



**Communities
in Transition**

Area Research
Report 2023

**East
Belfast**

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Northern Ireland
Executive



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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

EAST BELFAST

Communities in Transition activity in East Belfast focuses on The Mount and Ballymacarrett. Previous research has indicated that many residents of East Belfast feel that the area has experienced little or no improvement in its condition or capacity since the 1998 Belfast Agreement. This directly correlated with a sentiment that Nationalist/Republican areas have prospered more directly (East Belfast, Communities in Transition Baseline Report, 2018). Other research (Sturgeon and Bryan, 2021) has indicated ongoing concerns about the current condition of East Belfast, which includes: widespread deprivation throughout the site, scale of criminality (specifically drug dealing), levels of alcohol and drug addiction and a lack of trust in key statutory bodies responsible (particularly PSNI).

METHODOLOGY

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

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

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

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

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

In this area, 20 people participated in our PGIS mapping exercise and accompanying qualitative interview – 22 of these individuals identified as Unionist and 4 as Other (neither Nationalist nor Unionist).

Household Survey – Overview

- 132 people from across The Mount, Ballymacarratt and surrounding areas took part in the Household Survey survey, carried out by market research company, Perceptive Insight in Spring 2022.
- 70 Participants were male and 62 participants were female.
- 114 participants were Unionist, 10 were Nationalist and 8 identified as 'other'.
- The participants were aged between 17 and 76.

Research Findings

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

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

Household Survey

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

- **68% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout East Belfast.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 66%.

- **57% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt connected to their local area.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 68%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **24 participants completed the Spraycan Mapping Tool.**
- **20 identified themselves as 'Unionist' and 4 designated as 'Other'.**
- **Figure 1 demonstrates that participants felt that the core area of East Belfast was the Newtownards Road, Ballymacarret and the Woodstock and Castlereagh Roads.**
- **Participants who identified as 'Other' also included Ballyhackamore and Sydenham.**

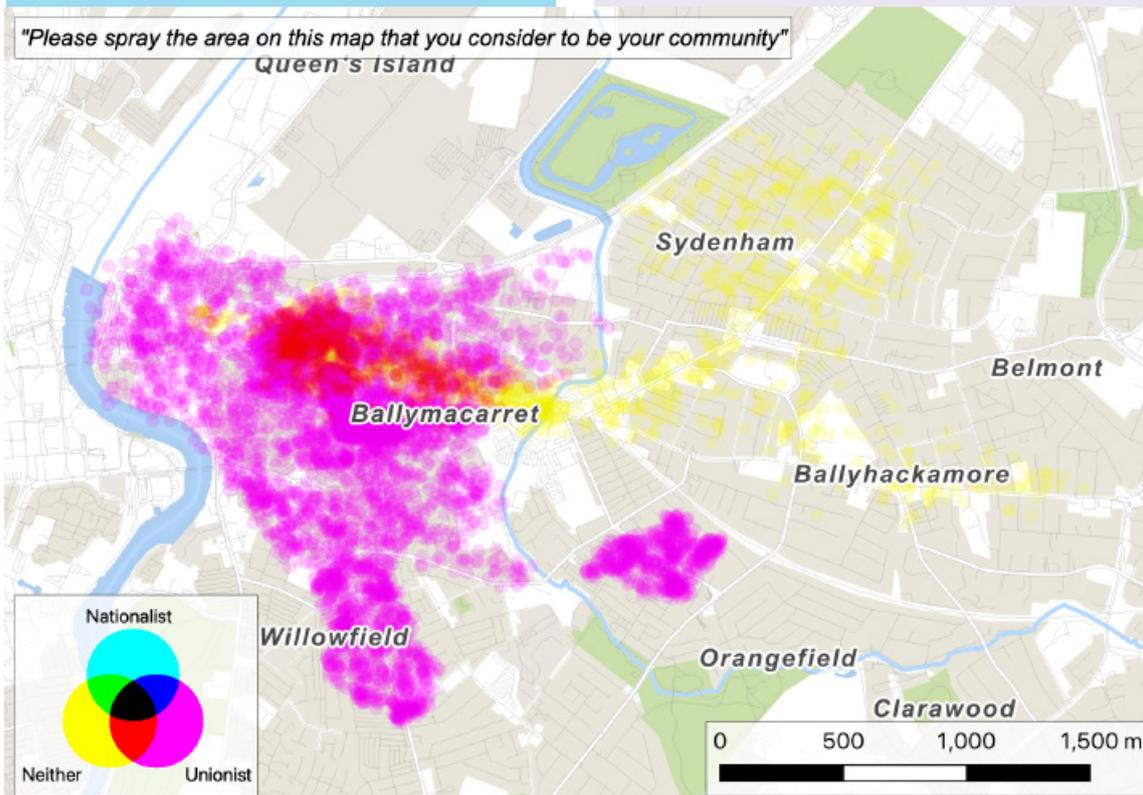


Figure 1: Community Attachment in East Belfast.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants explained that East Belfast is a complicated landscape that features distinct pockets of space that have definable identities within the wider community infrastructure of the area.

