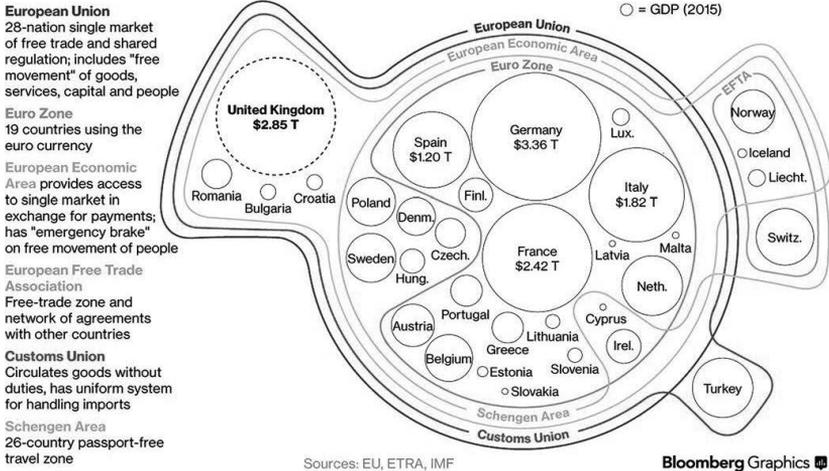
The southern side of the Border Corridor has also featured strongly in the statements and publications issued by the Irish Government since its initial Brexit contingency plan, issued immediately after the referendum.⁶ Regional Brexit events have also allowed local people to feed into the Irish government's approach. This approach to date has had three strands: Irish/EU, British/Irish and North/South. Although the negotiations do raise questions about how best the Republic of Ireland can position itself for a post-Brexit world, the issue of the border and the integration, in terms of people and trade, with the UK generally means that the Government is likely to favour as close a UK/EU future relationship as possible.⁷

In the UK, matters have become more complicated due to recent political events.⁸ The UK election resulted in a minority Conservative Government and raised fresh questions about the shape of Brexit. Before the election the exit door desired by the UK Government seemed to be clearer and involved leaving the Customs Union, taking control of immigration policy and rejecting the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.⁹ Analysis of GB voters suggested that they were 'hard on the outside but rather softer in the middle', meaning that any trade-off between free trade and freedom of movement of people would be difficult to sell, especially to the Government's supporters.¹⁰

Since the election, the UK Government has begun to publish a series of proposals, including some on the Irish border, which seem to confirm the exit door but are unclear on the path afterwards. However, there remains uncertainty about what sort of Brexit will have a parliamentary majority, how long any transitional arrangements after June 2019 will be, and whether the current UK government will serve throughout the entire period of negotiations.¹¹ On the European side, while the unity of member states will be sorely tested by the negotiations, the Article 50 process with its fixed timeline allows EU negotiators to be the ones making the UK an offer, first on the shape of the divorce and then on the future relationship.¹²

Some of the post-Brexit options are detailed in Figure 2, which shows the various associations and memberships which currently bind European countries together. It may be that one of these or perhaps an entirely new 'association' will become part of the solution.

Figure 2: Various membership arrangements across European countries



Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-06-22/u-k-should-consider-efta-deal-to-kick-start-post-brexit-trade>

2.2 The (economic) story so far

One thing that the story so far should have taught observers is that it will be difficult to accurately predict the medium to long term impacts of Brexit. Just after the Referendum, the Nobel laureate, Paul Krugman, argued that the threats of a UK recession were overblown and bad economics, even if he believed that ‘economists have very good reasons to believe that Brexit will do bad things in the long run’.¹³ Others have taken the Treasury and various forecasters to task for their modelling techniques and assumptions, although it is fair to say that this criticism has, in turn, been attacked.¹⁴ Above all, the economic debate before the referendum and the accompanying forecasts has done little to persuade the general public that these tools and the expertise that goes with them have got any better since the financial crisis.¹⁵

What we now know is that the period after the Referendum did not see either the UK or EU economies entering recession. Instead, as Table 1 shows, most of the economic indicators have remained positive since June. The immediate decision by the Bank of England to increase levels of quantitative easing and lower interest rates, alongside the signals that, for the time being, the Treasury was partially abandoning austerity (saying that the UK budget would not be balanced by 2020) were critical factors in supporting what became a consumer-driven rally in the second half of 2016. By November, however, the growth in retail sales had peaked and begun to decline, perhaps as a result of price inflation beginning to pass through.

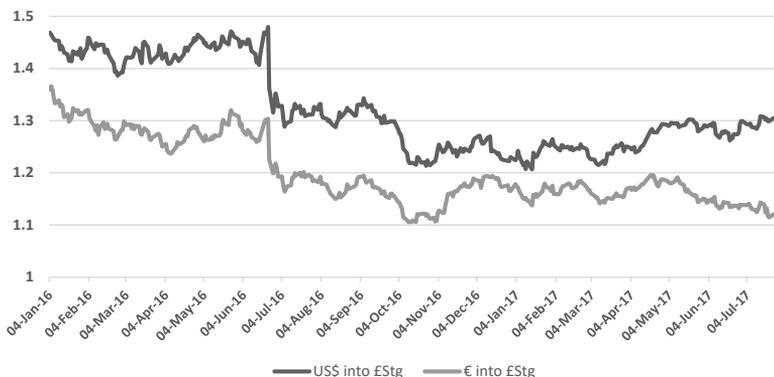
Table 1: Economic indicators for the UK and NI since the Referendum result

Indicators March/April 2017	Change since Brexit vote
FTSE 100	↑ (+14%)
Sterling into USD	↓ (-16%)
Sterling into Euro	↓ (-7%)
UK Retail sales (Jun vs. Mar 17)	↑
UK Consumer confidence (Jun vs. Apr 17)	↓
Economic Surprise Index (Jun vs. Mar 17)	↑
UK Claimant unemployment (Jun vs. Feb 17)	↓
UK New car sales (YoY to Mar 17)	↑
NI PMI: Output/Business activity (Jun vs. Nov)	↑
NI PMI: New business (Jun vs. Nov)	↑
NI PMI: Backlogs (Jun vs. Nov)	↔
NI PMI: Employment (Jun vs. Nov)	↓
NI PMI: Input costs (Jun vs. Nov)	↑
NI PMI: Price charged (Jun vs. Nov)	↑
NI PMI: New export business (Jun vs. Nov)	↑

Sources: FTSE 100: London Stock Exchange (27/04/2017); Exchange rate: Bank of England (24/04/2017); Retail sales: ONS; Consumer confidence: GfK; Economic Surprise Index: Ulster Bank on behalf of Bloomberg; Claimant Unemployment: ONS; New car sales: SMMT; NI PMI: Ulster Bank.

Linked to the growing inflationary pressures, the change in the Sterling to US Dollar and Euro exchange rates has been the most striking alteration since the Referendum. This will have had an immediate impact in the Border Corridor, which operates in many places a dual currency zone. Although Sterling has not reached parity with the Euro, which almost happened in late 2008, the weakness against the US Dollar has reached 30-year lows. The depreciation in Sterling may be good news for exporters in NI or the UK as a whole but the evidence of increasing exports is patchy.

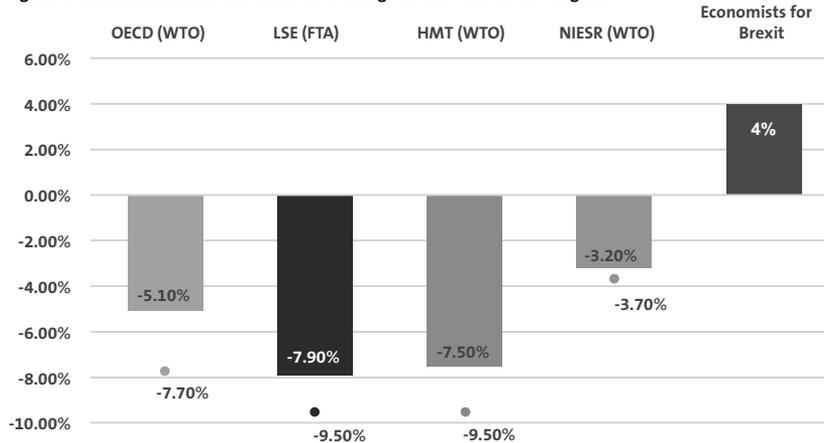
Figure 3: Sterling vs Dollar and Euro, January 2016 - July 2017



Source: Bank of England

Despite the continuation of consumer-led growth after the Referendum and the potential advantages for the UK economy from a Sterling devaluation, the consensus among most economists remains that the long-term impact on trade, investment and skills of Brexit will be negative for both the UK economy and the EU's. Figure 4 shows that most assessments, based on the UK leaving the Customs Union, would lead to the economy shrinking between 3% and 8%. A rare exception to this trend were those economists favouring Brexit who believe that less regulations, the ability to negotiate new trade deals and the potential for further FDI coming to the UK could lead to a 4% addition to GDP.

Figure 4: Central and Lower Forecasts of % change in UK's GDP in the long run



Source: M. Ebell and J. Warren, 'The long term economic impact of leaving the EU', *National Economic Institute Review*, May 2016, p.154.

There has been a similarly negative picture of the impact of Brexit on the Republic of Ireland. This is of particular importance to the report given concerns that a negative impact might be especially bad for the southern Border Counties.¹⁶ As soon as the likelihood of a UK referendum on EU membership was raised there were estimates that Ireland could be the worst affected EU member state from a UK exit. One initial assessment referred to a potential fall in GDP of between 0.8% and 2.6% below baseline by 2030.¹⁷ Research from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has supported this initial estimate as a result of Ireland's close trade, investment, energy and migration integration with the UK, even allowing for gains in FDI. The ESRI forecast that, if the UK were to adopt WTO rules for future trade, then Ireland's GDP would be 3.8% lower after 10 years. This is largely due to a fall of 30% in trade with the UK, representing a decline of 4% in total trade, twice the average for the EU as a whole.¹⁸ Further research has provided sectoral detail of these potential losses, given exposure to UK trade in sectors including Food and Drink, Pharmachem, Traditional Manufacturing and Materials Manufacturing.¹⁹ The agri-food sector has come in for particular attention and Bord Bia have recently developed a Brexit Barometer for the sector, essentially a risk analysis tool for exporting firms in the sector.²⁰

Despite this negativity the economy in the Republic of Ireland currently remains a vibrant one. Forecasts for growth in 2017 and 2018 in Table 2 below show this strength, with most above 3% in both years. Indeed, much of the economic narrative in Ireland concerns potential over-heating in Dublin, with a resultant rental and house price bubble, rising employment numbers (to over two million in work with all 11 sectors adding people) and concerns only around recent falls in manufacturing and services output.²¹

Table 2: GDP Forecasts for the Republic of Ireland for 2017 and 2018

	Date	2017	2018
IMF	Oct. 2016	3.2%	3.1%
European Commission	Nov. 2016	3.4%	3.3%
OECD	Nov. 2016	3.2%	2.3%
ESRI	Mar. 2017	3.8%	3.6%
Central Bank of Ireland	Apr. 2017	3.5%	3.2%
Department of Finance	Apr. 2017	4.3%	3.7%

Source: Department of Finance, *Monthly Economic Bulletin April 2017*

The potential economic impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland has not had as much research. A paper for the Assembly's Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Investment and research commissioned by the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment from Oxford Economics came to a similar range of reductions of 2.8%-3% by 2030, 1% lower in both cases below the reduction in GDP expected for the UK.²² Other research, from the Nevin Economic Research Institute, has identified sectors at risk from Brexit and then the consequences for NI of the UK leaving the Single Market and the Customs Union.²³

The problem for the Northern Ireland economy is that while it continues to grow, indeed faster than many believed it would in 2016, growth is much less than needed for a step-change in performance. The forecasts in Table 3 show that the modest growth is set to continue, although there is significant uncertainty around the potential upsides associated with the recent £1 billion pledged as part of the DUP/Tory deal and the downsides associated with a slowdown in consumer spending.

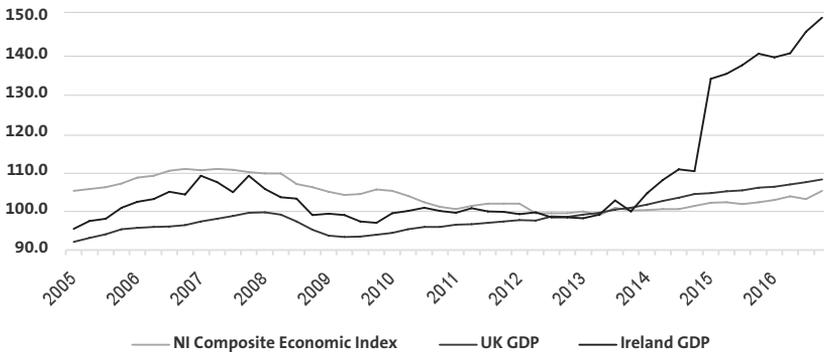
Table 3: GDP/GVA Forecasts for Northern Ireland for 2017 and 2018

	Date	2017	2018
UUEPC	June 2017	1.1%	1.2%
Danske Bank	June 2017	1.2%	1.0%
PwC	Mar. 2017	1.2%	0.9%

2.3 Conclusions

Although the longer term forecasts have a consensus about the negative economic impact of Brexit, Figure 5 below shows how current economic performance of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is better than expected, even if the two economies are showing quite different trajectories. Given the growth in the UK economy, at least until recent months, and the fact that the forecasting expertise of economists did not convince (perhaps due to past sins), a majority of UK voters in the Referendum chose to vote Leave. Certainly, the consensus around negative economic implications, even if they were believed, were not enough to produce a Remain majority.²⁴

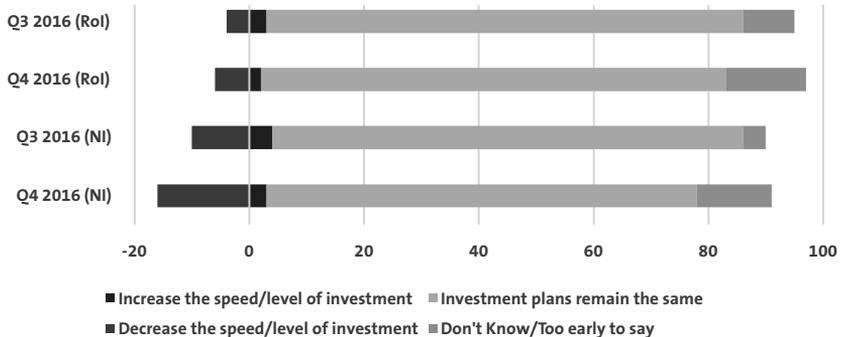
Figure 5: Comparison of NICEI²⁵ with GDP for UK and Republic of Ireland, Q1 2008-Q4 2016 (2013=100)



Source: NICEI, Q4 2016 release (Apr. 2017)

Many businesses have felt differently about Brexit from the start, perhaps due to their dislike of the uncertainty surrounding the subject and the future. According to the largest survey of businesses across the island, InterTradelreland’s Business Monitor, less than one in 20 firms have made any plans to deal with Brexit. There has been a slight shift in business sentiment around investment plans for the next 12 months. Most firms, as shown in Figure 6, will continue with their current plans. However, there is now a growing number between Q3 and Q4 2016 who are either unsure or are planning to reduce the level or speed of these investments. This may be a sign of how wider uncertainty can begin to impact on hopes for job creation or business expansion, something which the Bank of England has been arguing for some time.

Figure 6: Given the Referendum result how will your investment plans for the next 12 months change?



Source: InterTradelreland Business Monitor, Q4 2016

The uncertainty around Brexit is unlikely to disappear in the short term as the negotiations begin in earnest. The importance of inputting regional or sub-regional concerns and particularities into the general process, either via Dublin, London or Brussels, will also continue and any opportunities to do this should be grasped by Councils in the Border

Corridor. This may be particularly the case if the Northern Ireland Executive takes longer than hoped or expected to re-establish. One piece of advice recently to abstain from arguments that combine ‘having your cake and eating it’ may be especially important on the issue of the border.²⁶

3. An economic profile of the Border Corridor

Issues of data complementarity make it difficult to present a unified profile of the Border Corridor in this report. However, we are able to detail the population, labour market and enterprise features of the Corridor, in order to draw some general conclusions on the economy of the region.

3.1 Population

The combined total population for the Border Corridor in 2016 was 1,322,536 (60% of this in NI), marking an increase of 2.6% on the 2011 Census. However, the increase is mostly centred in the NI Council areas as the 2016 Census returns show that the southern Border Counties added on just over 8,000 people and County Donegal actually showed a fall in population due to out-migration. Figures 7 and 8 show how the share of total population in the two parts of the Corridor is going in different directions – gently increasing on the northern side and decreasing, quite sharply, on the southern side. The population may be aging, in line with the island as a whole, but it remains a relatively young one with 35% of the combined total under the age of 30 years.

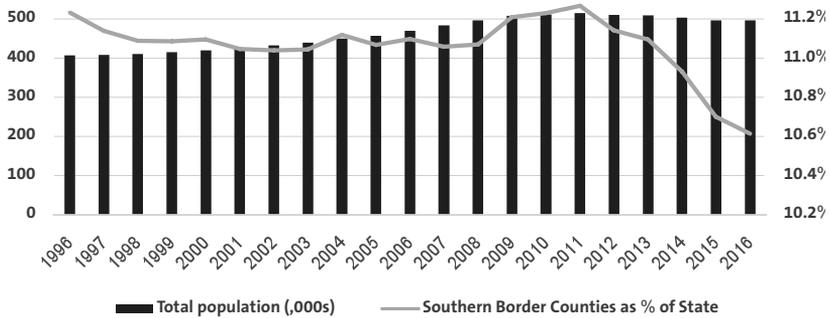
3.2 Labour market

The employment rates (67% and 68%) are very similar for the areas on both sides of the border. Employment is dominated by five key sectors - retail, health, manufacturing, education and agriculture – which account for around 60% of the total share. In the southern Border Counties manufacturing and construction have shed jobs in the last 15 years. This has not happened for manufacturing north of the border where agriculture has been the main employment shedder. Unemployment rates in the Border Corridor have traditionally been higher than the state averages and this remains the case today. That said, the fall in unemployment rates since late 2012 has been mirrored in the border region. Another feature to note is that labour participation rates have long been lower in the Corridor than in other parts of the island. How much of this is due to a lack of employment opportunities, in particular for females, is a matter for future research.

3.3 Business demography

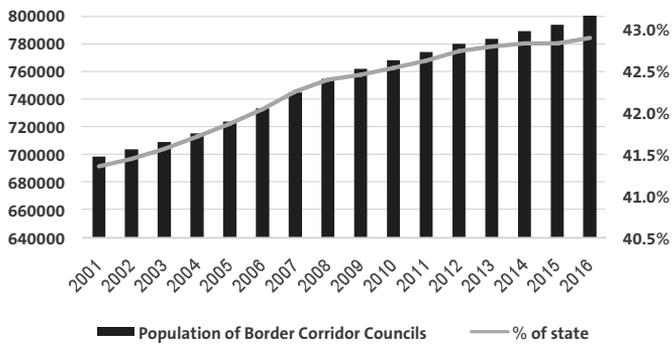
The data for the two parts of the Border Corridor are not directly comparable as the NI data includes agriculture as a sector but the Republic of Ireland does not. If we use the sectoral shares from the Council areas north of the border as a proxy for the Corridor as a whole then there may be around 87,000 businesses in the region, 40% of which are in the agriculture sector. Of the other 60%, or 52,217 firms, the highest shares are in retail, hospitality/accommodation, manufacturing and construction. The data excludes the self-employed where agriculture and construction are particularly strong. In terms of size, the profile of the businesses are quite similar to the shares of micros, small, medium and large businesses. However, as Figure 9 shows, those businesses employing more than 50 staff in the southern Border Counties account for only 38% of total employment as opposed to 55% in the Republic of Ireland as a whole. Smaller businesses are particularly important employers in Counties Donegal, Leitrim and Louth.

Figure 7: Population of Southern Border Counties, 1996-2016



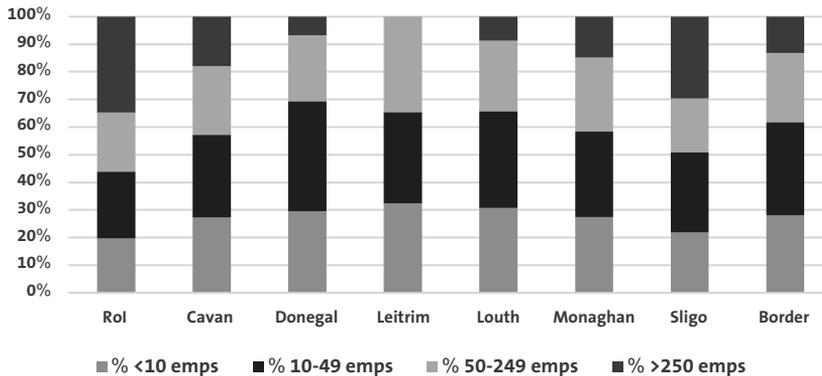
Source: CSO and UUEPC estimates

Figure 8: Population of NI Border Corridor Council areas, 2001-2016



Source: CSO and UUEPC estimates

Figure 9: Shares of employment by firm size in businesses in the southern Border Corridor Counties, 2014

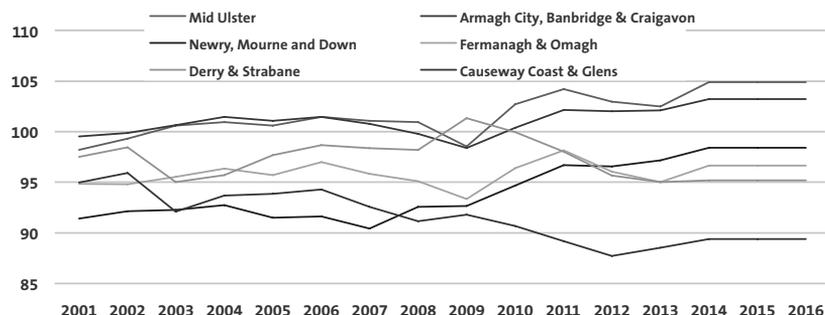


Source: CSO and UUEPC estimates

3.4 Productivity

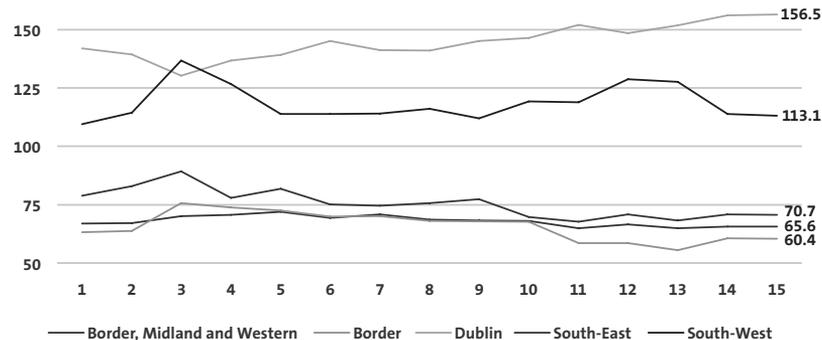
Figures 10 and 11 show the GVA per capita figures for the Council areas across the Border Corridor (aggregated as the Border region in the CSO data). In the case of Northern Ireland, two Councils, Mid Ulster and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, have productivity levels in most years that out-perform the NI average, itself a lagging performer when compared to the UK or the Republic of Ireland. The southern Border region has not only lagged the national productivity figures and those for Dublin and the South West, but also other poor performers, such as the South East.

Figure 10: Indices of GVA per capita in the NI Border Corridor Council areas, 2001-2016 (NI = 100)



Source: NISRA and UUEPC estimates

Figure 11: Indices of GVA per capita in the Southern Border Corridor Counties, 2001-2016 (Ireland = 100)



Source: CSO and UUEPC estimates

3.5 Conclusions

This brief profile of the Border Corridor region supports earlier and more detailed research by John Bradley and Michael Best which referred to ‘bypassed places’.²⁷ They found good examples of successful businesses which were developing and selling differentiated products or services to markets across the island and beyond. Indeed parts of the region have higher levels of entrepreneurship, at least than other parts of Northern Ireland.²⁸ However there are too few of these firms and, outside the areas along the Belfast-Dublin

Corridor and those Council areas in the middle of NI, the productivity rates tell a worrying story.

The problems identified by Bradley and Best in 2012 have not been resolved since. Consultations for this paper would suggest that they are the very regional weaknesses and vulnerabilities that Brexit might well turn a spotlight upon.²⁹ The earlier report argued for a greater regional focus in policy-making in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, based more upon the local realities than either a desire to market an area or to deliver national agendas at a local level.³⁰ Any strategy which purports to address the risks posed or opportunities offered by Brexit for the Border Corridor would do well to take the advice from Bradley and Best to rethink regional policy across the island from the bottom up.

4. Areas for consideration for the Border Corridor

Figure 12 shows the areas where Councils in the Border Corridor should consider for their potential to be impacted by Brexit. This section of the report will deal with each of the areas in turn with a particular focus on trade, agri-food and fisheries, movement of people and inward investment – and will offer some considerations about the challenges and opportunities which might arise.

Figure 12: Potential areas of impact from Brexit



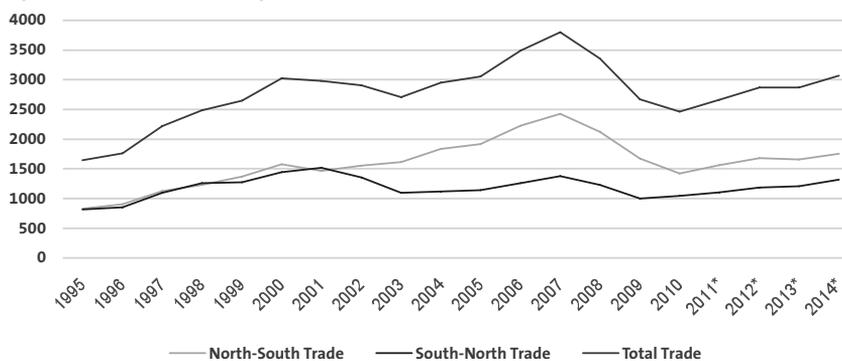
Source: UUEPC

4.1 Trade: Cross-border trade and exports off the island

Cross-Border trade

Figure 13 shows how total cross-border trade in goods amounts to just over €3 billion with four years of growth in both directions after the recession wiped off almost a quarter of the trade's value. More recent data, released by the HMRC for Q1 2017, shows a continuing recovery in the value of cross-border goods trade, currently driven by demand from Northern Ireland for goods from the Republic of Ireland.³¹ Cross-border trade is of much more aggregate importance to the NI economy than to that of the Republic of Ireland, where it is a small part of exports to the UK (worth €34 billion in 2016).³² The cross-border goods trade accounts for less than 2% of Ireland's total exports (or less than 1% of GNP), while the combined cross-border sales of goods and services from NI accounts for approximately 10% of its GVA. While cross-border trade is much more important to small firms in the Republic of Ireland – around a sixth of small firm exports – this also pales beside the share in NI: two thirds of external sales by smaller businesses.

Figure 13: Cross-border trade in goods, 1995-2014



Source: InterTradeIreland

Analysis from the Irish Government has found that three goods sectors – Food and Live Animals, Manufactured Goods (eg timber, paper or rubber goods) and Minerals (building material and metals) – are the sectors most exposed to any changes in trade with the UK.³³ These three broad sectors account for around 40% of Ireland/UK trade but command a higher share of cross-border trade: 54% of Ireland's cross-border sales and 57% of NI's.³⁴ Therefore particular sectors – we will return to agri-food in the next section – and the regions where these are concentrated – will be more exposed to any trade shocks arising from Brexit. These exposures need to be taken into account in any consideration of the trade issue.

Consultations for this report with a range of firms across different sectors have found that businesses and employees based in the Border Corridor tend to be more concerned about Brexit than you find elsewhere. One reason for this, supported by economic research, is that proximity to a border leads to greater levels of trade with the neighbouring country or region than might be found the further away from the border you travel.³⁵ Although we lack good sub-regional trade data for the island of Ireland, the InterTradeIreland Business

Monitor survey has found that firms in the border area are much more likely to be involved in cross-border trade – 23% across the island of Ireland compared to 30% in the South and West of Northern Ireland and 29% in the southern Border Counties. Firms in the Border Corridor also sell much more of their output on a cross-border basis compared to firms elsewhere who are involved in that trade, perhaps a third as much again.³⁶ For example, figures from Invest NI data for their client firms in the South, West and North West regions (those closest to the border) shows that the Republic of Ireland is a key market for these companies, where they sell more than 8% of their total turnover.³⁷ The recent UK Government paper on the Irish border recognises that those Council areas closer to the border had a higher propensity to export.³⁸

Exports off the island

As noted above, the UK market is of great importance to the Republic of Ireland. In 2014 18% of services exports and 14% of goods went to the UK (including NI). In the same year the share of exports from the southern Border Counties going to the UK was as high as 33%, almost twice the national average. Exports from NI are even more concentrated on the market most at risk of being impacted by Brexit: the EU. In 2014 58% of NI's total exports went to the EU, 22% going to member states other than Ireland.³⁹

Issues and Actions for Councils to consider

Short term: Currency

- In the immediate future the consultations with businesses point to the main issue being how to deal with the currency fluctuation referred to above. A recent note from UBS suggests that while Sterling will recover some ground against an over-valued US Dollar it will remain around the same value against the Euro.⁴⁰
- This has led to talk of a Stabilisation Fund for Irish exporters to the UK⁴¹ but, in the meantime, the promotion by Councils of available currency and cash management advisory and online trading and exporting supports to businesses will be critical. This will equally apply to retailers and tourism operators, given a limited ability to pass through the costs of a weaker pound to consumers.

Medium term: Risk analysis and planning

- When discussion turns to mitigating business and trade risks in the face of Brexit a key to this will be to better understand the extent to which some sectors – and not just agri-food – are most exposed to tariffs. Recent research from InterTradeIreland on the impact of the application of WTO tariffs on cross-border trade contains the startling fact that while only 6-7% of products have tariffs of 15% and higher, they account for shares of 19% of South-to-North goods trade and 33% of North-to-South.⁴²
- The sectoral analysis needs to be quickly followed by further work at firm level on the exposure to risk from trade shocks for different types of businesses (indigenous v multinational and small v medium or large). Consultations with firms in the Border Corridor suggest that larger firms, with experienced management teams, are much further along in planning for Brexit. Other firms, with more of their turnover exposed to risk, may need assistance.

- Much of the understanding of these sectoral and firm-level dependencies are likely to be completed at the state level, both North and South. Councils in the Border Corridor need to insist that the regional angle and indeed any additional exposure to risk continues to be considered in this work.

Long term: Diversification

- As the market destination figures show, both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland continue to be dependent on a small number of markets. Part of this is due to geography and history – thus the British Isles remains the key market for most businesses located there. And, as a later section suggests, access to this market is still important in FDI location decisions.
- The movement towards greater diversification of trade will need all government bodies, including local government with their economic development competencies, to be working together to ensure business can receive the correct assistance at each step along an export pathway that might be about to get more tricky to navigate.⁴³
- Diversification – both of markets and, equally importantly, of the export base beyond a small number of firms – takes a significant amount of time but can be done. The share of Ireland’s exports to the UK has fallen from 50% on 1973 to around 30% now, while, in the case of NI, HMRC data suggests that twenty years ago 70% of exports went to EU member states and this is now closer to 55%. In both cases nearby markets remain of crucial importance for goods and most services, but North America and other markets are becoming more important. The trends suggest trade diversification is possible but slow.

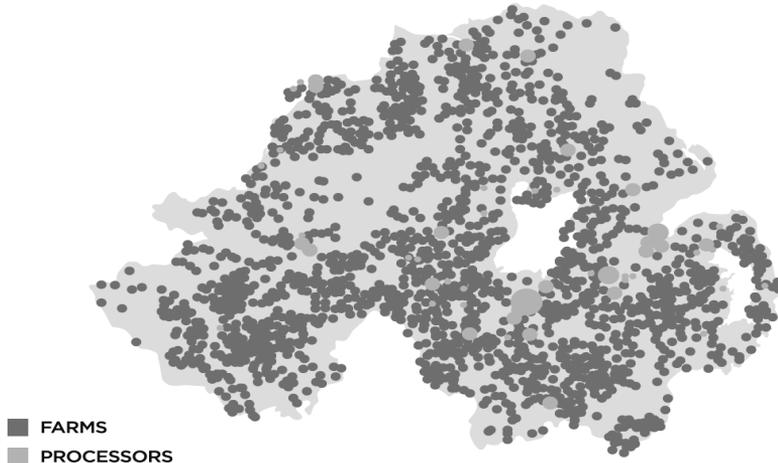
4.2 Agri-Food Sector: exposure to risk?

The agri-food sector is unique within the wider Brexit debate due to the importance not only of Ireland/UK trade in agri-food goods, but also the integrated nature of the supply chain on the island of Ireland that deliver these exportable goods, the risks of high tariffs in the case of WTO rules applying, and the contribution of CAP to farm incomes in NI.

The industry is an important employer across NI and the Republic of Ireland, involving 19,000 direct employees and 25,000 family farms north of the border and 52,000 and 140,000 the respective numbers in the South. There is also a regional concentration to consider for the purpose of this report. In the Republic of Ireland 15% of all Food and Drink processors are based in the Border region, where these make up 16% of all manufacturing businesses (second only to the South East for their share). ‘Other Foods’ (ie bakeries, small food producers etc.) make up most of the businesses but 11% are dairy processors and 20% meat producers, both slightly higher than the national averages. Figure 14, taken from a recent Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association (NIFDA) report, shows a similar concentration of farms to the south and west of NI and processors in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid Ulster Council areas.

