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# Not Your Father's Border: An Examination of the Border in Northern Ireland and Its Relevance to the Global Change in the Importance of World Borders

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by

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ABSTRACT

"Not Your Father's Border: An Examination of the Border in Northern Ireland
and Its Relevance to the Global Change in World Borders"

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Humanity has long maintained barriers separating specific entities from others.
Ranging from cultural, religious, financial, and racial differences among a few others,
the reasoning behind borders has remained a purely human endeavor.  But our current
golden age of technology has somewhat shrunk, or at least reassessed the necessity
for borders.  The boundaries of today, while many remain in the same locations as in
the past, are vastly different from the borders created by previous generations.
Globalization, a relatively new term, has made communication simple and fast.  The
noticeable result has been, of course, better communication between locations, and
thus easing international travel.  However, many areas of the world remain torn by
border conflicts.  The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, appropriately
deemed The Troubles, is a long-studied and well-documented one.  The incredible
increase in technology in the past few decades has presented the conflict with positive
new alternatives to physical altercations and has been overall satisfactory.  There is
peace in Northern Ireland, but it is a shaky peace.  Questions are raised such as why is
the border still in existence and what keeps Ireland from uniting after nearly one
hundred years of separation.  This paper serves to answer these and similar questions
and assess the results within the world arena to determine not only the need, but also
the desirability for and function of borders in today's globalized world.

**Key Words:**  Borders, Northern Ireland, Globalization, Troubles

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Introduction and Review of Literature**

All states, regardless of region or culture, are bound by borders, each of which is political in nature.  Borders, although changing over time, have been a constant factor since the beginning of human civilization.  A border is a line that demarcates one territory from another which under every circumstance is arbitrarily positioned based on a political agenda.  But what makes borders so significant is their unarguable role as a source of conflict throughout the world.

One particular area in northern Europe owns such a charged climate.  Northern Ireland, a section of six counties north of the Republic of Ireland (see figure 1.1) on the island of the same name, currently maintains its allegiance to the United Kingdom, or Great Britain, and identifies with the state of Ireland in land and dialect only.  Six counties of the nine-county province of Ulster—Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone—are in fact a part of the United Kingdom, sharing the title with England, Scotland, and Wales (see figure 1.2).  The twenty-six counties that exist to the south of the border make up the Republic of Ireland.  Passions run high on both sides of the border and are easily recognizable.  They call it the "Troubles"; *they* being everyone involved, be it a child or a mother or a priest; anybody who experienced the events of the uprising.  It is a term that the affected

**Figure 1.1  Map of Ireland**
www.greenwichmeantime.com

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people use to describe the period.

Darby (2003) describes the Troubles as a period of bitter conflict around the border of Northern Ireland between the late 1960s and late 1990s.  He explains, on a fairly unbiased level, the rather unstable roads that Ireland has traveled in the past. Ireland was its own nation-state until 1801 when Great Britain claimed the land as part of its kingdom.  It remained under British control until 1921 at which time Ireland demanded independence.  However, the northern six counties in the province of Ulster had since become acclimated to the "Britishness" of the United Kingdom, specifically in terms of religious conviction.  The majority of inhabitants in Northern Ireland claimed to be Protestant, which was the predominant religion in the whole of the United Kingdom differing from the predominantly Catholic majority south of the border (Darby 2003).  The argument can be made that this alone is the greatest cause of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.
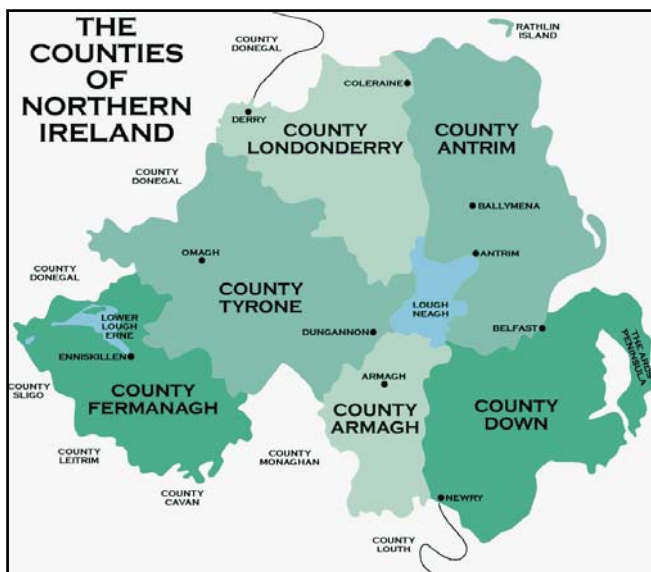
**Figure 1.2  Map of Northern Ireland**
www.ballynagarrick.net

The cycles that have persisted in Northern Ireland for hundreds of years have involved both aggressiveness and concord.  These opposing facets can have pertinence on the idea of borders as a whole.  Ireland has experienced control from outside entities over the centuries, namely Great Britain.  Naturally, such a situation has given way to dissonance amongst those within and around the border.

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This has ultimately led to conflict.  Northern Ireland is an example of border disputes worldwide.  Although its current state is a peaceful one, the road to that fragile peace holds relevance to states across the globe undergoing such tumult.  With war, death, grief, and destruction, one must ask—why continue to recognize borders if they bring conflict?  Narrowed down, why is there still a border in Northern Ireland?