In this instance, it was explained that the Newtownards Road was distinctly different from the upper end of the road and significantly different from the area described as The Mount.

Participants explained that the Newtownards Road was, in isolation, a complex area. It was noted that there is often considerable tension in the site – this can be as a consequence of frustration with the level of deprivation that exists in the area (especially in comparison with the upper end of the road, as well as in comparison to Belmont Road and Ballyhackamore). It was noted that on-going interface tension with neighbouring Short Strand remains, while internal feuding between paramilitary groups often causes concern and division (see Pages 16&17 for more details).

'It's a very complicated issue... there's not one particular problem. Do you know what I mean? For example, if you went up down this street and asked 25 people what the biggest issue was in this area... you might get 4, 5 or 6 different problems.'

'We have all sorts of problems... unemployment, poverty, poor health, lack of leadership and lots of crime. We don't have one key problem... we have lots of big issues that we need to try and tackle as one community, but that's very difficult.'

'Then even locally we have interface trouble at the peace walls as well.'

'We really need programmes like CIT. Programmes that properly engage residents. I think that's what is really missing. Some programmes fund particular groups or the installation of a particular service, but they don't really interact with residents... if you don't connect with them then there's just lots of stuff happening, but it doesn't mean anything to them.'

Respondents explained that residents living on the Newtownards Road are often concerned that there's a lack of evident local leadership to confront the stated issues. It was suggested that the bulk of the site's political representatives live in more affluent areas of East Belfast. Moreover, the alleged leaders of paramilitary groups active in the area, who it was felt had a considerable impact on the site, also live outside of the area. This point was made with considerable frustration – it was noted that groups of this kind plagued the area and extorted the community, yet those involved often do not reside in the area.

'They don't care, they really don't. They extort the area to pay for their cars and houses, they don't even live here... half of them. They live in North Down, yet they completely control this space. It's so frustrating. Can you imagine someone destroying your area for their own greed and telling you they're doing it for the preservation of the 'community'. They'll say all that to people who have next to nothing and then drive back to their fancy house.'

KEY FACILITIES

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

Household Survey

- **21% of participants indicated they were involved with a Local Church.**
- **16% were associated with a Sports Club.**
- **11% were involved in a Local School.**
- **3% participated in Neighbourhood Associations.**

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **The majority of participants marked the Connswater Retail Park as an important location.**
- **Many others marked key community spaces such as the Ballymac Friendship Centre and the East Belfast Network Centre.**
- **A large number also marked CS Lewis Square, though we will discuss elsewhere that this was a site that provoked mixed feelings amongst participants.**