The agri-food industry is a sector characterised by low margins, high levels of intra-firm competition and is perhaps the most integrated on an all-island basis. As one witness to a House of Lords Committee put it: ‘Many agri-food businesses are structured and operate

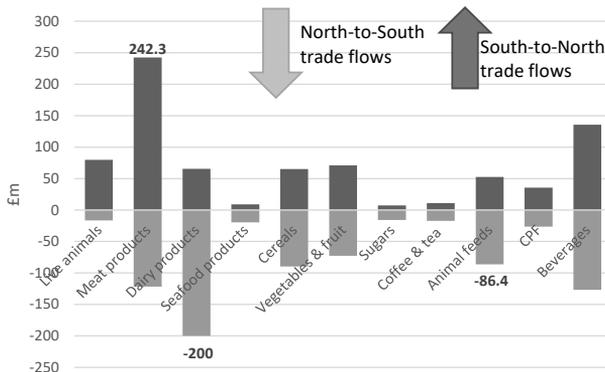
Figure 14: Concentrations of agri-food employment in Northern Ireland, 2012



Source: NIFDA, *Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities for Northern Ireland Food and Drink* (Nov. 2016)

on a cross-border basis.⁴⁴ In the medium term this may offer further opportunities to further integrate all-island supply chains, if competition rules allow. Already, for example, the Irish-owned firms currently control 60% of NI’s dairy processing capacity. Although the supply chains flow in both directions across the border, Figure 15 shows how dairy products and animal feeds are traded from North to South and meat products in the opposite direction. These flows are important not only for the large firms which account for much of the value of meat and dairy processing but also for smaller producers, closer to the border. Recent research from the Centre for Cross Border Studies found that the cross-border sales were destined for places outside the border region, suggesting the area is rather a centre of production than consumption.⁴⁵

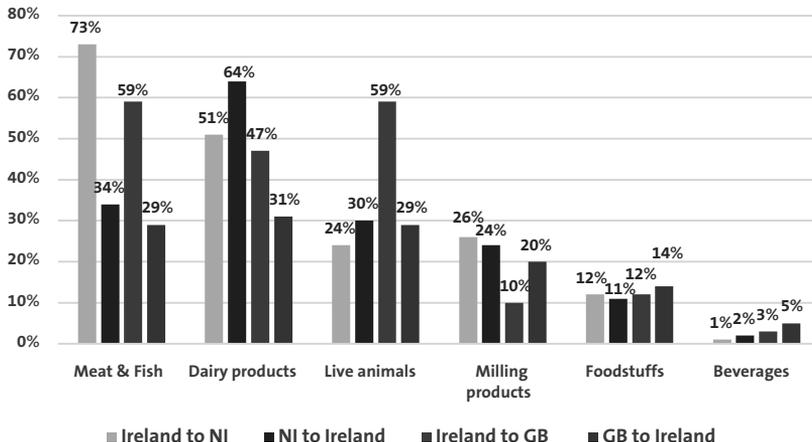
Figure 15: Cross-border flows of agri-food products, 2016



Source: HMRC Regional Trade Statistics

Turning to tariffs, under WTO rules these vary greatly from product to product depending on whether they are imposed by weight of the good being traded or at the product level. Figure 16 shows the effective tariffs that would be levied on agri-food products given the current patterns of cross-border and Ireland/GB trade if the WTO rules were adopted by the UK on exiting the Customs Union. One estimate of the cost of additional paper associated with tariffs, at the level of the individual border crossing, is in the range of €20 to €80.⁴⁶

Figure 16: Sector level effective tariffs on agri-food products by trade direction



Source: ESRI research for InterTradeIreland

Research for InterTradeIreland by the ESRI offers some estimates of the impact of WTO tariffs and non-tariff barriers on cross-border trade:

- Tariffs only would see cross-border trade fall in value by 9%;
- With the addition of non-tariff barriers it would decrease by 16%; and
- With the addition of an effective devaluation of 10% in Sterling, the fall would be 17%, although some sectors would see trade in a North to South direction increase – notably machinery, chemicals and beverages.

However, for agri-food products generally the decline in trade value would range from 3% for live animals to 52% for dairy products. Given the importance of dairy products to NI’s exports to the Republic of Ireland, more than half (56%) of the overall fall in cross-border trade would come from the declining sales of milk and cream products.⁴⁷

The agri-food sector will also be thinking of changes post-Brexit to the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Between 2014 and 2020 €2.3 billion will be given as CAP Direct Payments to farmers and a further €251 million will be spent on other rural development and fisheries supports. It is promised that this will not change suddenly, given that the contribution to farm incomes in NI is significant. Figures from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and

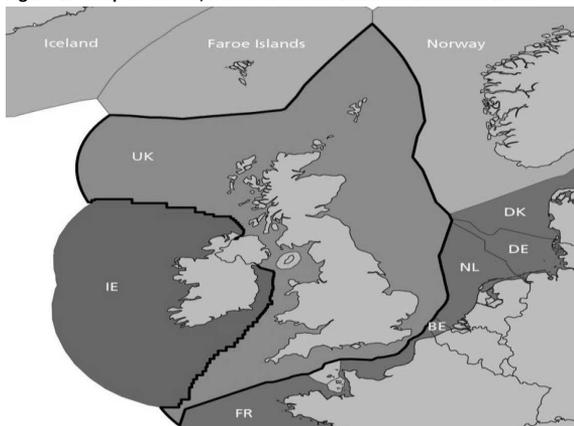
Rural Affairs (DAERA) show that farm incomes in 2016 stood at £244 million, while payments to NI from CAP in the same year amounted to £276 million. This suggests that many farmers, due to prices and costs, were actually losing money in 2016 and only kept afloat by Single Farm Payments. And not just in 2016 as DAERA estimates that the payments mounted to an average of 103% of farm incomes in NI in 2014/15.⁴⁸ Sub-regional figures for CAP receipts in 2015 show that there were more than 23,000 recipients in Council areas along the border who received £180 million in direct payments (approximately 70% of the NI total) and a further £51 million in rural development funding.⁴⁹

Fisheries

The question of the fisheries forms a separate issue and one that affects two Council areas in particular: Newry, Mourne and Down where 7% of UK landings and 6% of the UK value (worth more than €100 million) take place and County Donegal where 65% of Irish landings and 40% of value happens. Currently the Common Fisheries Policy, first signed in 1983 and most recently updated in 2013, is agreed by EU member states on total allowable catches and quotas. The UK fishing industry has long criticised the centrally agreed quotas and Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, recently opened the debate about what Britain will do about access to its waters after Brexit.⁵⁰ Given that a third of Irish landings are taken from British waters (two thirds in the case of mackerel), the risks from any uncertainty are clear.

There are models for new agreements post-Brexit, notably the EU's current agreement with Norway.⁵¹ Here, agreement has been reached on total allowable catches of shared fish stocks (to manage resources), the division of these between the two parties and mutual access to fishing grounds. The map in Figure 17 shows how mutual access to the UK and Irish Exclusive Economic Zones will be critical in the wake of Brexit. How far this will be possible to satisfy both the fishing industry and the seafood processing one in both NI and the Republic of Ireland (and indeed differing interests between the North West and South West) remains open to question.

Figure 17: Map of the UK, Irish and Nordic Exclusive Economic Zones



Source: House of Lords European Union Committee, *Brexit: Fisheries*.

Issues and Actions for Councils to consider

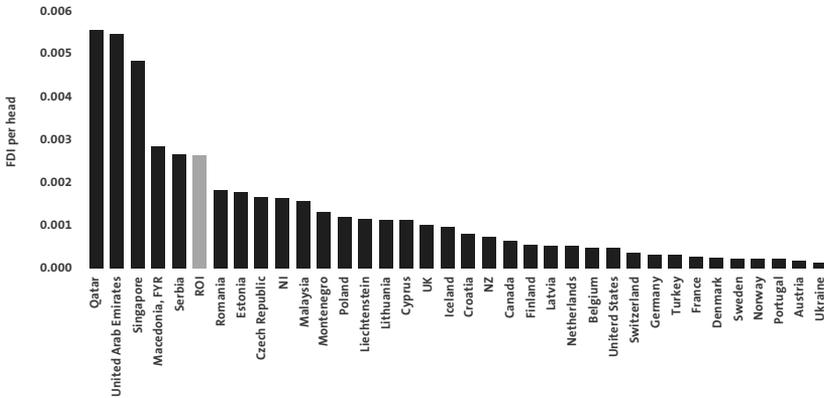
- *Currency:* As noted above for cross-border trade the volatility of the exchange rate and the general depreciation of Sterling against the Euro calls for the promotion of better currency management by businesses and individuals as part of wider economic development supports. This is especially the case for this sector given both the higher engagement in cross-border business but also the low margins involved which make food and drinks businesses, currently in particular in the southern Border Counties, susceptible to exchange rate swings.
- *Cooperation and clustering:* The agri-food sector is already highly integrated in terms of cross-border and all-island supply chains. Indeed, there is talk of further advances in this, perhaps in the shape of mergers between Irish and British food businesses. However, there are also opportunities for greater all-island cooperation in the sector, to support those smaller and medium size firms which make up the bulk of agri-food businesses. Proposals identified in an InterTradelreland report could form the basis of new cooperative initiatives, starting first in the Border Corridor.⁵²
- *Continuation of CAP:* At present the debate is on the replacement of the current CAP by a new UK Agricultural Policy. However, agricultural policy is a devolved matter and the NI Assembly and DAERA are responsible for the implementation of CAP within Northern Ireland, which has allowed for some flexibility in this area. The continuation of this regional flexibility will be critical given both the importance of direct payments to farmers in the Border Corridor but also the need to retain a policy coherence and alignment with the Republic of Ireland in light of the co-dependencies in the agri-food area.
- *Concentration and special arrangements:* The extent of the regional concentration of employment, single farm payments, cross-border market focus and reliance on migrant labour does raise the need to debate whether a special arrangement or deal is necessary for the agri-food sector. Gathering further information on the importance of the sector to the Border Corridor should remain a joint priority of Councils there.

4.3 Foreign Direct Investment: What will drive future location decisions?

FDI firms in the recent past have proved to a key economic driver for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Figure 18, shows that both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are among the top 10 countries or regions for FDI invested per head of population. A possible explanation for this may be the lower rate of corporation tax in Ireland and access to both the UK and the EU single market enjoyed by both parts of the island.

At a regional level, performance data from Invest NI at a local government district level, shows that since 2012/13 the border council areas have seen the creation of 3,900 jobs (30% of the NI total) by foreign owned firms. Engineering, ICT, FinTech, food production and business services firms contributed the majority of the job creations. Over the five years these areas have received a total of £320m worth of foreign investment (not including a major investment by one firm) with a majority of this investment coming from America

Figure 18: Average total FDI per head of population for selected countries around the world, 2010-2015

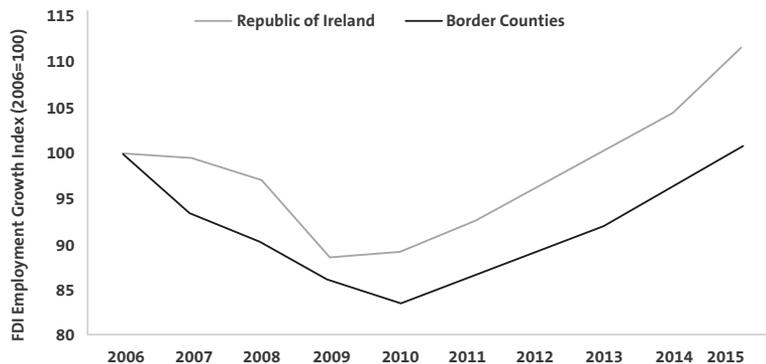


Source: FDI Intelligence, World Bank and UUEPC analysis

(52%), followed by the Republic of Ireland (19%), other EU countries (13%), non-EU countries (9%) and finally the rest of the UK (7%).

In the southern Border Counties foreign owned firms have added over 2,000 jobs (an increase of 20%) from 2010 to 2015, bringing their employment levels back to the 2006 peak of 11,800 jobs. Figure 19 shows that, relative to the Republic of Ireland as a whole, FDI employment growth has been lower in the Southern Border Counties. Much of this difference can be attributed to local losses of manufacturing employment (15% of total jobs) between 2006 and 2010, as a result of both the global financial crisis and a broader sectoral shift. These losses have been offset by gains in the service sectors (43% increase between 2010 and 2015) with the most jobs gained in the internationally traded service sector. This change in the sectoral make-up is also resulting in a continuing shift away from the UK market to a more global market place.

Figure 19: FDI employment change index (2006=100) in Republic of Ireland and Border Counties, 2006-2015

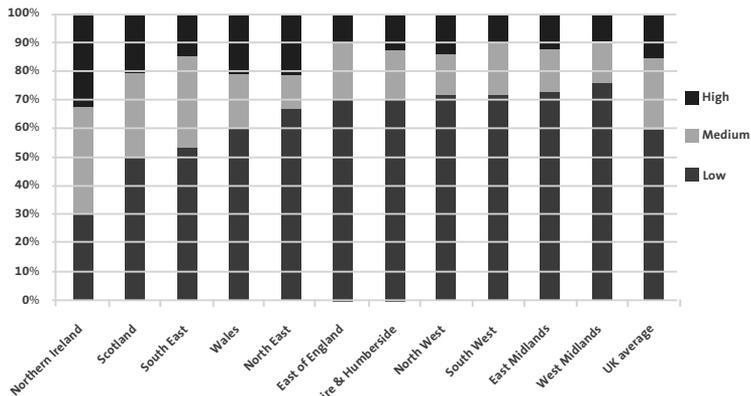


Source: Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, *Annual Employment Survey* (2015)

Although FDI job creation in the southern Border Counties has not been at the same relative level as the Republic of Ireland in the past decade there is an expectation that there will continue to be a reliance on this source of growth well into the future. Brexit places the wider locational choices made by firms under the microscope, as many international firms currently see the UK and the Republic of Ireland as being similar places to locate. Recent research by the ESRI identified a lower corporation tax rate as one key to attracting FDI, but also found that other locational factors are also taken into account before investments are made, including local market size, access to the European single market and low production costs. Indeed, non-EU investors appear to value access to the European single market as much as a low corporate tax level, whereas EU (including UK) investors value low costs more than anything else.⁵³

In Northern Ireland, future FDI locational decisions are likely to be influenced by the proposed implementation of a reduced corporate tax rate (to 12.5%) and the outcome of the Brexit negotiations on the future nature of the Irish border and wider access to EU markets. Current foreign-owned businesses located in NI cite the skill levels of the resident population and the ready availability of employees as key. Indeed, recent research has found that the majority of the FDI firms located in the border councils are there due to the supply of workers (25%) and the availability of suitable infrastructure (21%). With regard to access to the EU markets, findings from research, shown in Figure 20, highlight the risk to current FDI in NI, with as much as 70% of this at risk if membership of the single market changes.

Figure 20: Risks to UK regional FDI job creation if the UK doesn't join the EU single market



Source: Wavteq, *The impact of Brexit on FDI into the UK* (July 2016)

The figures above suggest that, while relatively more FDI has located in other parts of the island than in the Border Corridor, these investments are still important in terms of the 6,000 jobs created in the last five years. The uncertainty about future FDI levels, due to the recent election of President Trump in the USA and the Brexit decision, mean that a continuation of even this level of employment growth should not be taken for granted. The ESRI research suggests that, in light of Brexit, the Republic of Ireland may become a

more attractive investment proposition than the UK, especially for service sector firms seeking access to the Single Market regardless of corporate tax level parity. On the other hand, access to the large UK market from NI will also continue to be a factor in location decisions. Indeed the potential for Councils in the Border Corridor to benefit from greater cooperation around locational decisions may offer an opportunity.

Issues and Actions for Councils to consider

- In Northern Ireland the border Councils may need to engage in the debate over whether the lowering of the corporation tax rate should be made soon or not at all, due to the UK government's decision to cut their rate over the coming years (from 20% in 2017 to 17% in 2020). Given locational decisions noted above the continuing uncertainty and any loss in advantage may make NI a less attractive proposition.
- Given the motivations of investors, the Councils across the Border Corridor need to ensure the area remains a competitive one, with delivery in improvements to infrastructure (wireless internet etc.), skill levels and transport connectivity vital to Community Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.
- Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland border areas need to have policy certainty surrounding access to markets (UK and EU single market).
- Are there opportunities to influence decisions on the FDI both border areas want to attract, eg with possible incentives to attract firms wanting to grow the R&D base in the area by encouraging engagement between Higher and Further Education institutions and firms.

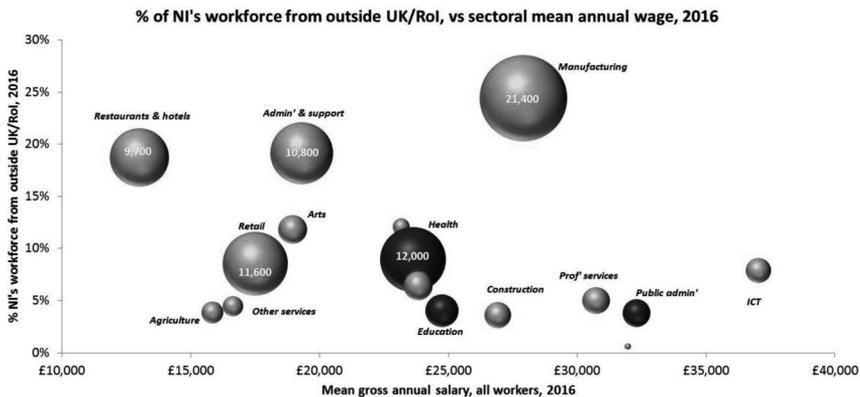
4.4 Movement of people: Both an internal and external issue

Immigration proved to be a central part of the Brexit debate, with many voters using it as one of their main reasons for voting Leave. According to a survey of 12,300 voters conducted on the day of the EU Referendum (23 June 2016), one-third (33%) of people voted Leave based on their thoughts towards immigration and the desire for control by the UK over its 'own borders'.⁵⁴ In Northern Ireland the link between immigration and a Leave vote may have been less strong than in England and Wales. A quarter (24%) who 'strongly disagree' that 'immigration has been good for Northern Ireland's economy and society' still voted to Remain.⁵⁵ This makes the movement of people a key part of the Brexit debate and subsequent negotiations. However, on the island of Ireland it is complicated by the Common Travel Area where Irish and UK citizens can travel in a border-free zone and enjoy the same rights throughout the area. Maintaining this *status quo* is a central aim of the UK and Irish governments.

The figures show the importance of immigration to both parts of the island. Since 2002 over 153,000 overseas nationals have made applications in NI for the registration of National Insurance numbers. Over 72,400 (or 47% of the NI total) of these applications have come from overseas nationals based in the border councils. The vast majority (around 70%) of the applications were made by EU nationals from outside the British Isles, the rest were from non-EU nationals. Across NI it is evident that some sectors are more reliant on migrants than others. Figure 21 shows that the Manufacturing and Admin and Support

services sectors are the most reliant on migrant labour with EU and non-EU migrant workers making up to as much as 25% of the total workforce. The importance of manufacturing might explain why almost 43,000 (or 58%) of the applications from the border councils have come from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid Ulster Council areas, where a high level of manufacturing jobs are available. Figure 21 also shows that two of the three largest employing sectors in NI (Health and Retail) have 10% of their workforce made up of those from outside the UK and Ireland.

Figure 21: % of foreign nationals employed by sector, average sector wages and size of sector in Northern Ireland, 2016



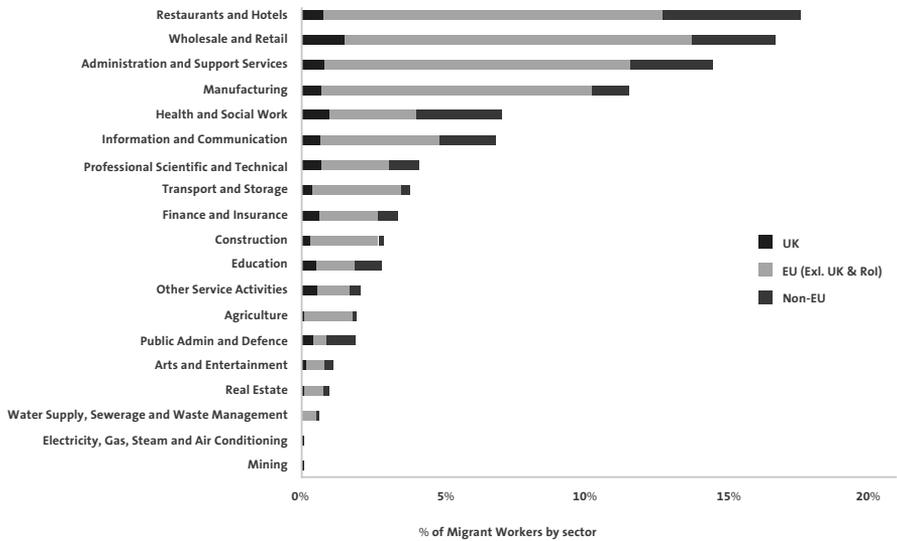
Source: Labour Force Survey. Note: Dark blue bubbles represent public sectors

In the Republic of Ireland since 2002 there have been over 1.6m applications for PPSN by foreign nationals. Only 15% of the total applicants are UK nationals, the rest being made up of other EU and non-EU nationals. In the border counties as many as 250,000 Personal Public Service Number applications were filed by non-Irish residents between 2002 and 2015, 12% of the allocations being to UK-born citizens. This number is equivalent to 18% of the southern Border Counties' total population. As in NI, some sectors in the Republic of Ireland are more reliant on migrant workers than others. They are, however, quite different sectors. Figure 22 shows that the Restaurants and Hotels and the Wholesale and Retail sectors are most reliant on migrant workers, with as much as 18% of the workforce being from outside the Republic of Ireland. With regard to UK nationals, only in healthcare and retail are more than 1% of the sector's employees from the UK.

Movement across the border

There has been considerable debate surrounding the numbers of people that currently travel across the border in either direction on a daily basis. A report by NISRA and the CSO based on the 2011 Censuses suggests that a total of 14,800 people travel daily between the two jurisdictions for work or study. According the Census returns, 6,500 travel from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland and 8,300 travel in the opposite direction. In contrast, two reports, from 2009 and 2010 use surveys of employers on both sides of the border to estimate the number of their staff who cross the border to their workplace. The

Figure 22: Foreign nationals employed by sector in Republic of Ireland, 2015

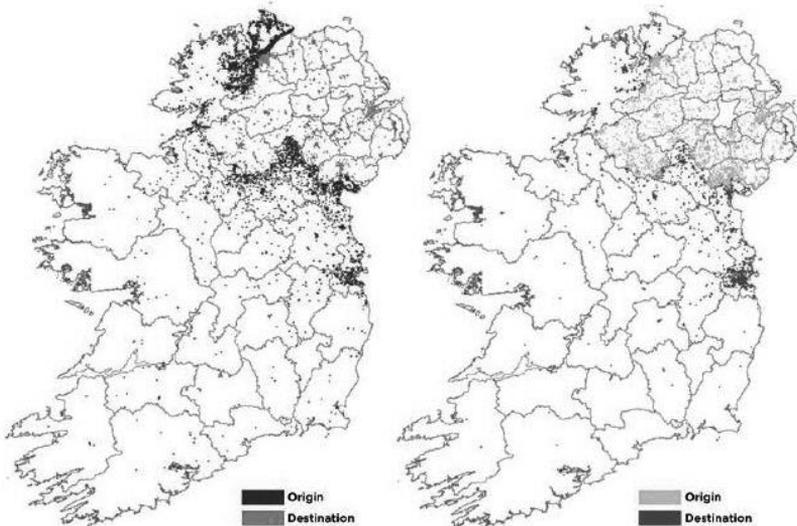


Source: CSO

Figure 23: Cross border commuting flows, 2011

Cross-border commuters from Ireland to work or study in Northern Ireland

Cross-border commuters from Northern Ireland to work or study in Ireland



Source: All-Island Research Observatory using Census 2011 data

2009 report, for the European Commission on cross-border mobility across Europe, found that 17,000 commuted cross-border to work in the Republic of Ireland and 12,000 commuted cross-border to work in NI. A 2010 report by the Centre for Cross Border Studies found similar numbers, of between 23,000 and 30,000 in total.⁵⁶

Figure 23 illustrates the origin and the destination of commuters from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. An interesting trend appears, with the majority of those commuting from Northern Ireland to the Republic located along the Belfast-Dublin corridor, while the majority of those that commute in the opposite direction live in the North-West region.

Data for 2015, shown in Table 4 and using 10 Department of Infrastructure traffic counters from locations on or near the border, suggests that there are 94,480 daily border crossings.⁵⁷ Corresponding traffic flow data collected from Transport Infrastructure Ireland suggests a similar number of daily crossings, estimated at an average of 93,300 in 2016.⁵⁸ By way of comparison, the Westlink in Belfast had 95,810 vehicles using it daily in 2015, similar to the volumes crossing the border at the 10 counters where data is collected. It is important to note that four of the 10 counters – two in Derry, one in Strabane and another outside Newry – account for 80% of the daily volumes.

Table 4: Annual Average Daily Traffic flows (AADT), Northern Ireland Border Roads, 2015

Column1	AADT 2015	% of total
A1 Dublin Rd, Newry	21,960	23%
Cullyhanna - A29 Jntn	860	1%
Monaghan Rd, Middletown	3,770	4%
Buncrana Rd, Bridgend	19,600	21%
Culmore Road, Heathfield, Derry	17,550	19%
Strabane Lifford at Bridge	17,030	18%
Derrylin/Aghalane Rd at Bridge	3,560	4%
Aughnacloy - Caledon	3,380	4%
Clones Road, B533	4,400	5%
Pettigo Rd, Kesh	2,370	3%
Total	94,480	100%

Source: Department for Infrastructure, Traffic and Travel Information, 2015

With regard to freight movements the Transport Infrastructure Ireland data provides an estimate of approximately 6,500 HGVs (7% of all vehicles) crossing the border daily. The routes with the highest shares of vehicles being HGVs are the N2 between the border and Emyvale, Co. Monaghan (12%) and the N52 between Butlers Bridge, Co. Fermanagh, and Clones, Co. Monaghan (11%). One possible explanation of these higher shares is the transport of agri-food produce, quarry products or engineering goods from the mid-border region.

Issues and Actions for Councils to consider

- Maintaining the Common Travel Area is a priority for both the British and Irish governments in order to facilitate the flow of people to work, study or use

services across the border as well as between the two islands. Given the intensity of these movements in the Border Corridor, a focus on the continuation of the CTA will be critical.

- The ageing population and the importance of skilled employees for the businesses, healthcare and educational institutions in the border region means that policies which support movement of people will not only be essential for the continued growth of some sectors but also for the population vitality of the council areas.

4.5 EU funding: Is there a case for continued or new funds?

The European Commission estimates that €3.5bn is allocated to NI programmes from the EU from 2014-2020. Over 70% of this will go on CAP payments showing the importance of that fund. Those programmes with a cross-border element (Interreg VA and Peace IV) will make €469m available up to 2020. NI Border Councils also benefit from EU money allocated by NI Government departments on a regional basis (eg *circa* £238m in CAP and Rural Development funding in 2015 alone).

Issues and Actions to consider by Councils

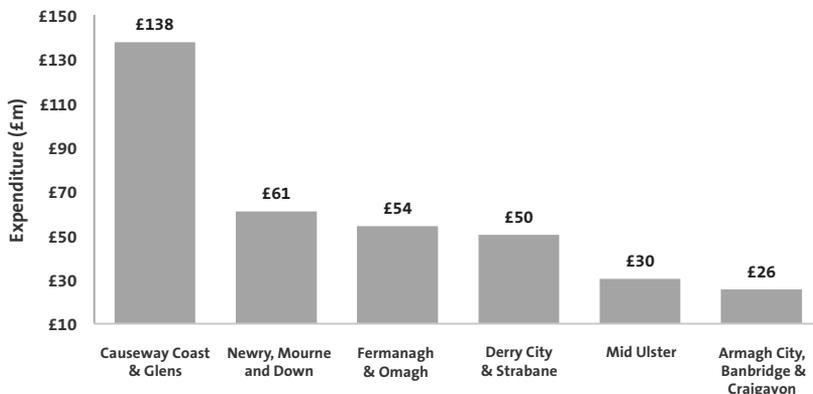
- Priority must be dealing with uncertainty over the continuation of current funding programmes after Brexit – Chancellor Philip Hammond’s August 2016 statement presents a first step as does the recent UK Government proposal on the continuation of Peace funding, but questions remain over the longer-term future of other EU funding.
- Need to discuss and decide what the long-term goals should be for both cross-border funding programmes and those targeted at reconciliation. Should these continue on the existing tripartite basis (EU/UK/Ireland)?
- Need to support any opportunities for a non-EU-member state to access schemes such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus post-Brexit?

4.6 Tourism: Crucial sector with more to be achieved

The tourism industry in the NI border region has become an increasingly important one. It made up approximately 8% of total employment in 2015 in the Council areas, with nearly a quarter of all staff non-EU citizens. Tourism is now similar in size to the Construction industry (8.5% of total) in terms of share of employment in the NI border area.

Tourism expenditure in 2016 for the NI border councils was £359m, around 42% of the NI total and up from £329m the previous year. More than 38% of the £359m was spent in Causeway Coast and Glens and another 17% in Newry, Mourne and Down. Indeed, Causeway Coast and Glens is the star performer with 14% of total visitors to attractions within NI going there, no doubt to the Giant’s Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede and the area’s golf courses. The fall in the value of Sterling, alongside strong promotion of the areas are the likeliest explanations of increased tourism in the council areas, although the devaluation should not be relied upon in the long term.

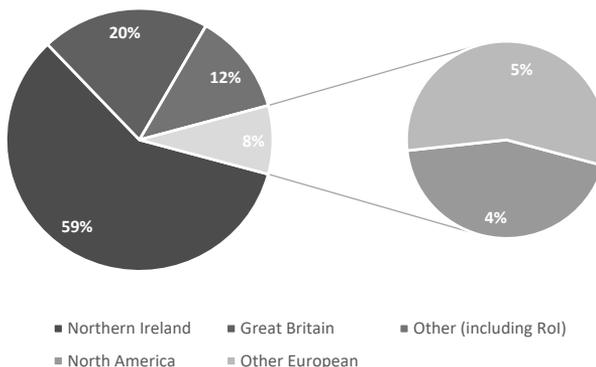
Figure 24: Tourism Expenditure by NI Border Councils, 2016



Source: NISRA

However, there is still an over reliance on ‘home market’ visitors from the rest of NI/UK. Figure 25 shows that these visitors make up a total of 79% of the visitors to the area, compared to 69% of Belfast’s total visitors. The NI border councils attract only 5% of their total visitors from the wider EU, while Belfast attracts around 12%, showing that the EU market remains an underdeveloped one, in regard to tourism opportunities.

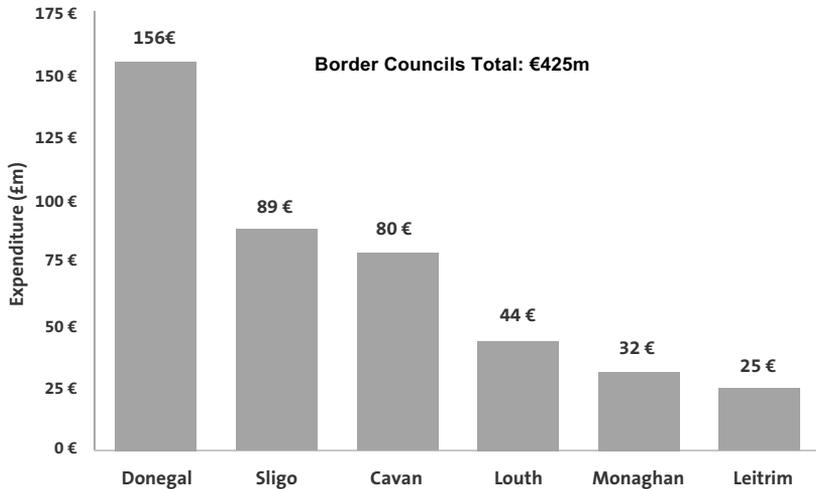
Figure 25: Origin of Visitors to NI Border Councils, 2015



Source: NISRA

Tourism is equally important for the border councils in the Republic of Ireland with employment being 10% of their total (2% higher than NI border councils). Expenditure in 2015 was €425.8m, as seen in Figure 26, around twice the amount spent in the NI border councils. In addition, the border councils in the Republic of Ireland received around 1.8m visitors in 2015, 400,000 more than the equivalent councils in NI in the same year.

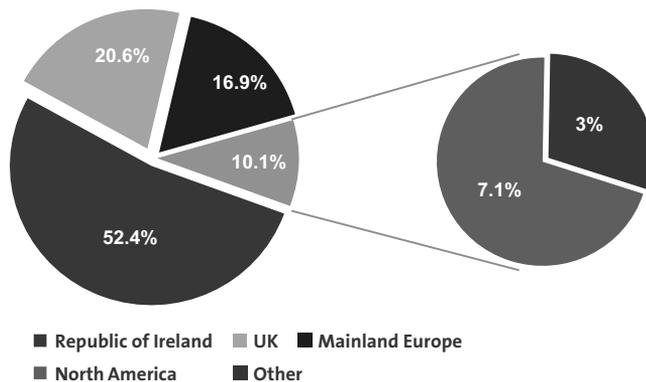
Figure 26: Tourism Expenditure by RoI Border Councils, 2015



Source: Bord Fáilte

Unlike the NI border councils the Republic of Ireland border counties are less reliant on the UK for tourism. However, they are still heavily reliant on ‘home’ visitors with 52% of total visits in 2015 coming from within the Republic of Ireland. This tourism is often due to visits to family and/or friends. A widening of the tourist pool is the aim, especially given that Donegal has three of the most recommended tourist attractions in the Republic of Ireland (Glenveagh, Sliabh Liag cliffs and Malin Head). Mainland Europe is becoming a key market for visitors, similar to the NI border councils, as it currently accounts for 17% of total visitors.

Figure 27: Origin of Visitors to RoI Border Councils, 2015



Source: Bord Fáilte

In general the figures for both the NI border councils and the Republic of Ireland border counties reflect a feeling of a strong sector with potential to grow the industry further. Indeed, for many of the Community Plans and Local Economic Development Plans, there is an ambition to make tourism a sectoral leader/driver for the Council area.