The boundary is merely an arbitrary line detailing what "belongs" to whom.  This line created by man has different meanings to so many.   Exploring the undeniable significance of the border in Northern Ireland will certainly give some answers to the question of why it still remains and what makes it so important.

While borders are inevitably a part of human civilization, borders change and have changed throughout civilization, hence the title "Not Your Father's Border".  The border of today is not the same as yesterday's border.  It is essential to know why borders have changed so drastically in recent years.  Recognizing the swift growth of global communications, trade, global health issues, and the environment in the era of the internet and instant access to almost anything, while indeed a necessity in comprehending this change, begs the relating question—are borders relevant today?  This paper will serve to examine and answer this critical question, with the border in Northern Ireland as the central theme.

To better understand the significance of the border in Northern Ireland, the review of the literature involves only the broad topic of borders.  Territoriality has changed over the years and cannot be thoroughly explained in the current literature on the subject.  Nation-states, a rather recent structure of political land-use, were designed for a reason.  For societies to function with as few flaws as possible, borders were

simply crucial—it was a matter of containment, limiting the practice of one governing body to a reasonable (local) distance.  The practice has remained to this day, albeit not usually in kind methods, i.e. through oppression and/or wars.

Geographers have long argued over the reasons for boundaries in our world. Newman (2006) makes the argument that there is a new sense of borders that has come about in the last two decades.  This is brought about by the new trend of considering our world a 'borderless' one, in which the powerful stream of technology has led to increased communications across the globe.  However, Newman (2006, p.143) almost instantly insists that most geographers think no such thing, stating that this new trend has led to "a counternarrative to the borderless and deterritorialized world discourse".  And according to Newman, geographers are interested in understanding the border as a process involving its creation, maintenance, and movement rather than the actual border itself, which consists only of simply knowing where that border is, its length, and with whom it is shared.  It is a matter of 'why' rather than 'what'. Geographers want to know why and how the boundary exists far more than what it is.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the traditional geographer's view can go a long way in understanding the unique circumstances that make it a model case study. Ireland serves only as an example, and a good one, of the overall idea of borders and their effects, be they positive or negative, on territory around the world.  Kahler and Walters (2006, p.1) begin their idea of globalization and question the need for borders with the statement "Globalization has produced changes in territoriality and the functions of borders, but it has eliminated neither."  In essence this is saying that even though the world has grown smaller due to globalization and the greatest respect for

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human life in the chronicles of humanity, borders still exist and in all probability will throughout the remainder of time. The European Union, for example, shows that borders are prone to change, yet they are still next to impossible to remove. The borders between Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands may be easier than ever to move across, but the citizens within those borders still consider themselves Germans, French, Belgians, and Dutch. Goetz (2006) touches on this idea within Europe itself. He states that nations of the European Union have a tendency to move their traditions across borders, essentially cross-pollinating their worlds with the worlds of their neighbors and vice-versa as a result of "shrinking" borders, namely the success of the EU.

The case of Northern Ireland is resonant of other, more dangerous lands in the world. As with the literature on the topic, understanding the political history of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Great Britain is central in determining the underlying question about borders in general. Other examples also serve well in answering the question. Many states in the world have been and still are in serious conflicts over just this issue. Israel, for one, cannot seem to shake the curse of border wars. Tibet's long-standing feud with China to be granted statehood is but another.

Maps of elections, religious distribution, nationalist (those who wish for a unified Ireland, most of which are Catholic) and unionist (those who wish for Northern Ireland to remain part of Great Britain, most of which are Protestant) sentiment, and other similar details involving both Ireland and Northern Ireland are utilized. It is important in understanding the overall infrastructure of the island, as such information can detail important connections between economics and the state of individual points of view on

national population data to further assist in the matter.  Although a margin of error is recognized, these maps help to demonstrate the significance, or none thereof, of the border.  Additionally, economic maps tell a story of progress, and so are included in the research.

Examining the incredible rate of globalization is vital in finding border commonalities and the reasons behind them.  Technological feats, such as the internet and ultra-fast voice communication, are included to aid in the illustration of the ease of worldwide communication, certainly the grand catalyst behind globalization, but are later seen as a thread to a new brand of violence in Northern Ireland.  In-depth comparisons of other countries with disputes over territoriality are weighed and dissected in order to paint a picture of a global problem.  Some world borders have shortened or disappeared while others have been erected at alarming and disruptive rates.

Through these and other analyses, a conclusion will be reached as to the reasoning for the border in Northern Ireland and other lands with similar situations.  In addition, *that* conclusion will be analyzed thoroughly to determine the reason, and moreover the necessity, for borders in general.

**Chapter 2**
**History to Partition, Troubles Period and Border Situation**

Answering the question of whether or not borders are significant in the age of globalization is not an easy undertaking. While certain generalizations hold true regarding worldwide border issues, there are simply too many individual borders to create blanket conclusions. For instance, Tibet disputes China over not only a border, but overall independence, which some recognize and some do not. That differs, albeit just slightly but enough to notice significant inequities, from the problems facing Israel and Palestine. But perhaps the most distinct conflict over borders is that of Northern Ireland, for it displays many similar aspects of conflict worldwide, including human rights, nationality, and territoriality, yet it differs exponentially from most conflicts in that it succeeded in finding a definitive resolution.