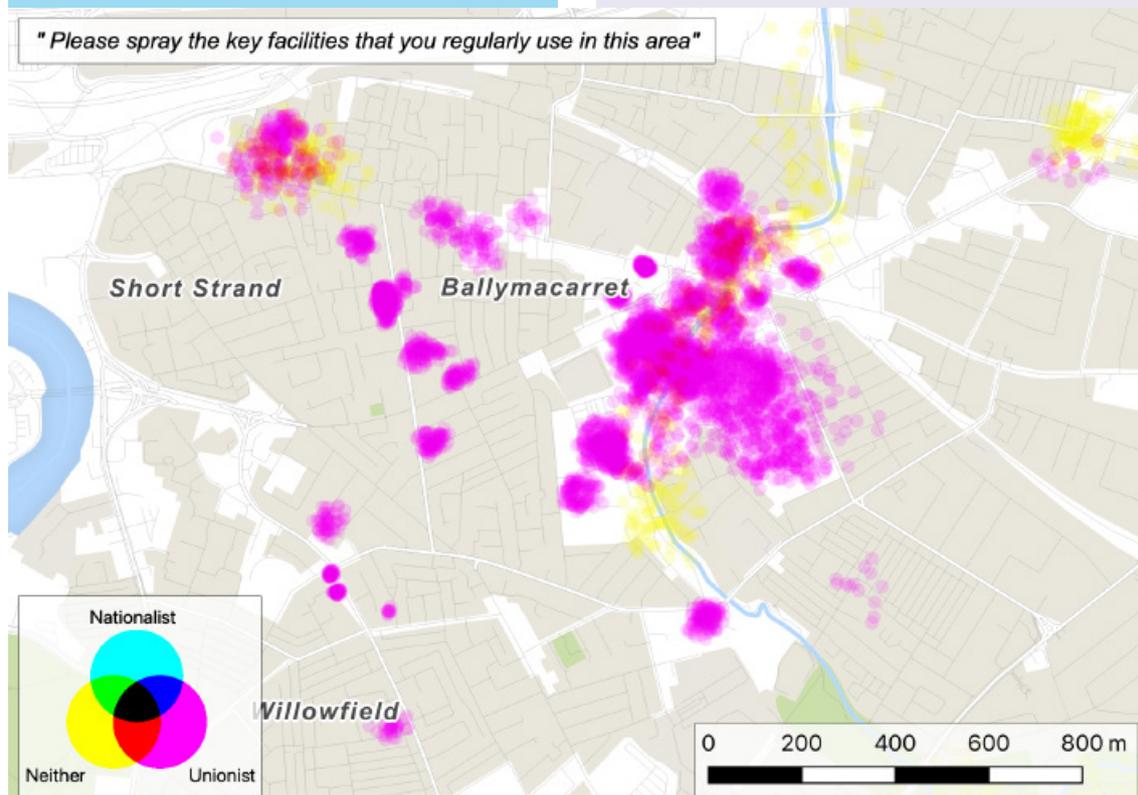


Figure 2: Key Facilities in East Belfast.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants explained that there was considerable division regarding how local residents felt about a number of key facilities in East Belfast.

Whilst it was noted that the development at CS Lewis Square is an asset to the area, there was a perceived lack of community ownership of the space. Some attributed this to a poor consultation phase that preceded its development, while others felt that it sits uneasily in an area surrounded by deprivation.

'I'm sure the intention was good. Have a nice space, but local residents would never have picked it. If we'd been offered the choice between it and something else... it's not for locals, it's for visitors, which is good... It's actually a good thing, but when there is so much clear need in this community. You have to address that first.'

Participants were also divided about the value of being in such close proximity to Belfast City Centre and the various developments in the Titanic Quarter. It was explained that while these spaces are nearby in basic geographical terms, there are two distinct barriers to their access. The first, is a basic logistical issue associated with the complicated road network that exists between the Newtownards Road and the centre of the city (with parents regularly stating they do not feel comfortable walking their children by access points to the motorway as they enter and exit the city centre). The other issue is more complex and relates to a belief that although these spaces are physically close, there are education and financial barriers to their use.

'We are close to the City Centre... physically close... but there are very few people in East Belfast qualified enough to take full advantage of that. I don't mean they can't get any job, but can they get a better job than they would get here? Can they do more than work in a shop? Can someone realistically tell me that because of where we are (situated,) someone from here is more likely to be a lawyer or something like that? Surely they are less likely, given our poor (education) outcomes.'

A large number of participants emphasized the importance of the community infrastructure in the area. It was suggested that some of these spaces are the first place residents would go with a problem and in some instances they were described as 'safe spaces'. In most instances these locations were associated with groups involved in the CIT programme.

'I think EBDCA (East Belfast Development Community Agency) offers so much to the area. The Network Centre is a brilliant facility and the training and support they (EBDCA) offer is... it's very consistent.'

'The work Ballymac (Friendship Centre) has been doing with young people is sensational. They're taking those kids on a journey... an educational journey of what Loyalism is... what it means to be a Loyalist. I think that's so important. Loyalism... ah, sometimes the way it's depicted in the media... there's a lot of negativity. It's important that someone is laying out an objective and fair assessment... especially when engaging our young people.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

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

Household Survey

- **87% of respondents indicated that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 84%.

- **69% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.**

The average response across all the CIT sites was 50%.

- **58% of respondents felt the area would be in better condition in five years time.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 29%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- The majority of participants indicated that increased shopping options in the Connswater Retail Park were important to residents.
- Many participants marked the Connswater Community Greenway as a key space.
- Ongoing developments at the old Sirocco Works site and the Portview Trade Centre were also considered important.