Issues and Actions for Councils to consider

- Recent NI tourism expenditure data for 2016 shows a marked increase from 2015 (+16%), partly helped by the depreciation in Sterling following the Brexit vote. However, it should be noted that this advantage may be short-lived and risks to tourism numbers from any future appreciation of Sterling need to be guarded against.
- One market that could be further exploited, even without the effect of Brexit, is mainland Europe. The figures show that the Border Corridor relies heavily on visitors from the Republic of Ireland and the wider UK. Building further cooperation between councils on a cross-border basis, in tandem with efforts by Tourism Ireland to attract European visitors to the island of Ireland, should be deepened further.
- There is a need to further exploit linkages between the tourist attractions (the closeness of Donegal and Causeway Coast being an obvious example) and combined packaging of successful events (eg festivals, sports events etc.).
- A key issue for the tourism industry in the Border Corridor is the relative free movement of people across the border which exists currently. Given that many tourists use the ports and airports (Dublin and Belfast) for entry to the region, the maintenance of the Common Travel Area and flexibility of visitor visas is essential to ensure the sector's current progress.
- The ongoing debate and potential outcome of the decision on Air Passenger Duty in Northern Ireland could potentially affect tourism numbers given the importance of access to the area. So, a well-managed relationship with Dublin Airport and the improvement of transport infrastructure could further mitigate any risks posed by Brexit.

4.7 Conclusions: Border management

...a 'hard' border is a real possibility, a 'frictionless' border is almost an oxymoron.⁵⁹

Management of the Irish border has never entirely reduced it to merely a line on the map but the disappearance of customs posts – there to manage the movement of goods – and security checkpoints have taken much of the friction from it.⁶⁰ One estimate is that 180 roads cross the border but that 35-40 of these roads wind back and forth 'with the frontier lying in the middle and a crossing point every mile'.⁶¹ The successful contributions of cross-border cooperation and interactions may also have eroded the 'border in the mind' in the recent past.⁶² The importance of cross-border trade to small firms, the integration of the agri-food industry and other sectors – for example accountancy firms in the border region estimate that 30% of their staff and 50% of their clients straddle the border – and the frequency of movements of people, have all been partly assisted by the form of border management in recent years.

One contribution to good border management has been the creation of a long tradition of cross-border cooperation across the region between business bodies, higher education institutions, those working in the health services and efforts by community and voluntary groups to facilitate cross-border reconciliation. An Irish government minister recently urged councils in the border region to strengthen their existing bilateral or multi-lateral cross-border arrangements.⁶³ The new partnership arrangements in the North West City Region have been highlighted as a step in the right direction for other Councils to follow. The joint approach taken by the councils across the entire Border Corridor behind this research is a further step in this direction and will support them in engaging with local citizens and bringing their views to the negotiations process.

It has been suggested that the current absence of the NI Executive may be due, at least in part, to the political instability that Brexit is causing.⁶⁴ When it is re-established, the Executive, alongside the local authorities along the Border Corridor, should work to develop and propose creative solutions for future border management. Solving many of the issues raised above will depend how the impact of Brexit on the Irish border can be managed. This will particularly be the case where there are currently strong cross-border, British/Irish and UK/EU flows and interactions. For example, several consultations on logistics and supply chains for this report – carried out with hauliers, ports management, freight forwarders, retailers and current and former customs officials – reveal a complex web of engagements which the current border management have facilitated. The success of any future regime for the management of the Irish border will be judged not only on how well it answers the political and economic dilemmas caused to the border region by Brexit, but also how far it allows the current level of co-dependencies which exist across Council areas to continue unhindered.

5. Possible outcomes: Employment forecasts to 2026

This section details the UUEPC forecasts for employment growth in the Border Corridor out to 2026. The forecasts are based upon the UUEPC's modelling of longer term outcomes for each of the Council areas in the Corridor. This local economic modelling and provision of local government forecasts has been developed by the Centre to assist in the devolution of some economic development powers within Northern Ireland. The report also uses the provisional UUEPC forecasts from its preliminary Irish model to outline some forecasts for the six southern Border Counties. By providing local councils in NI with a range of economic data (on demographics, labour market, GVA and employment by sector etc), the UUEPC aims to assist in the identification of the best economic policies for local places and needs, as well as developing the capacity to test out the outcomes and indicators for the new Community Planning processes.

5.1 Baseline and lower scenarios

The forecasts are based on the baseline and lower (or worst case) scenarios from the UUEPC's Summer 2017 outlook, released in July 2017.⁶⁵ Both scenarios assume that Brexit will occur, the difference between the two scenarios being a varying degree of the severity of its impact. The baseline scenario further assumes that future trends will be largely based upon the current economic environment, for example stable consumer spending. This scenario is underpinned by assumptions that the UK economy, as result of Brexit, will experience a slowing of business investment, falling levels of FDI in coming years and

inward migration capped at 185,000 per annum. The baseline scenario sees Northern Ireland showing little convergence in growth to the UK average, and adding an additional 28,800 jobs by 2026.

The second scenario, known as the lower scenario, assumes a damaging and poorly coordinated Brexit. This scenario assumes that the negotiated deal between the UK and the EU member states will be a 'hard' Brexit, with the UK exiting the Single Market and the EU Customs Union. In addition, unlike the baseline scenario, the lower scenario also assumes that consumer confidence will fall and that, in particular in Northern Ireland, squeezed incomes will cause a consumer spending slowdown. In this scenario the UUEPC forecast that Northern Ireland will fall further behind the UK average and lose 8,100 jobs by 2026.

The UUEPC's outlook refers to a 'wider range of outcomes' and high levels of uncertainty, given the political shocks from 2016 carrying on in the recent UK general election result. In addition, the greatest level of uncertainty exists around not only the shape of the UK's exit from the EU but also the nature, good or bad, of future trading arrangements with other international partners. The highly integrated nature of the Irish economy with the UK ensures that these levels of uncertainty around economic futures exist right across the island.

5.2 Northern Ireland Border Councils

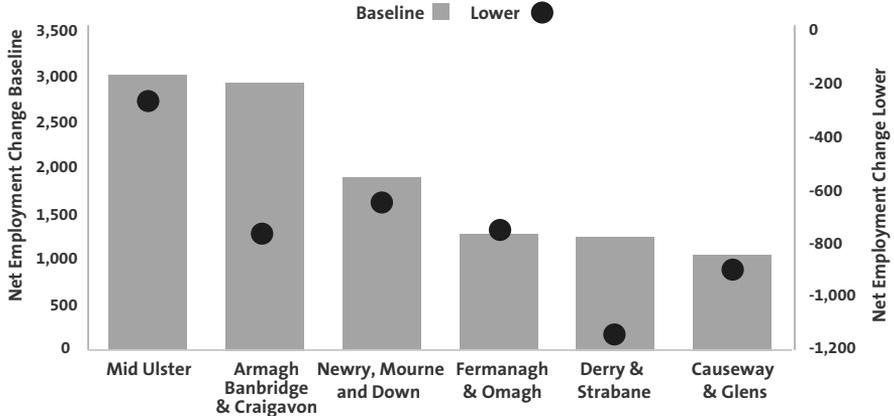
Figure 28 shows the expected change in employment in both the baseline and lower scenarios to 2026 for each of the council areas located along the border in Northern Ireland. In the baseline scenario the council areas are expected to gain a combined total of 11,500 jobs, which would make up 40% of the total net employment change in Northern Ireland. However, in the lower scenario the border councils could expect to lose 4,400 jobs by 2026 around 55% of the total loss in employment change to Northern Ireland. The relative gains and losses are indicative of the concentration of the potential impact of Brexit in this area.

The growth in employment, on the baseline scenario, in the combined council areas would mark a percentage change of 3%. The highest percentage changes come in the big job gainers – Mid Ulster (4.7%) and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (3.4%) – while Causeway Coast (2.1%), Derry City and Strabane (2%) and Fermanagh and Omagh (2.5%) are all well below the average growth. In the lower scenario every council area is expected to lose jobs, a combined percentage change of -1.9%. A similar pattern by council area repeats itself – in terms of the extent of jobs losses – with Derry City and Strabane expected to be the worst affected council with a loss of 1,100 jobs, around 26% of the total loss to the border councils.

5.3 County Council areas in the southern Border Corridor

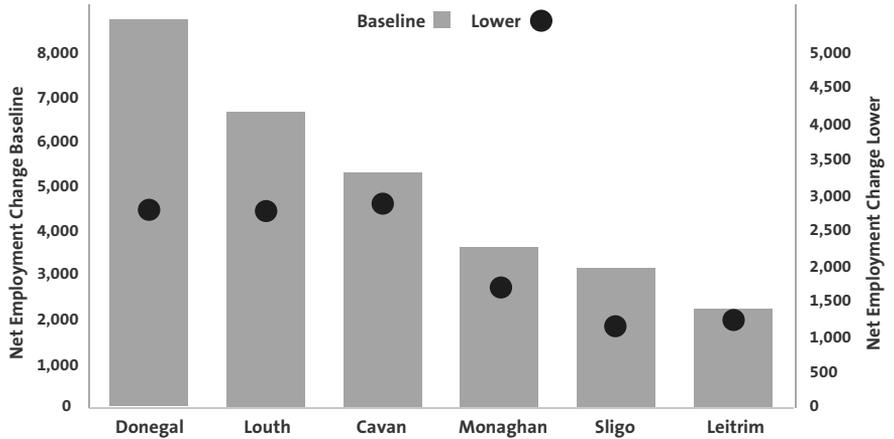
Figure 29 shows the expected change in employment numbers in the council areas of the southern Border Counties when the baseline and lower scenarios are applied to 2026. This has been done by the UUEPC modelling the potential impacts of Brexit on the Irish economy, in areas such as trade, in order to gauge baseline and lower scenarios. The estimates are based on a range of independent forecasts for the Republic of Ireland and using the sectoral composition of employment in the 2011 Census and current trends in

Figure 28: Northern Ireland Border Councils Baseline and Lower Employment Forecasts to 2026



Source: UUEPC analysis

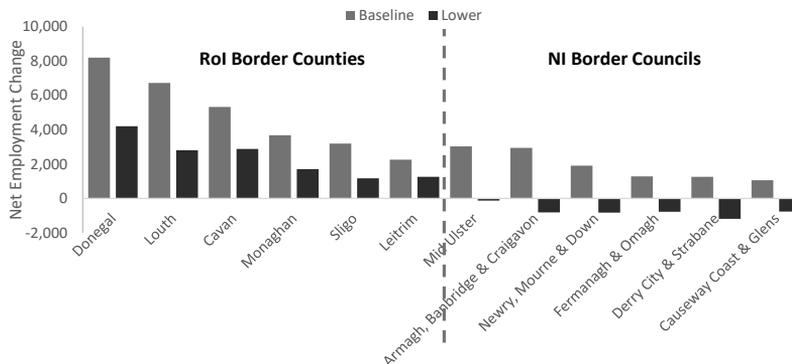
Figure 29: Republic of Ireland Counties' Baseline and Lower Employment Forecasts to 2026



Source: Provisional UUEPC analysis

order to create profiles for the State, Regions and Counties. These estimates are very experimental and are under constant review. Again, the picture is one of a region particularly exposed to Brexit, especially a mismanaged one.

In the baseline scenario depicted in Figure 30 the border councils are expected to generate an additional 27,900 jobs by 2026, around 10% of the overall employment change expected for the whole of the Republic of Ireland. This is the equivalent of a percentage change of 13.5%, slightly behind the 14.1% employment growth for the Republic of Ireland as a whole. Some of the highest percentage changes are likely to be found in the smallest counties – Leitrim (16.9%), Cavan (17.1%) and Monaghan (14%) – while those in the North

Figure 30: Border Corridor Counties' Baseline and Lower Employment Forecasts to 2026

Source: Provisional UUEPC analysis

West – Sligo (11.4%) and Donegal (11.4%) – are expected to grow but not as much as elsewhere. In the lower scenario the council areas gain around 12,400 jobs by 2026, a percentage change of 6.2%, less than half the level for the Republic of Ireland generally (13.6%). As Figure 29 shows each individual council area will add on jobs, even under a 'hard' Brexit, but at much lower levels in some places – Donegal (4.6%), Sligo (4.3%) and Louth (5.8%) – than nationally.

5.4 Comparisons across the Border Corridor

When making comparisons across the Border Corridor, as can be seen in Figure 30, the stronger economic performance can be found – in both scenarios – in the Southern Border Counties. This reflects the relative short and medium term economic forecasts for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, where the latter is expected to grow perhaps more than twice as fast as the former, even under Brexit.

5.5 Conclusions

As noted in the title to this section, these forecasts present the possible outcomes for overall changes in employment in the Border Corridor over the next decade. Given that the forecasts include possible impacts of Brexit they are hedged with uncertainty as it is not yet possible to know the final shape of the UK exit, how this will be managed by all involved and what arrangements will then be put into place. However, the forecasts do provide some clear patterns for policy makers when thinking about potential futures for the Border Corridor:

- The rate of employment growth in both parts of the Corridor is likely to fall below the average percentage change in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- There are exceptions to this within some council areas in Northern Ireland – for example Mid Ulster and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon – and in some smaller counties south of the border – Leitrim and Cavan.

- The lower scenario, while still showing positive growth in the southern Border Counties, will produce growth there well behind the national average. The same gap exists in Northern Ireland, where all Council areas will lose jobs under this scenario, but is not as large.

This suggests that the outcomes do not herald a convergence for the Border Corridor with the other parts of either the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland, in terms of employment growth. Thus, measures for mitigating the impact of Brexit, either in terms of sectoral exposures, trade impacts or infrastructural deficits, will be particularly important to this region if it is not to fall further behind.

6. Final thoughts and conclusions

There is a high level of agreement between the European Commission (and Council of Ministers), the UK Government and the Irish Government on what will form the programme of work around the Irish border in the Brexit negotiations. These can be summarised as the following:

- Ensuring that nothing is done to undermine the goals of peace and reconciliation contained in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.
- Maintaining the Common Travel Area [CTA] between the UK and Ireland (in conformity with EU rules).
- Avoiding a return to a hard border – stress laid on need to be flexible and imaginative in devising solutions.⁶⁶

Of course for the UK to leave the EU Customs Union, introduce a new system of controls around movement of people, and hope for a ‘frictionless’ Irish border will require more than technological solutions. Political imagination, flexibility and will are all going to be needed to develop a new form of border management that is not ‘hard’.

Consultations for this report have identified the avoidance of an economic border (on the transit of goods in particular) and the protection of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (especially around aspects of peace and reconciliation, and citizenship rights) as the key ‘asks’ for the Border Corridor in any Brexit talks. The UK Government’s proposals for Ireland/NI contain plenty of ideas on EU funding, customs arrangements and regulations in the agri-food sector, which may contribute to any future management of the Irish border.⁶⁷ However, it remains to be seen whether the proposals in the UK Government paper are regarded as putting a ‘Trojan Horse’ into the negotiations or something that will form the basis of future solutions.

There are many cautionary tales which warn against complacency and sticking to the old routine ways of thinking in the face of shocks and changes.⁶⁸ This warning is relevant now when grappling with the dilemmas and challenges raised by Brexit. Mitigating risks and/or taking opportunities will, by necessity, mean defending some of what is currently in place (eg: funding streams). However, it may mean that how some things are done will also have to change. The Border Corridor, with its peripheral position on the island, already lags behind other regions so breaking with past patterns is necessary. New policy thinking, new

methods of cooperation and partnership – between Councils and with central Governments – will be essential for border management to work in the wake of Brexit.

6.1 Conclusions

Despite the fact that the Irish Border Corridor has received significant amounts of EU and other funding since the 1990s, it continues to lag behind national or regional averages in areas such as productivity and household incomes. Forecasts for employment growth in the region out to 2026 mean that this outcome is likely, at best, to continue for the Corridor all things remaining equal. Given the current levels of cross-border co-dependency across the Council areas, a poorly managed Brexit could mean economic outcomes where the region falls further behind. Thus the need not only for measures to mitigate against any negative impacts of Brexit, but also for the creation of solutions that ensure that future border management is actually as seamless as possible.

Mitigation

The Community Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans across the Council areas in the Border Corridor include a range of proposals and actions to address some of the structural weaknesses in the region and mitigate against any negative impacts of Brexit. Key actions in this regard might include:

- Investment in upgrading transport infrastructure such as the A5, N4, N16 (Sligo/Enniskillen), Southern Relief Road (around Newry), the Enniskillen Bypass, etc. Continued access for Northern Ireland to TEN-T (Trans European Transport Network) funding will be important in this regard.
- Investment in business support to ensure that many more small and medium-sized businesses are able to prepare for Brexit, including getting advice on tariffs and new customs arrangements if these come into place.
- Continuation of EU funding to ensure not only that peace and reconciliation projects funded by the Peace programme continue, but so too cross-border cooperation (through Interreg), research collaboration (in Horizon 2020 and successor programmes) and student mobility activities (Erasmus).
- Recognition of the unique circumstances of the Border Corridor, with its distinctive cross-border flows, in the new Irish Government National Planning Framework would also provide the restart to regional policy identified as necessary for the Border Corridor by Bradley and Best in 2012.

Border Management

All of those consulted for this report referred to the need for the management of the Irish border to remain as close as possible to its current position given the practical issues and political sensitivities around it. In other words, the free movement of goods, services, people and investment should be the goal. The EU has certainly been flexible and imaginative when it has established arrangements for the management of other borders, though none of the examples cited (the former divided Germany, Cyprus or Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina) are exactly the same as that between a current member state and part of a former member state sharing the same island.

The simplest solutions suggested in the Border Corridor and elsewhere when it comes to

future management of the Irish border are either that the UK remains a member of the Customs Union on a permanent basis or does so on a transitional basis until a new Free Trade Agreement is signed with the EU. In both cases there would be no new customs border with the imposition of tariffs and non-tariff barriers. If neither proves to be the case then a combination of two possible solutions may be necessary to prevent a 'hard' border returning to the region:

- The continuation of the current operation of the Common Travel Area in full, which would allow not only the daily cross-border commuting and access to services to continue unhindered, but also would uphold the rights of UK and Irish citizens, supported by the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Including other EU nationals (33% of the approximate 120,000 non-UK nationals in NI in 2011) under the CTA arrangements should also be explored to facilitate movement of people.
- The development of a new economic zone within which the free movement of goods and services would continue as now. The application of exemptions for trade by certain sizes of businesses and the introduction of quotas for certain sectors that are highly integrated (eg agri-food) are ideas that might form the basis of such a zone. The details – its geography, and whether it covers some or all sectors, some or all sizes of firms, goods and services locally traded⁶⁹ or those which are part of internationally traded supply chains – are not worked out. Nor are questions about how it would be monitored and by whom. However, agreement around such an arrangement is likely to be essential for smooth border management.

Cooperation by the 12 Councils across the Border Corridor initiated this report and facilitated the authors from the UUEPC to gather evidence and then share the results. This cooperation has ensured that voices, debates and suggestions from within the region are heard across the island. Continuing this cooperation and the conversations around risks and opportunities associated with Brexit will be essential in order to develop solutions to the issues raised in this report and then to successfully implement these for the better development of the region.

Notes

- ¹ For details on the Brexit vote see John Garry, John Coakley & Brendan O'Leary 'Northern Ireland: Understanding the Brexit vote and what it means for border talks', 17 April 2017 <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/northern-ireland-understanding-the-brexit-vote-and-its-implications-for-the-border/>; Matthew Goodwin & Oliver Heath, 'Brexit vote explained: poverty, low skills and lack of opportunities', 31 Aug. 2016 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/brexit-vote-explained-poverty-low-skills-and-lack-opportunities>
- ² See the evidence of Professor Michael Dougan and Dr Stephanie Reynolds to the NI Affairs Committee, November 2016.
- ³ Figures from the BBC website.
- ⁴ For this letter see <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/Letter%20to%20PM%20from%20FM%20%26%20dFM.pdf>. A brief reply mentions energy and the land border; see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37610633>.

- ⁵ David Phinnemore, 'Northern Ireland and Brexit: struggling and divided over what next', The UK in a Changing EU project blog, 15 Nov. 2016; <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/northern-ireland-and-brex-it-struggling-and-divided-over-what-next-2/>.
- ⁶ For the details see http://www.merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/News/Contingency_Framework_Summary.pdf.
- ⁷ For more see Department of the Taoiseach, *Ireland and the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU: The Government's approach* (May 2017).
- ⁸ Anand Menon and Brigid Fowler, 'Hard or soft? The politics of Brexit', *NIESR Review*, no. 238 (Nov. 2016).
- ⁹ Janan Ganesh, 'Theresa May is decisive over Brexit but we choose not to listen', *FT*, 10 Jan. 2017.
- ¹⁰ John Curtice, 'Hard, but not too hard: Much more on what voters want from Brexit', March 2017 <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Hard-but-not-too-hard-much-more-on-what-voters-want-from-Brexit.pdf>
- ¹¹ 'How to turn a chaotic election result into a better Brexit', *The Economist*, 17 June 2017.
- ¹² Simon Usherwood, 'The EU position', in UK and Europe, *The EU Referendum: One Year On*, 25 June 2017.
- ¹³ Paul Krugman, 'The macroeconomics of Brexit: Motivated reasoning?', *The Conscience of a Liberal* blog, 30 June 2016, <http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/06/30/the-macroeconomics-of-brex-it-motivated-reasoning/?module=BlogPost-ReadMore&version=Blog%20Main&action=Click&contentCollection=Opinion&pgtype=Blogs®ion=Body#more-39827>. Most forecasters continued to say that the UK economy would not enter recession in 2016 with the average of the 21 forecasts received in September 2016 being 1.8%.
- ¹⁴ Graham Gudgin, Ken Coutts & Neil Gibson, 'The macro-economic impact of Brexit', Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, WP 483 (November 2016).
- ¹⁵ For a useful analysis of this debate see Diane Coyle, 'What scented candles say to an economist', *New York Times Sunday Review*, 7 Nov. 2015.
- ¹⁶ Department of Finance, *UK EU Exit: An exposure analysis of sectors of the Irish economy* (October 2016).
- ¹⁷ Bertelsman Stiftung / ifo, 'Brexit: Potential economic consequences if the UK leaves the EU', Policy Brief, 2015/05 (May 2015).
- ¹⁸ See Alan Barrett et al, '*Scoping the possible economic implications of Brexit on Ireland*', research series no. 48 (2015); Adele Bergin et al, 'Modelling the medium to long term potential macroeconomic impact of Brexit on Ireland', WP No 548 (November 2016); Martina Lawless and Edgar Morgenroth, 'Product and sector level impact of a Hard Brexit across the EU', WP no. 550 (November 2016).
- ¹⁹ Department of Finance, *UK EU Exit: An exposure analysis of sectors of the Irish economy* (October 2016).
- ²⁰ See Bord Bia, *Brexit Barometer* (June 2017); estimates of a 7% fall in agri-food exports can be found in Teagasc, *Brexit: Potential Implications for the Irish Agri-Food Sector* (April 2016)
- ²¹ Department of Finance, *Monthly Economic Bulletin April 2017*, May 2017.
- ²² For the Assembly Committee paper by Dr Lesley Budd see <http://crossborder.ie/site2015/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-03-22-brex-it-ceti-specialist-advisor.pdf> (March 2015); the DETI report was Oxford Economics, 'The economic implications of a UK exit from the EU for Northern Ireland: A briefing paper (February 2016).
- ²³ Paul MacFlynn, 'The economic implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland', NERI WP 35 (April 2016); 'Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the EU Customs Union', NERI WP 47 (August 2017). For interest from Brussels see Breugel, 'The impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland: a first look' (December 2016).
- ²⁴ Menon and Fowler, 'Politics of Brexit', R7 which notes that 69% of Leave voters felt that 'there probably isn't much in it either way' on the economic question.

- ²⁵ NICEI or the Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index is an experimental quarterly measure of the performance of the NI economy based on available official statistics. This measure of output allows comparison of GDP in the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- ²⁶ Cliff Taylor, 'Post-Brexit Border without friction just pure fantasy', *Irish Times*, 1 July 2017.
- ²⁷ See John Bradley and Michael Best, *Cross-Border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland* (Mar. 2012); Bradley & Best, 'Bypassed Places? The post-Belfast Agreement Border region economy', *Journal of Cross-Border Studies*, 6 (2012), 45-58.
- ²⁸ Mid Ulster, Fermanagh and Omagh and Newry, Mourne and Down have been among the best performers in terms of entrepreneurship activity among Council areas in NI; see M. Hart, K. Bonner, J. Levie and L. Heery, *GEM UK 2015 Report: Belfast* (2016).
- ²⁹ Martin Wolf, 'Economic ills of the UK extend well beyond Brexit', *FT*, 24 Sep. 2016.
- ³⁰ Bradley & Best, 'Bypassed places?', pp. 39-40.
- ³¹ These figures from InterTradelreland are taken from the CSO and NISRA (Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics). Alternative data can be had from the HMRC which shows a higher total figure for cross-border trade of £5.1 billion in 2016, almost a third of total exports from NI.
- ³² For more on these UK-Ireland links see <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-biun/biun/>.
- ³³ Mike Fahy, Gavin Murphy et al, 'Brexit: The trade exposures of sectors of the Irish Economy in a European context', June 2017.
- ³⁴ Calculations from InterTradelreland, *Potential impact of WTO tariffs on cross-border trade* (June 2017), Table 1.
- ³⁵ D. Mtko, P. George, T. Stroyan and T. Maria, 'Cross-Border Cooperation in Southeastern Europe: The Enterprises point of view', University of Thessaly, Department of Planning, Discussion Paper, 9:2 (2003).
- ³⁶ These figures are compiled from an analysis of characteristics of exporting firms from the InterTradelreland Business Monitor for Q1 2013 – Q3 2015 and the finding supports earlier research: Stephen Roper, 'Cross-Border and Local Cooperation on the island of Ireland: An economic perspective' ERSA papers, June 2005.
- ³⁷ The Invest NI figures come from their regional briefings published in 2015 and dealing with 2014 data.
- ³⁸ Department for Exiting the EU [DEXEU], *Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper: Additional Data Paper – NI Trade Data* (Aug. 2017), p.7.
- ³⁹ These figures come from the BESES data released by NISRA. Using HMRC the shares are similar: EU trade has a share of 55% of good exports from NI, 35% of this figure going to the Republic of Ireland; see Breugel, 'Impact of Brexit on NI'.
- ⁴⁰ UBS, *House View*, 22 June 2017.
- ⁴¹ See IBEC, 'Measures to address the immediate economic implications of Brexit', 24 Mar. 2017.
- ⁴² InterTradelreland, *Potential impact of WTO tariffs on cross-border trade*, Table 3.
- ⁴³ There is work underway in both NI and Ireland to ensure that businesses know who to go to for export assistance and the Councils will be critical to this.
- ⁴⁴ DAERA Permanent Secretary, Noel Lavery to the House of Lords Committee, quoted in House of Lords European Union Committee report, *Brexit: Agriculture*, 3 May 2017, p. 29.
- ⁴⁵ Centre for Cross Border Studies, *A study of cross-border flows within the agri-food sector: A snapshot of four border counties*, 17 Feb. 2016.
- ⁴⁶ Evidence of Queen's University Belfast academics, quoted in House of Lords European Union Committee report, *Brexit: Agriculture*, 3 May 2017, p. 33.
- ⁴⁷ These figures are taken from InterTradelreland, *Potential impact of WTO tariffs on cross-border trade*, Tables 4 and 6.

- ⁴⁸ DAERA, *Farm Incomes 2014/15* (2016).
- ⁴⁹ The dataset can be found at <http://data.nicva.org/dataset/common-agricultural-policy-cap-payments>.
- ⁵⁰ Lorna Siggins, 'Fishing announcement Britain first serious shot on Brexit', *Irish Times*, 3 July 2017.
- ⁵¹ For more see House of Lords European Union Committee report, *Brexit: Fisheries*, 17 Dec. 2016.
- ⁵² InterTradelreland, *Agri-Food: A study for cross-border cooperation* (2011).
- ⁵³ R.B. Davies, Iulia Siedschlag and Zuzanna Studnicka, 'Corporation Tax and FDI in EU Countries: Policy implications for Ireland', in ESRI, *Quarterly Economic Commentary* (Summer 2016).
- ⁵⁴ <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>
- ⁵⁵ Garry, Coakley & O'Leary 'Northern Ireland: Understanding the Brexit vote'.
- ⁵⁶ For the various reports see CSO & NISRA, *Ireland and Northern Ireland: Census 2011* (2014); European Commission, *Scientific report on the mobility of cross-border workers within EU-27/EEA/EFTA countries* (Jan. 2009); Centre for Cross Border Studies, *Measuring mobility in a changing island* (May 2010).
- ⁵⁷ Department for Infrastructure, *Traffic and Travel Information, 2015* (2016).
- ⁵⁸ See <https://www.nratrafficdata.ie/c2/gmapbasic.asp?sgid=ZvyVmXU8jBt9PJE5c7UXt6>
- ⁵⁹ Quotation from Katy Hayward, LSE Brexit blog, 10 July 2017, at <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/07/10/a-hard-irish-border-is-possible-a-frictionless-one-is-an-oxymoron/>
- ⁶⁰ For more on border management see Katy Hayward, Milena Komorova & Michael Buttazoni, 'Brexit and the Border: Managing the UK/Ireland Impact' (2016), at http://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/123024606/Brexit_and_the_UK_Ireland_Border_Discussion_Paper.pdf.
- ⁶¹ David S. Johnson, 'Cattle smuggling on the Irish border, 1932-8', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 11 (1979), p.42, quoted in Peter Leary, *Unapproved Routes: Histories of the Irish Border, 1922-1972* (2016), p.170.
- ⁶² Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Arthur Aughey, 'Northern Ireland and Brexit: Three effects on "the border in the mind"', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19:3 (2017), 497-511 (500-1).
- ⁶³ Minister Joe McHugh TD, Letterkenny 22 May 2017 speaking to the All-Island Sectoral Dialogue on Brexit: The North West and wider Border Region.
- ⁶⁴ House of Lords European Union Committee report, *Brexit: Devolution*, 19 July 2017, pp. 24-5.
- ⁶⁵ UUEPC, *Summer Outlook 2017* (July 2017), available at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/business/epc/publications>
- ⁶⁶ Extracts from the various statements on the Irish border can be found in DEXEU, *Northern Ireland and Ireland Position Paper*, pp.26-7.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ CP Snow in 1959 quoted in John Gapper, 'The fatal divide for business in Brexit Britain', *FT*, 12 July 2017.
- ⁶⁹ The UK Government paper referred to 80% of cross-border trade being by SMEs as 'examples of local trade in local markets'; *ibid.*, p.17.

Anticipating Brexit:

The view from local communities in the Central Border Region of Ireland/Northern Ireland

Dr Katy Hayward, with Annemiek Teuwen and Shane Campbell¹

*The UK's withdrawal from the EU will constitute a major change to the context for relationships across the border. The Central Border Region is the area most exposed to the risks of Brexit. Although the nature and extent of any changes are as yet unknown, their very prospect is already having an impact in the Central Border Region. This article presents the key findings from a small-scale research project – *Bordering on Brexit* – conducted by the Centre for International Borders Research (Queen's University Belfast) on behalf of the Irish Central Border Area Network. The purpose of this project was to give a voice to members of local communities on both sides of the border in this Region, to better understand the potential and actual impact of Brexit even at this early stage.*

Cross-border cooperation in the Central Border Region

'I think of barriers when I think of Brexit' (2.0.37)²

When the UK leaves the European Union, the 500km border that runs across the island of Ireland will become an external boundary of the European Union. What this will mean in practice is subject to both the British withdrawal 'Brexit' negotiations under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union and the contents of any agreement on the future UK-EU relationship. A so-called 'hard Brexit'



would mean that the Irish border would be a frontier to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital that is a feature and condition of EU membership. This would mean deepening difference in experience on either side of the Irish border. This is a particular concern in the Irish Border Region, on both sides, which is where the benefits of carefully-fostered, mutually beneficial cooperation have been most valued.

Cross-border cooperation has been used as one means of addressing the particular needs of the Central Border Region – needs which can be summarised in terms of its demographic deficit, rurality, geopolitical peripherality and structural deprivation. Cross-border cooperation has had to work against the background of a stark integrative deficit in the Border Region and differences in policy and administration on either side of the border

hindering co-operation in both public and private sectors. There has been a gap in regional-level policy-making, and even those local authorities proximate to the border have not been incentivised to consider policies beyond the remit of their local constituencies. When they have done so, however, the achievements have been considerable. The work of ICBAN (Irish Central Border Area Network) as well as that of EBR (East Border Region) and the North West Strategic Growth Partnership exemplifies the benefits that can come through Region-wide cooperation.

By joining up the regional stakeholders and playing to the strengths of the Central Border Region, cross-border groups such as ICBAN have been able to attract significant EU-funded investment into the Region towards the development of strategic cross-border initiatives. Some of the most effective examples of this investment in ICBAN occurred under the EU Interreg IVA Programme 2007-2013 (from the European Regional Development Fund). In order to be delivered successfully, such projects necessarily entail joint structures, such as in marketing, education and management. Participants in this research study explained how funding for projects such as these has a greater impact than merely the specific programme output:

‘I’ve been on the Interreg Monitoring Committee and that’s another example of the relationships and opportunity to build relationships and see the other person’s point of view, to see the wider angle in the two jurisdictions’. (3.29.46)

‘I also do a lot of community work and have been involved with European projects. Such projects are an excellent way of networking and sharing skills and information. Much of the funding also comes from Europe.’ (#110, F, Fermanagh and Omagh)

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) and the Centre for Cross-border Studies (CCBS) offer several studies of how ‘softer,’ practical cross-border cooperation have benefited groups across all sectors (businesses, regional health authorities, local councils) and promoted better relations between communities. Yet the sustainability of the work of cross-border groups such as ICBAN is threatened by a financial crisis. Not only are many of these cross-border groups heavily dependent on EU Interreg funding for operations, but the constraints of the post-2008 austerity programme in both the UK and Ireland have also left local authorities with shrinking resources from which to commit to these collaborative forums. Even aside from Brexit, the levels of local cross-border public sector co-operation achieved face challenges if they are to avoid slipping back into a state of baseline disintegration. In sum, despite significant efforts and advances, the border continues to exercise a disintegrative influence over local public and private sector actors within the Central Border Region. Unless active efforts are made to protect and sustain cross-border cooperation, there is a risk that the practical gains achieved through it for all communities over the past 20 years could rapidly retreat.

