

**MAPPING FRONTIERS, PLOTTING PATHWAYS:  
ROUTES TO NORTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION IN  
A DIVIDED ISLAND**

**PROJECT OVERVIEW  
2 JUNE 2005**

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**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Institute for British-Irish Studies  
University College Dublin

Institute of Governance  
Centre for International Borders Research  
Queen's University Belfast

Democratic Dialogue, Belfast

Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh



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programme, funders of the North-South research project  
“Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways: routes to  
North-South cooperation in a divided island”,  
is gratefully acknowledged*

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## THE PROJECT

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The idea for this project arose from the need, recognised by the collaborators, for a systematic and comprehensive research study of the impact of the Irish border on society, in all its formats, in both parts of the island. It was felt that real and sustainable academic engagement with policy-makers and practitioners involved in initiatives and strategies to tackle the issues raised by the border was needed. The North-South programme for Research and Development contributing to Peace and Reconciliation was an ideal opportunity to undertake this research and policy interaction

The project proposal identified that “*the research framework will provide an analytical overview of the scope, complexity and diversity of cross-border contact and of the factors which hinder and facilitate it*”. The *Mapping Frontiers* project then, is a two-year collaborative research initiative on the impact of the Irish border, led by University College Dublin (Institute for British-Irish Studies) and Queen’s University Belfast (Institute of Governance, Centre for International Borders Research). Partners include the Centre for Cross Border Studies, at Armagh, Democratic Dialogue in Belfast and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Dublin.

### ***Project aims***

- to specify and assess factors that help or hinder North-South cross-border contact, both formal and informal
- to inform future policy initiatives on issues such as sustainability, cross-border partnership, the potential for reconciliation and the impact of European Integration.

The project brings a new comparative interdisciplinary perspective to bear on the study of the border, and of its changing impacts over time. Three main themes frame our research:

1. The nature of the Border, in a comparative international perspective
2. The changing impact of the Border at a range of levels (governmental, administrative, other) and in a range of sectors (business, social organisation, other)
3. Tackling the issue of the Border: in particular the role of the European Union in this respect and of more systematic attempts to resolve cross-border issues since 1998.

Our day-to day work falls into four main areas:

- (i) Mapping study of cross-border initiatives and institutions (Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh)

This study documents the extensive but highly fragmented programmes and projects aimed at promoting cross-border co-operation since the mid-1980s. These include programmes funded by the International Fund for Ireland, INTERREG and the Peace and Reconciliation Programme, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and a range of charitable foundations. This unique data resource will provide a picture of "grassroots" contacts, especially those concentrated in the border region of N. Ireland and the Irish border counties. It will provide a major resource for further research and a badly needed audit for policy-makers of the range of funded cross-border activity since the 1980s

- ii) Case studies of attitudes towards the Border and the changing nature of cross-border contacts (Centre for International Borders Research, QUB)

This series of in-depth indicative case studies (including public sector bodies, firms, NGOs, voluntary groups, and mixed projects) probes different forms of cross-border co-operation to analyse four key questions:

- the meaning of "partnership"
- the question of sustainability
- the relationship between informal and formal cross-border co-operation
- the implications for mutual understanding and inter-communal reconciliation

- iii) A survey of secondary sources (printed works and theses) relating to the Irish border, its creation and impact
- iv) Wide-ranging original research on the comparative history of partition in Ireland, and on the impact of the border in a range of sectors and at a range of levels, from 1922 through to the present day.

### ***Project methodology***

Key to the project's success is a high level of interaction with the policy and practitioner communities involved in issues of cross-border cooperation. Grass-roots seminars with local border area stakeholders are convened by the CCBS, Armagh. Regular research workshops also take place between project researchers in Dublin, Belfast and in border locations. Two project conferences were originally scheduled, one of which has just taken place in UCD on 27 May 2005.

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## PROJECT OUTPUT

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### Academic workshops

Research output is presented, discussed and debated among the entire project team at these workshops. Three workshops have been held to date: April 2004, October 2004 and January 2005. Two more will take place in 2005, in June (Dundalk) and September (QUB)

### Grassroots seminars

At these events, members of the project seek to ascertain the views of practitioners and local people on questions raised by research undertaken by the project. Two study groups have been organised to date:

- i) “Partition and the creation of the Irish ‘border region’” Armagh, December 2004
- ii) “Regeneration and Identities on the Border”, Clones, April 2005

A further two groups will be organised on the themes of sustainable economic co-operation, and of issues around mobility, employment and the impact of spatial planning.