For this paper, the region is highlighted as distinct because it differs significantly from other better-known border conflicts, such as the aforementioned Israel/Palestine conflict, which receives far more international media coverage. That conflict cannot share in Northern Ireland's case of resolution on the grounds that peace in Israel and Palestine is still being sought while peace in Northern Ireland has found a high degree of success. For this, Northern Ireland's border dispute is a fine example of the state of the modern world border in that it is a proactive one, meaning the states involved worked to find a solution rather than allow the dispute to carry on indefinitely. However, it is of most importance to understand how it got that way. For this, a brief history of the dispute is deemed necessary.

Ireland, or Eire as it is known in the Irish Gaelic tongue, has long been a hotbed of violence. The new British Empire, which previously was a Roman territory, used its

newfound unity and, just like in Wales and Scotland, claimed Ireland for its own for the sake of expansion (Curtis 1985, p.5). It saw the island to the west as another piece of land to expand the empire, thus making it the invader. This, in turn, gave rise to a bastion of unrest throughout the majority of the millennium, such as the O'Connor clan's massacre at the hands of English baron Piers de Birmingham in 1295 (Curtis 1985, p.82).

Ireland was initially a victim of European imperialism, in which another country views the land as a 'frontier' upon which it can expand. While under British rule, Ireland was seen as a backdoor for Britain's enemies at the time, such as Spain and France, and was used as a testing site for "colonial policing, legislation and government" with the then-British territory recognizing Ireland as a fairly second-rate territory compared to the rest of Great Britain (Anderson and O'Dowd 2007, p.941).

By the late twentieth century, many people in Ireland had made the decision to seek Home Rule, which would ensure greater control of Ireland apart from British rule. Naturally, Great Britain contested Home Rule, regardless of their dislike for the Irish, and even encouraged force on the part of unionists to stop Home Rule from transpiring (Anderson and O'Dowd 2007, p.943). From Great Britain's viewpoint, losing any land is losing too much land, and so could not afford to allow Ireland its independence.

Before the first World War there was the smaller Irish War of Independence throughout Ireland (Kissane 2003, p.328). With the backing of the relatively young political group in Ireland known as Sinn Fein ("We Ourselves" in Irish Gaelic), the British state fought for its independence. Recognizing the need for a swift conclusion to the war, the British government, with the Irish, signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, which

essentially issued Ireland its independence on the grounds that it remain a dominion of Great Britain, much like Canada and South Africa (Kissane 2003, p.341). The threat of a drawn-out war expedited the British role in signing the treaty. Ireland had finally won its independence, but Great Britian left open the possibility for some parts of the island to remain part of Great Britain. Ireland was its own state, but Northern Ireland was not part of it. Unionists in Northern Ireland detested the idea of Home Rule on the grounds that it would separate their land from their governmental body, i.e. be isolated on another government's island. Ultimately, World War I interceded the escalating tensions. Seeing no other option as a more global threat loomed, the new Republic of Ireland and Great Britain decided to partition Ireland at Ulster to preserve stability in a frightening time (Anderson and O'Dowd 2007, p.943-944). However, the door to unrest had already been opened, bringing with it a period of turmoil that defined many generations.

Ireland's new 'dominion' status did not sit well within most of its nationalist population. Instead of self-determination throughout the entire island, the conditional status with Great Britain allowed for most of Ulster to divide the new Republic. Ireland would be independent but without six of its counties, namely Antrum, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. This was costly because it birthed the division of the island, which the Republic of Ireland did not desire. It led to the overwhelming sensation of isolation to the Northern Irish. However, a more particular reason for Ulster to secede was that the British government decided that since most of Ulster was Protestant, it would be useless to enact Home Rule in 1914, and so these six non-Catholic counties remained part of the United Kingdom (Rankin 2007, p.913-914).

Ireland, understanding the risk of losing its new autonomy, reluctantly agreed to let the six counties go, but the tenuous atmosphere created a rift amongst people on both sides of the new border.

The strong feelings were evident through seemingly friendly communication between the Republic and the north before the true genesis of the Troubles. In 1956, when then Prime Minister of Ireland John A. Costello attempted to arrange discussions of reunifying Ireland, the Northern Ireland Viscount, Prime Minister Brookeborough, relayed a statement from the acting Prime Minister at the moment, Dr. W.B. Maginess, that read "…the Northern Ireland Government is not prepared to discuss partition" (Brookeborough 1956, p.2), or in other words the Northern Ireland government was not considering a reunification with Ireland at that time.

Naturally, Catholic-nationalists saw this as a sign of extreme disrespect. They felt if there was a chance that Ireland could reunite, it was worth the Northern Irish government's time to listen to their claim. It would not be so. By the late 1950s a cycle of violence had arisen that claimed many lives. Many cite the mid-1960s as the beginning of the Troubles, as it was at about the time when religious discrimination peaked in Northern Ireland against Catholics by the Northern Ireland Labour Party (Warner 2005, p.14). Furthermore, sentiment was sparked by the civil rights movement in the United States at the time, to which Northern Ireland could easily relate (Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson 2007, p.5). But as table 1.1 explains, the brunt of the violence was felt by civilians, not only militants or police. The years between 1979 and 1989 contained more non-civilian deaths, but not by far. This is the result of human rights organizations getting involved in the conflict later in the Troubles.