Facing Brexit

The Central Border Region is already conceived by a number of respondents as a ‘marginalized’ or ‘neglected’ area. Despite the successes and achievements of recent cross-border cooperation, this enduring sense of isolation exacerbates many of the concerns

that residents have around the potential impact of Brexit; it also dampens some of the perceived opportunities that may be more apparent in urbanised, better-connected locales. As a focus group participant commented:

‘These things are going to be driven from the capital cities and if they are driven from these places, the supports may not be relevant for us in this Region and supports could be somewhat diluted by the time they get as far up the country.’
(1.33.06)

It is notable that the majority of benefits or opportunities from Brexit that were identified by respondents (even Leave voting respondents) tended to be framed as benefits for the UK (or Republic of Ireland) as a whole, or to be quite general Leave arguments, rather than specifically relevant to the Border Region.

The unique position of the border counties is that they are in a ‘liminal’ zone between the UK and Ireland. In the past, this has meant that they are on the periphery of policy-making and political interest in both Westminster and Dublin. With that border becoming an EU/UK border, the concern of the border area is that it becomes even further from the centre of decision-making (especially in the absence of a functioning devolved Assembly and Executive in Stormont). The Border Region is thus at risk of being the Region most deeply affected by Brexit and least closely protected by measures that may be put in place by London or Brussels to mitigate its effects. However, this particular position also puts it at the cutting edge of the new relationship between the UK and European Union. This could mean acting as a bridge between the two. It is clear that a pull to either Dublin or to London merely stretches and exacerbates divisions within Northern Ireland. Instead, cross-border cooperation takes on a new symbolic and practical significance in this environment of uncertainty.

The study

Partly with the intention of informing policy-makers in the management of the consequences of Brexit for the Central border Region, our study’s main aim was to listen to the views of people living in rural communities on both sides of the Central Border Region, specifically in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC); Cavan; Donegal; Fermanagh and Omagh; Leitrim; Mid Ulster; Monaghan; and Sligo. The project has been determinedly non-political and non-partisan. It was not intended to be a comprehensive report on the potential impact of Brexit across a range of sectors but rather an opportunity to record the views of local communities who are ‘bordering on Brexit’ in a very literal way, from both sides of the border. In order to do so, we have used two means of gathering data: an online survey and focus group interviews. The research was conducted in accordance with guidelines and procedures for research ethics of Queen’s University Belfast.

The research for this report was conducted in the summer of 2017, it thus constitutes a snapshot of the perception and anticipation of Brexit from the Central Border Region one year on from the June 2016 referendum but before much progress had been made in the negotiations. The focus on the movement of people and goods in the survey responses reflects the main issues raised in media coverage of Brexit. The possible fallout from Brexit

for the peace process was also frequently mentioned. Other practical concerns were raised by individual participants, including diverging environmental standards, specialised healthcare provision, shrinking recruitment pools, the loss of EU funding (including CAP), tourism decline and tariff barriers. Just as our research reflects the complex links across the border that make up everyday life and practice in the Region, we found that anticipation of the possible impact of Brexit on any aspect of cross-border movement has ramifications for several others.

We gathered data through the use of an online survey and focus groups. The online survey was promoted and distributed through social media and online forums (such as via a blogpost on brexitborder.com) and through notices given by ICBAN and its member authorities. Through the use of several open questions, we sought to give residents in the Region an opportunity to express their views on the potential impact of Brexit, particularly in relation to cross-border movement and relations. The data cannot be taken in any way to be a quantitative representation of the views of residents in this Region but it does illuminate our understanding of some of the interests, issues and valid concerns of residents on both sides of the border.

The survey received over 300 responses [n=305] from across the eight local authority regions of the Irish Central Border Area Network. Most of our respondents are in full-time work and aged 31-64. They come from both sides of the border and constitute balanced representation from the eight Local Authority areas of ICBAN. There was an under-representation in our sample of those with British citizenship and those who voted Leave in the 2016 Referendum. Approximately 60% of our respondents had a right to vote in the June 2016 referendum. Of those who exercised this right, one in six voted for the UK to Leave the EU, which is not representative of the actual result of the referendum in the relevant Northern Ireland constituencies. This disparity may be because those most motivated to respond to a survey on Brexit were likely to be Remain voters and concerned to express their views. That said, from our focus groups it was clear that pro-European and Remain voters are just as keen as Leave voters to find ways of ensuring the best possible outcome, and avoiding unnecessary disruption or risk, in the process of Brexit for their local communities. In the final report on the project, we give a dedicated space to presenting the comments from the Leave voters.

The focus groups were composed of respondents to the survey who volunteered to participate in this further exercise. There was also a focus group of local councillors, who between them represented each one of the participating authorities and each of the following parties: DUP, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, and the Ulster Unionist Party. The focus groups were conducted in 'neutral' spaces in Monaghan town and Enniskillen. The focus groups were centred upon a schedule of questions but the discussion was managed in such a way so as to enable follow-up and elaboration of new areas for conversation as they naturally arose. In this article, we summarise some of the key findings of analysis from both sources of data. The full report can be found online.³

Crossing the border today

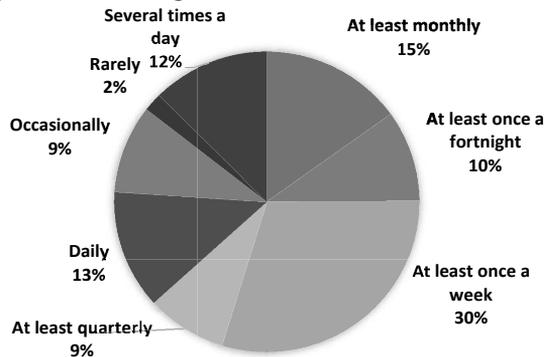
Over half of the survey respondents cross the border at least once a week (some daily or even several times a day). This figure is more or less the same for respondents on either

side of the border. This has much to do with living in the Border Region itself. One participant in a focus group commented that road networks now meant that one can cross the border several times on a journey:

‘For those of us that live near the border, it *has* to be crossed. They recently closed the roads near where I live for roadworks and I counted that, [following the alternative route] I crossed the border 12 times. So if there was a physical border that would be a nightmare.’ (2.7.37)

There are only a handful who cross the border ‘rarely’ and it is notable that none of the respondents said that they never cross the border at all.

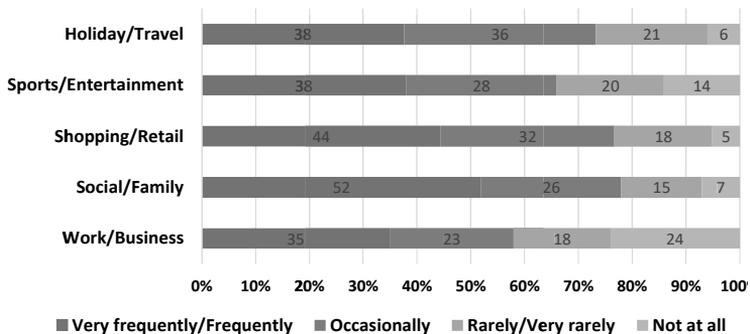
Frequency of border crossing



Responses to Q. 8. How often do you cross the border?

As to why people cross the border frequently or very frequently, the main reasons are social reasons (e.g. 52% of respondents do so [very] frequently to meet family and friends) and for shopping (45% [very] frequently). This is followed by about 40% of our respondents doing so frequently for work/business and about 38% for sport/entertainment and holiday/travel.

Purpose and frequency of border crossing



Responses to Q. 9. How frequently do you cross the border for...?

Many respondents, in their comments, mentioned the fact that they have family members on both sides of the border; a few shared that their partner lives on the other side of the border to them. One respondent in particular articulates the type of social and familial ties that exist across the border:

‘My family is split across both sides of the border. I have 50 first cousins with approximately half on each side of the border. I am a member of some literature groups and they regularly meet on both sides of the border. I use the libraries in both Derry and Letterkenny. My house is literally 250 metres from the border across the fields. Everything I do crosses the border. My bus to Letterkenny crosses the border to go to Derry first, then back across the border to complete its journey to Letterkenny. The border going back up, will affect every single aspect of my life in a negative manner.’ (#279, F, Donegal)

Experience of EU membership

The survey also asked respondents the extent to which they considered themselves and their household affected by EU membership across a range of different policy/legislative areas. It is clear from this response that by far the most significant areas in which respondents consider EU membership to affect them are in EU citizenship rights and in EU funding. After these, the main ways in which respondents believe themselves to be affected at least ‘quite a lot’ by EU membership are in relation to holiday/travel (78%), work/business (75%), shopping and retail (75%) and environmental protection (73%).

What this means is much of the experience of the European Union is not only related to travel abroad and to rights but also to very local experience, especially when it comes to direct funding and to matters that entail cross-border activity. We noted above the importance of shopping/retail as a motive for crossing the border, and three-quarters of respondents also see EU membership as being important in this area. In this way, the lines between the experience of EU membership and the ease and experience of crossing the border can be blurred.

Anticipating the personal impact of Brexit

97% of our respondents (from both sides of the border) said that they would be personally affected by Brexit. Those who did not expect to be affected by Brexit tended to be older (‘Won’t affect me personally a lot, as I am retired’) or they had a sceptical view of the media coverage of Brexit (‘There will be an impact, some pros and cons but its impact is being hyped up’). Leave voters were disproportionately represented in the number of respondents saying that they would not be affected at all by Brexit. One such respondent said that he believed Brexit would not affect him because ‘covered by GFA [Good Friday Agreement]’ (#7, M, Mid Ulster).

Of those who saw Brexit as having a significant personal effect on them, many mentioned the wider British-Irish context, such as anticipated changes to the position of British passport holders in Ireland and vice versa, and the importance of travel between Great Britain and Ireland. In light of this, it would seem that the preservation of the Common

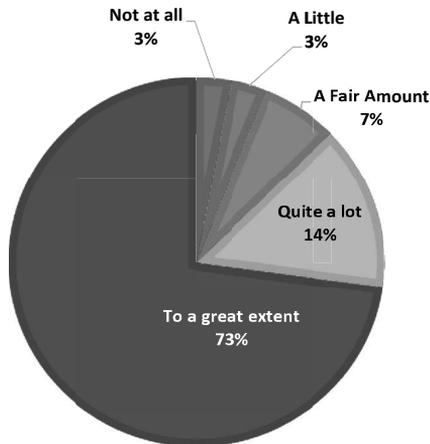
Travel Area is very important for people in the Central Border Region when it comes to managing the effects of Brexit. Travel across the border with ease and the anticipation of other forms of border control were very frequently mentioned as explanations for the anticipation of being personally affected by Brexit. The connection of cross-border movement to ‘everyday life’ was very apparent, with shopping, sports, holidays, entertainment, business and relationships mentioned frequently in this regard.

Beyond border-centric issues, there were a wide range of reasons offered as to the ways in which respondents anticipated being significantly personally affected by Brexit. A businessman commented: ‘Will limit my business development opportunities, remove development grants and limit my free movement.’ (#58, M, Newry, Mourne, Down). Others mentioned the loss of EU funding: Farm support payments, Rural Development Programme monies, PEACE funding. A range of other points were raised including employee protections, trade, tourism and agriculture standards.

Not all those who anticipate Brexit affecting them to a great extent viewed this as a negative thing. One commented by way of explanation: ‘Great to have rid of the EU, bureaucracy, we can make our own decisions’ (#8, M, Mid Ulster); this was echoed by another: ‘Life will be a lot better the EU has too much say in our affairs and not for the good’ (#16, M, ABC). It is important to recognise that these views were not exclusively those of Leave voters with only British citizenship or resident in Northern Ireland. A Leitrim resident (with joint citizenship) added: ‘[Brexit] will be a tremendously positive influence because we desperately need reform in the EU and only Britain has the ability to stand up to EU imperialism.’ (#27, M, Leitrim). And an Irish citizen in Cavan commented: ‘The UK will be a better place after it leaves EU’ (#9, M, Cavan).

Anticipating the local impact of Brexit

Impact of Brexit on local community



Responses to Q. 19. How much do you think the UK leaving the EU will affect your local community and Region? (Likert scale)

It is evident that those that see Brexit as having most consequence for their locality, tend to emphasise the border and to anticipate its 'return'. One person, when asked about the impact of Brexit, commented: 'border of the '70s' (#297, M, Newry). There appears to be no significant difference between respondents in different jurisdictions as to the emphasis they place on the border in the anticipated impact of Brexit. This centres on the importance of the border for the Region. Issues raised include cross-border shopping, travel, trade and social connections. Others mention particular risks for particular sectors, and the loss of EU funding is mentioned most frequently as a particular concern.

'Community and voluntary sector will be hit badly, especially with good relations/cross community work and programmes' (#286, F, Fermanagh and Omagh).

A little over 6% of the respondents believe that Brexit would hardly affect their local community and region. Looking at the reasons they gave for this view, it centres on the idea that things will either stay the same or improve. These respondents ridiculed what they saw as scaremongering from the 'doomers and gloomers' and welcomed the removal of 'unelected bureaucrats'. Other improvements that they anticipated to be the reduction of red tape, retention of monies currently paid to the EU, 'the re-establishment of full Parliamentary democracy as a result of Brexit'. Leave voters were disproportionately represented in those believing that Brexit would have no effect on their local community.

Concerns from the 'southern' side of the border

A border not only divides, it is a meeting point – what happens on one 'side' of the border invariably affects experience on the other. This is powerfully illustrated in the case of a referendum with such significant implications for the economic, social, legal and political environment of a country. For a Border Region, the ramifications are particularly acute – the more integrated a Border Region, the weightier the implications. Responses to some of the questions in this project have brought this to the fore in several ways.

'Both sides of the border... it's a community. In Belfast/Dublin, certain sectors may be impacted and others might never be. Within the local border community, it's *everyone* that will feel it.'(1.20.02)

'For a border community, it impacts on every aspect of everyday. When you get up in the morning, which road do you go out on? In Dublin or Belfast they won't understand. That very close, tight way that it affects everything you think about and everything you do.' (1.20.20)

'The vote for Brexit was essentially a vote to turn my county [Donegal] into a peninsula. We are already cut off from our natural urban centre by partition. Any hardening of that line would be economically disastrous for my local area.' (#73, M, Donegal)

The fact that these respondents did not have a vote in the referendum and yet are deeply affected by its outcome means that the feelings of resentment, anxiety and voicelessness are particularly acute among respondents in the southern border counties.

‘We (in the South) didn’t have any say and we’re going to be equally affected. People face the same issues on both sides of the border.’ (1.31.16)

It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the most urgent expressions of anxiety about the effects of Brexit on the local community come from those on the southern side of the border.

The border and the peace process

Respondents explained that, as things currently stand, the decision as to which side of the border to shop on, for example, depends on what one wants to buy or whom one wants to meet; whether it is the northern side or the southern side only comes into consideration in terms of the currency and price difference. The conversations in the focus groups in particular revealed the paradox of the contemporary border. In some ways it is non-existent, completely irrelevant and not a consideration in daily life:

‘Yes, the decision is to shop in Armagh or Dundalk, but the border doesn’t come into it.’ (1.7.53)

‘Not sure that people are even aware they are crossing the border for shopping or whatever – I don’t think about it.’ (1.7.53)

In other ways, however, the border is ever-present, particularly as linked to politics and the experience of the peace process. This mix of the mundane and the extraordinary significance of the border is encapsulated in the comments of one young survey respondent:

‘[A hard border] would be a nightmare, politically, socially. It would seriously affect my daily routine, and my faith in the peace process.’ (#155, M, Leitrim)

‘The UK leaving the EU will plunge my life into uncertainty. ... I also worry about the threat of violence if a hard border is imposed as a result of Brexit.’ (#287, F, Fermanagh and Omagh)

To raise the spectre of disruption to cross-border cooperation and movement – making it a politically significant or practically demanding task, rather than ordinary, simple task – does further disrupt the ground on which the peace is founded. This was expressed very powerfully by a participant in a focus group in Monaghan:

‘Even the psychological impact - the re-awareness and the re-awakening of the border. Everyday I’m now thinking ‘what’s going to happen?’ (1.22.22)

‘[A harder border] creates a number of problems and has massive ramifications, not just in terms of where roads are closed off, but emotionally. ... That emotional relationship with a border, in terms of where you think you’re going to go has much

longer-lasting impacts. It doesn't matter if they build [physical] barriers, the fact that they create some form of border ... that's what divides families and communities.' (2.9.16)

The fragility of the peace process is an immediate concern for many, especially when combined with acknowledgement of the lack of progressive politics in Northern Ireland:

'People have entrenched positions, heightened emotions on something that hasn't been dealt with, even from a legacy point of view. We're still on the path to reconciliation and this is like opening a wound.' (1.25.25)

Concerns about the peace process were wrought together with concerns about Brexit-induced change for the Border Region. As one respondent holding both British and Irish citizenship put it:

'I would prefer that Brexit didn't go ahead because the North is a powder keg already without dragging the nationalist community out of the EU to be a part of the UK and nothing else.' (#261, F, Monaghan)

Such views speak of an imposed decision and thus of echoes of colonialism. Leave voters were much more likely to see *EU membership* as an imposition and Brexit as an expression of democratic freedom. This is a fundamental difference between the two positions and one that can only be resolved through clear information, transparency in decision-making and accountability as principles of governance in the Border Region after Brexit.

Priorities for the Brexit negotiations

Respondents' priorities for the Brexit negotiations (including among Leave voters) centre on the need to keep a 'frictionless' border. The practicalities of cross-border movement (and the mundane reasons for this) really come to the fore in people's responses to the anticipated effects of a harder border, especially with regard to farming and agriculture. This is important, given that free movement of agricultural products are not as a rule included in free trade agreements or customs unions with the EU for non-EU member-states. A number of respondents commented on the fact that farming now is far more complicated – and the agricultural markets and supply chains far more integrated – than at the time there was a harder border. This makes the anticipation of a post-Brexit border all the more concerning:

'There are so many regulations around farming now. Previously when the border roads would have been closed there was less bureaucracy and red tape. Now it's all traceability, far more bureaucracy with it. It's going to be massively difficult with splitting up two farms in two jurisdictions.' (3.33.50)

Respondents comment frequently on the potential problems for cross-border trade and business, and the fact that some in the Region would have to make different choices about where they will live and work as a result of a harder border.

'The UK's decision has impacted Ireland in terms of business and highlighting the fact that Northern Ireland is partitioned from the rest of the island. Many people

living in border counties will perhaps have to make serious decision on their workplace/country of residence... Economically I think cross-border businesses need a plan of what happens if a hard border is reality.' (#217, F, ABC)

A particular Brexit-related concern for business – the issue of smuggling – comes up in several comments in response to survey question about the impact of Brexit. Experience already shows that smuggling causes particular harm to the legal economy in the Border Region. A more significant economic border will mean greater incentives for smuggling. As well as causing a difficulty for policing, at one level this also places some legitimate businesses in the area at a competitive disadvantage.

'Black market economy and illegal behaviour is going to sky rocket again – back to the dark days again. People trying to make a genuine € or £ are subsumed by the illegal activity, illegally procured goods, people avoiding tariffs, avoiding controls whether it is digital or a hard border. People going through fields. People registering cattle on one side and registering on another. Back to the fuel laundering. All that stuff will come back.' (1.18.17)

A quite different dimension of Brexit-related changes that are already affecting business and life in the border region are felt at a personal level by cross-border or frontier workers. Brexit looks set to affect them not only in terms of changes to the economic conditions of work in the Border Region but also as the UK's withdrawal from the EU potentially affects workers' rights, transferability of social security payments and mutual recognition of qualifications. The future position of cross-border workers is one of the most frequently mentioned concerns in the survey responses and a number of our respondents are cross-border workers. Some explained that they are already feeling the effects of the Brexit decision:

'I live in ROI, work in NI, cross the border at least twice daily for work. [I] Socialise, shop and get health care each side of the border. A hard border would make all that difficult and more expensive in time and money. The currency drop of £ is already a huge drop in my money in my pocket. (#151, F, Monaghan)

The greatest concern is that the process of Brexit (and the related disintegration of currently common frameworks) would mean that people would be forced to stay on one side of the border or the other, rather than to live cross-border lives.

'I live in Donegal and work in Derry, very worried about hard border and implications to local economy in Inishowen. Already seeing impact with property prices and personally with falling exchange rate. I am considering having to sell house and move to Derry or change jobs.' (#281, F, Donegal).

Looking ahead

As the border looks set to take on even more material, legal and economic significance in March 2019, it is important that the views and needs of the Central Border Region are taken into account.

'If something is imposed on people who don't want it – then you're talking big trouble.' (1.22.22)

The recent experience of a very hard Irish border has created a profound awareness in the Border Region of the damage that can be caused by circumstances that affect the symbolic and practical manifestation of the border. Meeting the particular needs of the Central Border Region, then, is seen as a challenge that requires proper representation. This would need to be acknowledged and steered from local political forums as well as at higher levels.

‘If Brexit does go through, I think people locally would be a lot more accepting if their concerns and their fears were dealt with by politicians at a local, national and European level. If conditions were put in that come from Monaghan, come from Donegal – they would be a lot more accepting of the inevitable if they knew their concerns had helped to formulate policy.’ (1.34.11)

Now is not a time to pull back from funding cross-border bodies and groups but a time to invest in them and draw upon their knowledge and experience.

Just as both sides in the withdrawal negotiations have emphasised that they wish to avoid any return to a hard border on the island of Ireland, so too is it imperative that the benefits of cross-border cooperation in the Central Border Region are preserved and protected during and after the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. Amid current uncertainties and political differences, there remains a widely-held commitment across local communities and groups around the Region to continue working together to preserve the gains already achieved and to realise potential benefits for future generations.

Key findings

This project contains eight core findings regarding the views of local communities in the Central Border Region towards Brexit:

- 1 The Central Border Region is most exposed to the impact of Brexit. Any change to the status of the border or ability to easily cross the border will have the most direct impact on residents in the Border Region, on both sides of the border. This in a Region where development and cooperation is greatly needed.
- 2 The legacy of violent conflict is apparent in the fears that people have about the impact of Brexit on the border. For many respondents, the very term ‘border control’ is one that conjures images of a securitised border and recalls deeply negative experiences and community tensions.
- 3 The effects of Brexit are already being felt in the Central Border Region. Brexit is already having an effect in respondents’ comfort in living on one side of the border and working on the other, and in their confidence in doing business on the other side of the border.
- 4 Leave and Remain voters differ in their anticipation of a hard border. Leave voters are less likely to fear a hard border – not because they don’t cross it or see the economic value of an open border – because they are less likely to believe that negotiations will result in such an outcome.
- 5 There seems to be a paradox in the contemporary Irish border: crossing the border is both unremarkable and extraordinary. In some ways it is non-existent, completely

irrelevant; however, in other ways it is ever-present and at the centre of politics, economics and peace.

- 6 The overwhelming sense is one of uncertainty; this is not a good thing in a Border Region with a legacy of conflict and under-development.
- 7 Brexit is exacerbating the sense of marginalisation and invisibility felt by residents in the Central Border Region, in both jurisdictions.
- 8 There is a risk of return to back-to-back development. Opportunities expressed for the Border Region/Northern Ireland from Brexit tend to be framed as being at the expense of the other.

NOTES

- ¹ We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Board of ICBAN, the participating local authorities/district councils and the SSHRC-funded Borders in Globalization project for support. Most particularly, we wish to express our gratitude to each one of the respondents who took the time to complete the online survey or to participate in a focus group.
- ² Quotations from survey responses are labelled according to the number allocated to the anonymous survey response, the gender and the local district of the respondent. Focus group quotations are referenced with the number of the group and the time stamp (minute, second) of the start of the extract in the recording.
- ³ ICBAN website, www.icban.com



Members of the Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann with ICBAN Representatives in Leinster House

Dying, Surviving or Thriving: *Time to create a new rural narrative*

Janice Rose

**Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager
Northumberland County Council**

Cities are quite rightly recognised as the economic powerhouses of the UK economy but their dominance in recent national place-based policy has failed to recognise the significant contribution that rural areas make to local economies both in their own right and in complementing the more urban areas they envelop. With the United Kingdom poised to leave the European Union and the emerging Industrial Strategy committing to drive growth across the whole country there is a unique opportunity to redress the balance and showcase the value of rural areas.

This is particularly the case in the county of Northumberland where its unique location sandwiched between the Tyneside conurbation in northern England and southern Scotland affords the scope to showcase rural economic development within the context of acting as the hinterland to a major city whilst also being part of a coherent rural economic geography. The potential of this opportunity is further heightened by the emerging prospect of a North of Tyne devolution deal (in collaboration with Newcastle and North Tyneside) and a Borderlands growth deal (in collaboration with Carlisle, Cumbria, Dumfries and Galloway, and Scottish Borders).

This article outlines the journey taken so far to keep Northumberland as a large and sparse rural area on the Government's growth radar and subsequently explores the extent to which the timing is now right for a new narrative that fully recognises the economic value of our rural areas.

Northumberland on the frontier

The Border between Scotland and England is almost a hundred miles long. It connects the Solway and the Tweed by traversing the Cheviot Hills and Southern Uplands.

Dating back to the 11th century, it suffered several centuries of lawless raiding with local clans, known as Border Reivers, switching their national allegiances as suited their family interests at that time despite the policing by wardens of the 'Scottish Marshes'. This is the place of the 'Debateable Lands' – an area between Carlisle and Langholm – where, for a time, the decree of neither England nor Scotland was heeded; and where the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed was perpetually in the wars, changing hands more than a dozen times. The Union of the Crowns brought a sense of order. Specific laws were applied to the 'Middle Shires' and the Reivers could no longer escape justice by crossing from England to Scotland or vice versa.

The legacy of this troubled past is still apparent on both sides of the Border. Today's landscape is peppered with castles, peel towers, fortified farmhouses and battle sites. Common Riding festivals are held in many Border towns every summer and the local traditions of balladry and pipe music live on. As do the Reiver clan names such as Armstrong, Elliott, and Kerr. Indeed, many local people see themselves as a 'Borderer' first then Scottish or English second.

Northumberland is an inherent part of these Borderlands – and is also synonymous with another, much earlier frontier. Hadrian's Wall runs from coast to coast (but entirely within England) and marks the northern limit of the Roman Empire, with the land to the north home to the Ancient Britons. Still visually prominent, the Wall provides a further reminder that this is a place located at the edge, on the outer fringe.



Hadrian's Wall

Before moving on, there is one further bit of geographical context I'd like to highlight. Between 1889 and 1974, the administrative county of Northumberland extended south to the river Tyne. So, for 85 years of modern local government, the city of Newcastle, together with a number of adjoining Tyneside boroughs that included Wallsend and Whitley Bay, formed part of Northumberland. City, suburb and rural hinterland were managed as one – and the prevailing travel to work and learn patterns would suggest that, at least from an economic development perspective, they still operate on that basis. More of this later.

The tag of rural idyll

Today, the administrative county is home to over 316,000 residents living in a network of small market towns and villages largely set in attractive, unspoilt countryside. The UK Government confirms this by classifying Northumberland as 'mainly rural' with 70% of the population living in settlements of less than 30,000 people.¹ The scattering of these settlements across a vast area (97% of the land is classified as rural) only serves to heighten this sense of rurality.

There are undoubtedly some advantages in this. We can claim all the marketing advantages of a good quality of life associated with remote open spaces, low congestion, dark skies

and tranquillity – particularly as significant chunks of the countryside and coastline are also recognised and protected for their quality and value through various national designations.

However, this image of a rural idyll isn't one that necessarily smacks of being at the forefront of economic growth and innovation. The Chambers Dictionary defines idyll as "relating to a simple, pleasant, usual rural or pastoral scene". The additional issue of peripherality – just as in Hadrian's day, the county is a northern outpost of Europe – further compounds this perception and conjures up another unhelpful term: "backwater, an isolated place, not affected by what is happening elsewhere".

Now don't get me wrong; there a number of trends that potentially justify these tags. Older people abound, with pensioners coming to retire and young people leaving in search of a career. More people work in the public sector and the sizeable tourism sector is characterised by seasonal, part-time jobs. Our bigger companies are all branches of international firms with investment decisions taken by distant directors. Education attainment is poor with limited access to further and higher education. Broadband (and in places, mobile phone) connectivity is challenging – and we even have a number of homes that don't have mains electricity or gas. Not surprisingly, then, when it comes to productivity, Northumberland is always shaded on the national Gross Value Added (GVA) map in the coolest colour. But equally there are grounds for painting a different picture – one of optimism and opportunity.

Northumberland should be a hotbed of competitive small businesses and enterprises that cluster and innovate through digital networks. Land-based industry should still be a key economic driver but focused on niche manufacturing, including the production of acclaimed food, drink and artisan produce; growing the creative industry sector; and advancing new and cutting edge technology and processes associated with agri-food, biosciences, energy generation, marine and offshore, and low carbon applications. Our schools should be rated excellent with attainment levels high, and colleges and universities delivering a full virtual curriculum. Northumberland should also be an international destination that attracts visitors who love the great outdoors to stay longer and spend more, at all times of the year.

This is attainable. Based on its existing rural-based strengths and assets, Northumberland could be thriving at the forefront of prosperity and wellbeing, and recognised for making a meaningful contribution to UK plc that is valued in complementing the equivalent input of the City of Newcastle.

Achieving rural growth

So why is this not the prevailing picture? In December 2016, Andrea Leadsom, the then Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), affirmed that:

Whether through food, farming, tourism or technology - Rural businesses add £229 billion a year of GVA to the English economy, employing 3.8 million people in England. That's an enormous contribution, and if rural businesses can go even

further, the potential economic prize is very clear. Even a small increase in productivity has the potential to add billions to rural GVA. That's why the government wants to provide the right conditions to enable you to grow your businesses even further, and plan and prepare for the future with confidence.²

So there is no question that the Government recognises the scale and potential of rural productivity. The issue is the extent to which progressive Governments are serious about creating the right conditions for growing that rural productivity.

Let's go back to 2015 and the last attempt aimed at achieving this. The *10-Point Plan for boosting productivity in rural areas*³ focused on five key priorities: rural areas being fully connected to the wider economy; a highly skilled rural workforce; strong conditions for rural business growth; easier to live and work in rural areas; and greater local control. All very laudable but the reality of the Government's approach to the plan's delivery inherently constrained its ability to succeed from the outset.

This is fundamentally because the *10-Point Plan* completely disregards the contribution of environmental stewardship to rural productivity; even though so much of the rural economy and the sustainability of rural communities are heavily influenced by, and in some instances reliant upon, the quality and nature of the prevailing land protection and management regimes. The disconnection is telling. This failing is all the more surprising given that the *10-Point Plan* was published under the auspices of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), whose day to day operation is dominated by the E and F in its title. Indeed the Department's stated purpose is "*unleash the economic potential of food and farming, nature, and the countryside, ...*". Furthermore, if you look at the list of national agencies and bodies that support the activity, all 33 have an environment-led agenda.

So, if we return to the *10-Point Plan* and go through the 10 pillars of rural productivity identified, the role of DEFRA is largely consigned to one of rural-proofing the policies of other more powerful Government departments that are mercilessly driven by improving GVA levels with "cities, cities, cities" being the mantra. When you then add in the 'South-Eastern' policy bias associated with overheating development pressures, the economic needs of rural areas, particularly the further north you go, become more and more marginal to national economic policy.

Given this, I can also understand why any Secretary of State for 'the Environment' focuses on precisely that as they have some actual decisions to take and influence to wield. We await the publication by DEFRA of two much-heralded 25-year plans – one focused on the environment and nature conservation; and the other on food and farming. Again, there is no mention of an equivalent strategy for rural development.

So who is championing the interests of the rural economy within the Government? On the face of it, the recent *Industrial Strategy Green Paper*⁴ doesn't offer much hope that anyone is. A crude search for references to rural in the 132-page document throws up the following references:

10-Point Plan summary

Rural areas fully connected to the wider economy

1. Extensive, fast and reliable broadband services

- The government is committed to delivering superfast broadband of at least 24Mbps to 95% of UK households and businesses by 2017. Decisions on further broadband rollout will be taken in the Spending Review in November.
- By the end of 2015, access to standard broadband will be available to anyone unable to get a service of at least 2Mbps, through the option of satellite broadband.

2. High quality, widely available mobile communications

- The government will work closely with industry to support further improvements to mobile coverage.
- The government proposes to extend permitted development rights to taller mobile masts subject to conclusions from the Call for Evidence which closes on 21 August 2015.

3. Modern transport connections

- The government will improve transport connections for rural areas, including through its £15 billion Road Investment Strategy and £38 billion rail investment programme. To support smaller airports serving regions across the UK, the government is publishing proposals for new publicly-supported passenger air routes, with final decisions on funding for successful routes to be made in November.

A highly skilled rural workforce

4. Access to high quality education and training

- The government will ensure fairer funding for schools, including those in rural areas. It will turn inadequate schools into academies and focus efforts to support school improvement in underperforming rural areas.
- The government will invite local areas to participate in the re-shaping and commissioning of local post-16 skills provision.

5. Expanded apprenticeships in rural areas

- The government will increase apprenticeships in rural areas, including by tripling apprenticeships in food and farming and by helping small tourism businesses to provide more, high quality apprenticeships.

Improvements to digital infrastructure will be felt most in rural areas. Supporting the rollout of fast broadband in rural areas enables new business to locate and grow there. It is estimated that an increase in broadband penetration of 10 per cent yields 0.25 per cent increase in GDP growth. (p. 51)

This is a moment when new opportunities to rebalance the economy are emerging; our great cities have started to revive, sometimes after a long period of decline; and the digital economy is creating new opportunities to bring well paid jobs to rural areas. (p. 108)

Nor are imbalances just about cities. The residents of towns and rural areas also experience large variations in wages, standards of living and life opportunities.

Strong conditions for rural business growth

6. Enterprise Zones in rural areas

- In the current bidding round for Enterprise Zones closing on 18 September 2015, preference will be given to proposals involving smaller towns, districts and rural areas.
- The government's ambition is that businesses in all Enterprise Zones in rural areas will be able to access high speed broadband.