### Conferences

Two project conferences were planned; one at mid-term and one towards the close of the project. The first conference has just taken place in UCD, entitled “the North-South Bodies Five Years On”. This conference addressed the issues facing the development of the implementation bodies, designed following the Good Friday agreement to give institutional shape to formal North-South cooperation. An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, TD was the keynote speaker, providing the current Irish Government’s perspective on the future prospects for the North-South cooperative relationship.

The final project conference will be convened at a border location, and will take place in January 2006.

## Working Papers

The project produces working papers in hard copy, which are made available from both the Institute for British-Irish Studies and Queen's University Belfast. These papers are in a pre-publication format and, as such, are considered as "work in progress", open to further revision to appear as journal articles and book chapters if appropriate. These papers are of two kinds i) those first presented within academic research meetings as Discussion Papers and further refined following feedback from research colleagues and participants of grass-roots seminars, and ii) Ancillary Papers, produced by colleagues in association with the project, but not necessarily of the project itself.

A list of papers produced to date is included in this booklet. A selection of abstracts is also included. All abstracts are available on the *Mapping Frontiers* website.

### **Project website: [www.mappingfrontiers.ie](http://www.mappingfrontiers.ie)**

The *Mapping Frontiers* website has been up and running since October 2004, with key project information provided, including biographies of all participants, abstracts of working papers to date, notice of forthcoming workshops and grassroots seminars, and notes of meetings held.

Links to the website are now available from a range of relevant institutions and projects in Ireland and beyond. In addition, a website forum has been established to enable online discussion between project team members and with participants who attended grassroots seminars.

A project leaflet, providing summarised key information and contact details, has been produced and distributed to a wide range of relevant academic and other organisations.

### **Project publication**

An eventual project book is planned. This will incorporate two volumes, information on which will become available on the *Mapping frontiers* website.

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## PUBLICATIONS TO DATE

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### Working papers

1. John Coakley and Liam O'Dowd, The Irish border and North-South cooperation: an overview
2. Kieran Rankin, The creation and consolidation of the Irish border
3. James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, Imperial Disintegration and the Creation of the Irish Border: Imperialism and Nationalism 1885-1925

### Ancillary papers

1. Etain Tannam, Cross-border cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland: neo-functionalism revisited
2. KJ Rankin and R Schofield, The troubled historiography of cross-border terminology
3. John Coakley, Ethnic conflict and the two-state solution: the Irish experience of partition
4. An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, TD, The Future of the North-South relationship
5. Tim O'Connor, The establishment of the North-South institutions
6. Peter Smyth, North-South cooperation since the agreement

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## ABSTRACTS

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### *Working papers*

#### ***1. The Irish Border and North-South Co-operation: an Overview*** —John Coakley and Liam O'Dowd

This paper undertakes a preliminary mapping of the kinds of issues raised by the existence of the Irish border. This is not of merely academic interest: analysis of the conditions which facilitate and inhibit cross-border co-operation responds to important societal needs, especially if accompanied by an exploration of the options for promot-

ing positive north-south contact and co-operation for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the island. Such analysis is, indeed, necessary with a view to informing future policy initiatives, both governmental and non-governmental, that are designed to promote sustainable cross-border partnerships. This requires us to examine the interface between co-operation across the state border and across internal communal borders within Northern Ireland, and to assess the impact of the border as barrier, bridge and source of material costs, benefits and symbolic identity for the peoples on the island

## ***2. The Creation and Consolidation of the Irish Border***

—**KJ Rankin**

This paper helps explain how the Irish Border came to be delimited and why it was confirmed in position. It constitutes an empirical survey and analysis of the origins of partition proposals and a review of contemporaneous policies and philosophies of both individual and collective bodies within a geographical context. The paper initially outlines the Irish Border's physical geography supplemented by basic facts and figures, followed by a brief charting of the political geography of Ireland with specific reference to the province of Ulster. This is important towards understanding perceptions and defining images of Ulster in relation to unionism and nationalism, and appreciating the circumstances the administration in London was eventually compelled to address via partition