Horgan (2006) gives a singular statistical and historical analysis of the toll the Troubles have taken on Northern Ireland in terms of the economy, specifically in fostering poverty. He explains how the poor, who were most affected by the conflict, only became more numerous since partition, and how Northern Ireland has remained the economic 'black sheep' among the four British states (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) since Ireland's independence. Muldoon *et al.* (2007) simply relays the idea that religion, when amalgamated within

### Total deaths related to the 'Troubles' in Ireland 1969 - 1998

This table gives the total victims in each of three categories. **Police/Army** includes British Army, RUC and Irish Security Forces. **Paramilitary** includes Loyalist and Republican terrorists. **Civilian** cover the rest. Source: Malcolm Sutton, *"An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland"*.

| Year | Police/Army | Para-military | Civilian | TOTAL | Each pixel across represents the death of one.... Police/Army Paramilitary Civilian |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1969 | 1 | 2 | 13 | 16 | |
| 1970 | 3 | 5 | 18 | 26 | |
| 1971 | 60 | 22 | 89 | 171 | |
| 1972 | 149 | 78 | 249 | 476 | |
| 1973 | 82 | 52 | 119 | 253 | |
| 1974 | 72 | 30 | 192 | 294 | |
| 1975 | 35 | 49 | 174 | 258 | |
| 1976 | 62 | 26 | 207 | 295 | |
| 1977 | 50 | 12 | 49 | 111 | |
| 1978 | 34 | 7 | 39 | 80 | |
| 1979 | 76 | 7 | 37 | 120 | |
| 1980 | 38 | 8 | 34 | 80 | |
| 1981 | 51 | 20 | 40 | 111 | |
| 1982 | 59 | 15 | 36 | 110 | |
| 1983 | 41 | 10 | 34 | 85 | |
| 1984 | 33 | 14 | 22 | 69 | |
| 1985 | 32 | 8 | 17 | 57 | |
| 1986 | 25 | 9 | 27 | 61 | |
| 1987 | 29 | 28 | 40 | 97 | |
| 1988 | 46 | 20 | 38 | 104 | |
| 1989 | 39 | 6 | 30 | 75 | |
| 1990 | 34 | 11 | 36 | 81 | |
| 1991 | 24 | 20 | 52 | 96 | |
| 1992 | 11 | 20 | 58 | 89 | |
| 1993 | 18 | 7 | 63 | 88 | |
| 1994 | 7 | 9 | 48 | 64 | |
| 1995 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 9 | |
| 1996 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 18 | |
| 1997 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 20 | |
| 1998 | 2 | 6 | 46 | 54 | |

**Table 1.1  Deaths Attributed to the Troubles**

www.wesleyjohnston.com

the confines of national identity, was the main reason for the Troubles. It is now clear that religion played the most important role in the Troubles. The two sentiments are highly polarized based solely from which side of the border they emerge. The exception would have to be the limited number of Catholics in Northern Ireland. During the height

of the Troubles, "three-quarters of the Catholics categorized themselves as Irish, and 15% saw themselves as British" in Northern Ireland (Muldoon *et al.* 2007, p.90).

The Irish Republican Army, or the IRA, became known, at least in the minds of those attacked, as a terrorist organization for their rather callous attacks on unionist entities. The creation of the IRA was in response to growing dissension toward Ulster, the nine-county province where all of Northern Ireland fell. The three remaining Catholic-nationalist counties of Ulster, which are Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan, refused to remain a part of Great Britain and perhaps caused the IRA's prompt "response" in the mode of terrorism, which the IRA acknowledges. These counties held a majority Catholic population. Since each county was granted the will to secede from or remain part of Great Britain, in 1919 they decided for secession (Anderson and O'Dowd 2007, p.944). The religious and partisan differences in Counties Cavan,



**Figure 2.1  Mural of Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey**

http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/bogsideartists

Donegal, and Monaghan naturally fueled their resistance to remaining part of the United Kingdom. In the grand scheme of the Troubles, Ulster was very much the center of the conflict (Ulster will be covered in the next chapter).

To find a more tangible, personable example of the differences from one side of the border to the other, a person who experienced the Troubles was contacted. Tom Kelly, one of the three Northern Irish men who constitute the Bogside Artists, has painted numerous murals in the city of Londonderry (also referred to simply

as Derry).  The murals (figures 2.1, 2.2) depict, mostly, the events of Bloody Sunday in 1972, in which members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (or the RUC) killed 13 civil rights activists in Londonderry (Muldoon *et al.* 2007, p.98).  Rather than just show general adaptations of the event, the Bogside Artists gave their murals a generous touch of humanity, such as a mural of Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey, one of the leaders of the resistance movement during the Bloody Sunday incident; she was later made a Member of Parliament in London.  Kelly is a Catholic, but is a native of Northern Ireland. This places Tom Kelly in a special group of people—the minority.



**Figure 2.2  Mural of Bloody Sunday Petrol Bomber**

http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/bogsideartists

When asked where his allegiance lies this day, Kelly answered by saying "I am neither unionist or nationalist" (Kelly 2007).  He said "painting the resistant faction of the incident...was a way to pay homage to the fourteen who unfairly died that day in 1972" (Kelly 2007).  However, according to Kelly himself, many have questioned his and the other two artists' alleged indifference today.  He cites the notion of skeptics that the murals bleed with "Nationalist propaganda" (Kelly 2007).  The idea is well founded, too, as real balance on the part of the Bogside Artists would have been to depict the RUC's humanity alongside that of the victims in this case. However, in fairness to Kelly, the RUC did not lose lives during the Bloody Sunday incident.