7. Better regulation and improved planning for rural businesses

- Alongside wider measures to reduce the regulatory burden and improve planning, the government will review planning and regulatory constraints facing rural businesses and measures that can be taken to address them by 2016.
- The government will introduce a fast-track planning certificate process for establishing the principle of development for minor development proposals.

Easier to live and work in rural areas

8. More housing

- Through the right combination of measures, the government wants to ensure that any village in England has the freedom to expand in an incremental way, subject to local agreement.
- The government will make it easier for villages to establish neighbourhood plans and allocate land for new homes, including the use of rural exception sites to deliver Starter Homes.

9. Increased availability of affordable childcare

- The government will work with local authorities and providers to ensure there is sufficient high-quality childcare to meet the needs of parents in rural areas.
- The government will welcome high quality early expressions of interest from rural areas to deliver 30 hours of free childcare to working parents.

Greater local control

10. Devolution of power

- The government will encourage further proposals from local areas for devolution of powers in return for strong and accountable local governance.

Productivity in rural areas across the country lags behind the UK average. If rural businesses in England had the right conditions to grow and the productivity gap lessened, an extra £28 billion per year could be added to the rural economy annually. Rural businesses face particular challenges and barriers to close this gap, including a shortage of work premises, slow internet connections and a lack of knowledge transfer between business communities spread thinly over wide areas. (p. 109)

Meanwhile, many rural areas are held back by weak digital infrastructure. The average download speed in urban areas is at least three times faster than in rural communities, limiting people's ability to seize the opportunities of the digital economy. (p. 110)

That's it! The Government's blueprint for ensuring that *'wealth and opportunity are spread across every community in our United Kingdom, not just the most prosperous places in London and the South East'* apparently sees improvements to digital infrastructure as the panacea to solving the productivity of rural areas.

Now there is no doubt that significantly improving broadband coverage and speeds within rural areas would be transformational. But past experience would suggest that any such improvement will always lag behind what is available to our urban communities. We just need to go to the aforementioned *10-Point Plan* to gauge the level of the Government's ambition – it essentially aspires to rural areas having access to a minimum standard that city dwellers and businesses now regard as the old generation of digital technology.

And even if 'gigabit rural connectivity' becomes a reality, is it that simple? Rural areas – like cities – are complex. Their attraction and success relies on the interplay of an intricate set of interdependencies that differ according to all manner of place-based attributes and which play out at different layers of geography – again, just like cities.

The approach to creating the right conditions for growth and productivity – albeit founded from some common foundations – will not be the same in the south-west of England as it is for the north-east of the country. Northumberland faces different opportunities and challenges that those in Cornwall and thereby, the interventions that allow for St Ives to prosper will vary from those needed in Berwick. We need to be more refined and nuanced.

The prospect of devolution has allowed Northumberland to look through this place-based lens and to challenge its role in taking more control and responsibility for rural growth and stewardship.

The prospect of devolution has allowed Northumberland to look through this place-based lens and to challenge its role in taking more control and responsibility for rural growth and stewardship. Why wait for the Government to tell us what to do? Why sit dormant as devolution to North of England core cities and Scotland continue apace? Why wait for the implications of Brexit to hit us? Why accept depopulation and ageing as the future?

Now is the time for a new rural narrative – one that is more locally driven; one that builds from the mutuality between economic growth and environmental stewardship; one that exploits the dynamics between urban and rural; one that flexes to fit geographies that make sense to communities and businesses; and one that harnesses the role of all the players who make a rural area tick. The prize is thriving rural places – not just surviving and certainly not dying. To do this, we have to be agile and opportunistic. And the absence of a coherent national doctrine actually helps.

Grasping the nettle

So let's return to the concept of 'Greater Northumberland' highlighted earlier. The North of Tyne, covering the administrative areas of Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland, extends to over 5,000 square kilometres and has a population of 810,000. It is home to 23,000 businesses that generate a total of GVA of £17 billion, with

employment growth increasing at a faster rate than any other part of Northern England. But, critically, our productivity remains below the national level.

The key to addressing this lies in taking a more coherent approach to what is a genuine functional economic geography – as demonstrated by the fact that 85% of working residents are employed within the patch. This potential Combined Authority, if created over the coming months, would represent the only one that extends from the centre of a core city, through the urban fringe and rural market towns, and out to the most remote countryside. It includes quality uplands and coast with a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site – as well as two universities, an extensive former coalfield area and a significant swathe of land protected by Green Belt status which includes an international airport.

In many respects, the North of Tyne represents a microcosm of England. As such, it presents a unique opportunity, particularly if devolved powers and responsibilities are secured, to fully understand the relationship and interdependency between urban and rural areas, and thereby strengthen productivity by driving economic, social and environmental outcomes in tandem. The North of Tyne is committed to seizing this opportunity, by becoming a national exemplar for rural growth and stewardship.

In many respects, the North of Tyne represents a microcosm of England. As such, it presents a unique opportunity, particularly if devolved powers and responsibilities are secured, to fully understand the relationship and interdependency between urban and rural areas, and thereby strengthen productivity by driving economic, social and environmental outcomes in tandem.

This has the scope to be pioneering on all sorts of levels. We can demonstrate the delivery of the Industrial Strategy through a rural lens – showcasing how a more rural setting is no barrier to skills development, business scale up, sector growth and science and innovation.

We can lead the delivery of the Government’s 25-year ambitions for the environment and food and in so doing illustrate the value of the countryside to the country’s supply of food, energy and utilities. We can also influence the creation, in a post-Brexit context, of a new kind of Rural Development Programme that better integrates our businesses and communities with farmers and landowners. With all of this underpinned by an increasingly ‘applied’ approach drawing on the nationally-acclaimed expertise in rural intelligence, research and design housed within both our universities and a sound track record in project delivery that has fully embraced piloting new approaches and ways of working.

We also appreciate the need to be ‘porous’ in our thinking about geography. Out of necessity we work through administrative boundaries that at best can only ever represent a ‘reasonable fit’ of how local economies work. There is no doubt that Northumberland has a strong interrelationship with Newcastle and North Tyneside, but also has an affinity and commonality with neighbouring areas of Gateshead, Durham, Cumbria and southern Scotland. Our approach needs to reflect this and ensure that any planned interventions

are delivered at the right scale to optimise the outcomes. Our engagement in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the Borderlands Initiative help facilitate this approach – but equally, we need to retain an openness to learn from other places with similar characteristics and look to adopt and adapt that good practice accordingly.

Before moving on to the final section, it's worth just highlighting a little more the significance of the Borderlands Initiative. Located in the centre of the UK, the Borderlands area comprises of the five local authorities of Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council. It not only straddles the England-Scotland Border but provides a bridge to Northern Ireland. It is home to in excess of 1 million people – although a further 14 million people live within two hours' drive time. Its economy accounts for a similar level of GVA to that of Edinburgh or Newcastle, but on a 'per capita' basis, productivity is well below the average for both Scotland and England.

So, despite being at the trading nexus of the UK's internal market, the presence of the Border has created barriers to growth – fragmented business supply chains and broken access to markets; limited sector development and clustering; poor recruitment pool and in-work progression opportunities; a diluted business voice and diminished ability to lobby for additional investment and resources; and reduced scope to share good practice and learn from the experiences of other parts of the region. All further compounded by the different roles and responsibilities of councils, public sector agencies and Governments depending on which side you live or work on.

The Initiative is all about removing the policy impact of the Border and properly reflecting the strong sense of place that emanates from being a Borderer. At the heart of this is the fundamental aim to improve the area's 'stickability' – moving it from a place that you might travel through to one that is a positive destination for living, working or visiting. The prospect of a Borderlands Growth Deal as detailed in the Conservative Party Manifesto⁵ would act as a major stimulus to achieving this.

... the presence of the Border has created barriers to growth – fragmented business supply chains and broken access to markets; limited sector development and clustering; poor recruitment pool and in-work progression opportunities; a diluted business voice and diminished ability to lobby for additional investment and resources; and reduced scope to share good practice and learn from the experiences of other parts of the region. All further compounded by the different roles and responsibilities of councils, public sector agencies and Governments depending on which side you live or work on.

Our approach

So almost by a quirk of its location, Northumberland potentially has access to two powerful tools – a devolution deal and a growth deal – which have, in the main, only been available to cities thus far. These together present a chance for the county's future to be front and centre – no longer at the periphery. In grabbing these possibilities with both hands, we've initially advocated the development and implementation of a new kind of Rural

Productivity Plan – one that doesn't follow the same path taken by DEFRA a couple of years ago.

BUT, would that be missing a trick? Yes, we'd better recognise the role of the land in driving economic growth and creating sustainable communities and vice versa.

BUT, by putting 'rural' in its own little bubble would we run the risk of being 'anti-city' or 'city-agnostic', and of not seeing the wider dynamic that people and businesses stay or are attracted to an area because it gives them ready access to what they need? In other words, if we want to create a great rural area do we actually need to focus on creating a great location that happens to have rural and urban settings?

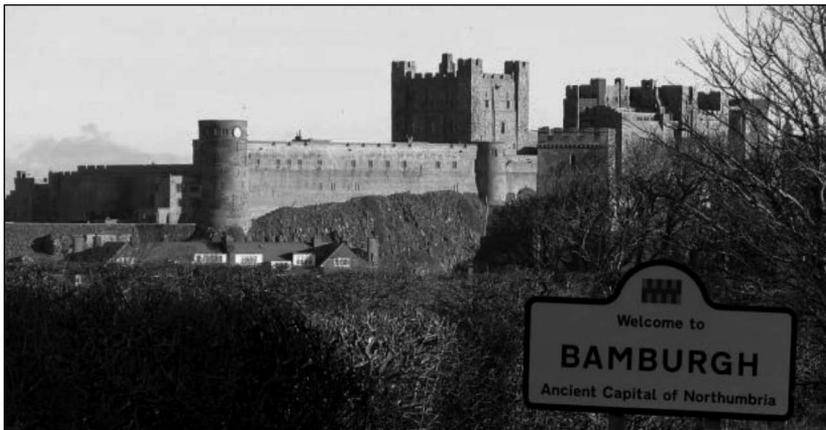
So, the emerging preferred solution is now a unified Local Industrial Strategy. A Strategy that properly reflects the power and might of our urban, suburban and rural areas, their interplay with each other, and the wider geographies they have a commonality with. To make this work, I have no doubt that, at least initially, some specific rural infrastructure will need to be put in place. This might include the delivery of bespoke rural exemplar programmes; the creation of a ring-fenced rural investment fund; and the development of tailored rural outcomes and outputs – all potentially championed by a some form of dedicated Rural Affairs Board.

Our approach should be one of creating 'smart rural' to sit alongside 'smart city'. In this way we'll better meet the challenges and opportunities facing the whole of the North of Tyne area – and hopefully presents a new narrative for all our places to thrive.



Notes

- ¹ *2011 Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authorities and other geographies*, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, January 2017 (revised)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2011-rural-urban-classification-of-local-authority-and-other-higher-level-geographies-for-statistical-purposes>
- ² *A government that supports rural business – speech by Andrea Leadsom to the CLA’s inaugural Rural Business 2030 Conference*, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, December 2016. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-government-that-supports-rural-business>
- ³ *Towards a one nation economy: A 10-point plan for boosting rural productivity*, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-one-nation-economy-a-10-point-plan-for-boosting-rural-productivity>
- ⁴ *Building Our Industrial Strategy*. Green Paper, HM Government, January 2017.
https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/strategy/industrial-strategy/supporting_documents/buildingourindustrialstrategygreenpaper.pdf
- ⁵ *Forward, Together – Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future*, The Conservative and Unionist Party, May 2017.



Brexit: *delivering a better future for us all as we age?*

Dr Paschal McKeown
Head of Policy and Influencing, Age NI

An uncertain future

It is too early for a full or accurate assessment of the likely impact of Brexit on older people but it is vital that the rights of older people currently enjoyed under EU law are protected and strengthened. Finding ways for people directly affected by Brexit to be informed and involved in shaping future arrangements will be a challenge.

On 23 June 2016, a referendum¹ was held in the UK on whether to remain a member of the EU or to leave. The majority of voters in the UK (52%) voted to leave. In Northern Ireland, however, the majority of voters (55.8%) voted to remain. UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, formally began the process of the UK leaving the European Union by triggering Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union on 29 March 2017, beginning a two year period of complex negotiations with the EU (of 27 States) and the UK government.

In the aftermath of the Referendum result and the triggering of Article 50, the future is uncertain for us all. Concerns about the priority given to the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland during negotiations are exacerbated by the current political situation both here and in Britain. With publication of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill² on 13 July 2017, the UK Government intends copying all existing EU legislation into UK domestic law and bringing to an end the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

Age NI has engaged with older people through Age NI's Consultative Forum and a local day centre to explore the possible impacts of Brexit for older people in Northern Ireland.³ We know from talking to them that older people want to create a better future for their grandchildren and for us all as we age. They are concerned that the current political situation means there is no agreed position on what is in Northern Ireland's best interests and the NI Executive is not represented at meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations). They are concerned, too, about the lack of information available to help people to plan for their own future in the post-Brexit environment.

Age NI is keen to inform older people and other stakeholders about the issues of concern for older people posed by the UK's decision to withdraw from the European Union and help ensure that their voices are heard and influence the ongoing wider debate. For older people living along the border counties, these and other issues relating to freedom of movement, access to employment, social security, pensions and family reunification are of significant and particular concern. This article considers the issues which older people indicate are important to them and require greater attention during negotiations on Brexit:

equality and citizen rights; the provision of health and social care services; and pensions for older people from the UK living in EU countries and those from EU countries living in the UK.

Unique circumstances of Northern Ireland

Although there has been some discussion on the opportunities which may arise following the exit of the UK from the EU, much of the analysis and debate has focused on the major challenges for the future of Northern Ireland; relations across and between these islands, the rest of Europe and beyond; the extent of Parliamentary scrutiny; and the role and impact on devolved administrations regarding legislative changes which impact on their areas of competence.

Brexit has created uncertainty around our access to the EU Single Market and has the potential to disrupt significantly integrated cross-border markets and supply- and production-chains and impede the movement of workers and people more generally across the border. Brexit has also raised questions about rights and equality protections; health care provision, replacement of EU Regional and Social Funds; maintaining collaboration on policing and criminal justice matters⁴ to tackle crime linked to drugs, trafficking, security and terror threats; and ongoing engagement with EU Networks, sharing learning, influencing policy practice on ageing.⁵

Despite reassurances and commitments from the UK, Republic of Ireland and the other EU negotiators, Brexit continues to provoke concerns about the Common Travel Area and the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the right of people from Northern Ireland to Irish – and therefore EU – citizenship and the possible destabilising effect on the peace process in Northern Ireland as a place emerging from conflict.⁶

While detail around the practical outworking of the post-Brexit arrangements remain unclear, the need to take account of the implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland, and for UK-Irish relations as a whole has been acknowledged by the UK⁷ and Irish Governments⁸ and by the EU⁹. The commitment of the European Council to seek ‘flexible and imaginative solutions’¹⁰ and the UK Government’s affirmation of support for the peace process; recognition of citizenship rights set out in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement; along with agreements to continue PEACE funding to Northern Ireland and border counties of Ireland to 2020 and to explore a potential future programme post 2020,¹¹ are to be welcomed.

These challenges are compounded by the current political climate both here and in Britain. The failure to form a power-sharing Executive, the absence, for the first time in decades, of nationalist MPs taking their seats at Westminster; and the Conservative Party/Democratic Unionist Party agreement have increased concerns around the stability of the devolved institutions and the erosion of cross-community support. There are fears that ‘Brexit is proving to be profoundly destabilising for the peace process and the constitutional politics of Northern Ireland. An outcome that lacks the consent of the people of Northern Ireland is re-opening fundamental questions about future relationships across these islands.’¹²

Preparing and planning for our ageing population

Longer lives represent many opportunities and challenges for us as individuals as well as for our families, communities, employers and our welfare, housing and health and social care systems. Lots of older people lead fulfilling lives, actively contributing to the economy and society, supporting their families, neighbours and communities through volunteering, caring for others, providing childcare and working beyond the traditional retirement age. For many older people, however, the picture of later life is stark, with four in 10 older people telling us they struggle on their income, four in 10 older people who report feeling lonely, and 75% of older people stating they are concerned that they will be affected by spending cuts.¹³

Like the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland is experiencing demographic shifts in terms of ageing and life expectancy. Mid-year estimates (mid-2016) indicate that 16% of the population (297,800 people) are over 65 years and that there are more people over 55 years in Northern Ireland than aged 18 years and under.¹⁴ Between 2014 and 2039 the number of older people is expected to increase by 74.4%, when it is expected that almost one in four of the population will be aged 65 years and older. The numbers of older old people are also growing, with the growth of the population aged 85+ expected to be almost six times faster than that of the population under 85 years. It is expected that the number of people aged 85 years and older will double between 2014 and 2039, accounting for 4.4% of the total population, compared to 1.9% of the population in 2014.

Evidence suggests that although life expectancy is increasing, healthy life expectancy is not increasing at the same rate.¹⁵ People are spending longer living with conditions which seriously reduce their quality of life.¹⁶ The numbers of people with dementia are expected to rise from 19,000 people to around 60,000 people by 2051 and we know that rates of disability and ill health increase with age.¹⁷

Post Brexit impacts

The EU Referendum was marked by strongly held, passionate views expressed by both 'Remain' and 'Leave' supporters. Voting patterns exposed a divided society and were accompanied by an unhelpful and potentially damaging characterisation of the Referendum as an intergenerational clash, with young people angry at the selfishness of older voters who have 'deprived them of their future'. A more in-depth analysis of voting patterns, however, showed that the picture was more complex, with the relationship between age and voting Leave or Remain weak.¹⁸

For older people involved with Age NI, Brexit raises questions about equality and citizen rights; the future delivery of health and social care services; pensions for older people from the UK living in EU countries and those from EU countries living in the UK; and the particular circumstances of older people and families living along the border counties. A roundtable event organised by Family Carers Ireland on 16 June 2017, highlighted similar concerns about future cross-border arrangements, particularly if the person providing care lives on a different side of the border to the person requiring care and support.¹⁹ Fears were expressed about the ability of families and workers to move freely and easily across the border, reciprocal health care agreements, access to welfare benefits, as well as the potential to incur additional costs if import duties were imposed on appliances and

products or if travel or medical insurance was required when carers wished to travel across the border to enjoy short breaks from caring.

Equality and human rights

Older people in Northern Ireland experience ageism, inequality, discrimination and breaches of their human rights in a number of ways. This includes not being given adequate opportunity to participate in decisions about their life; inequality of access to a range of services including health and social care services, financial services, facilities for transport and travel, or retail services; abuse and neglect. In contrast to their peers in Britain and the Republic of Ireland, age discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland has not been extended to include goods, facilities and services. It is vital that current EU rights are not lost or weakened in any new arrangements and age discrimination protections are maintained and strengthened for older people, particularly in relation to employment and training opportunities and when accessing goods, facilities and services.

EU human rights framework

EU legislation has been an important driver in enhancing the rights enjoyed by older people through the EU treaty itself, Directives and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU human rights framework protects a wide range of rights including rights to privacy, family rights and workers' rights, the right to move and reside freely, voting rights, rights of prisoners and migrants.²⁰ The European Charter of Fundamental Rights provides important safeguards for older people in Northern Ireland.²¹ The Charter explicitly prohibits age discrimination and recognises the rights of older people to dignity, independence and participation in social and cultural life. The Charter also includes wider social and economic rights, such as the rights to fair and just working conditions, to healthcare and to have personal data protected. The decision by the UK government not to incorporate the European Charter of Fundamental Rights into domestic law²² has added to concerns about what appears to be a precarious situation for rights and equality protections.

Brexit will not affect the UK's status as a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as this is an international treaty distinct from EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and given effect in the UK through the Human Rights Act 1998. Successive Conservative governments have made it clear, however, that they intend to scrap the Human Rights Act, replacing it with a British Bill of Rights, and to withdraw from the ECHR.²³

Repatriated powers

There are also deep concerns as the EU (Withdrawal) Bill proposes to give UK Government ministers wide powers to change laws without parliamentary oversight, and proposes a centralisation of repatriated powers from the EU that fall automatically within the scope of the devolved institutions, to Westminster.²⁴ In Northern Ireland, we face these threats without the full protection that the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement was to afford us, most notably through a local Bill of Rights.²⁵

Right to family reunification

The UK's departure from the EU will result in significant changes to the immigration landscape. Currently EU nationals can bring family members, including spouses, to live

with them in the UK. For older people, it can be important to join their families, for example following the death of a spouse, or to support family members by providing child care. This has particular relevance for people living along the border counties, where family members live on different sides of the border. A leaked Home Office document on Britain's post-Brexit immigration policy outlined plans to restrict and weaken family reunion rights for EU nationals in the UK.²⁶ Those who come to the UK after Brexit are likely to fall under more draconian, domestic immigration rules.

Health and social care

While health is not an area of significant EU competence and the role of the EU is largely limited to supporting member states to effectively deliver related policy and services, the EU has had important effects on the major determinants of health, both directly and indirectly. European legislation on matters such as environment, consumer safety, food quality, human rights and social policy has powerfully contributed to better UK health and wellbeing. The impact of Brexit has major implications for public health,²⁷ regulation and access to medicines,²⁸ medical research²⁹ and the provision of health and social care on this island, not least because it is taking place at a time of significant demographic and financial pressures and service reform.³⁰

With the repatriation of UK funds from EU budgets following the UK's exit from the EU, older people involved with Age NI are keen that money saved from contributions to the EU is shared fairly across the four devolved administrations of the UK and consideration given to how these resources could be used to strengthen health and social care provision and improve services and outcomes for older people.

Workforce issues

It is anticipated that Brexit will have implications for the health and social care sector across the UK. There is evidence that the impact of Brexit has, in part, been responsible for the 96% drop in EU nurses registering to work in Britain.³¹ The existing open border arrangements³² provide a number of benefits for people who work in or access health and social care services, which risk being lost if restrictions are introduced following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The UK's membership of the EU has ensured among other things, a flow of qualified workers for the NHS and other employers of health and social care workers. While there is statistical evidence of the reliance in Britain on workers from the EU in the health and social care sector, there is a paucity of such data in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the heavy reliance on the voluntary, community and private sectors to deliver social care services, including nursing, residential, domiciliary and day care, means that there is even less data upon which to plan for the possible impact of Brexit on these vital services. The lack of accurate baseline figures in Northern Ireland makes assessment and planning difficult regarding the impact of possible changes to the employment status of EU nationals after Brexit.³³

Data from the General Medical Council³⁴ reveals that 8.8% of doctors in Northern Ireland come from EEA countries. Figures show that 73% of licensed EEA graduates in Northern Ireland have a PMQ (primary medical qualification) in the Republic of Ireland and Northern

Ireland has the largest proportion of EEA graduate GPs than any other UK country. Northern Ireland has a relatively high reliance on EEA graduates (8.8%) compared to Scotland (5.7%) and Wales (6.4%); mainly because of the large number of Republic of Ireland graduates working here. England also has a higher reliance on EEA doctors (8.2%), but from a broader range of countries than Northern Ireland.

Theresa May, UK Prime Minister has indicated that workers' existing legal rights would be guaranteed during her period in office and judgments of the European Court of Justice would be given effect in domestic law at the point of exit.³⁵ Concerns remain, however, about the ability of a post-Brexit government to amend or remove any of these protections.³⁶

Delivery of cross-border specialist health services

Working separately, health services in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland do not have sufficient demand to provide cost effective, highly specialist medical services to meet the needs of their respective populations. A number of successful initiatives have led to improved outcomes for people across the island of Ireland, including the new Radiotherapy Unit in Altnagelvin hospital; out-of-hour GP services in Castleblayney and Inishowen; shared dermatology clinics at four sites along the border; ENT Services at Monaghan Hospital and Northern Ireland's Daisy Hill and Craigavon hospitals.³⁷ There are concerns that Brexit, and a hard border in particular, may risk the significant progress that has been made around organising and delivering cross border services, improving the health and wellbeing of people who live on both sides of the border.³⁸ For older people involved with Age NI, such reciprocal arrangements are important to the UK and EU alike and robust efforts should be made to ensure that shared services continue to operate beyond Brexit in a way that benefits people and systems of care.

Reciprocal access to healthcare – the EHIC medical card

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), gives an individual access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay (including holidays) in any of the EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, under the same conditions and at the same cost as people insured in that country. According to the Business Services Authority, there are currently 660,329 valid EHICs in circulation in Northern Ireland.³⁹

There are fears that, if the current reciprocal EHIC arrangements are not maintained or replicated post-Brexit, people visiting EU countries will need more private health insurance. This could particularly affect people with existing health problems who may have found it difficult to buy private insurance or older people who have faced age discrimination in accessing health and travel insurance, and who may have relied on the EHIC for medical cover. It is particularly relevant to the healthcare of pensioners from Northern Ireland who have retired elsewhere in the EU or are there on a temporary basis. Ill health, whether mental or physical, can strike at any time, and there needs to be provision in place for individuals visiting or living in the EU to facilitate access to immediate healthcare.

The UK Government has stated that it will seek to protect existing healthcare arrangements for both EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU, including continued participation

in the EHIC scheme.⁴⁰ Concerns remain, however, as the UK proposal is linked to a requirement for residency of more than five years before a specified date, which has yet to be announced, and will be enforceable by the UK legal system rather than the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

Medical research

Research and innovation is another area where the EU dimension is of particular interest to health and social care as Brexit calls into question future involvement in ground-breaking healthcare research through Horizon 2020 funding, with a focus on food and healthy diet, health, social sciences and humanities and biotechnology,⁴¹ or the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI),⁴² which encourages collaboration between key players, including universities, the pharmaceutical and other industries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), patient organisations, and medicines regulators. Since the EU Referendum, universities have experienced a reduction in numbers of opportunities for collaborative transnational research projects. The Royal College of Physicians has stated that Brexit stands to impact on patients in the areas of funding and ability to contribute to world-leading research projects.⁴³

Pensions

The impact of Brexit on pensions is complex and will depend, in part, on the economy, the financial markets and, for private and occupational pensions, the future regulatory framework.⁴⁴ The design of pension systems is largely the responsibility of Member States, with the EU regulatory framework covering:

- cross-border coordination of social security pensions to facilitate the free movement of workers and equal treatment for workers who change country;
- establishment of an internal market for funded occupational schemes and the necessary minimum standards on prudential rules to protect scheme members and beneficiaries;
- minimum guarantees concerning occupational pensions and accrued rights in case of the insolvency of enterprises as sponsors;
- anti-discrimination rules, although with some differentiation, to both statutory and private pension schemes.⁴⁵

For older people involved with Age NI, it is important that current protections continue to exist, including the right of UK and EU citizens to transfer and/or access their pension funds from across their different pension funds in the EU and to benefit from any future uprating of state pensions.

State pension

The UK is currently part of a system to co-ordinate social security entitlements⁴⁶ for people moving within the EU.⁴⁷ The aim of these provisions is to remove barriers for workers moving between EU Member States. Rules on social security entitlements enables periods of insurance to be aggregated meaning that a pension built up in one Member State can be drawn in another through a process known as 'exportability'.⁴⁸ Individuals who have

worked in other Member States can make one application to the relevant agency in the country of residence - in the UK, this is the International Pension Centre.

The UK Government stated on 26 June 2017 that, subject to reciprocity, it would continue to export and uprate the UK State Pension within the EU and aggregate periods of insurance, work or of residence within the EU accrued before exit to help meet entitlement conditions for UK contributory benefits and State Pension, even where entitlement to these rights are exercised after Brexit.⁴⁹ It is of some concern that the Government has made this commitment in respect to its obligations to those entitled to a state pension *subject to reciprocity*.

Conclusion

Age NI's priority in the coming months and years will be to ensure a better later life for everyone, no matter where they live. We will work alongside older people and other stakeholders to ensure protection of older people's rights.

Despite assurances by UK, Irish and EU leaders about the importance of the ongoing peace and reconciliation process and the rights enshrined in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, fears continue of the impact of Brexit on all our lives.

Notes

- ¹ European Union (EU) Referendum The Referendum turnout was 71.8%, with more than 30 million people voting. England (53.4%) and Wales (52.5%) voted 'for Brexit'; Scotland voted to remain (62%).
- ² The Repeal Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech on 21 June 2017 and was published by the UK Government under its official title of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill on 13 July 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-about-the-repeal-bill>
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Age NI 'Tell us what you think' event



Anna House consultation on Brexit, 25 July 2017



Age NI Consultative Forum meeting

No Woman's Land:

The impact of borders, conflict and Brexit on women affected by Domestic Violence

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While the island of Ireland struggles to come to terms with the legacies of conflict and our uncertain future with an impending but still nebulous Brexit, women in border areas continue to deal with the most personal and intimate abuse and violence. This article seeks to explore the nature of domestic violence through the unique experiences of victims in border areas north and south, and offer some analysis of how Brexit may impact on the lives of domestic violence victims and survivors. Louise Kennedy suggests here how violence and abuse can be tackled, now and following the UK's (and Northern Ireland's) exit from the European Union.

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a cross-cutting issue, requiring a concerted effort by governments, agencies and communities to tackle it. Victims and their children must be afforded protection from harm and supported to come to terms with what has happened to them. Effective intervention must be coupled with early-stage prevention initiatives, to build resilience and disrupt patterns of intergenerational domestic violence. Additionally, in Northern Ireland particularly, our efforts must also recognise and understand the impact of our conflict on the lives of women, asking and answering pertinent questions about how it continues to affect women suffering domestic violence and abuse.

At first glance this may seem like a tall order, especially in the current political climate. But while the focus is on political stalemate at Stormont and Theresa May's Brexit strategy, women across Northern Ireland continue to be physically, sexually, financially and psychologically abused on a daily basis. Indeed, both the Stormont and Brexit crises are having direct impacts on the victims of domestic violence and abuse. As the main Northern Ireland political parties remain in protracted gridlock, initiatives such as a Coercive Control law to finally criminalise domestic violence, and Claire's Law to allow police to disclose a partner's history of domestic violence upon request, have been put on hold.

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These issues are thrown into starkest relief in the experiences of domestic violence victims in border areas.

2. Domestic violence in border areas – the current context

Domestic violence is by nature a hidden crime, taking place in secrecy behind closed doors. Contrary to myths that depict domestic violence as a crime of passion or involving loss of control, it is in fact a crime of control and subordination. Domestic violence usually involves an intentional and persistent pattern of behaviours designed to isolate, manipulate and control a victim. These behaviours usually start small; escalating only after a victim is committed to the relationship and has been cut off from avenues of escape. A victim's dependence is key, so common abuse tactics include isolating victims from support networks such as friends or family, making them financially reliant on abusers or in too much debt to leave, and dismantling their self-esteem.

For victims in rural border areas, that process of isolation is often fast-tracked by geographical isolation. Women may be many miles and several bus journeys away from support and protection. In border towns, the nearest or most geographically accessible services may be in a different jurisdiction, and not an option for this reason. Rural women must often travel greater distances to access specialist support services such as Women's Aid. This situation has been exacerbated in recent times by austerity policies, which have resulted in underdevelopment, closures or cuts to rural services including women's centres, specialist domestic violence services, police stations, and public transport services.¹ At the same time, women have shouldered 86% of the cumulative burden of austerity since 2010,² with policies such as the two-child tax-credit cap and 'rape clause' disproportionately impacting women and children.³ This has further diminished options for domestic violence victims, who increasingly find themselves without the financial means to escape, or worry that they won't be able to provide for their children if they flee an abusive relationship.⁴ Another pertinent factor is the psychology of rural and smaller border communities. While close-knit community relations can be a positive for many, victims of domestic violence may be loath to reach out for help lest they are recognised or identified by acquaintances. They may worry that they'll be judged to have 'made their beds' by entering the relationship, or fear that they won't be believed, especially if their abuser is well thought of in the community. The case of the Hawe family in County Cavan demonstrates the oppressive power that a perpetrator's good reputation can have. Alan Hawe brutally murdered his wife Clodagh and three children – Liam (14), Niall (11) and Ryan (6) – with a knife and a hatchet. Yet news reports initially portrayed Hawe as a pillar of society; focusing on his involvement with the local GAA, his church-going and his position as deputy principal of the local school. If Hawe could be lauded even after committing such heinous acts, it is hardly surprising that many victims remain reticent about disclosing abuse.

While victims can feel constrained or trapped by their proximity to the border, the opposite is true for perpetrators of abuse. Domestic abusers rarely respect boundaries – societal or geographical. The skilled abuser will use all the tools at his disposal to maintain control over his victim. Perpetrators may travel across the border to avoid consequences of their actions – eg, to evade arrest or the serving of a protection order – until the victim's terror subsides and they become more likely to acquiesce to 'reconciliation'.

Other practical issues also remain. While there is no doubt that peace and the scaling down of border operations have benefited women affected by domestic violence, living on the cusp of an entirely different jurisdiction still presents problems. Women's Aid regularly witness complications arising for women who live on one side of the border but experience instances of abuse on the other. Access to police, benefits, safety, health services and refuge in these cases are not always straightforward. Cases in which perpetrators use the Hague Convention against victims who cross the border with their children for safety or for practical reasons, have yet to be resolved in favour of protecting victims.⁵

The challenge for statutory and non-statutory agencies here is to help victims over these additional hurdles. Given that it takes an average of 35 instances of abuse before a woman will report or seek help, it is crucial that there are no further barriers when she does finally reach out. If victims find that help to leave and rebuild their lives isn't there, they will disappear from support agencies' line of sight, often returning to the abusive relationship and not resurfacing until it has escalated to extreme violence. This is a scenario that any good practice-based domestic violence strategy should seek to avoid. We know that the earlier the intervention, the less the likelihood of serious injury, trauma and death. The more readily available the support at the point of need, the more likely victims will leave abuse and stay gone.