### ***Ancillary papers***

#### ***1. Cross-border co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland: Neo-Functionalism revisited***

—**Etain Tannm, Dublin European Institute, UCD**

This article revisits the question of whether the European Union and/or Anglo-Irish policy initiatives have increased cross-border co-operation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The applicability of neo-functionalism to the Irish/Northern Irish case is re-examined in the light of the Good Friday Agreement and EU Peace programmes. The case study provides evidence that, at local level, the EU continues to have a positive impact on levels of co-operation. However, business co-operation between large businesses has not increased. Overall, the GFA and intergovernmental co-operation have had the largest impact on cross-border co-operation. However, although intergovernmentally driven, this impact has implications for traditional concepts of sovereignty. In particular, administrative co-operation has increased and Irish and Northern Irish civil servants enjoy a closer

relationship through the North-South Ministerial Council secretariat. The article concludes that increasing overall cross-border co-operation necessitates a multi-faceted approach and that no one theory appears to explain the Irish/Northern Irish relationship.

## ***2. The troubled historiography of classical boundary terminology***

—**KJ Rankin and R Schofield**

This paper seeks to explore the evolution and mutation of terms and concepts in boundary studies. It re-examines the context and actual letter of some items of classical boundary terminology, developed largely within the half-century period following the appearance of Friedrich Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* in 1897. While traditional political geography's coverage of territorial questions was substantial, the conventional wisdom holds that, in academic terms at least, it was far from enlightened—and has justifiably been criticised for its lack of objectivity, imagination and focus. Yet to dismiss the contributions of this period collectively as negative and deterministic is clearly too simplistic. Many individuals were more far-sighted than is generally recognised—Ratzel himself identified the essential premise of borderland studies some 70 years before it was developed more fully when commenting: “*der Grenzraum ist das Wirkliche, die Grenzlinie die Abstraktion davon*”. The pioneering attempts made to develop a specialised vocabulary for the study of international boundaries and territorial questions have not always been represented accurately or fairly by academics and policy makers. Ideas, good and bad, have been distorted through phraseology, poor translation and simple errors and corrupted for political means—in the latter instance, particularly the pursuit of questionable analogies and ideals, such as the living state organism and natural boundaries. This paper re-examines the rudiments of early territorial conceptions, while acknowledging the historical paradigms in which they originated

## ***3. Ethnic conflict and the two-state solution: the Irish experience of partition***

—**John Coakley**

Although the partition of Ireland in 1921 was only one of several in which this strategy was adopted as Britain withdrew politically from territories formerly under its rule, it was marked by a number of distinctive features. This paper examines and seeks to interpret some of these features. It begins by looking at the roots of partition in the history of Ireland's long political relationship with Great Britain, and explores the emergence of partition as a major question in the early twentieth century. Following a general assessment of the impact of partition on the two parts of Ireland, it turns

to the manner in which partition survived as a political issue up to 1998. Some brief remarks comparing the Irish with the Palestinian experience are made in conclusion.

#### ***4. The future of North-South cooperation***

—**Bertie Ahern, TD, Taoiseach**

This paper emphasises the central role of the Good Friday Agreement as the continuing blueprint for future political developments. The North-South bodies established under its auspices have worked quietly but efficiently for the good of all, North and South. Both parts of the island contribute to the work of the bodies, and both parts gain from it. The work of the bodies is complemented by other initiatives in North-South cooperation. Indeed, long-term economic planning implies the need to consider the whole island for purposes of infrastructural planning. There have been difficulties in the political process, but the common ground achieved by parties as diverse as the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin is more remarkable than the set of issues that divides them, and suggests a potential for positive political development in the longer term.

#### ***5. The establishment of the North/South Ministerial Council and the North/South bodies***

—**Tim O'Connor, Joint Secretary, North/South Secretariat**

This paper sets out the background to the new North-South institutional architecture contained in the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement—the negotiations themselves and the outcome. Given that much of the detail remained to be further worked out after Good Friday, it recounts the talks held in the Autumn of 1998/early 1999, culminating in the Agreement between the two governments establishing the implementation bodies, signed in Dublin Castle on 8 March 1999. The paper outlines the main elements of that agreement, including the nature of the functions and structure of each of the implementation bodies, together with the common arrangements that were to apply to all of them.