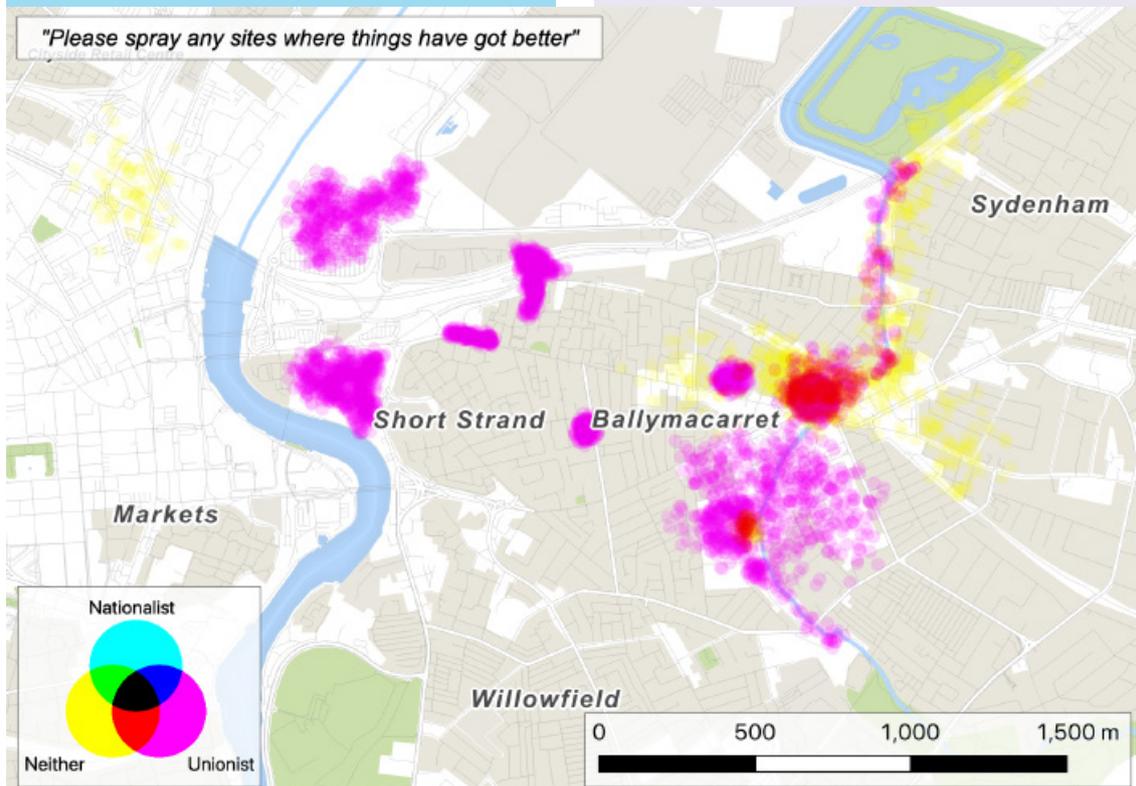


Figure 3: Locations in Carrick where things have got better.

Qualitative Interviews

A large number of participants felt that there was strong community leadership in the area. It was suggested that such groups care about the area and have a vision for the site – CIT project partners Ballymac Friendship Centre and East Belfast Development Community Agency (EBDCA) were regularly referenced in this regard.

Participants felt that although many community spaces needed to be upgraded, there were some key spaces that were of a high quality, these included: the East Belfast Network Centre and the upgraded Avoniel Leisure Centre.

The majority of participants felt that the Greenway was a massive asset to the community and was widely used by residents and visitors.

Although some participants noted concern about the local lack of connection to CS Lewis Square, others noted that it was important in drawing visitors to the area. A number of participants felt that the area had to get better at 'selling itself' to visitors. Some participants noted the importance of CS Lewis Square in building a local tourist strategy. These respondents stated that that the Urban Market that happens on the site helps to animate the space and is also important to drawing visitors to the area.

'We need to get better at developing a coordinated tourist strategy... I think if you look at some Nationalist areas... especially West Belfast... they have a very advanced sense of who they are and what people want. I think we've suffered a bit by being too introverted and maybe by not having a clear local message of who we are, but that's getting better and we're now getting closer to telling a joined-up story of East Belfast.'

The development of the East Belfast GAA and the East Belfast Football Club had created important social and sporting networks in their areas.

'East Belfast GAA has come from nowhere. Two years ago... nothing really existed, but now you probably have 500-1000 people networked by the club and the sport. It has become an important part of the community. It has helped improve cross community relationships and has also integrated a large number of refugees...who have recently moved into the area.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

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

Household Survey

- **Only 13% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%.
- **42% of participants indicated that in five years time, the area would be either in the same condition or worse.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 71%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Participants marked a decline along the Newtownards Road.**
- **Some marked the space as they felt the sense of community, which had been previously prominent in the area, had now greatly deteriorated.**
- **Others felt that the area was in physical decline – they pointed to a large number of vacant shop fronts and frequent spaces of dereliction. It was noted what was once a vibrant space, was now mostly isolated. It was also highlighted that few people walk the road, as there are a lack of facilities. There was also a perception that the space was generally considered to be ‘unsafe’.**