To successfully outmanoeuvre motivated perpetrators and overcome inter-jurisdictional barriers, cross-border cooperation between statutory and non-statutory agencies is vital. However, while cross-border cooperation on counter-terrorism and organised crime have reached high levels of procedural sophistication, this has not yet been sufficiently replicated when

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tackling domestic violence. Women's Aid staff still find that cooperation in domestic violence cases often happens as a result of highly motivated individuals in agencies on both sides of the border, rather than through established policies and procedures. Good practice can therefore be inconsistent and hampered if a key individual switches jobs or retires.

The reasons for this procedural gap largely mirror the reasons for domestic violence not being given sufficient priority generally. Individual instances of physical violence are regarded by the justice system as 'low level' crime, and thus are not afforded as high priority as crimes with higher-sentencing tariffs. Much of what constitutes abuse isn't even a crime in Northern Ireland.⁶ Myths continue to abound about victims exaggerating their abuse, when in fact they and their perpetrators are most likely to minimise it when reporting.⁷ Old-fashioned views that it is 'just a domestic' or a 'lovers' spat' prevent some cases of domestic violence from being taken seriously. Overly-simplistic analyses of domestic abuse being caused by alcoholism, poverty or 'mutual violence' have undue influence on local policy initiatives. These obstacles are amplified in border areas by additional hurdles associated with rural and border life. The result is diminished ability to prevent domestic violence, intervene early, protect victims and pursue perpetrators. While

huge progress has been made since the 1970s when Women's Aid NI didn't technically have the legal right to give women refuge from their abusive husbands, we still have a long way to go to make domestic violence a thing of the past.

Finally, no examination of domestic violence in border regions is complete without analysing the continuing legacy of the conflict in shaping patterns of abuse and responses to them. It is widely recognised that the impact of the Troubles on women in border areas was far-reaching,⁸ profoundly affecting their health, wellbeing and capacity to access support networks. Women have consistently identified isolation as a major consequence of the border during the conflict,⁹ with particular focus on social exclusion due to under-development of the region, and marginalisation caused by poverty and barriers to accessing services. Such social exclusion and isolation provide ideal conditions for control and abuse.

In the experience of Women's Aid groups working in these areas, it is clear that while many barriers have lessened or altered in character since the ceasefires and the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, they have not necessarily gone away. On the plus side, the removal of checkpoints and other traces of a physical border has facilitated cross-border travel, and has encouraged women to engage in cross-border initiatives and establish wider networks of support. This has been especially beneficial for women who would have traditionally regarded the 'other side' of the border, and the community residing there, with suspicion and fear.¹⁰

However, the conflict and paramilitarism continue to impact negatively on the lives of women, including in their intimate relationships. In our oral submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry on Women, Peace and Security,¹¹ we noted that domestic abuse remains under-reported in certain communities because of victims' mistrust of police; fear of reporting abusers who are linked to paramilitaries or security forces; and women being pressured not to report for the 'greater good' if perpetrators are ex-combatants out on license. This evidence has been expanded upon by further research, where women expressed fears about "controlling personalities" within both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, and concerns about vulnerable girls being caught up in "a culture of 'trophy girlfriends' that often resulted in abuse."¹² Women in focus groups felt that levels of domestic and sexual violence were actually increasing in communities blighted by paramilitary influence.¹³ Such fears are magnified by the presence of firearms in the household, legally-held or otherwise. Despite the ceasefires and several decades of peace, firearms continue to circulate in Northern Ireland and women have disclosed being threatened with guns, assaulted with firearms, or suffering fear and anxiety because they know a gun is in the possession of their abuser.¹⁴

The conflict and paramilitarism continue to impact negatively on the lives of women, including in their intimate relationships. ... solutions are not yet in place to free women from the impact of paramilitarism in the community and in their homes.

The continued impact of the conflict on women in the home has been recently recognised by the Fresh Start Panel Report on the Disbandment of Paramilitary Groups in Northern Ireland.¹⁵ Despite this, solutions are not

yet in place to free women from the impact of paramilitarism in the community and in their homes. Commitments made by then-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Theresa Villiers, to implement the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Northern Ireland,¹⁶ have yet to come to pass. With politics effectively stalled at Executive and Assembly level, it is difficult to see how these issues affecting women suffering domestic violence will be dealt with. History has shown time and again in Northern Ireland that when the spectre of the conflict rears its head, women and issues uniquely affecting them are relegated to the bottom of the priority list. It remains to be seen whether we manage to buck this trend and give women their place around the table and the priority level they need and deserve.

3. The Impact of Brexit

There is a broad consensus that Northern Ireland will be the part of the UK most affected by leaving the European Union.¹⁷ Victims and survivors of domestic violence in border areas, as particularly vulnerable members of our community, are likely to be distinctly affected.

At the time of writing, Northern Ireland is without an Executive, and parties are divided on how to move forward on Brexit. Following the snap General Election in June 2017, there are no longer any Nationalist MPs who take their seats in the House of Commons,¹⁸

though conversely the largest Unionist party, the DUP, holds an unprecedented amount of sway over the minority Government.¹⁹ We continue to weather cuts to Government budgets and great uncertainty over the future funding of services, including domestic violence support services. Developments are fast-moving as Brexit negotiations continue, yet the ultimate shape of post-Brexit Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland remains speculative.

While domestic violence is on Prime Minister Theresa May's agenda via the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill,²⁰ there is little sign that the unique concerns of women have or will be given adequate airtime in Brexit negotiations. Apart from the content of the negotiations themselves, it was reported last month that the UK's negotiating team is all-white and contains only one woman.²¹ History tells us that this does not bode well for the female 51% of the population, who are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, sexual violence and austerity and need their interests to be represented in the talks.

Meanwhile, Northern Ireland continues to lag behind in efforts to improve the situation of domestic violence victims and their children. Unlike our counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales, we don't have a coercive control law, a stalking law or a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme to protect victims.²² We are yet to establish Domestic Homicide

Northern Ireland will be the part of the UK most affected by leaving the European Union. Victims and survivors of domestic violence in border areas, as particularly vulnerable members of our community, are likely to be distinctly affected. ...

For victims of domestic violence, the main points of concern fall under the broad categories of freedom of movement, health, justice, cross-border cooperation and equality.

Reviews to learn lessons from the killing of victims by domestic abusers.²³ Although protective orders like Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) are on the statute books, they have not been put into practice.²⁴

This is the context in which Northern Ireland navigates its future without the European Union. For victims of domestic violence, the main points of concern fall under the broad categories of freedom of movement, health, justice, cross-border cooperation and equality.

Freedom of movement

Following the Referendum on 23 June 2016, several voting patterns emerged in Northern Ireland. There was a clear community divide between voters, with Protestant/Unionists mainly voting to Leave and Catholic/Nationalist voters wanting to Remain. Perhaps more interestingly, every border county voted to Remain in a proportion higher than the Northern Irish average.²⁵

Freedom of movement is a huge concern for those living in border areas. Official analysis indicates that there were 110 million border crossings last year alone.²⁶ Of that 110 million, some of those people undoubtedly crossed the border to flee domestic violence and seek safety.

A hard border of any kind would add an extra barrier preventing women from escaping abuse, simply because it would make it more difficult for them to flee. If women in border regions can no longer hop over the border to disappear or hide from abusers, as it is sometimes necessary to do, their means of escape and safety are narrowed. If those women are then further restricted when trying to access support, benefits or housing on the 'wrong' side of the border, their options shrink yet again.

Negotiations on the future of the border between the North and South have been far from enlightening. According to the UK Government Position Paper,²⁷ there is no appetite for a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Theresa May has stated that there should be no visible border infrastructure. That intention, however, has not yet been backed up by solid plans to make it a reality. While there appears to be agreement among all players that the Common Travel Area (CTA) should remain, there is less certainty around the customs border, and how all of this will operate in practice.

As the CTA applies only to Irish and UK citizens, what will happen to non-Irish EU citizens living north or south of the border, and what will their freedom of movement look like? If they find themselves in an abusive relationship, will their ability to move cross-border to escape, or right to access social security and support, be limited? How would Government comply with existing human rights obligations to protect them? And how does all of this square with the UK's anti-free movement, pro-sovereignty motivation for voting Leave in the first place?

Even with a seamless Common Travel Area arrangement, the question of customs controls and the UK's membership or otherwise of the single market is yet to be resolved to anyone's satisfaction. At present, the UK Government's plans remain vague. But no matter

how one cuts it, it isn't possible to satisfy the contrary demands for reclamation of sovereignty, a hard-line on immigration, a special and low-cost trading relationship with EU countries and an invisible border on the island of Ireland at the same time. Sooner or later, someone with a stake in the UK negotiations is going to be disappointed.

All the while, the ability of domestic violence victims to ensure their safety by crossing the border, and remain there while accessing support and legal remedies, is at risk. Something as simple as a woman's ability to get a house or work in the jurisdiction that she has fled to could be the difference between her staying safe and having to go back to her abuser.

The other risk posed by the border debate emanates from the impact of the UK/EU divorce on our fragile peace. Women's Aid has borne witness to the detrimental impact of the Troubles on women in abusive relationships since we opened our doors in the 1970s. Women continue to struggle to come to terms with this impact in the two decades since the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Domestic violence was hidden from view during the Troubles and the focus on anti-terrorism and security meant that violence against women and domestic abuse was not a priority. Women were on their own. There is no doubt that a return to conflict would be devastating for women and for victims of violence in the home, just as it would be for victims of violence on the streets.

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Despite efforts to find a way to marry the conflicting aims of Leavers, Remainers, Unionists and Nationalists, while keeping Northern Ireland's peace intact, it remains to be seen if there is a magic solution. For Women's Aid, and for the thousands of women affected by domestic violence each year in Northern Ireland,²⁸ the main issue will be whether this solution will keep women and children safe, and help them to thrive as well as survive.

Health, justice and cross-border cooperation

Domestic violence is, first and foremost, a public health crisis. While victims may or may not wish to seek criminal justice remedies, their suffering will invariably affect their physical and mental health.

Last year, 738 women and 520 children stayed in Women's Aid refuges because they weren't safe in their own homes. Of those women, 46% presented with a disability or complex need, 10% were over the age of 55, 18% were under 25, and 51 were pregnant. 172 women identified as an ethnic minority, including 35 Traveller women.²⁹

As these statistics demonstrate, victims and survivors of abuse are a diverse group. Not only do they suffer from wide-ranging complex needs as a result of their abuse, they are also impacted by a multiplicity of health and other concerns which affect the public generally. These concerns are magnified by the abuse they have suffered.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service has identified a number of potentially negative impacts of Brexit, which may have a knock-on effect on health provision for domestic violence

victims in border areas.³⁰ Not least is the potential loss of EU funding, including €31.8 million allocated to Northern Ireland from the Interreg VA Health and Social Care Call.

According to the Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) partnership,³¹ EU funding has been vital to the development of cross-border health and social care. CAWT has used previous EU funds to improve access to services, reduce health inequalities and promote social inclusion in border areas. If this funding source is lost, it will affect acute hospital services, as well as projects on prevention and early intervention; tackling health inequalities; building resilience and recovery; and developing partnerships with the community and voluntary sector.

These services and projects play a vital role in improving health and wellbeing of those in border areas, not least domestic violence victims. Given the strain that our health service is already under, and the economic wisdom in sharing services on an all-island basis, it would be a spectacular own-goal if Brexit spelled the end of this funding and hampered cross-border collaboration. The same can be said for other pots of EU funding, which have been generously allocated to Northern Ireland through PEACE and other EU funding programmes.

Given the strain that our health service is already under, and the economic wisdom in sharing services on an all-island basis, it would be a spectacular own-goal if Brexit spelled the end of this funding and hampered cross-border collaboration.

Cross-border cooperation has enhanced the lives of those in border areas, including domestic violence victims. These models of cooperation must expand, not be rolled back. While cross-border collaboration has preceded Ireland and the UK's EU membership, and is enshrined in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, funding for cross-border initiatives may be harder to come by if it is the UK government to whom Northern Ireland must turn with begging cap in hand. What then for future cross-border initiatives to protect victims of domestic violence, if they must compete for funding against counter-terrorism and other 'big ticket' issues? There is a danger that domestic violence, and the needs of women, will once again slip down the pecking order.

In terms of access to justice, the EU has also been good for victims and survivors. ... EU Protection Orders are one such example of inter-jurisdictional protection.

In terms of access to justice, the EU has also been good for victims and survivors. As people's lives and the reach of crime become more international, so too have the tools of legal protection. EU Protection Orders are one such example of inter-jurisdictional protection. Victims of domestic violence with a non-molestation or other protection order from their own jurisdiction, will remain protected from perpetrators when they travel to another Member State. This system has made access to protection easier and faster. As time is often of the essence for victims of domestic violence seeking legal protection, it is crucial that these administrative advantages are not lost. This is especially so for abuse victims in border areas, for whom a simple matter of crossing the road could render a non-molestation order useless due to the

proximity of the border. European inter-agency cooperation and information sharing also helps keep victims safe.

It is also worth mentioning the value of Europol, which works to tackle human trafficking, modern slavery and child sexual exploitation including online exploitation. Europol was for instance instrumental in catching the blackmailer who drove 17 year old Northern Irish boy Ronan Hughes to suicide, after attempting to extort money from him over intimate photos.³² Another useful tool, the European Arrest Warrant, simplifies the process of extraditing suspects back to where they are wanted for crimes in other parts of Europe. Perhaps unsurprisingly, now that the dust has settled on the Referendum campaign, the UK Government has indicated its desire to continue cooperating with the EU on criminal matters. How this will happen is still uncertain, especially if the UK Government is determined, as it appears to be, to end the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in the UK.

Despite the ECJ's unenviable status as most-maligned EU institution by Eurosceptic, disentangling the UK from the Court's jurisdiction may not be as straightforward as has been suggested. Among other things, the Court plays a key role in deliberating on complex child abduction cases, which increasingly involve victims of domestic violence fleeing to another jurisdiction with their children. Some commentators argue that completely splitting from the Court may prove to be impossible if the UK is to benefit from favourable trade agreements with the EU.³³ Whether this will provide comfort or any discernible protection to the victims of domestic abuse, whose legal status and right to remain are threatened by the UK's exit from the EU, remains unresolved. However the UK chooses to relate to European justice agencies in future, it should not be at the expense of vulnerable victims in need of protection, and should not create a situation whereby victims are trapped without recourse to safety or protection simply due to their immigration status. This would be an unconscionable outcome of Brexit which the UK must seek to avoid at all costs.

Equality

It is a well-known adage that domestic violence is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Thus, while men also suffer domestic violence, the majority of abuse is perpetrated by men against women. Differences in gender roles, behaviours and societal expectations have created inequalities and imbalances of power, which manifest in both public and private spheres. We see it in the gender pay gap and under-representation of women in parliaments and boardrooms, but also in homes where women are coerced, controlled, manipulated and assaulted.

The fight for gender equality has progressed at least in part thanks to our membership of the EU. Although the EU has not been a complete success in delivering gender equality,³⁴ its value cannot be denied when we look at progress in maternity rights, equal pay and rights for part-time workers, most of which are women. The benefits are clear for women in border areas, in Northern Ireland and across the UK. Although the UK will remain [at least initially] party to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act, the extra legal and procedural safeguarding provided by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms will be a bitter loss to those still struggling for substantive equality in the home.

Concluding thoughts

Regardless of the configuration of the UK after exiting the EU, our message is clear: There can be no roll-back on women's rights, and no return to the dark days of conflict, isolation and marginalisation of victims of domestic abuse in border areas and beyond. While the UK's membership of the Council of Europe will continue to give effect to the European Convention on Human Rights and, once ratified, the Istanbul Convention,³⁵ we cannot be complacent. Our rights and protections were hard-fought and hard-won. And while there is no indication that the Government of the day plans to dismantle what is in place for victims, survivors and women in general, the vote to leave the EU will remove us from a regime that safeguarded those rights. If we are to move forward instead of back, the focus of Brexit negotiations must be on stability, partnership and a commitment to enshrine EU rights and protections as minimum standards in the British legal order.

24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

Call: 0808 802 1414

Email Support: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text support to 07797 805 839

Women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland

Freephone from all landlines and mobiles.

Translation service available.

Open to all *women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

Notes

- ¹ Northern Ireland Women's Rural Network, Rural Women's Manifesto, accessible at <http://www.nirwn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NIRWN-Rural-Womens-Manifesto.pdf>
- ² Cracknell, R and Keen, R, Estimating the gender impact of tax and benefits changes, Briefing Paper Number SN06758, House of Commons Library, December 2016
- ³ NI Women's Policy Group, Opposing the two child tax credit cap and rape clause, available at <http://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2017/05/opposing-the-two-child-cap-and-rape-clause.pdf>
- ⁴ Disappointingly, there is no specific mention of the unique circumstances of rural women, those living in border regions, or those affected by paramilitarism or the Troubles in the Government's Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, bar a brief mention of the existence of UNSCR 1325.
- ⁵ In the Review of Family Justice, it was noted that "The complexion of Hague cases has changed from the typical case of the noncustodial parent snatching a child to the situation of the custodial parent fleeing with a child from oppressive situations, such as domestic violence." See Review of Civil and Family Justice in Northern Ireland, Review Group's Report on Family Justice, Sept 2017, accessible at <http://www.jsbni.com/civilandfamilyjusticereview/Documents/Family%20Justice%20Report%20September%202017.pdf>

- ⁶ This is in contrast to England and Wales, where a domestic abuse and coercive control law has been in place since 2015 and carries a sentence of up to five years' imprisonment.
- ⁷ See for example Bonomi, A, *Interpersonal Process Associated with Victim Recantation*, Criminal Justice Research Center and the Group Health Foundation, 2011
- ⁸ For an examination of this in more detail, see for example Boydell, L., Hamilton, J., Livingstone, S., Radford, K. and Rugkåsa, J. *Women Speaking Across the Border: The Impact of the Border and the Conflict on Women's Health and Roles*. Dublin: Institute of Public Health in Ireland, 2008.
- ⁹ Harvey, B., Kelly, A., McGearty, S. and Murray, S. (2005) *The emerald curtain: the social impact of the Irish border*. Carrickmacross: Triskele.
- ¹⁰ See Boydell et al, *Women Speaking Across the Border: The Impact of the Border and the Conflict on Women's Health and Roles*, 2008
- ¹¹ Evidence presented to Baroness Lister, Margaret Owen OBE and Paula Bradley MLA, December 2013
- ¹² WRDA, *Women and Peacebuilding Project: Issues of Protection and Security*, accessible at http://review.table59.co.uk/wrda/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Toolkit_BriefingPaper_Protection.pdf
- ¹³ WRDA, *Women & Peacebuilding Toolkit*, https://wrda.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Toolkit_Booklet.pdf
- ¹⁴ See *Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Response to: Ireland's Second National Action Plan: Women, Peace and Security, 2014*, accessible at <https://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2014/12/Irelands-second-NAP-on-Women-Peace-Security-20-August-2014.pdf>
- ¹⁵ Alderdice, McBurney and McWilliams, *Fresh Start Panel Report on the Disbandment of Paramilitary Groups in Northern Ireland*, May 2016, accessible at <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/newnigov/The%20Fresh%20Start%20Panel%20report%20on%20the%20disbandment%20of%20paramilitary%20groups.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Speech at Beijing Platform for Action +20 event, Malone House, 12 February 2015.
- ¹⁷ See for example the compendium of views on the impact of Brexit on Northern Lords EU Select Committee paper on Brexit and Devolution https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/lddeucom/9/906.htm#_idTextAnchor017
- ¹⁸ The election saw both SDLP and UUP lose out to DUP and Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein do not take their seats at Westminster, so the only sitting MPs are the 10-member DUP bloc and Independent Unionist Lady Sylvia Hermon.
- ¹⁹ The content of the 'confidence and supply deal' between the Conservative Party and the Democratic Unionist Party can be accessed here: <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/docs26062017/Confidence+and+Supply+Agreement+between+the+Conservative+Party+and+the+D....pdf>
- ²⁰ Announced in the Queen's Speech, the Bill will only cover England & Wales and not Northern Ireland. *The Queen's Speech, 2017*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620838/Queens_speech_2017_background_notes.pdf
- ²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/22/all-white-one-female-uk-brexit-team-negotiating-eu-diversity>
- ²² For a more detailed exploration of why Northern Ireland would benefit from these provisions, go to <https://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2016/07/WAFNI-response-to-DOJ-consultation-on-Domestic-Abuse-Offence-and-Domestic-Violence-Disclosure-Scheme.pdf> and <http://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2017/05/WAFNI-Stalking-evidence-for-Justice-Committee-December-2016.pdf>
- ²³ Although we are aware that the Department of Justice is currently working to introduce these and that no further legislation will be required to do so.

- ²⁴ Yet even as we grapple with the introduction of DVPOs and DVPNs, the law in England is moving further still in the form of the proposed Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, which may address identified shortcomings of these Orders by making breach a criminal offence and adding additional protective orders.
- ²⁵ Compared to Northern Ireland's overall 55.8% vote to Remain, border constituencies voted as follows: Foyle –78.3% Remain; West Tyrone – 66.8% Remain; Newry and Armagh – 62.9% Remain; Fermanagh and South Tyrone – 58.6% Remain.
- ²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/21/irish-border-data-underlines-huge-task-facing-brexit-negotiators>
- ²⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638135/6.3703_DEXEU_Northern_Ireland_and_Ireland_INTERACTIVE.pdf
- ²⁸ For a full statistical breakdown of domestic violence in Northern Ireland, see Women's Aid Federation NI, Annual Report 2015-16, accessible at <https://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2017/01/WAFNI-Annual-Report-2015-16.pdf>
- ²⁹ See Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Annual Report 2015-16, accessible at <https://www.womensaidni.org/assets/uploads/2017/01/WAFNI-Annual-Report-2015-16.pdf>
- ³⁰ Information in a paper obtained by The Detail via Freedom of Information request. See https://thedetailwebsite.s3.amazonaws.com/asset/upload/2493/Potential_Implications_of_EU_Exit_for_Health_and_Social_Care.pdf
- ³¹ The CAWT Partnership comprises the Public Health Agency, Western and Southern Health Trusts and the Irish Health Service Executive
- ³² See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37801090>
- ³³ See Catherine Barnard's commentary in the Guardian, 19 August 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/19/ecj-farewell-brexit-european-union-surrendering-influence>
- ³⁴ Even with EU membership, Northern Irish policy development has remained 'gender neutral', including when tackling gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming hasn't been embedded in policy-making. This includes the gender neutral Departments of Health and Justice's joint Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, accessible at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/stopping-domestic-sexual-violence-ni.pdf>
- ³⁵ Also known as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?desktop=false>

The Towards a New Common Chapter Project:

Assessing the commitment to cross-border cooperation at the grassroots

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This article sets out an overview of the Joseph Rowntree-funded Towards a New Common Chapter project, managed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies: its origins and rationale, and some of what it has revealed so far of attitudes among a number of grassroots community organisations from both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland towards the notion of cross-border cooperation. However, neither this article nor the project at its current stage should be seen as definitive in terms of what they may tell us of general perceptions of and commitment to cross-border cooperation. Having completed two stages involving 10 community organisations and a number of related groups comprising 86 participants, the project is only now embarking on a third stage aimed at disseminating “A New Common Chapter for cooperation within and between these islands” drafted by the participating groups at the end of the second stage, and reproduced below. It will be during this process of interacting with other grassroots community organisations on the island of Ireland and seeking their views on the New Common Chapter that we will perhaps gain a wider understanding of the relative support for the notion of cross-border, North-South and East-West cooperation.

Why a New Common Chapter?

In June 2014, in evidence given to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, the Centre for Cross Border Studies raised its concerns over the potential marginalisation of and political commitment to cross-border cooperation resulting from the failure of the Governments in Dublin and Belfast to reintroduce what had become known as the *Common Chapter*:

Since the demise of the Common Chapter, the limited but nevertheless important references to cross-border cooperation have dwindled and all but disappeared from major policy documents. Unless there is a clear policy imperative supported by resources – and it is made clear to civil servants and other public officials that it is part of their job – even the most motivated people will, with the increasing pressures of austerity, see cross-border cooperation as an unaffordable luxury.¹

The *Common Chapter* was the name given to the chapter of agreed text that appeared in Northern Ireland’s *Structural Funds Plan* and Ireland’s *National Development Plan* for the period 2000-2006,² setting out the priorities for cooperation as identified by the Irish Government and the devolved administration in Northern Ireland, and the funds

(particularly European Union funds) to be allocated to them. Cooperation in the *Common Chapter* was understood as having three dimensions – cooperation along the border corridor, North-South cooperation within the island of Ireland, and East-West cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, Europe and internationally – with the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) being given statutory responsibility for undertaking regular reviews of the *Common Chapter's* implementation. That period, however, saw the collapse of the power-sharing institutions in Northern Ireland as well as the suspension of the North-South and East-West institutions. Restoration of the institutions in 2007 following the St Andrew's Agreement did not result in the revival of the *Common Chapter*.

The *Common Chapter* contained in the policy documents for the 2000-2006 period had a predecessor. In 1994, in a statement announcing the approval in principle of the *Community Support Framework* for Ireland for the 1994-1999 period, the EU's Commissioner for Regional Policy and Cohesion remarked how he “welcome[d] the decision by the Irish and Northern Ireland authorities to include a chapter on co-operation in their Plans with the aim of working closely together to ensure that the operations assisted by Structural Funds provide the greatest possible benefits to the whole island”.³ These positive comments were expanded further when the European Commission published the *Community Support Framework* for Ireland, and were repeated in the equivalent document relating to Northern Ireland. In it, the Commission not only notes “the initiative taken by the Irish and United Kingdom Governments to include a common chapter on cooperation between Ireland and Northern Ireland in the development plans”, but also how the joint pursuit of cooperation “will reduce duplication and multiply synergies, particularly through improved coordination of the provision of infrastructure, through the intensification of trade in goods and services and through effective tourism development”.⁴

Unlike the version created for the 2000-2006 period, therefore, this early iteration of the *Common Chapter* was not the product of coordination between the Irish Government and a devolved government in Northern Ireland that had not yet come into existence. Crucially, whereas “Policy in respect of overall UK-EU relationships is still formulated at Westminster”, as Jonathan Tonge points out, “the implementation of EU programmes’ policy directives would become increasingly a matter for a (sustained) devolved Northern Ireland Executive”,⁵ with the *Common Chapter* as one of the products of devolution. In the wake of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 1998, the *Common Chapter* was included in both Northern Ireland's *Structural Funds Plan* and Ireland's *National Development Plan* for 2000-2006.

Two core factors underpin the rationale for the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project, initiated by the Centre for Cross Border Studies: the practical implementation by the devolved administration in Northern Ireland of the drive for cooperation contained within the 1998 Agreement, and the question of the extent to which devolution of power has resulted in implementation directed by actors at the grassroots level. These two factors were, in effect, inextricably linked in the rationale for the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project. We saw cross-border cooperation as hostage to a political environment where instability – as experienced during the 2000-2006 period, and again

at the time of writing when we are once more faced with the lack of functioning devolved institutions in Northern Ireland – constrains the ability of the two Governments on the island of Ireland to drive the cooperation agenda forward. Even when there is a functioning devolved government in Northern Ireland it is not always apparent, according to Mary C. Murphy, that there is wholehearted support for cooperation between the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland:

The Strand 2 institutions of the 1998 Belfast Agreement have created new forms of cross-border cooperation. In the case of the EU, these are especially complex, involve numerous actors and elicit only lukewarm political support. It is a case of much has changed, and yet little has changed. [...] The hand of the state is omnipresent.⁶

The less than fulsome political support for implementation bodies such as the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), or the failure to realise the full potential of others such as InterTradeIreland, is indicative of a reluctance to cede control of cross-border and all-island cooperation to structures that could become significant examples of multi-level governance. There is little room in this context for the same cross-border governance structures that we can observe elsewhere in the EU, particularly when they encourage the involvement of non-political actors. With continuing divisions and mutual suspicion among the political classes in Northern Ireland regarding national identity and sovereignty, policy direction and governance of cross-border cooperation could be seen as remaining the privileged domain of politicians.

The *Towards a New Common Chapter* project, therefore, was designed to address the need for cross-border cooperation to be independently valued and enacted at the grassroots level, with communities from both sides of the border jointly setting their own priorities and advocating for their inclusion in regional and local strategies. Without this engagement in cross-border cooperation, cross-border cooperation would continue to be hostage to the political environment and the time-limited pursuit of European funding; and therefore hamper the ability of cross-border cooperation to properly contribute to peace and reconciliation and to wider socio-economic development.

Towards a New Common Chapter: the story so far

However, involving local communities in the design of policies to ensure the inclusion of cooperation initiatives not only assumes a particular level of capacity, but also brings us to the fundamental question of whether there is genuine understanding or acceptance of the need for such cooperation. The underlying imperative for cross-border, North-South and East-West cooperation may be woven into the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, articulated by the *Common Chapter* while it existed, and enacted through cooperation initiatives at central and local government levels, as well as by a range

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of non-governmental institutions and organisations; but what is the level of wider support for cooperation? For those grassroots community groups who have been involved in cross-border cooperation efforts, what has been their experience and what suggestions do they have for the future of cross-border cooperation? And what understanding do community groups based away from the border have of cross-border cooperation and do they value wider North-South and East-West cooperation?

To begin answering these questions, the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project initially sought to engage with two constituencies in particular: women's groups and Protestant community groups. The inclusion of women's groups was in line with the argument put forward by the Centre for Cross Border Studies in its response to the consultation on *Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2015-2018*,⁷ which concluded that "the under-representation of women [...] will continue to hamper progress in relation to peacebuilding and reconciliation".⁸ Therefore, in undertaking this project it was felt that it was essential that women's groups should have equal representation in reflections on cross-border cooperation and on the development of a shared vision for its future. Involving Protestant community groups, on the other hand, was seen as addressing the need to engage those who may have specific concerns around cross-border cooperation at the Northern Ireland-Ireland border, as well as a broader vision of cooperation encompassing the East-West dimension. This also reflected the findings of research into the participation of Protestant community groups in cross-border cooperation, particularly under the PEACE programme.⁹

An additional constituency was included when the first stage of the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project was already underway. It became apparent during discussions with the original participating groups that young people should be included in the project. This issue arose as individuals became conscious of the fact they were making suggestions as to what young people's views of cross-border cooperation might be and what needs they may identify that could be addressed by such cooperation, but noting that no young people were present. This absence became the subject of wider discussions regarding the relative underrepresentation of young people in the community groups participating in the project, particularly those from rural areas. As a result, and in response to the groups' concerns, the project managed to recruit two young people's groups who contributed to the ongoing discussions and to the drafting of a *New Common Chapter*.

To broaden the discussions further, and to attempt to ensure that the development of a shared vision for cooperation included the cross-border, North-South and East-West dimensions, the project set out to engage with some community groups located in areas not immediately adjacent to the Northern Ireland-Ireland border. This was also driven by the need to assess these groups' understanding of the value of cross-border cooperation and to allow them to hear from those living close to the border why they would want to engage in cross-border initiatives. During the project design stage it was felt that without such understanding there may be the risk that support for cross-border cooperation would be weaker, and that at times of crisis (whether political or economic) such cooperation would be at greater risk of having support withdrawn.¹⁰

The project was designed to contain three principal stages in which the main aim was to work towards a *New Common Chapter*, with two follow-up stages, all with interrelated goals:

Stage	Goal
1. Critical engagement with “old” Common Chapter and identification of cross-border needs	A grassroots cross-community and cross-border agenda for Cross-Border Cooperation
2. Development of vision for future Cross-Border Cooperation (in its three dimensions)	Production of draft of New Common Chapter
3. Community-led consultation and advocacy with other Civil Society Organisations	Production of New Common Chapter
4. Community-led East-West engagement	Support for New Common Chapter from community organisations in GB
5. Community-led advocacy with policy-makers (island of Ireland)	Support for New Common Chapter from political actors and policy-makers

The first two stages (now completed) involved a series of workshops, with an evaluation seminar at the conclusion of each. The opening stage of four workshops was concluded in December 2016 with an evaluation seminar bringing together all the participating groups to determine whether there was sufficient consensus to progress towards the drafting of a *New Common Chapter* in Stage Two. The programme of work developed for the first stage was as follows:

Workshop 1	Introducing the ‘old’ Common Chapter
Workshop 2	Critique of ‘old’ Common Chapter
Workshop 3	Analysis of principles of integrated cross-border cooperation
Workshop 4	Identification of areas of need capable of being addressed on a cross-border basis (North-South <i>and</i> East-West)
Evaluation Seminar	Evaluation of progress and way forward

Whereas the first workshop was delivered to each of the participating groups individually (10 iterations of the workshop with the projected 10 groups), the other three were delivered on a cross-border basis. This meant workshops two to four involved pairs of groups made up of one from Northern Ireland and another from the Republic of Ireland.

The first workshop not only introduced the aims and rationale of the ‘old’ *Common Chapter* using the original documents, it also offered an overview of the aims and structure of the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project. This was followed by a critical discussion on the relative merits of the ‘old’ *Common Chapter* in the second workshop, while the third built capacity by introducing the groups to the principles of integrated cross-border cooperation. The participating groups were assisted to design their own cross-border initiatives using the *Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation*,¹¹ designed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the Euro-Institut (based in Kehl, Germany). The skills-based element also provided them with an increased capacity to engage with local authorities

to promote a cross-border dimension of benefit to local communities on both sides of the border in local development plans. The principles of integrated cross-border cooperation were then be put into practice and tested in the fourth workshop, as the participating groups began to identify areas of need they judged capable of being addressed on a cross-border basis, whether on a North-South or East-West basis.

A New Common Chapter for cooperation within and between these islands

Introduction

The vision for cooperation within and between these islands by grassroots community organisations we propose below was developed in the light of our critical engagement with what had been known as the “Common Chapter”. Following the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the devolved administration in Northern Ireland gave its approval to a section on cooperation with the Republic of Ireland in the *Northern Ireland Structural Funds Plan 2000-2006*. The same text was contained in the Republic of Ireland’s *National Development Plan 2000-2006* in a section on cooperation with Northern Ireland. This replicated text – the “Common Chapter” – set out in the two Governments’ priorities for cooperation and how funds (particularly European Union funds) would be used to support it. It was understood that cross-border cooperation for the island of Ireland had three dimensions:

- cooperation along the border corridor and between Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland;
- North-South cooperation within the island of Ireland; and
- East-West cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, Europe and internationally.