#### ***6. North/South cooperation since the agreement***

—**Peter Smyth, Joint Secretary, North/South Secretariat**

This paper continues the story introduced by Tim O'Connor. Because of the sensitivities associated with North-South co-operation, the initial meetings of NSMC were important as much for symbolism as practical outcomes. But as the implementation bodies established themselves, and government departments engaged in the areas of co-operation, the possibilities offered by co-operation for mutual benefit became

more apparent, and NSMC meetings assumed a different and much more meaningful character. The paper looks at the impact of the Assembly's suspension in 2002, and offers a brief look at the wider dimensions of cross-border co-operation.

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF PROJECT MEMBERS

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**James Anderson** (School of Geography, QUB). Main research interests: geopolitics and political geography, state and local territoriality, nationalism and national conflicts, and state borders and cross-border processes

**John Coakley** (Dept of Politics and IBIS). Main research interests: Irish politics, comparative politics, ethnic conflict.

**Ivo Damkat** (research assistant, Centre for International Borders Research, QUB). Ivo's major duty is to undertake in-depth case studies and interviews in cross-border co-operation

**Hastings Donnan** (School of Anthropological Studies, QUB). Main research interests: anthropology of borders, transnationalism and globalization, pilgrimage, Islam and Muslim identity, Pakistan, Ireland.

**Kevin Howard** (post-doctoral fellow, Dept of Politics, UCD). Main research interests: ethnic mobilisation, transnationalism and diaspora politics.

**Eoin Magennis** (post-doctoral research fellow Centre for Cross Border Stud-

ies). Eoin is responsible for the mapping study on cross-border initiatives.

**Cathal McCall** (Lecturer, School of Politics and International Studies, QUB). Main research interests: questions of civic, ethnic and cultural identity in the integrated contexts of Northern Ireland, the island of Ireland, the British Isles and the European Union (EU), EU governance and social capital as applied to the Irish border region and cross-border co-operation, Europeanisation, regionalisation and regionalism.

**Patricia McCarron** (Administrator, IBIS, UCD). Research interests include cross-border governance and economic development within the EU.

**Patrick McWilliams** (Administrator, Institute of Governance, QUB). Main research area is the Ordnance Survey of Ireland.

**Elizabeth Meehan** (Institute of Governance, QUB). Main research interests: citizenship, women, European Union, Northern Ireland and the European Union, citizens' rights and freedom of movement in the EU

**Judit Molnar** (Marie Curie Fellow, School of Geography, QUB). Main research interests: study of the Irish and Hungarian borders in the context of EU integration/expansion

**Liam O'Dowd** (Centre for International Borders Research, QUB). Main research interests include the sociology of borders and border regions, European integration, nationalism, republicanism and unionism in Ireland, theorising borders in sociology; the debate over the future of the national state and nationalism, the growth of neo-imperialism, the sociology of Irish intellectuals and the prospects for a durable peace in Northern Ireland.

**Cormac Ó Gráda** (Dept of Economics, UCD). Main research interests: economic history and the history of economics, the Irish Famine.

**Andy Pollak** (Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh). Main research interests: most aspects of cross-border contact, including education

**Kieran Rankin** (research assistant, IBIS, UCD). PhD thesis "The evolution and entrenchment of the Irish border, 1911 - 1926; a political geography".

**Ian Shuttleworth** (Lecturer, School of Geography, QUB). Main research interests: census analysis, labour markets and labour mobility, and the political economy of transnational migration

**Etain Tannam** (Dept of Politics, Senior Academic Fellow at the Dublin European Institute, UCD). Main research areas: EU and cross-border cooperation, international relations theory, Anglo-Irish relations.

**Jennifer Todd** (Dept of Politics, UCD). Main research interests: Northern Ireland conflict, contemporary ethnic conflict, comparative centre-periphery conflict, globalisation, political identity and identity-change, European regionalisms and nationalisms

**Brendan Walsh** (Professor of Economics, UCD). Main research interests: Irish economic and public policy; North-South economic relations

**Robin Wilson** (Director, Democratic Dialogue). Main research interests: outworking of devolution, intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention, EU governance

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## CONTACT DETAILS

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Further information on the project can be obtained from the project website: <http://www.mappingfrontiers.ie>. The administrators of the project can also be contacted as follows:

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Information on the grass-roots seminars, and on the final project conference can be obtained by contacting the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh:

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