The Bogside Artists' murals have become world-renown for their eerily beautiful captures of a moment in time that most people, namely those on the island, would like

to disregard because of its violent nature and the scar that it put on the global view of Ireland.  But what the murals show above all else is the vast differences across the border that have made the land so volatile.  Catholics aspire for recognition in the north; Protestants want respect in the south.  Nationalists cry for a unified Ireland once again; unionists will fight and die for the Queen.  The Irish feel it is in the best of Northern Ireland's interest to rejoin the Republic; the Northern Irish regard their southern brethren's dream as a pipe dream, that nothing good would come out of separating from Great Britain.  The sentiments on both sides of the border are extreme.  But many things have changed, and progress, apparently, is being achieved, which will be discussed in-depth in the next chapter.

Many incidents are attributed to extreme feelings in either direction of the unfriendly border situation in Ireland.  As a consequence, many distinctive reasons are attributed to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, all of which have consequence in its inception.  McLaughlin, Trew and Muldoon (2006) discuss the significance of religion involving Irish/British identity within the youth of the region, with the [Northern Irish] British being Protestant and the [Southern] Irish being Catholic.  The significance was directly related to the state—with most of Great Britain being Protestant and most of Ireland being Catholic, the governments of both states were greatly influenced by religion, a fusing of church and state, which ultimately led to differing views and bitterness.

Darby (2003) explains that the Good Friday Agreement, or the Belfast Agreement, on the 9th of April 1998, was an accord which states that the future of Northern Ireland would rest fully in the hands of its citizens as granted by the United

Kingdom.  Dixon's (2001) discussion of whether the Good Friday Agreement is or is not

a viable, authentic structure in ending the Troubles is one such example, but in a new

direction.  Instead of expressing opposition to one side of the argument, Dixon presents

his dissent for the actual process.  Dixon unearths the mass inconsistencies in the Good

Friday Agreement (explained in the next chapter), keeping his objectivism off to the side

somewhat.

# Chapter 3
## Good Friday, Negotiations, and Border Changes

The 1990s brought about the resurgence of a global aim for peace. The trend across the globe was a far greater attention paid toward human rights, which was ignited during the 1980s in places like Africa and South America. At the same time, the island of Ireland was thoroughly exhausted from the drawn-out battle, which was becoming increasingly senseless when examined closely, specifically by the younger generation who were thrown right into the middle of the conflict. For both of these reasons, Ireland and Northern Ireland felt strongly compelled to at last do something to benefit their futures. The time was right to reach some sort of resolution and both governments realized this necessity. Essentially, according to Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson (2007, p.6), the violence was contained after the initial onslaught of the Troubles in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the 1980s, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland found themselves at a stalemate, which was the result of evenly-matched militaries on both sides. This would last throughout the decade, with relatively little violence being the residual effect of the stalemate. Nonetheless, the conflict remained.



**Figure 3.1  Sinn Fein Logo**
www.corksf.20m.com

In the early 1990s, Sinn Fein (see figure 3.1), Ireland's leading Nationalist organization and the long-believed aggressor in the violence, was invited to speak with British officials with the expectation that they would eventually be "admitted to all-party talks on Northern Ireland's future" (Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson 2007,

p.6).  This led to many changes, such as greater governmental interaction between the

Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom.  The latter half of 1994

brought real change in the violence as the IRA declared a ceasefire in August and

loyalist paramilitary groups did the same six weeks later.  Both groups opted for a more

political decision (Coakley and O'Dowd 2007, p.879).

Some universal factors had an exceedingly key impact on the change in Northern

Ireland.  The rapid increase of globalization, in which international interaction molds a

sort of global community, spawned interest in peace by examining what peace had

done for other states within the unofficial community, such as increased economic

development in slightly underdeveloped states.  The European Union, a somewhat

matured version of the economic organization known as the European Community, was

readying its emergence into the western world, which would call for a shift in Irish/British

politics; no longer were the Troubles an issue just in the British Isles, but also

throughout the rest of the European Union.  Other factors, such as both sides realizing

the undeniable economic benefits that peace would bring, played into the transition from

violence to non-violence in Northern Ireland (Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson 2007,

p.3, 8).  In short, peace, security, and economic benefits were the foundation of the

accord.  The peaceful collaboration of the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain had

begun.

The result was the most defining piece of legislature in modern Irish/British

history.  The accord constructed was the Good Friday Agreement, also known as the

Belfast Agreement.  The Good Friday Agreement, signed in April 1998, boldly stated

that the fate of the citizens of Northern Ireland was solely in their hands, not to be

decided by the British or Irish governments (Coakley and O'Dowd 2007, p.880). This meant self-determination on the part of Northern Irish citizens alone—if Northern Ireland ever decided to unite with the Republic of Ireland, according to the agreement, neither Ireland or Great Britain would not intercede.

Along with the Good Friday Agreement came many side-bar items, such as significant doubt in the accord itself. A popular sentiment amongst both sides was that the accord was tenuous at best (Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson 2007, p.8). But what was not expressed through public dissent, was true in the form of identity. By this point in the lives of both Irish and Northern Irish citizens they had been raised in a certain tradition, and the division was that of Protestant and Catholic. The Good Friday Agreement instilled a new sense of pride in nationalism and unionism. For Catholic-nationalists in Northern Ireland, it left behind a much greater hope that the six counties in Ulster could reunite with the south. For Protestant-unionists in Northern Ireland, it meant their vote, and that of no other entity, was all that mattered.