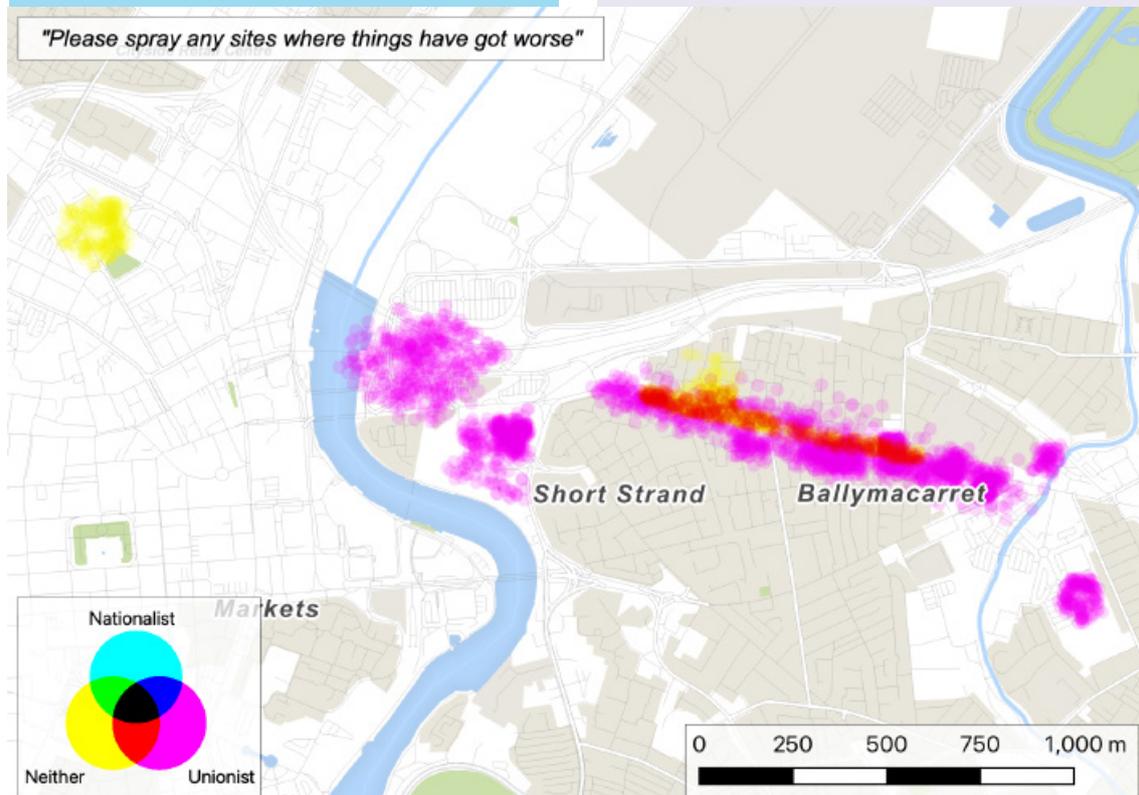


Figure 4: Locations in East Belfast where things have got worse.

Qualitative Interviews

Almost every participant emphasized concerns about the high levels of drug and alcohol addiction that exists throughout the area.

'Drug use and addiction... so bad round here. Really bad... you could get hard drugs here... no problem. it's just everywhere and is so widely used. Really sad. Especially the amount of young people involved is scary. There's been a large number of suicides in the area and... once you look, so many of them are linked to drug use and addiction.'

While the value of recently redeveloped sites, such as the Portview Trade Centre, was emphasized, the scale of local businesses closing down was considered to be alarming. Many pointed to concerns about rows of vacant shops and derelict spaces of land that are poorly lit and had become rubbish dumps.

'The look and feel of some parts isn't right... it's uneven. I could take you up one road and it's fine... probably looks like any other road in Belfast, but then coming down the next one... you'll just see a waste ground. The shops are empty, there's no one walking the streets and there's rubbish everywhere.'

Participants were concerned about the poor educational attainment throughout the area and the lack of local high quality jobs that would help retain the small number of individuals who did obtain academic success.

'As soon as people can leave,

they do. It causes problems for us (representative for local community association), because when we invest time in someone... there's a risk that they might go. Kids with potential will be straight out of here... and I don't blame them. We can give them an opportunity... or space for development, but after that... there's nothing for them to transition on to in this area.'

Some participants noted that although there were key community groups (Ballymac, EBDCA) doing excellent work in the area, there are smaller organisations that need more developmental support. It was explained that these groups do not have fully functioning and proper Boards to oversee good practice and standards.

'I think community leadership is very important in this area. I think the work that has happened because of CIT has really helped support local people. Groups like Ballymac, the Network Centre and (East Belfast) Alternatives are key to the area... the provision is fantastic... they're filling spaces where the statutory bodies should be. I think... I think it's that next tier down... it is the groups with less capacity. I think they need more support... to really bring them on. I think every group is important, but some need to get to the next level... to help them grow... to make sure they've proper Boards in place... governing structures.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

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

Household Survey

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

- **66% of respondents felt that local residents abided by the rule of law.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 61%
- **78% felt that improved lighting and alleygating would make them feel safer, while 90% said improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 60% & 59%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Despite identifying a large number of community issues in the last section, many participants still felt safe as they moved around East Belfast, though this sense was based on the time of day they were travelling and their mode of transport (with older participants indicating that they preferred to drive or get a lift from a friend or family member).**
- **Like Section 1, participants generally felt connected to the area at the bottom of the Woodstock and Castlereagh Roads.**