Within the 2000-2006 period for which these plans were designed devolution in Northern Ireland was suspended, and following the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2007 the Common Chapter was not revived.

What follows below, therefore, is the result of a sustained process of engagement by grassroots community organisations from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with the notion of cross-border, North-South and East-West cooperation, which has led to a vision of such cooperation and what it should entail.

A New Common Chapter

Recalling the “Common Chapter” on cross-border, North-South and East-West cooperation that existed in Ireland’s National Development Plan and Northern Ireland’s Structural Funds Plan, **we hereby propose a New Common Chapter for cooperation** within and between these islands by grassroots community organisations that promotes social justice and equality, but do so:

- Acknowledging and respecting the differences that make these islands what they are, while also recognising and cherishing the relations between the communities that live in its different nations and regions;
- In the knowledge that we speak and treasure indigenous languages whose roots cross the borders within and between our islands;
- Recognising that faith traditions are organised and followed by communities within and across these islands;
- Valuing the musical, literary and other artistic traditions that have spread across the world and whose development has been assisted through relations within and between these islands;
- Realising that whilst we can compete against each other, sport and sporting organisations also unite us within and between these islands; and
- Recognising that our islands are connected by family bonds that cross the borders that separate them.

We hereby propose a New Common Chapter for cooperation by grassroots community organisations within and between these islands which values how it can:

- Maintain family ties and friendships that cross borders;
- Allow for the cross-border sharing of local resources and services;

- Increase opportunities for the sharing of information, knowledge of policy and best-practice in the other jurisdictions, widen our cross-border evidence-base, and improve policy-making by matching it to the realities on the ground and identifying cross-border opportunities;
- Promote sustainable cross-border friendly relations between communities that give insight into the views of those from the other jurisdictions, and allow for difficult conversations to be had;
- Promote a civil society that values diversity and in which there is the ability to disagree respectfully;
- Facilitate the exploration of a community's culture and heritage;
- Increase the protection and enjoyment of the environment;
- Encourage and develop community leadership;
- Contribute to our common safety and wellbeing;
- Explore economic opportunities;
- Discover tourism potentials;
- Advocate for improved coordination of regulations within and between these islands; and
- Engage with and support the most isolated and marginalised in our communities.

We believe that for it to be successful cooperation within and between these islands must not:

- Be the unique preserve of any one government, agency, group or community;
- Be used for party-political purposes;
- Involve policies or projects imposed on communities and that are irrelevant to them;
- Operate on the basis of religious or cultural labelling, use assumptions about a community or group, or involve tokenism or quantitatively-driven targets;
- Be short-term, short-sighted or unsustainable;
- Be driven by the need to achieve large impacts in a way that privileges the involvement of larger institutions and organisations and dismisses the value of micro-community initiatives and their potential to contribute to significant positive change;
- Be overly theoretical, complicated or dismissive of community-led approaches;
- Be funding-led; and
- Deny equality of opportunities to people with different religious belief, political opinion, of different racial groups, ages, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, with or without a disability, with dependants or without.

We believe that grassroots community cooperation within and between these islands can usefully address the following issues:

- Capacity-building for community leadership in cooperation, especially for young leaders;
- Improving the sustainability of community organisations and initiatives;
- Exploring the potential for cross-border tourism, especially rural tourism;
- Exploring histories and heritage that cross borders within and between these islands;
- Improving women's representation in decision-making structures;
- The provision of affordable, accessible quality childcare and social care support;
- The promotion and support for gender equality proofing and gender budgeting;
- The provision of affordable, accessible and regular transport services, especially in rural areas and border regions;
- Facilitation of cross-jurisdictional educational opportunities, including through the removal of administrative obstacles between the jurisdictions;
- Improving the value given to and the quality of vocational and non-university paths to careers; and
- Promotion and support for rural proofing and regionally balanced budgeting and resourcing.

We hereby commend this New Common Chapter for cooperation within and between these islands.

Proceeding to the second stage of the project was contingent upon support for continuing the project at the evaluation seminar concluding the first stage.¹² Following this agreement being reached, stage two then proceeded to the development of the draft *New Common Chapter*. This took place over two workshops, both of them involving cross-border pairs of groups (meaning each workshop would be repeated five times to accommodate the 10 participating groups), and informed initially by some of the needs identified in the fourth workshop of stage one. Drawing together the conclusions of the discussions and work of these workshops, the evaluation seminar marked the end of the second stage of the project with the endorsement of all the groups for the draft of the *New Common Chapter*.

The draft *New Common Chapter* was presented to an invited audience of project participants, elected representatives and public officials at a seminar on 11 September 2017.



South Armagh Rural Women's Network



MONAGHAN



A Longford Women's Link Programme

Towards a New Common Chapter: next stage

Stage 3 (commencing October 2017) will involve consultation on the draft Chapter with other grassroots community groups in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Informed by the consultation process, this stage will then move to community advocacy and promotion of the resulting *New Common Chapter* at ten dissemination events. During stage three, the Centre for Cross Border Studies will adopt a supportive role that cultivates the independence of the community groups leading the advocacy and promotion activities. The Centre will facilitate and monitor these engagement and advocacy initiatives and act as coordinator, with the identification of target audiences for these activities being led by the groups themselves.

The penultimate stage in the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project will involve representatives from the participating groups in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland engaging with equivalent grassroots community groups in England, Scotland and Wales. Over three workshops the groups will discuss the needs identified in the previous stages, assess the extent to which they would benefit from an East-West approach, and include any other issues considered relevant. This stage concludes with an evaluation seminar involving representatives from all the groups, which will aim to gain further endorsement of the *New Common Chapter* and map out the advocacy process to be followed in the project's final stage.

The project's final phase is intended to focus primarily on community-led advocacy and promotion of the *New Common Chapter* with policy-makers and political representatives in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. However, there is scope here to expand those activities to Great Britain in line with the mapping exercise undertaken at the end of the previous stage of the project and with the capacity of the participating community groups from England, Scotland and Wales.

With the exception of those addressing the 'old' Common Chapter and the principles of integrated cross-border cooperation where there was an element of information delivery, all of the workshops were designed principally as forums for discussion. The primary objective was to elicit critical engagement with the topics being discussed and to record the views of the participating groups. This process involved ensuring clarity of the messages being delivered by seeking confirmation of the accuracy of what was being recorded, with those messages then informing subsequent workshops and evaluation seminars.

Having started in late 2015, and with the majority of activities under its first two stages taking place in 2016 and 2017, the question of the UK's membership of the European Union threatened to overshadow the project's implementation. Crucially, however, although the issue of Brexit has been raised repeatedly by the community groups participating in the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project, it was important that it should not dominate discussions and distract from a more fundamental question: do people actually agree with the idea of cross-border cooperation?

While institutions such as the North South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council were created under the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement to support intergovernmental cooperation, and European Union funding has enabled a wide variety

of cross-border initiatives, the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project set out in its first phase to assess the degree of genuine commitment to and understanding of cross-border cooperation among grassroots community organisations. The project's original design set out the need for establishing that the participating groups supported cross-border cooperation before beginning the process of developing a *New Common Chapter* reflecting their vision of what it should entail and the needs it should address.

In this context, membership or not of the European Union is irrelevant. The value of cross-border or wider North-South and East-West cooperation should not be directly linked to being in the EU or not, and issues that could be addressed by cross-border cooperation existed before EU membership, during the UK's membership of the EU, and will continue to exist following the UK's withdrawal. Brexit does not impinge on the intrinsic value of cross-border cooperation; instead, it poses challenges to *how* such cooperation may take place in the future.

But the investment in rising to those challenges may outweigh future returns if the approach to cross-border cooperation that results from it is built on weak foundations – foundations that risk marginalising civic society and take communities' support for cross-border cooperation for granted. The existence of formal institutions set up following the 1998 Agreement to undertake cooperation does not of itself guarantee the maintenance and development of harmonious relations between the peoples of these islands. That can only occur if communities recognise the value of such relations and are actively involved in fomenting them through initiatives that address needs or issues of common concern, and which they have jointly identified as being such.

As it brought about a critical engagement with the 'old' *Common Chapter* and began to identify a number of needs that could be addressed through cross-border cooperation, the opening stage of the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project immediately revealed some potential fault lines in the participating groups' perceptions of and approaches to cross-border cooperation. For many in the women's groups, participation in cross-border cooperation had been a longstanding activity with its value seen as intrinsically positive and inherently worthy of support. Similarly, although with less comparative involvement in cross-border activities, the young people's groups also regarded cross-border cooperation as worthwhile, with the group from Northern Ireland even having been involved in the past in an attempt to create a North-South youth forum. However, in debating the 'old' *Common Chapter*, both sets of groups voiced their belief that – as in other areas of policy development – they were not sufficiently involved in the identification of priorities for cooperation to be pursued by the governments in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, nor were those priorities necessarily reflective of their own needs. This issue was particularly evident as the women's groups reflected on their experience of engaging with local authorities on their respective sides of the border and on how, in their view, cross-border cooperation projects pursued at local or central government level did not afford the necessary priority to women's concerns.

Among the Protestant community groups there was also significant experience of participation in cross-border activities, although support for cross-border cooperation was not expressed in the same initially uncontested manner as had been the case with the

women's and young people's groups. For the Protestant community groups, especially those from Northern Ireland, while economic cooperation and cooperation supporting cross-border economic activity such as infrastructure development, was viewed as generally beneficial, less enthusiasm was expressed in relation to cross-border cooperation in other areas.¹³ This reaction to the broad concept of cross-border cooperation was bound up with what the Protestant community groups termed the 'elephant in the room', which necessarily became the subject for discussion and reflection in the first stage of the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project, as it was understood that to do otherwise would be to undermine one of the project's core objectives: to address the need for cross-border cooperation to be independently valued at the grassroots level. In other words, by ignoring the elephant in the room, the project risked arriving at a superficial level of support for cross-border cooperation that would continue to mask underlying tensions capable of becoming major obstacles, particularly during periods of political instability.

The 'elephant in the room' encompassed a number of issues that the Protestant groups viewed as normally being internalised, as to bring them into the public sphere could result in perceptions that those who did so were not fully engaged in the ongoing peace and reconciliation process and in the role of cross-border cooperation in that process. These issues included the suspicion that the impetus for some cross-border cooperation activities outside the economic sphere could be part of a politically motivated 'greening' process threatening to the Protestant identity and ultimately to the status of Northern Ireland. This was exacerbated by two further factors: perceived lack of active involvement by grassroots Protestant community groups in the design of cross-border policy development, and the nature of some current cross-border cooperation programmes.

In terms of the perceived lack of involvement in policy design, concerns were expressed that the political agenda in its broadest terms was being driven without sufficient and continual dialogue with grassroots community groups, particularly those from rural areas along the border. However, this situation is potentially further exacerbated by the very nature of the 'elephant in the room', whereby there may be some reluctance to voice such concerns during public consultation exercises for fear of appearing to be in opposition to a well-established and widely supported agenda. Moreover, the embeddedness of that agenda is seen as operating within some cross-border cooperation programmes, particularly the PEACE programme. In relation to this aspect, Protestant community groups drew on past involvement in some cross-border cooperation projects (although noting that this was not the case in all instances), arguing that their invitation to participate was as a function of increasing the chances of securing funding by demonstrating cross-community participation. The result in these cases was reported as being a 'tokenistic' and short-lived involvement, with outcomes that were not seen as genuinely cross-community or cross-border. Furthermore, it was also considered that there was little support in this context for cross-border projects explicitly aimed at single-identity work that would allow for greater understanding between Protestant community groups from the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

It should be stressed at this point, however, that these were the concerns and views of the Protestant community groups as expressed in the initial stage of the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project. Their perceptions do not necessarily negate the value of cross-

border cooperation programmes as they have been operating, nor are they proof that the design of cross-border cooperation policies has not sought to address their needs. Nevertheless, these perceptions were voiced and were also articulated in other ways by the women's and young people's groups. This is why the *New Common Chapter* drafted during the project's second stage reflected a common desire to be more closely involved in the development of cross-border policies, and that cross-border cooperation should not be used for party-political purposes or involve tokenism or quantitatively-driven targets.

The *New Common Chapter* also includes a view that perhaps encapsulates many of the concerns and aspirations of the participating groups and how they may relate to cross-border cooperation as it currently operates. This is the belief that for it to be successful, cooperation should not "Be driven by the need to achieve large impacts in a way that privileges the involvement of larger institutions and organisations and dismisses the value of micro-community initiatives and their potential to contribute to significant positive change". This sentiment does not deny the value of larger-scale cross-border cooperation initiatives – indeed, the project used some examples of these, particularly in the area of health, to highlight the value of cross-border cooperation. Instead it expresses a desire for a wider dashboard of funding support that can encompass much smaller scale cross-border projects capable of fostering sustained grassroots cooperation within and between these islands. Moreover, the issues the *New Common Chapter* identifies as ones that can be addressed through grassroots community cooperation are not necessarily included due to their absence from policy-makers' priorities; rather, they are the product of a willingness to support them at the grassroots community level.

This support for and willingness to engage in cooperation as expressed by the participating groups in the *New Common Chapter* extends to activities supportive of relations between the island of Ireland and Great Britain. Perhaps for understandable reasons given the recent advent of devolution and the need to focus on peace and reconciliation within the island of Ireland, this is a feature of the original *Common Chapter* that was never really put into practice, with the activities it supported privileging the cross-border and North-South dimensions rather than the East-West dimension. The reflection of the desire to incorporate all cooperation dimensions in the *New Common Chapter* can be seen in an element that was included at the request of the participating groups, and which had not been envisaged in the *Towards a New Common Chapter* project's original design. This is the passage of text highlighting the existing relations within and between these islands, bringing communities together through languages, faith traditions, culture, sport and family connections.

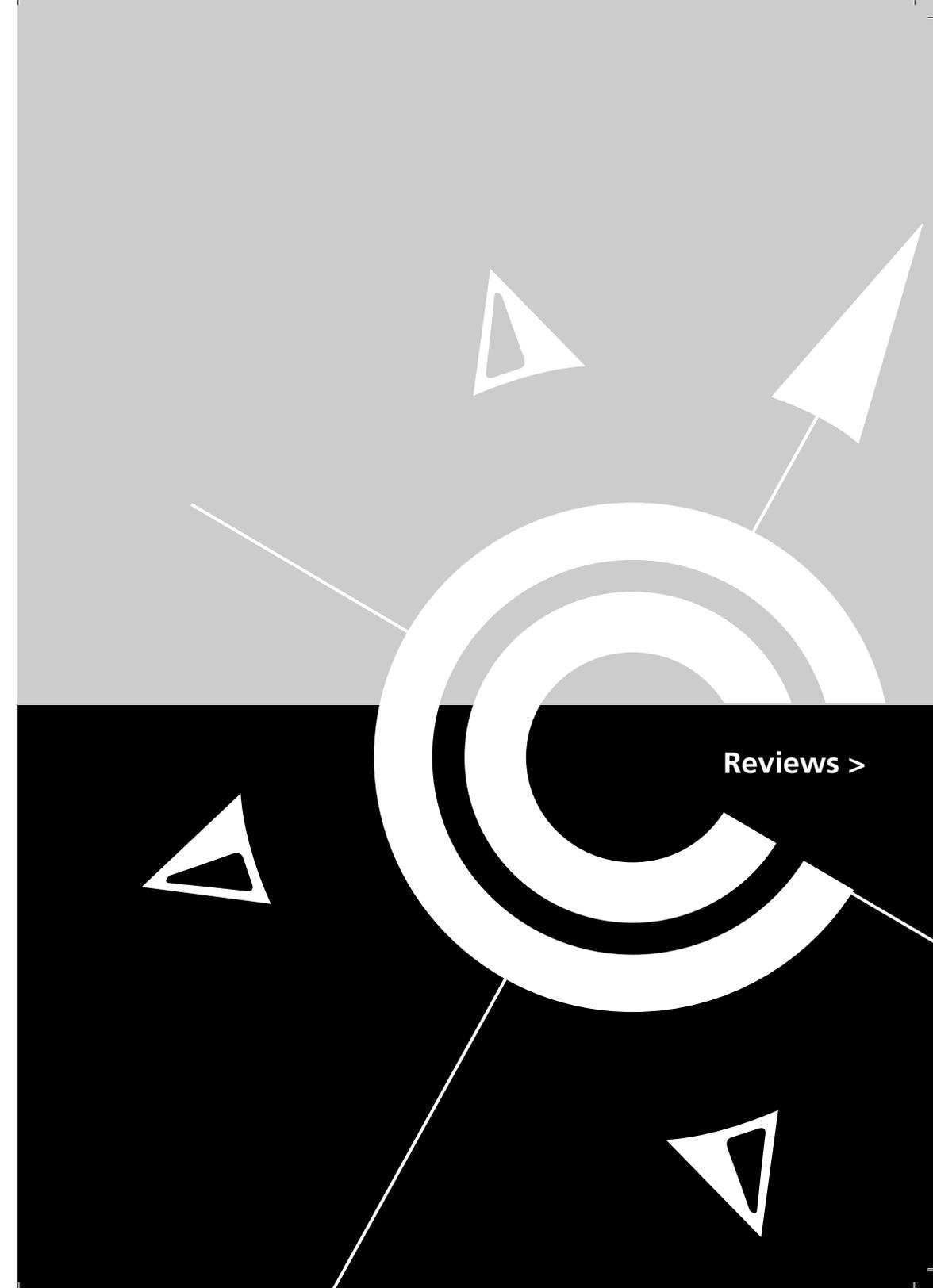
However, to enable and foster grassroots community cooperation whether on a North-South or East-West axis that can be supportive of and complementary to cooperation being undertaken at higher levels, it is essential that spaces are created for grassroots cross-border dialogue to take place. These spaces must be conducive to cooperation that can, as expressed in the *New Common Chapter*, "Promote sustainable cross-border friendly relations between communities that give insight into the views of those from the other jurisdictions, and allow for difficult conversations to be had", and "Promote a civil society that values diversity and in which there is the ability to disagree respectfully". In this regard, it is insufficient to design cross-border cooperation policies, whether North-South or East-

West, informed by consultations with communities taking place within their respective jurisdictions. To ensure cooperation addresses needs on the ground and is able to garner genuine community support, grassroots community organisations must be able to meet on a cross-border basis. With the United Kingdom's impending departure from the European Union, it is perhaps more urgent than ever to ensure these spaces and opportunities exist in order to ensure we maintain relations within and between these islands.

NOTES

- ¹ Centre for Cross Border Studies, "Submission to the Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement" (26 June 2014), p.3; <http://www.crossborder.ie/site2015/wp-content/uploads/CCBS-Presentation-to-GFA-Committee-26-06-2014.pdf>.
- ² *Northern Ireland Structural Funds Plan 2000-2006: 'Northern Ireland: - a Region achieving Transition'* (1999); Government of Ireland, *Ireland: National Development Plan 2000-2006* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1999).
- ³ European Commission, "STRUCTURAL FUNDS: THE COMMISSION APPROVES THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR IRELAND 1994-99" (15 June 1994), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-94-532_en.htm [last accessed 30/08/17].
- ⁴ European Commission, *Ireland: Community Support Framework 1994-1999 Objective 1: Development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1994), p.72; European Commission, *Northern Ireland: Community Support Framework 1994-1999 Objective 1: Development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1994), p.145.
- ⁵ Jonathan Tonge, "The EU and the Irish Border: Shaping Aid and Attitudes?", *Centre for International Borders Research (CIBR) Electronic Working Paper Series 2005* (1), p.10.
- ⁶ Mary C. Murphy, *Northern Ireland and the European Union: The dynamics of a changing relationship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p.148.
- ⁷ Government of Ireland, *Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2015-2018* (2014), <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebisitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/empoweringwomen-peaceandsecurity/Irelands-second-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf> [last accessed 15/08/2017].
- ⁸ Centre for Cross Border Studies, "Consultation Response: Ireland's Second National Action Plan – Women, Peace and Security" (August 2014), <http://www.crossborder.ie/site2015/wp-content/uploads/WPS-Consultation-Response-by-CCBS.pdf>.
- ⁹ See, for example, Marie Crawley, *Protestant Communities in Border Areas Research Report*, Paddy Logue, Karen McGillion and Pete Shirlow, *A report to the PEACE II Monitoring Committee on the Border Protestant Community & the EU PEACE programmes* (May 2007), and Deloitte, *Building Confidence: Ways Forward to Support Protestant Participation and Inclusion in the North West* (June 2011).
- ¹⁰ In terms of the make-up of the 86 participants in the project to date, 29% are male and 71% female, 43% "Protestant" and 48% "Catholic", 34% identify as British and 59% as Irish, 59% are resident in Northern Ireland and 41% in the Republic of Ireland, with the average age being 48.

- ¹¹ Centre for Cross Border Studies and Euro-Institut, *Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation* (2011), <http://www.crossborder.ie/pubs/2011-IAToolkit.pdf>.
- ¹² In its application for funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Centre for Cross Border Studies was explicit about the possibility that support may not have been achieved to proceed to the next stage: "We are conscious of the possibility that there may not be sufficiently broad cross-border and cross-community support expressed at Evaluation Seminar One for progressing towards the drafting of a *New Common Chapter*, requiring a re-assessment of how to proceed".
- ¹³ Indeed, a number of individuals from the Protestant community groups in Northern Ireland deliberately modified a question included in the Monitoring Form filled in by every participant in the project that asked: "**On a scale of 0 to 5 (where 0 indicates the lowest and 5 the highest), what importance would you give to cross-border cooperation?**" In these cases they added an additional dimension, enabling them to give a separate score for 'economic' cooperation (usually scored between 4 and 5), and another for 'cultural' cooperation (scored between 0 and 2).



Reviews >

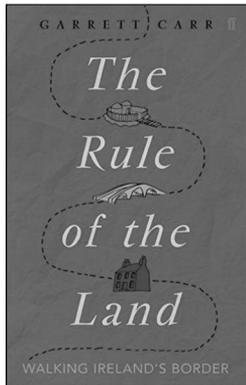
The Rule of the Land: *Walking Ireland's Border*

Garret Carr

Faber & Faber (2017)

£13.99, 312 pp.

ISBN 978-0-571-31335-8



Writing a good travel book is not an easy task. I tried it last year, walking between Belfast and Dublin over hills and along paths, back lanes and beaches, talking to people along the way. I produced a book-length manuscript which was derivative, journalistic and uninspired – in a word, rubbish.

Garret Carr's account of his walk along the border from Carlingford to Foyle is, in contrast, a little masterpiece (complete with quirky hand-drawn maps). A Donegal man, and thus a 'borderlander' himself, Carr is an observant and courageous traveller, with a wide knowledge of nature, geology, archaeology, history, politics and people, and an easy, often humorous writing style that brings the sometimes reviled, often ill-reported Irish border region to vivid life.

Carr begins the journey by water with his canoeist friend Paddy, another man with a nice line in dry wit. Carlingford Lough, Paddy points out, situated midway between two mountain ranges of differing personalities – the Mourne and the Cooleys – is "a good place to put a border. I mean, if you have a border and need a place for it."

Carr is an unusually balanced observer surveying this narrowest of Ulster's narrow grounds. He notes that the British Army's watchtowers on every hill in south Armagh gave the area the feel of an open prison – for the soldiers in the watchtowers too. He is conscious too of the intense localism of this, as of every part of Ireland. Seeing the loving gleam in the eye of man surveying Slieve Gullion, he remarks on people who are "convinced of the world-beating splendour of their own patch". Echoing the greatest border writer of them all, Patrick Kavanagh from Inniskeen, he notes that to border farmers, "the world's most shocking events are merely scaled-up versions of something that happened on their land at some point."

He occasionally dips into the dark and sinister, although even here he cannot resist a dash of humour. Walking the Irish border with nobody's permission inevitably takes him into tight corners ("hiking is foreign to borderlanders and loose strangers are watched"). Approaching one stretch of sheds, warehousing and abandoned cars, with diesel smuggling on his mind – "there's a brutality about the place, but also the hint of money" – he is accosted by a man with overalls and a face mask who is covered from head to toe in white dust. He nervously explains he is following the border. The man reveals that he is in the plaster moulding business, and asks Carr if he is interested in some samples.

He waxes lyrical about one of my favourite border places – Emain Macha outside Armagh. He notes that Emain Macha “radiates power and jurisdiction”. Taken together with the Dorsey embankment to the south (which Carr calls the “doorway into the old kingdom of Ulster”), it was clear that here territorial sovereignty was being shaped 5,000 years ago, and “a kingdom with a capital is sure to develop a frontier.”

To the west of Armagh, Carr walks through a very different country: the mini-kingdoms, with their well-tended fields and pretty gates, of the estates of Caledon, Tynan and Castle Leslie. The formerly mighty landlords of these three great mansions went their very different ways: in the North, the Earl of Caledon still hides away behind a long drive and magnificent (now electronic) gates; while the last of the Stronges were murdered by the IRA (and their house burnt to the ground) in the 1970s; in the South, the Leslies (notably Shane Leslie) became Catholic and nationalist and worked hard to integrate into the new republic, most recently by turning their house into a smart, friendly and somewhat ‘throughother’ hotel.

For this reader, the book got better the further west Carr walked. In the Monaghan drumlin belt, the openness of the sky above the green hillocks and the sheer exhilaration of walking makes him whoop with joy. This is “a landscape slowly filling, then exhaling. There is also something oceanic here. Drumlins look like full sea swells, bulging more to one end, but still a long way from breaking.”

On the other hand this is a landform “well suited to ambushes, harrying and conspiring. There are always hills to hide behind and high ground to claim.” This is country where the IRA and its

sympathisers held sway. Carr tells the desperately sad story of the ‘disappearance’ of 17-year-old Columba McVeigh in 1975, accused of spying for the British Army, and killed and buried in a remote bog near the border. Despite five searches of the Slieve Beagh area, his body has never been found.

Carr passes a monument to the ‘Borderbuster’, a JCB that was used by local people to reopen border roads closed by the army, filling in cratered roads and shoving aside concrete bollards. Soldiers deployed along the border were often accused of harassment, assault and murder.

This was the atmosphere of violence, exclusion and ‘borderbusting’ that a young Monaghan boy called Barry McGuigan grew up in. If this book has a hero, it is McGuigan. Before he became professional world featherweight champion in 1985, he had represented Northern Ireland in the 1978 Commonwealth Games and Ireland in the 1980 Olympics. “He was an example of a third identity forming between Ireland’s north and south. A new citizenship, there for those willing to take it: the borderlander.” In the ring McGuigan did not accept any national flags or symbols: “he simply did not want to be associated with a single nation because he was a likeable man who liked being liked and liked having friends everywhere.”

Senator George Mitchell is another of Carr’s heroes. For Carr, Mitchell oversaw the creation of a compromising – some might say duplicitous – new language so that the emerging peace process was built on “a spindly framework of linguistic construction, pinned together with hyphens”: power-sharing, sufficient consensus, decommissioning. Mitchell was thus the ‘editor’ of the peace process: “I made certain that every single word [in

the Good Friday Agreement] had either been spoken or written by one of them [the local politicians]. And when I distributed it to them, I put on the cover sheet: Remember what I said two years ago, it would be your agreement? Here's your agreement. Everything in it is yours." And it was. By then the politicians had gained a whole new vocabulary.

Carr is excellent on the deeply flawed genius of Sean Quinn, and the motivation of those who follow him, not stupid or in denial, but "members of another state...small, inward-looking and centred on the border", outlanders who are ignored and forgotten by distant (and not-so-distant) capitals.

He is equally good on the extraordinary and largely unknown cave system under Cuilcagh Mountain, the border's highest summit along the Cavan-Fermanagh frontier. These terrifying underground passages and caverns are being explored slowly and methodically by a group of Belfast cavers who are following in the footsteps of one Artur Kozlowski, whose unbelievable courage first opened up this "very violent environment" of rocks and gravel being tumbled around in tiny tunnels and chambers like clothes in a washing machine.

The Leitrim-Fermanagh border, and particularly the bleak stretch along the Donegal-Tyrone border north of Pettigo is "a landscape shaped for loneliness". Carr pays tribute to William Trevor's brilliant, heart-breaking tales of the rural isolation of forgotten people and discovers the remote ballroom in Glenfarne in Leitrim (still going strong) which was Trevor's model for his most famous story, *The Ballroom of Romance*.

If Carr can be blunt, he can also be lyrical and funny. From inside his tent on a remote hillside north of Lough Derg, he listens to the cries of sheep. "A lamb's bleat sounds like an objection in the House of Commons. Another cry sounds like that of an older sheep, throaty, panicked, like a grandmother might produce when reaching for her personal alarm. There is also a drawn-out, boorish call that repeats again and again, like a man heckling football players from the couch in his living room."

He has a charming, disarming way of dealing with Northern Ireland's wearying historic divisions. Passing through Derry, he muses on the different names of that much fought-over city. Not surprisingly, he likes the "wise joke" of calling Derry/Londonderry 'Stroke City'. "Wise because it recognises the city's character in its duality, hence the need to engineer labels in the first place. Stroke City makes the 'r' the most important part of the name, suggesting it's the most important thing happening here. The act of encounter is the city's foundation."

If he is wise, he is also brave. Not content with traipsing the length of the border – through forests and farmyards, across bogs and mountains – he ends with a scarifying night-time canoe journey (with Paddy) across the mouth of the Foyle, landing beside a pub near Magilligan, where the barmen line up respectfully to serve these two ragamuffins. "Both Paddy and I have wet hair and grimy hands; everyone can see we've come a long way."

ANDY POLLAK

**Former Director,
Centre for Cross Border Studies**

Postscript:

the Centre for Cross Border Studies can take a tiny bit of credit for Garret Carr's wonderful book. Some years ago a panel of university presidents – representing the all-island body Universities Ireland, which the Centre administers – were deciding who to award bursaries to as part of a North-South scholarship scheme. We persuaded them to sponsor Carr, then not a mainstream academic, to begin mapping the border and researching this book, although he was only loosely affiliated to Queen's University Belfast (where he is now a lecturer in creative writing).

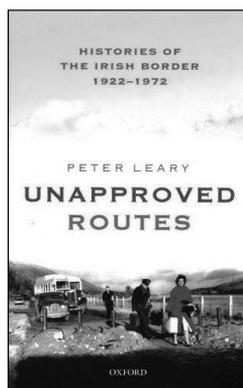
**Unapproved Routes:
Histories of the Irish Border
1922-1972**

Peter Leary

Oxford University Press (2016)

£25.00 (hbk) pp 252

ISBN 9780198778578 (hbk)



Peter Leary's book on unapproved routes is an insightful read, especially in the context of Brexit and the possibility of a reinstatement of a 'harder' border between Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which remains a member state of the European Union. The book provides a fascinating view of elements of border life through a 50-year period in the middle of the twentieth century from partition to the onset of 'the Troubles'. It does this by providing what it terms a 'series of little histories' of what life was like on the border during periods of socio-political change and turmoil. These are captured through a number of diverse events and activities, such as the work of the Irish Boundary Commission, fishing rights on the Lough and River Foyle, cockfighting,

smuggling and the closing of border roads. The author, Peter Leary, is from the border county of Fermanagh, growing up in the county town of Enniskillen. He has completed a PhD in Irish history in Queen's University Belfast on which this book is based. The book is beautifully illustrated throughout with old photographs and maps depicting border scenes in the time frame of the book in the 1920s to 1970s. As expected in a book derived from a PhD thesis, it is meticulously referenced so that the interested reader can follow up on the wide range of international, national and local sources drawn upon by Leary.

The first substantive chapter discusses the role of the ill-fated Boundary Commission, describing how the 500 kilometres long boundary between the six counties and the twenty six was to be established, but this account is really just a backdrop to an 'on the ground' exposition of the complications of daily living, such as shopping and trading, across a border which broke up natural hinterlands. There is discussion of Protestant and Catholic divisions in terms of land ownership, workers and natural alliances. The politics of space, as 'a world ripped apart by the creation of the border' and the politics of time are considered, including the conditions where you could only cross the border in daylight hours, unless you paid an additional charge, complicated by a difference in GMT in Northern Ireland and Dublin time in the Republic.

The second chapter traces the history of fishing on the River and Lough Foyle post-partition, culminating in the establishment of the first cross-border body, the Foyle Fisheries Commission. Fishing took place from both sides of the Foyle, with much of the fishing on the Donegal side being illegal, with officials on both the northern side and the southern side having

difficulty enforcing fishing rights. The Second World War compounded illegal activity with trade from County Donegal in the Republic to the British naval vessels in Lough Foyle, and fish becoming a valuable commodity, so that fishing moved up Foyle River. Again Leary uses his interest in class and locality to highlight the leverage of the less well-off to exert influence stating that 'not for the last time communities otherwise marginalized both by partition and by social standing had used the border to acquire leverage and opportunities they had previously been denied'.

Chapter three, on cockfighting, documents a rather unusual minority activity, carried on throughout the island but prevalent in the border region at the time. The border facilitated this illegal activity in that it was fairly remote from the Dublin-Belfast official axis and its undulating terrain made it suitable for such an activity to take place under the radar of local officialdom. Leary recounts occasions where cockfighting events would be disrupted by the Gardai whereupon everyone would run across the border where the Gardai had no jurisdiction and vice versa, referred to as 'border hide and seek', and captured by the image that 'there are strange ways to learn the idiosyncrasies of international boundaries, but fleeing breathlessly from the Gardai with a rooster under your arm while looking desperately for sight of a red post-box has got to be one of the oddest'. While the perceptible focus of the chapter is on cockfighting the underlying issues pertain to class (where the 'poor' could defeat their landlords and masters in cockfights), gender (cockfighting is associated with masculinity and those who wanted to stop it were referred to as 'old dames'), and nationalism (to counter British laws).