The change was clear. Northern Ireland, while still aligned with and dependent upon Great Britain, had more control of its future than any time in the past. The reasons for Northern Ireland to remain a British state rather than unite with the republic to the south had to be very great. Such contrasts have led the area toward a unique border situation in the region. Linguistically, dialectically, and racially, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland are very similar; they speak fluent English—few speak Irish Gaelic anymore, although it remains on the list of Ireland's official languages. Their dialects reflect a heavy Gaelic ancestry. While other races, such as African and Asian, have recently added to a minor heterogeneity of the island, Ireland still remains 96% white, or

Irish (The 21st Century World Atlas, p.592).  In terms of ethnic similarities, these three

factors are the only main likenesses between Irish and Northern Irish identities.  The

differences are also few, but are far more important to the overall contribution of the

conflict at the border.

First and foremost, as mentioned before, the greatest difference between

Ireland's and Northern Ireland's cultures is that of religion.  While the bulk of the

counties on the island lie south of the border, it is of great importance to appreciate the

sharp contrast of faith on both sides.  Religious dissimilarities between the two entities

could very well create a strong basis for the conclusion that borders are still most

relevant.  However, these differences could also be erased if the border were removed.

But a picture is no longer worth a thousand words, as exemplified by the progress made

through the Good Friday Agreement.  These religious dissimilarities are best expressed

by the following two graphics. The first (figure 3.2) depicts, through the use of pie charts, the Catholic distribution across the island by county.  The second (figure 3.3) uses color to represent the distribution of Protestant proportion across the island over a 100 year period starting in 1891 and ending in 1991.
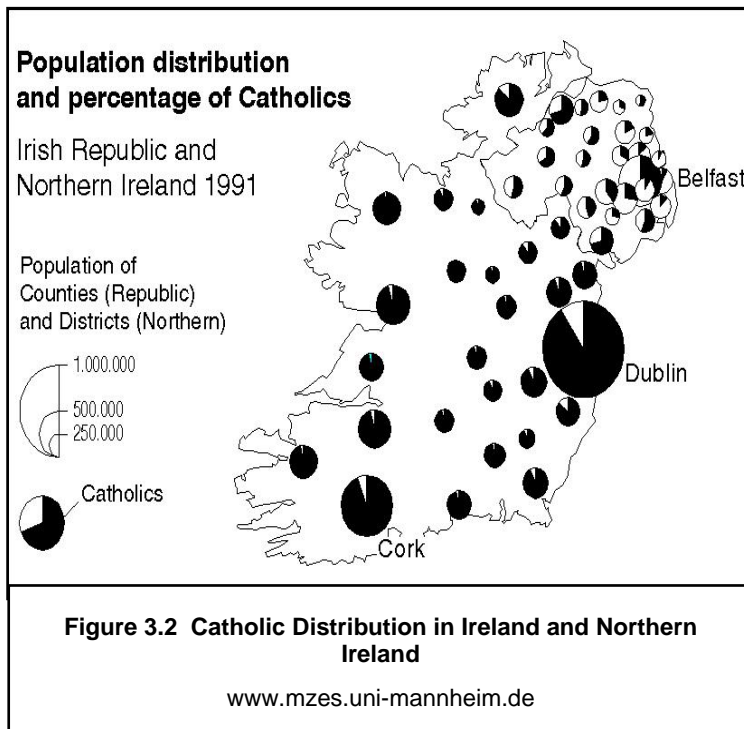


**Figure 3.2  Catholic Distribution in Ireland and Northern Ireland**

www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de

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It should be noted that almost all of the graphics found depicting these statistics were practically the same, save for an occasional mismatch of counties. By examining these graphics, one can easily depict where the border stands. With the exception of Counties Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan, Ulster is highlighted by both a majority of Protestantism and a lack of Catholicism. The Catholic map and the 1991 Protestant map are in unison. Of particular interest is the changing of Ulster around 1991—whereas in 1863 Ulster was heartily Protestant, the latter date suggests that Ulster had become a considerably
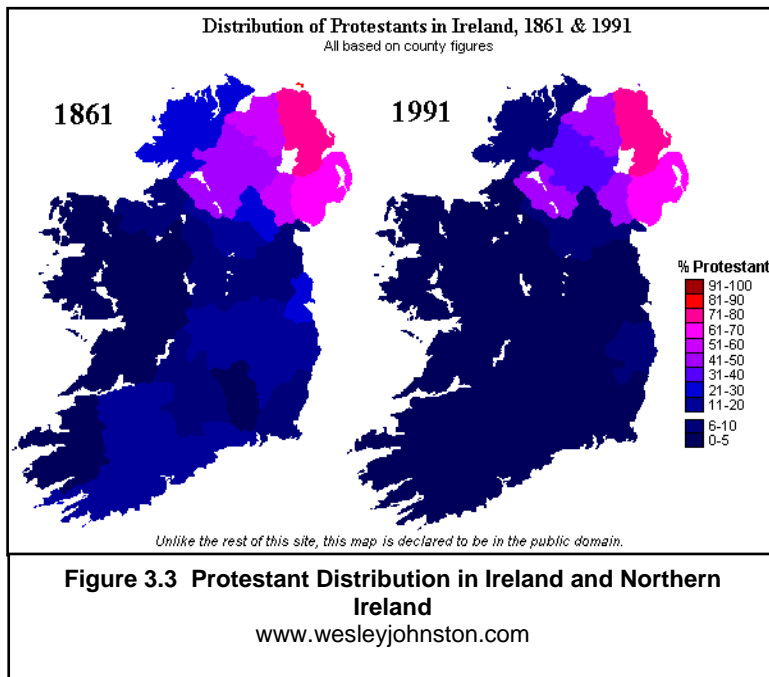