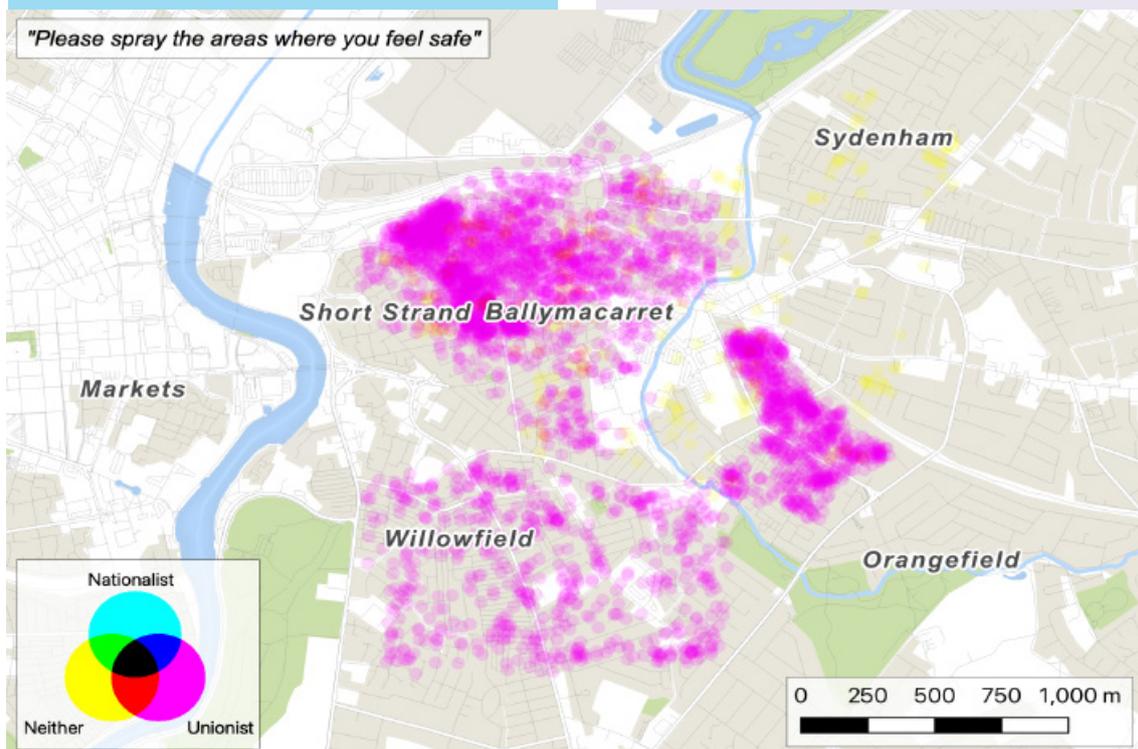


Figure 5: Locations in Carrick where people feel safe.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants largely associated their sense of safety with feelings of familiarity. For instance, long term residents often explained that they knew a large amount of people living in the area – they felt comforted by this and suggested that provided them with a degree of protection. Long term residents did concede that there were ‘unsafe’ spaces in the area, but they knew how to navigate them – they indicated that they wouldn’t travel through them on their own or at night.

‘I know everyone here... my family live close. My sister lives three doors up from me and my best friend lives just across the street... so yeah, I feel very safe. If something were to happen... and nothing really ever has, I know they would be there for me.’

Residents who had lived in the area for less time, suggested that their sense of safety also correlated with their level of familiarity of a situation or space. They explained though that this had less to do with familiarity of people and more to do with their daily routines and the frequent use of certain pathways and spaces.

‘I think it’s just about... it’s about probably about doing the same thing every day. You forget where the threat is... does that make sense? When we came here, once we planned how my husband would get to work and the kids would get to school... you just repeat those routes every day. Then we go to the same park, the same shops... you know, I feel like I would anywhere else.’

For some participants, the symbolic landscape was important – one participant indicated that they like the fact that local murals are regularly repainted, while others felt painted kerbstones and flags reinforced a collective sense of identity.

‘I think they (flags, murals and painted kerbstones) remind us... that we are one community. Even if there’s splits or tension, we are together... especially at important moments like the Twelfth. I think when the community comes together (at the Twelfth), it’s a reminder of the sense of community that we used to have all the time... so that’s important.’