The fourth chapter deals with smuggling which continues to receive national, and local, attention to this day because of its economic implications. A number of themes run through this chapter, where smuggling is articulated as a 'quintessential borderland activity' and 'smugglers and borders are conjoined twins'. Smuggling extends from small scale concealed domestic items to large scale commercial operations, with much of the chapter concerned with the small scale but widespread smuggling across the border, in both directions. Smuggling is seen as an opportunistic activity, which despite the risks (and excitement) can reduce 'direct reliance on the farm and home economy', as well as giving a degree of independence from oft-times constrained circumstances. An interesting part of the chapter is the attention given to the role of women in smuggling captured by the need for 'interlock knickers with good elastic in the legs' and the 'shopping bag' economy where many women, across the social classes, smuggled food and cosmetics across the border in both directions and who may have intimidated customs officials, as 'flirtatious young women passing through the male dominated patrols'. Because it was widespread a 'culture of complicity developed' towards smuggling in the borderlands and there was little social stigma attached to it, with a 'moral distinction drawn between commercial and domestic activities'.

Chapter five concerns the roads which cross the border where Leary espouses the French philosopher Foucault's concepts of 'governmentality' arguing that the 'lived experience of the Irish border was permeated by the separation, divergence and peculiar penetrations of rival state structures with elements of civil society'. In the chapter he describes how

the patterns of daily life were affected by border closures and how the local populace dealt with this, situating it within the roles of local and national governance. He presents roads as 'police', as 'politics' and as 'rebels'. As 'police' the border roads were initially to bring a sense of control to these 'lawless' rural areas following partition so that 'by the early twentieth century what became the Irish border was furnished with one of the densest rural road networks ... in Western Europe'. The introduction of customs controls after 1923 was accompanied by agreements between London and Dublin which divided border roads into: 'approved crossings' of which there were about 16 with customs facilities with most of the rest (about 150) 'unapproved' where people were allowed to pass across the border on foot, by bicycle or horse drawn carriage so long as they had no taxable items, and giving the book its title! Roads as 'politics', as the name suggests, discusses London and Dublin's approach to road closures so that 'farmers fields and shopping trips became the stuff of diplomatic relations'. Roads as 'rebels' refers to local people pulling up the spikes used to close the roads as 'social contacts and commercial contacts must be maintained ... the bingo crowds and the dance crowds and the shopping crowds must continue to cross ... life must go on', even though British Army personnel replaced the spikes each day.

In a concluding chapter on hegemony and the histories of the everyday Leary notes that while on the border state structures such as uniformed agents, road blocks and the built environment were visible to an 'uncommon degree' their limitations were also exposed by border residents who, while living in circumstances that were 'burdened by inconvenience and imposition' also gave them choices. Leary

argues that the border was much more complex than a line on a map, and that the political structures created by the border cannot be viewed in isolation from the 'lived realities with which they interact'. His 'little histories' of the Irish border offers insights into not only territorial politics, 'but also the interpenetrations of such diverse questions as property and gender, young people, agrarian culture, and the social impact of motor transport'.

Overall, the book is a compelling, and in some places humorous, insight into the impositions the border placed on people's lives but also the opportunities it gave them to create better and more interesting circumstances for themselves, even though this may have entailed some element of difficulty and risk, but also excitement, and which often galvanised communities. A recommended read for people interested in the daily routines of other people's lives, intertwined with border politics at local and national levels.

DR HELEN JOHNSTON

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**Senior Social Policy Analyst,
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Dynamics of Political Change in Ireland: *Making and Breaking a Divided Ireland*

**Niall Ó Dochartaigh, Katy Hayward
and Elizabeth Meehan (Editors)**

Routledge (2017)
£110 (Hbk) £35.99 (ebook) 230 pp
ISBN 9781 138 196001 (hdbk)
9781315638065 (ebook)



John Coakley is a fine example of an academic who not only contributes to the understanding of relationships between and within Britain and Ireland, but also got involved in proactively addressing them. As an example, he joined with The Centre for Cross Border Studies and Co-operation Ireland in a programme of developing understanding and better relationships between public servants in the heady days after the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

This book, which is dedicated 'in fond appreciation of his multifaceted contributions', and which originated with a conference which marked his retirement from his role as Director of the Institute for

British-Irish Studies, is a fitting tribute to him. It examines the interrelated dynamics of political action, ideology and state structures in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, taking into account the UK and European contexts and bringing together contributions that cross divisions between history, party and borders in order to understand connections between structures, culture and action in politics on the island. Completed after the UK Brexit referendum of June 2016, it is able to reflect on the potential consequences of that decision, and the implications of Brexit hang heavily over the book.

Brendan O’Leary offers a useful context and review of the contributors in his foreword, pointing out that the feared consequences of the decade of centenaries have been much less consequential than the referendums held in the UK in 2014 and 2016. (Since his writing, one could add the Stormont and UK elections of 2017 and the ineptness of the UK Brexit negotiations.) Granting that the 1998 and 2007 agreements were possible because the political leaders were able to make and keep bargains, felt obliged to co-operate, had sufficient autonomy and were free of threats of being out flanked, he then suggests the ‘grim but necessary thought’: that the resulting quiescent Northern Ireland matters less in London and Dublin. He highlights two developments that would have seemed unlikely four decades ago. These are the secularisation of Catholic Ireland and the significant changes in the demographic composition of the island, involving both an increase in the proportion of cultural Catholics in Northern Ireland and in the arrival of citizens from elsewhere in the EU. He then questions what will be the long term effect of these changes.

The book is in three sections exploring first the broad regional and geopolitical framework, then considering the effects of internal and external forces on politics on the island, and finally considering the new political dynamics and the extent to which they cut across the old divisions.

In the first section, Paul Arthur highlights the change in relationships between Britain and Ireland which grew out of the involvement of third parties – the United States and crucially the European Union. Bridget Laffan then explores the contribution of the European Union in greater depth and raises the concern that the referendum result will accentuate the significance of two states co-existing on the island of Ireland concluding that ‘both islands face a more uncertain future than at any time since 1973.’ Jennifer Todd also emphasises the importance of the international dimension of the Agreement but opens with a reminder that, although since 1990 there has been an increase in conflicts ending in settlements rather than victories for either side, there is a high rate of recurrence of violence. She notes that the recidivist rate for negotiated settlements since the Second World War is nearly 60%. Her concern is that the values established in the Agreement have not been followed in practice and that ‘the settlement remains vulnerable to a changing international context.’ Peter McLoughlin concludes this section by focussing on the importance of the gradual growth in confidence and trust between the British and Irish governments, noting in particular the long term impact of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. In sharing the concern over Brexit, he notes two reasons for optimism – the fact that the regional parties had, at the time of writing, successfully managed most aspects of Northern Ireland’s governance and that it has been clearly

demonstrated that intergovernmentalism, shared sovereignty and cross-border co-operation are essential to the stabilisation of Northern Ireland. Developments in the last year may undermine some of this optimism.

The next contributors consider internal and external forces on politics in the island. Joe Ruane considers how the different jurisdictions have handled crises – the economic crisis in the South; the political crisis in the North – and questions whether a crisis on one side of the border could ever interact with the other side and escalate into an island-wide crisis. He concludes that there is not a single integrated model for the island as a whole. Michael Gallagher examines the changing face of electoral competition in the South, pointing out that since the high point of November 1982 the dominance of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael has declined. Jonathan Tonge analyses ‘the considerable extent of change in the main political parties on the island of Ireland,’ stating that all the main parties have undertaken significant new thinking on Northern Ireland and revised their all-island perspective. He concludes that this reflects the fact that ‘political parties could not function adequately in the twenty-first century on the basis of ideological positions rooted in a grievance nearly a century old.’ John Garry examines the support base of Sinn Féin north and south of the border. He describes the party as nationalist in the North and socialist in the South and considers the difficulties in operating in two separate party systems and sets of institutions. He adds that the island of Ireland may be a valuable resource for international scholars to test the influence of jurisdictional context on political behaviour.

Two contributors in the final section – Yvonne Galligan and Melanie Hoewer – consider the issues of gender inequality and women’s activism. Yvonne Galligan highlights that conservatism of political and societal cultures impeded women’s political representation into the twenty first century, but concludes that ‘perhaps finally the party systems ... are becoming responsive to women’s inclusion in democratic politics.’ Melanie Hoewer, looking at women’s organisations and networks on the island, notes that ‘it was not until the peace process was well established and national and international reports highlighting issues of gender equality were gaining mainstream attention that spaces for women’s activism across the border were sought and created.’ She echoes comments made by earlier contributors in stressing the importance of the international context. Drawing on his experience as former director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, Andy Pollak reviews North-South co-operation since the Belfast Agreement, opening with a comment that the high hopes of 1998 have been disappointed by the *realpolitik* of Northern Ireland politics and Republic of Ireland economics. He also highlights a reduction in interest by the Irish government after the change in government in 2011. One quote from a civil servant is perhaps more telling now than when the article was written. ‘Leo (Varadkar) didn’t have the same depth of interest in the North as Fianna Fáil ministers.’ While giving some examples of successes, he notes that there is a lack of sustainability and concludes with a downbeat quote from a senior Irish official that the modest pace for North-South co-operation is all that could be expected. In the final article, Katy Hayward and Kevin Howard look at broader issues of multiculturalism and draw the depressing conclusion that while the Agreement

offered the potential for the recognition of cultural diversity these freedoms were quickly interpreted as a threat with the lines of exclusion once more drawn.

There is so much stimulus for thought in this book that it is difficult to do it justice in a short review. It should be widely read and the ideas in it discussed, considered, and used to inform and shape policy. It is unfortunate that the price is so high that it will not achieve the readership it deserves. I hope that some way can be found to make it available to a wider audience.

TONY KENNEDY

**Board Member,
Centre for Cross Border Studies**

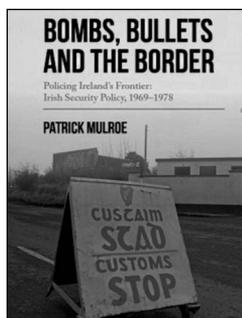
Bombs, Bullets and the Border: *Policing Ireland's Frontier: Irish Security Policy, 1969- 1978*

Patrick Mulroe

Irish Academic Press (2017)

£22.99 296 pp.

ISBN 978-1-911024-49-1



In an effort to reassure residents in Northern Ireland about the potential impact of Brexit following the result of the June 2016 referendum, Prime Minister May asserted that there would be 'no return to the borders of the past'.ⁱ In so doing, she inadvertently evoked the kind of militarised images that we had all assumed would never – but *never* – have a place on this island again. Interestingly enough (as research I recently conducted for the *Bordering on Brexit* project revealed, see this Issue), memories of watchtowers, armed soldiers, blown-up bridges and 'dragons' teeth' road blocks are all too easily provoked by the mere mention of 'border controls'. This is especially the case for those living closest to it.

The fact that a border is not a barrier but a point of connection, where experience on one side has ramifications for those on the other, becomes most apparent in dramatic times. The period in which the border changed from being relatively open (the distinction between approved and unapproved roads notwithstanding) into being a highly securitised, dangerous place is the subject of this superb book by Patrick Mulroe. What Mulroe's meticulous study encapsulates is the way that, even as the border became 'harder' and more secure, so there remained a close connection between experience on either side of it. In this way, the border continued to be more of a 'membrane' than a barricade.

The effort of trying to manage this interconnection was the unenviable and un-sought-after task of the Irish security forces from 1969 onwards. This is a fascinating and timely book on the securitisation of the Irish border during the first decade of the Troubles. It is very well-written, presenting an enormous amount of archival material in a way that is always engaging and never overwhelming. The author's arguments are woven throughout the book, sustained and explained by evidence; I will attempt to elaborate just a few key ones here.

Border as membrane not barricade

First, to pick up on the point above: the border is a point of connection and infiltration between two jurisdictions. It is unsurprising that the predominant ambition for Irish security from the earliest stages of the Troubles was to keep the conflict 'contained' to the six counties (p.55), never an achievable aim. We see this in the way that, as peace and stability in the North unravelled, so the South too became embroiled in related political instability and crises. We also see it in the

lives of individuals that were taken away by violence that would have been inconceivable just a short time beforehand.

Close ties and connections across these islands became transformed into routes and means of danger. Some of the most poignant parts of this book are in the sentences noting the deaths in Belfast of young men from the southern border counties, killed as serving soldiers of the British Army in Northern Ireland. Similarly serving officers of the RUC and UDR living in the southern border counties found themselves in direct danger. Indeed, one of the first signs of the growing danger of the border region was the vivid danger posed to those with any connection to the British security forces as they traversed the border, even if it was a crossing they made as part of their daily, unremarkable routine.

Similarly, a clamp down in Northern Ireland on Irish republicans through Operation Motorman (creating no-go areas in certain urban spaces) spurred the movement of IRA personnel south across the border, which had its own knock-on effects in the South (p.74). In fact, much of what the British security forces did in the North shaped the work and risks for Irish police and security forces, even indirectly. And in direct terms, the Irish security forces found themselves called to witness (if not intervene) as British army bullets and CS gas strayed across the border as 'inadvertent' effects of efforts to restore order in the northern border areas.

In one striking example, Mulroe recalls a two hour gun battle across the Armagh/Louth border at Dungooley in January 1972 in which the British Army fired 2500 rounds at the IRA on the southern side. There was a presence from

the Gardaí and (belatedly) Irish Army on the other side, who observed the whole event, purportedly with the intention of capturing IRA suspects but in the end, despite questioning a few young men leaving the area, no arrests were made by the Gardaí (p.95). Such inaction was the norm. The Gardaí were not seen as actively defending the local southern border communities, even as loyalist violence in the North increased dramatically and occasionally spilled over across the border.

The securitisation of the border

Secondly, this book offers a timely correction to any simplistic impression of how the border became a hard border during the Troubles. Mulroe notes that the early securitisation of the border, at least from the other side, was predicated mainly in official rhetoric. Lynch's August 1969 speech in which he said the Irish Government 'can no longer stand by' was, it soon became clear, not a call to (or promise of) action, but a substitute for the same. In the meantime, relative peace and normality persisted. There were virtually no shooting incidents in the first years of the Troubles; neither were there arms seizures or displays of public hostility between the Gardaí and IRA (p.22).

By 1973/4, however, violence spread along the border. This was in part a consequence of the targeting of certain groups of people, and in part an effect of the rapid securitisation of society in the North, which had direct consequences across the border. In 1973, a young Donegal man was shot and killed by the RUC at the border in Pettigoe after a car chase; the reason he fled was not for any paramilitary connections but because he had been disqualified from driving (p.145).

Suddenly otherwise insignificant actions or daily choices had fatal consequences – and the integration of life in the border region meant that these spread into the south. By 1975, the Miami Showband massacre epitomised the depravity of violence around the border, with paramilitaries taking on the identities of security forces (and even colluding with them in some cases) to wreak new levels of fear and danger into the border region. By 1976, the IRA classified any 'Free State civil servant' in the 'occupied area' involved in 'prosecuting a case' against a 'republican prisoner of war' as a legitimate target (p.164). The lines between civilians and security forces and paramilitaries on both sides of the border were being deliberately blurred.

The difficulties in British-Irish security cooperation

Domestic political pressure from the South forced high-level constraints on cooperation between security forces on either side of the border. At the start, Mulroe explains, the Gardaí did not know how to deal with republicans; by 1975 they had a fairly clear strategy in place, thanks to greater clarity and determination from the political echelons. However, on the matter of dealing with their British counterparts, they remained far less clear and policy was ill-defined (p.59, 109). Any cooperation, Mulroe claims, was 'restricted, cautious and covert' (p.165). The British found that the degree of cooperation they could expect from the Irish in relation to any one incident was largely determined by the effect that it would have on the southern side of the Irish border (p.158).

And from the perspective of locals in the border region, the Gardaí played an awkward role. Mulroe explains how, as Laurence McKeown's play *Green and Blue*

portrays so well, many a Garda felt uncomfortable and unwelcome in the border villages. Their tactics in these early days were based on personnel and 'eyes and ears' policing rather than resources. They patrolled roads, rather than spiked them. And when the British cratered border roads (an act which Minister Des O'Malley blamed squarely for the escalation in violence in the area), Gardaí did not intervene in public efforts to reopen them, which Mulroe describes as being often accompanied by 'stone throwing' (p.92).

The political constraints on security policy and action

As the security forces became better organised and prepared in the South, so the spontaneity of early political efforts to respond to the crisis became a thing of the past. Mulroe's description of Minister Patrick Hillery's unexpected visit to the Falls Road on 11 July 1970 is wonderful, not only because of its apparently unplanned nature (the date is conspicuously risky), but because Mulroe explains it as being part of a conscious effort to outflank the so-called (Neil) Blaney faction (p.33). Indeed, much top-level Irish Government policy at the start of the Troubles reflected intra-Fianna Fáil struggles, of which the Arms Trial was but a symptom of a much more profound problem. Mulroe's grasp of the political machinations and game-playing makes his description of the changing security environment all the more engaging and convincing.

In the detail, we see the uniquely difficult position of Irish political leaders, caught between factions of their own party, public opinion, and the need to produce a solid basis for trust and cooperation with the British Government. Amid all this, Mulroe argues, the Irish State was

operating at this time from a position of weakness, obsessed by internal threat (p.232.). 'The IRA had to be defeated while the nationalist image of the State had to be maintained. There were occasions when these two aims conflicted' and this resulted in poor decision-making and planning that no doubt had effects on security and stability in the border region in the 1970s (p6).

Overall, this brilliant but sobering read brings with it most sobering thoughts: how quickly cross-border connections can be damaged by violence and rumours of violence, how rapidly the inconceivable can become routine, how deep runs the legacy of the 'borders of the past'.

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ⁱ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/kenny-and-may-agree-no-return-to-hard-border-after-brex-it-1.2734884>

EU Cohesion Policy: Re-assessing Performance and Direction

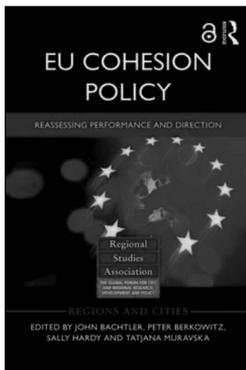
**John Bachtler, Peter Berkowitz,
Sally Hardy and Tatjana Muravska
(Editors)**

Regional Studies Association,
Routledge (2016)
£105.00 Hdbk320pp

Open Access version:

<http://www.tandfebooks.com/doi/view/10.4324/9781315401867>

ISBN 978-1-138-22464-3



The Cohesion Policy of the European Union is the policy instrument that underpins the funding of projects in less well-off European regions and member states by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund itself. In the latest programming period from 2007 to 2013, around €340bn was earmarked for expenditure across all Member States, of which just over half was allocated to the 10 new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe.

This expenditure by the European Structural Funds has stimulated very significant investment across a wide range of sectors in all member states, much of it focussed on regional economic development. In the two parts of the island of Ireland we are familiar with the funding over a long period for investment in transport systems and other major public and private infrastructure, industrial development, R&D and innovation support as well as ESF-funded employment and training initiatives. Some or all of this investment would not otherwise have taken place, although in the UK the Treasury has tended to regard European funds as simply recovering funds that have already been contributed and there is an ongoing (and probably unresolvable) debate over the degree of additionality of the funding.

Despite the long history of Cohesion Policy and the scale of the investment associated with it, the Policy has long been the subject of criticism for its lack of effectiveness in achieving what are its very ambitious objectives. In broad terms there remain doubts over the extent to which it has contributed to reducing the gap in levels of GDP per capita between the poorest and wealthiest parts of the European Union.

A fundamental review of the Policy has been long overdue and this took place during the second half of the last programming period. As a result, there have been major changes to the Policy for the 2014-2020 programming period, seeking to align the objectives of the policy more closely with the priorities of the EU as expressed in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This volume brings together a selection of papers from a conference that took place in Riga, Latvia in February 2015 to discuss the challenges facing the new Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020. As such it must be regarded as essential reading for both academics and policymakers involved with the administration and evaluation of European Structural Funds and all those concerned with regional economic development across European regions.

The risk with a book like this that assesses the performance of a policy that has not fully delivered is that it will wallow in a relentlessly dismal reporting of a history of relative failure. However, the editors have avoided this, first, by choosing papers that report on success as well as failure and, second, by asking the authors to conclude by reflecting on the lessons of their research for future programming.

The opening 'keynote' paper by John Bachtler and his colleagues goes straight to the heart of the issue, reporting on a major study assessing the achievements of the ERDF over the last four programming periods since 1989. For anyone familiar with the carefully structured nature of European programmes, their intervention logic and the comprehensive evaluation procedures that are put in place will know that there is plenty of evidence for such a study. The paper includes an interesting summary analysis of the effectiveness of different expenditure categories with broadly positive results from infrastructure, tourism and entrepreneurship interventions but with more mixed results from expenditure on, for example, business parks and environmental measures.

But it is perhaps surprising that the conclusions of this research confirm the failings of Cohesion Policy as '*a lack of*

conceptual thinking or strategic justification for programmes' and '*programme objectives that were neither specific nor measurable due to a lack of quantified targets and inadequate monitoring'*. Less surprising is the third failing identified of '*deficiencies across most areas of management to varying degrees'*.

Despite this indictment, the researchers point to evidence of improvement over time and increasing adoption of what is regarded as good practice. They argue the need for a greater concentration of resources and for coherent strategies that are based on an understanding of the distinctive strengths and weaknesses of individual regions.

At the micro level, an evidence-packed paper by Grzegorz Gorzelak on the impact of Cohesion Policy on regional development in Poland concludes that EU funds have had more impact socially, improving living standards and the state of the environment, than on local growth conditions. This reinforces the need to integrate infrastructure funding more closely with business development and innovation which is being addressed directly in the new 2014-2020 Programme.

The second group of papers addresses more directly the new direction of Cohesion Policy which links it directly to the objectives of Europe 2020 – smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. A paper by Henning Kroll reflects on the potential impact of the new 'smart specialisation strategies' proposed by the new approach and based on the experience of different member states. The study, based on two Europe-wide online surveys, concludes that the effectiveness of these strategies is directly linked to institutional

arrangements and governance capacities. Two other papers on the impact of Structural Funds on youth unemployment also highlight the importance of institutional arrangements. One of these by Sanderson, Wells and Wilson suggests the potential for co-design and co-production in the design and delivery of such programmes. One of the consistent themes of European funding has been gender mainstreaming and it is disappointing that a paper by McSorley and Campbell reports evidence that this has been largely unsuccessful, albeit based on a small sample of Structural Funds projects in Scotland.

In many ways, the most interesting set of papers in this book are found in the third section which deals with the administration and delivery of Cohesion Policy. These include an econometric analysis of corruption in EU-funded public procurement across 27 member states (excluding Malta which is considered too small to be included), a study of administrative and political “embeddedness” in new member states and evidence on the extent to which funding in Poland and Hungary has rewarded the wealthy and most politically loyal. Perhaps it should not be a surprise that all these papers highlight the importance of institutional and governance arrangements, which vary widely across Europe, and the need to tailor Cohesion Policy to the very different circumstances in which it is delivered.

In view of the importance of these European funds to both Northern Ireland and other UK regions, it is perhaps surprising that the discussion of the impact of Structural Funds on UK regions did not feature more strongly in the recent Brexit debates. It is also ironic that over one third of the authors of the papers in

this book are based at British universities. At the same time, regional development policy in the UK has virtually disappeared and has largely been replaced by city growth strategies.

How disappointing then that, when Europe is on the verge of re-inventing and re-shaping its regional policy and when British researchers are making an important contribution to this debate, the UK chooses to depart the stage!

PHILIP McDONAGH

**Board Member,
Centre for Cross Border**

Beyond Brexit? *How to assess the UK's future*

Janice Morphet

Polity Press Insights
 Bristol and Chicago: (2017)
 pp. 173. £9.99
 ISBN 978-14473-3924-3 (pbk)
 978-1-4473-3926-7 (ePub)



To assess the UK's future outside the European Union, you need to know its current situation within the EU and the possible future relationship. This is exactly what Janice Morphet provides in describing the UK's journey to membership of the EU as well as to the Referendum on exiting the EU, the current institutional relationships, possible models for a future relationship, what will stay the same, the changes and an overview of the likely consequences for the UK as well as for the EU. This ambitious attempt to systematically portray and correlate a diverse range of subject matters succeeds and manages to give each topic appropriate space without losing itself in detail.

Moreover, this book conveys a sense of the complexity of Brexit as well as the strong and deep relationship between the UK and the EU which has been built during the last four decades. While highlighting repeatedly people's lack of understanding of the relationship between the EU and the UK, the author offers a context for the ongoing negotiations and likely impacts on future policies that manages to address this knowledge gap. *"One of the unintended consequences of this period is that all involved will have a much greater understanding of the way in which the EU works than has been available over the last 45 years. There may also be some realisation that the failure to engage with the EU processes and discussions in a more open way in the UK has brought about the current division in the country."* (p. 170). Likewise, this book offers a clear understanding of the framework conditions of the withdrawal and the interaction of the various levels of governance in the EU.

The first three chapters impart the necessary knowledge to fully understand the most discussed models for a future institutional relationship as well as to properly classify the outcome of the Referendum and the changes caused by Brexit and their lasting impacts. The volume begins with an introduction into the relevant historical, political, constitutional and legal spheres, as well as an institutional overview to better understand the reasons for Brexit, some of the impacts the book focuses on in subsequent chapters, and the relationship between the UK, its constituent nations and the EU. After that, the author takes a closer look at the mutual importance of UK membership of the EU, particularly the financial costs and societal price of the UK's membership. The author argues that the price the UK paid for joining the EU

was to subscribe to the principles of economic and social cohesion and giving up some sovereignty in return for trading opportunities in a tariff free market and working together on borderless issues such as the environment.

Morphet also examines the effects of exiting the European Union on the UK's devolved administrations. She shows that a major issue will be the extent to which the devolved governments will retain existing powers of decision-making over the implementation of legislation or whether a new set of powers will need to be identified. In addition, she problematises the abolition of the principle of subsidiarity, currently guaranteeing devolution, which could lead to a pressure for central government to retain powers returning from Brussels that should belong to the devolved administrations. Moreover, the book claims that the nations of the UK and the crown dependencies should be involved in the negotiations as their foundational legislation is fundamentally affected by Brexit.

The author identifies as particular impacts for Northern Ireland, where the population voted to remain in the EU, the EU's financial contribution through funding like the PEACE programme, the border and the Common Travel Area as well as the Good Friday Agreement, whilst also well considering the possible consequences for Ireland given its peripherality in the EU and strong economic relationship to the UK. Morphet also notes the role of the different negotiators from the UK, Ireland, the EU and the US involved in the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement. One of them is Michel Barnier, Chief Negotiator of the European Commission for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

Chapter three puts the possible post-Brexit models in a nutshell with a very precise description of the differences between the several possible models and an assessment of the feasibility for each one. In addition, the author gives an assessment of the probability of the respective models and the most important changes in different policy areas that they would bring about. Chapter four suggests several governmental actions which need to be undertaken in uncertain times in order to stabilise the country, in particular in relation to the economy. These actions include investments in local provision of energy, increasing landlord regulation and improving security of tenure in the rented market and re-inventing the welfare state. Furthermore, the author explores the core issues debated during the Referendum campaign, such as the pressures on the NHS and increased EU migration. This section shows not only the impacts already being felt after the Referendum result, but also places them within their national and European dimensions.

The following three chapters look at what will stay the same, what will be lost and what will be foregone after the UK has left the EU. The author outlines on the one hand the remaining institutional frameworks, as the UK continues as a member of international organisations such as the OECD and the WTO. On the other hand, Morphet describes a more detailed and more concrete level by pointing out that in some policy areas the loss will be immediate like trade deals with third countries or access to funding programmes like Horizon 2020, R&D funding or programmes used by the UK's universities and research bodies. Furthermore, people in the UK will no longer be able to call on the European Court of Justice to control the work of the government, for example in

environmental policies: *“After Brexit, citizens will no longer be able to apply to the EU to enforce environmental standards.”* (p. 146-147)

The closing chapter with the title “How can we assess the future beyond Brexit” boils the current Brexit discussion as well as the purpose of the book down to its essence: *“It is difficult to predict which of these many options, and as many more not yet thought of, might affect and influence the negotiations between the UK and EU. Assessing what the UK will look like beyond Brexit is difficult but this book has provided a framework for understanding what the influences, implications and outcomes of these negotiations might be in the coming months and years.”* (p. 173).

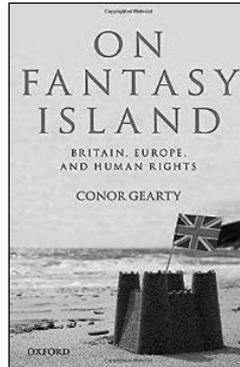
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On Fantasy Island: Britain, Europe, and Human Rights

Conor Gearty

Oxford University Press (2016)
£18.99 Hbk 233 pp
ISBN 978-0-19-878763-1



A few days before the recent UK General Election, in the wake of the London Bridge terrorist attacks, United Kingdom Prime Minister Theresa May, announced that if human rights laws prevented her government from deporting terrorists she would change them. It was a clear contemporary signal of the historic value her party and now her government place on human rights legislation. (p.xiii) In the 2015 UK General Election, the Conservative party had pledged to hold a referendum on membership of the EU and the repealing of the Human Rights Act (HRA) to be replaced by a UK Bill of Rights; something its coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats, had stymied in 2010. With Brexit now an all too present reality, the next casualty could well be the HRA and the treaty which underpins it, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This is the loaded context into

which Professor of Human Rights Law at the London School of Economics, Conor Gearty has launched his latest book, *On Fantasy Island: Britain, Europe, and Human Rights*. It is not so much an apologia as an energetic and spirited riposte to the HRA's detractors and an exposé of the fallacies on which their disapproval is grounded.

The genesis of the European Convention on Human Rights was in the normalisation of peace following World War II. Britain was not only a founder member but was active in its drafting and the then Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill a proponent. (p.175) The stipulations of the convention should in any democracy be deemed uncontroversial, including the right to life, prohibition of torture and slavery, the right to a fair trial and freedom of expression etc. However, as Gearty highlights the cases which provoke much outrage, fueled by the tabloid media, (p.100) are those which test the democratic limits of society eg whether prisoners should be entitled to a vote. (p.76)

Professor Gearty is a valiant advocate for the ECHR and all it has engendered. This book is a candid, eloquent, insightful elucidation of what to most would be an esoteric subject matter albeit one that has inextricably moulded contemporary society. His style is eloquent, witty, impertinent and mercifully succinct unlike his professional bed-fellows at whom he takes issue – particularly in a gentle, humorous, chiding exposition of a lecture by a colossus of contemporaneous jurisprudence, Oxford University Emeritus Professor, John Finnis. (p.18ff) This reveals the approach for the whole volume in which his analysis is presented in an engaging, conversational and amusing tone of voice. Positively demonstrated in

his description of how Britain has reacted, on those rare occasions, to an adverse European Human Rights ruling, behaving “like an agitated parent on the edges of a children’s football match, disagreeing with the flow of play, calling for special treatment for their beloved from time to time, screaming abuse on occasion, but never quite pulling their child away.” (p.178)

Gearty’s espoused objective is, despite the “current stay of execution”, to establish “the true place of the Human Rights Act in Britain.” (p.13) His methodology is simply to expose the “fantasies” which form the foundations for an overall negative appraisal of the HRA which when conflated together become this negative image of a “fantasy island”, from where the title originates. His intent is therefore to undermine the premise of these myths so that reality can be resolved from such fantasy. He adroitly utilises both case law and political history to demonstrate the necessity but insufficiency of the common law in the protection of human rights.

The book is minimally sub-divided into three easily distinguishable but interrelated parts. An initial assessment of “The Fantasies” (p.15ff) followed by a review of “The Facts” (p.129ff) and completed by an assessment of “The Future” (p.185ff), all bookended by a brief introduction (p.1) and conclusion. (p.213ff) Gearty directs the vast majority of his consideration to undermining the fallacies surrounding the HRA. Through a review of Europe’s human rights legislation he itemises and invalidates some widely held myths – the supposed triple supremacy of “the Human Rights Act”, (p.65ff) “the judges”, (p.81ff) and “Strasbourg” (p.97ff) together misrepresented as “a charter for the bad.” (p.113ff) He dismisses these fallacies

demonstrating they are the inevitable consequence of a misunderstanding of how the HRA functions.

Gearty clarifies how the HRA is different from other approaches, including the US Bill of Rights, which enable the courts to rescind legislation infringing on particular rights. (p.85) The HRA requires the British judiciary merely to interpret legislation, as far as possible, to be aligned with the ECHR provisions, while explicitly disallowing the courts from annulling any Act of Parliament. Where the sought alignment is impossible, the only sanction available under the HRA is to issue an incompatibility declaration which does not invalidate any provision of the proposed legislation. (p.70) He highlights an essential but continually overlooked detail by the HRA detractors, that far from being binding, decisions of the European Court are at best advisory. Drawing on several exemplars he substantiates the fact that the HRA is no villain's charter but a responsible and worthy protection for the most vulnerable members of society.

There are two very minor detractions from the overall thesis. First, in his conclusion in delineating a particularly sanguine prophecy should the HRA be repealed, Gearty appears willing to overlook his earlier stance on the necessity but insufficiency of the common law in the protection of human rights. Second, there would appear to be a logical flaw in his argument if the role which the HRA cedes to the ECHR requires the British judiciary to dialogue with, if not be directed by, Strasbourg. Should UK legislation be modified in this dialogue process as it has been historically, then while the Westminster Parliament may remain supreme, his rational underpinning of the supremacy of Strasbourg and the Judiciary both remaining a fallacy, certainly deserve

to be interrogated much more robustly. Despite these quibbles, one can but trust in the prescience of Gearty's Messianic prophesy that the book is a "*preparation for a second coming*" rather than "*an obituary*" for the Human Rights Act. (p.13) This is an accessible, cogent, insightful, compassionately developed argument in support of the Human Rights Act. Professor Gearty's ability to condense data and communicate its importance with intelligence and wit mean *On Fantasy Island* is a compelling read not to be confined to academics or legal scholars, but for anyone with an interest in policy, politics and the pragmatic defense of global human rights.

Let the final word go to a modern champion of civil liberties, Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws QC, in her comment on the dust cover, a "*...forensically brilliant defense... ..Lucid, powerful, advocacy at its finest. A triumph!*"

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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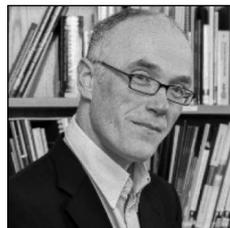
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