**Figure 3.3  Protestant Distribution in Ireland and Northern Ireland**
www.wesleyjohnston.com

more Catholic population. The map displays the changed demographics of Protestants and Catholics in Ulster, which is one of the larger factors contributing to the Troubles. The religious balance had begun to shift during the middle of the twentieth century in favor of Catholics in the north, thus unbalancing the two faiths. In addition, it shows the overall dominance of the Catholic faith on the entire island, as Protestant populations in the Republic of Ireland had dwindled to almost nothing by 1991.

The demographic makeup of the island contains definitive explanations. The Republic of Ireland, according to the pie chart map and the color-coded map, is somewhere in the range of 90-95% Catholic, with County Roscommon appearing to be

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100% Catholic.  Consequently, Northern

Ireland is about 50-60% Protestant, with the

westernmost counties containing a Catholic

majority.  In summary, Catholics reside on

both sides of the border while the Protestant

population cannot share that distinction.

Consequently, Catholics easily control the

Republic, whereas Protestants have a more

difficult time controlling the areas north of the

border.  The fact that the Republic of Ireland

is seen as a Catholic state places the less-

definable Northern

Ireland at a grand

disadvantage because

votes concerning both

sides are heavily in favor

of a Catholic majority,

regardless of nationality.

When the Protestant-

unionist majority in

Northern Ireland decided

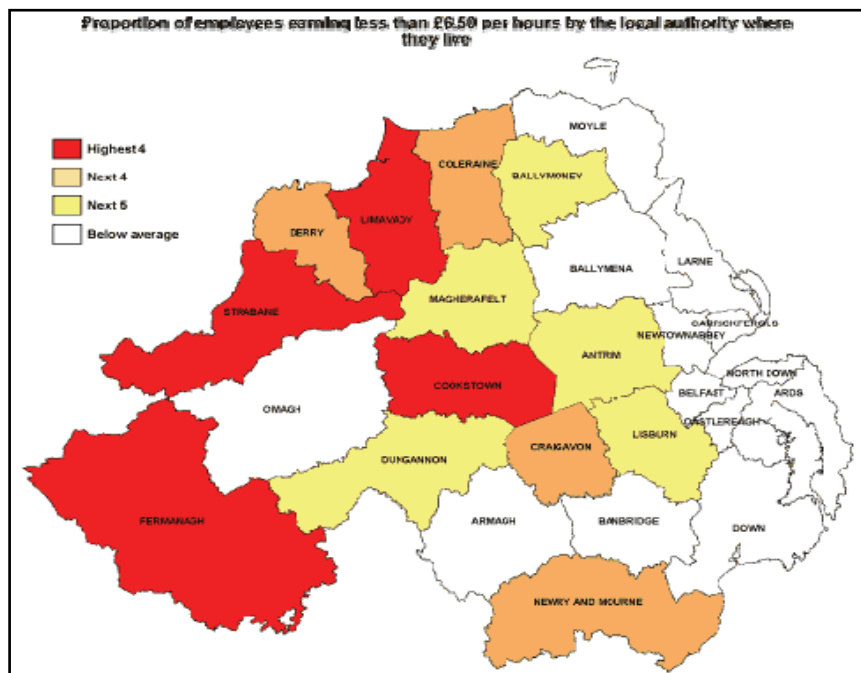for their territory to remain

part of the United
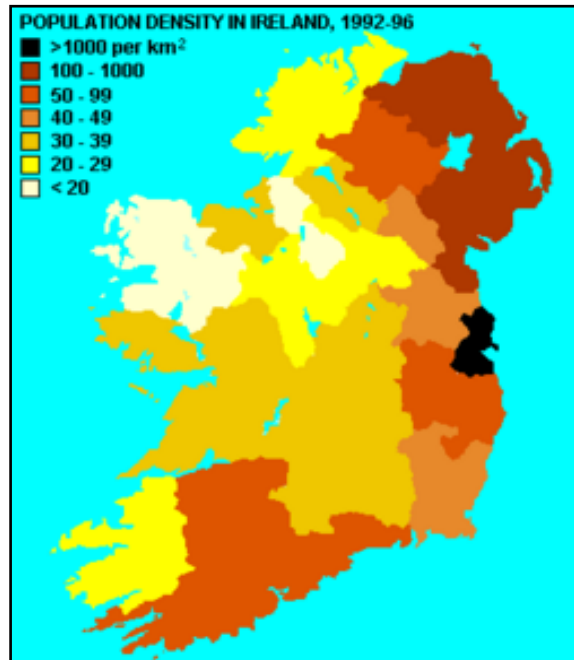


**Figure 3.4  Population in Ireland and Northern Ireland**

www.k12academics.com



**Figure 3.5  Poverty in Northern Ireland based on District**

www.poverty.org.uk

Kingdom, it understood the importance, and downsides, of dependency on Britain.  The

first map (3.4) displays the island's population density, free of a border separating north

and south (one of few 'borderless' maps found that were not directly tied to Sinn Fein).