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

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

Household Survey

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

- **49% felt ASB was a problem in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 55%.
- **49% believed that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 57%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- In addition to some participants marking some internal spaces that have been mentioned elsewhere (e.g. the Newtownards Road), nearly all participants also marked neighbouring Short Strand as a space where they would feel unsafe.
- Participants also identified the two main pathways (Bridge End and Middlepath Street) into Belfast City Centre as unsafe. Parents were especially likely to mark these spaces, as they felt uncomfortable walking their children so close to motorway access points. Participants also stated that the roads could be especially uncomfortable at

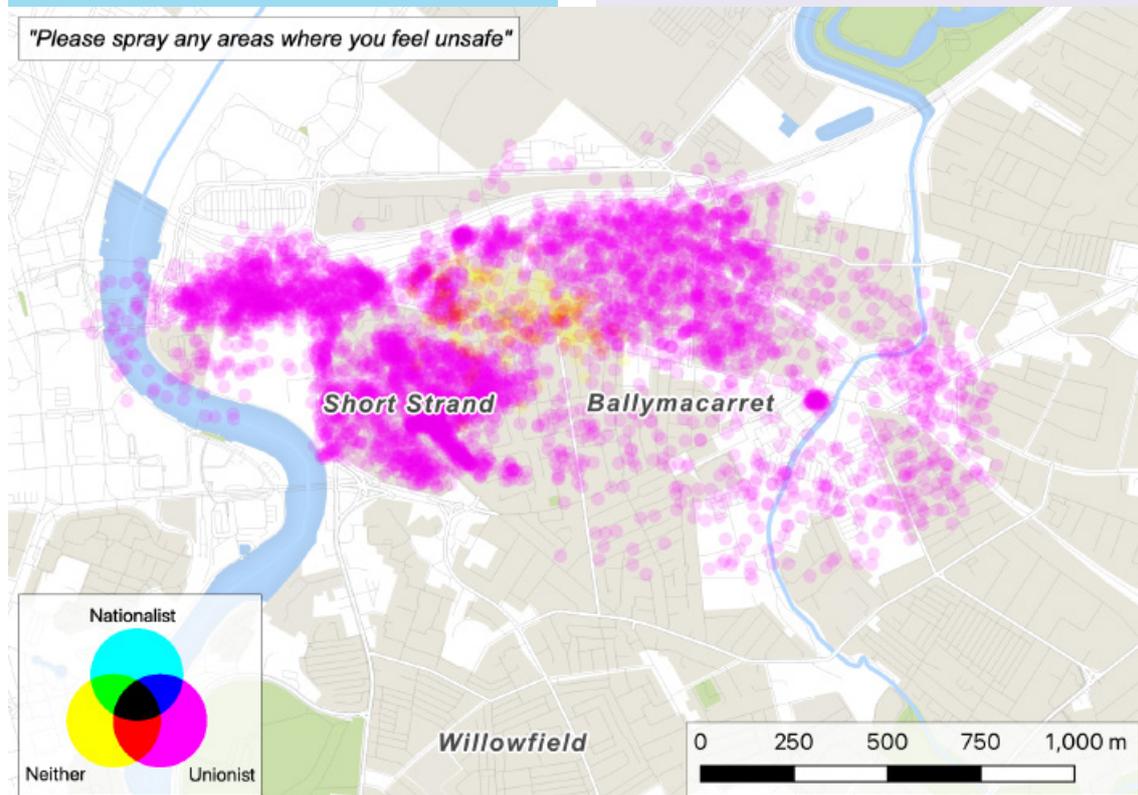


Figure 6: Locations in East Belfast where people feel unsafe.

night, when there were few other pedestrians around. The sense of isolation was often emphasized by the lack of active spaces along the roads and the large vacant space at the nearby Sirocco Works.

Qualitative Interviews

A large number of participants indicated that although they often feel safe living in East Belfast, especially if they keep to themselves and stay out of certain spaces, there are a number of ways in which they and other residents often feel unsafe.

Almost every participant noted that they were concerned by the high levels of drug and alcohol addiction. Participants who identified themselves as parents were particularly worried by this and explained that they were afraid that their children would become involved.

A number of participants noted that although current interface tension was low, it would likely increase the summer. They also indicated that it is hard to imagine a time when interface violence will not be some sort of problem in the area, especially in the month of July.

As stated elsewhere, parents felt uneasy about taking children through the complicated network between the Newtownards Road and Belfast City Centre.

'If you had young kids, you wouldn't want to walk along Bridge End and Middlepath Street. It put the fear of God in you. I'll be pushing the buggy and my two boys want to run on and mess about, but if they slip or push each other... the cars are flying round this way. So you might say to me... isn't it great being so close to the City Centre, but some days it's easier getting the bus or a taxi.'

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED CRIME GANGS

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

Household Survey

- **50% of respondents felt that young people living throughout East Belfast were under too much influence from paramilitary groups.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 32%
- **57% felt that paramilitary groups contribute to crime, drug dealing and ASB in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 34%
- **49% felt that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%

- **45% felt that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence in their area.**

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- The majority of participants felt that paramilitary organisations are active throughout the entirety of East Belfast.
- It was indicated that this activity is prolific and gives the group a significant influence over many community issues in East Belfast.

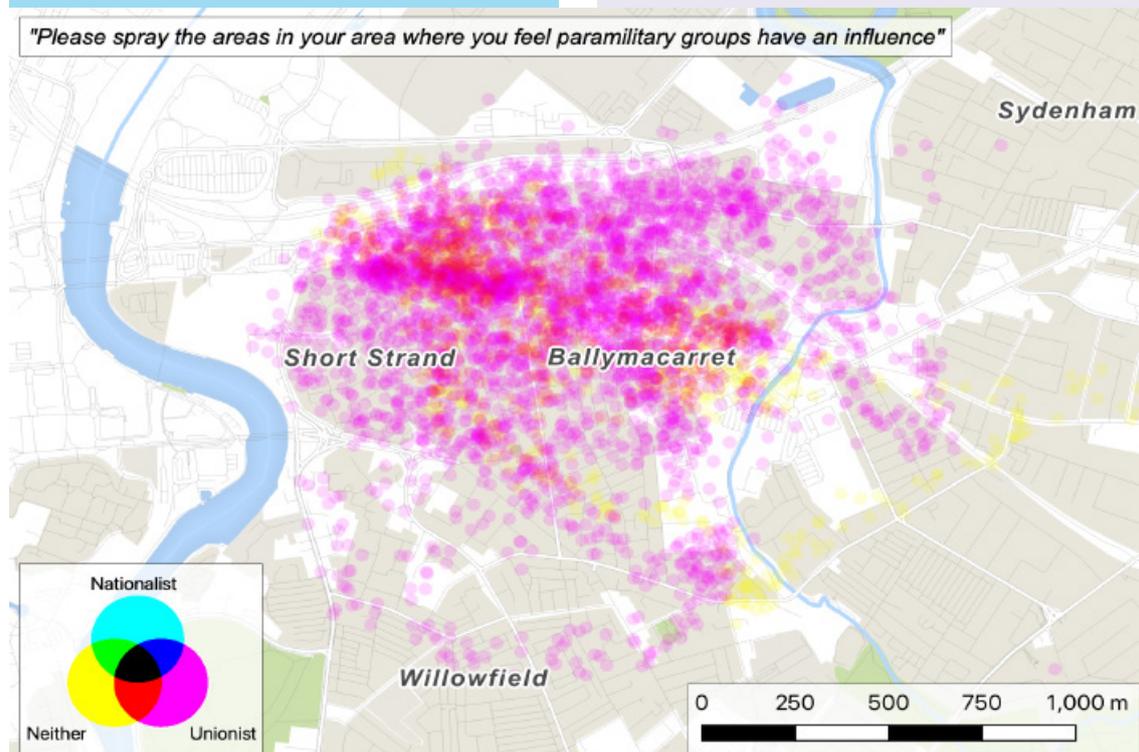


Figure 7: Influence of Paramilitary Groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs in East Belfast.

Qualitative Interviews

The majority of participants were very concerned about the scale of influence and level of activity paramilitary groups have in East Belfast.

Some participants stated that paramilitary groups that are active in the area permeate every aspect of the community in East Belfast.

'They are everywhere... they are involved in everything. All of the community structures that have existed for a long time... they are involved in that in some way. Anything new that comes up... that has potential... they immediately get involved in. I'll give you an example... There was a new sports club (name redacted)... that was something that came from nowhere... very natural community creation, but they immediately get involved. They see the potential... they see the risk of something else existing in the community that brings people together that they can't control... they immediately started saying: 'we can pay for that', 'we'll look after that' etc... then they're in and they won't go away. They get straight in there – they see something organic that brings people together... a Whatsapp group with a couple of hundred people... they see the potential in that and they're going to go and take that.'

Participants stated that the most common activities that the groups were involved in were drug dealing, extortion of local businesses and money lending.

It was also noted by many that the groups seek to 'control' community expression and do this via the management of Bonfires and any other key community rituals.

Each strand of our methodology indicates the significant and utterly negative impact that paramilitary groups have in East Belfast. The data collected from our Spraycan Mapping Tool illustrates the widespread influence groups of this kind have throughout the entirety of the area. The participants in our Qualitative Interviews present a very concerning image of the groups, who appear to be involved in every aspect of the community and who will seek to takeover any new community platforms. The scale of their activity and the problems this causes for local residents is also emphasized by the findings from our Household Survey – where we find that the groups have very little support (only 6% of respondents would go to a group of kind if they had a problem). Moreover, residents have identified a large body of problematic activity that the groups are directly involved in, which only serves to undermine the capacity and condition of the area.

ENDNOTE 1: Household Survey

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

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

KEY FACILITIES

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

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

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

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

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

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED CRIME GANGS

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

ENDNOTE 2: SPRAYCAN MAPPING TOOL/PGIS SOFTWARE

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

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

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

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

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

FURTHER READING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Communities in Transition

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