The second map (figure 3.5) shows the poverty levels in Northern Ireland based more

closely on districts than simply counties.  One can suggest that just like with any

distantly-owned part of a state, Northern Ireland has suffered from the problem of

selectivity on Great Britain's part—England, Wales, and Scotland, lands attached to the

United Kingdom mainland, receive more attention than Northern Ireland, which is on

another island altogether.  Distance from the mainland, perhaps, creates an unfair gap

in state funding, which is represented in figures 3.4 and 3.5.  Then again this is only an

observation, not a fact.

Counties Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone are easily the black sheep of

Northern Ireland when it comes to the economy.  This is likely due to their localities near

or around the Troubles hot spots.  Naturally, a hotbed of violence is not attractive to

newcomers.  This can devastate economies.  But the important facet of these two maps

is the fact that these three counties maintain a greater distance from the British

mainland than do Counties Antrim, Armagh, and Down, which also contain heavier

populations (Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital and largest city, is in both Antrim and

Down).  In Northern Ireland, these areas are farthest from London, meaning lesser

British representation.  This combined with the close proximity of violence creates a

good argument as to the cause of relative poverty.

Dissent is a factor.  Because these and similar maps present Northern Ireland as

an offshoot of Ireland instead of Great Britain (Northern Ireland resembles its southern

neighbor and not the U.K. mainland in economy), many Northern Irish have seen this as a large disparity and question the purity of their own British interests.  But to be fair, Ireland, too, has its share of poverty, and with a very similar nature (see figure 3.6), namely the err of distance from the population as depicted in the following graphic.  This does not imply that all places farther from their state's capital are poorer than the rest.  Rather, these examples assume some pattern of distance-related poverty exists.



**Figure 3.6  Unemployment Rates in Ireland**

www.rsf.ie
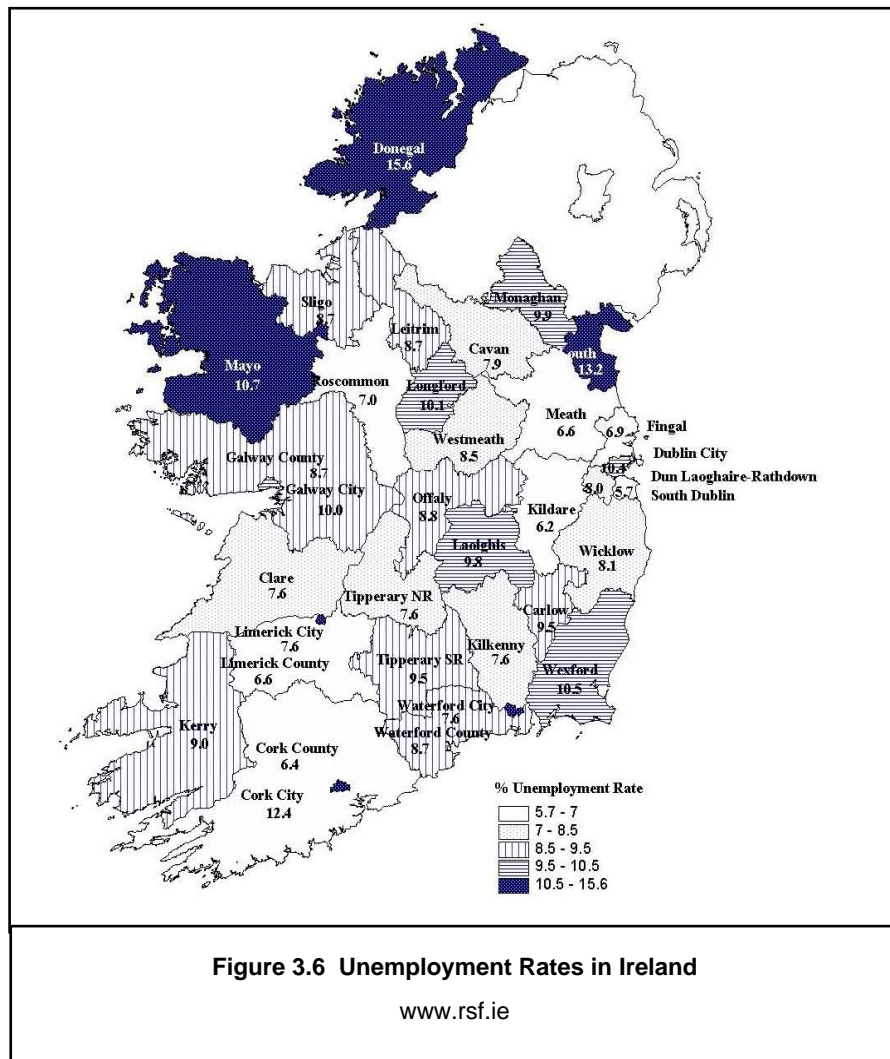
Of the three counties with the highest unemployment rates in the Republic of Ireland, two are located along the border with Northern Ireland.  This is the area where civil conflict has been at its highest since Ireland's independence.  War can hamper progress in many fashions, including the economy.  Many cite the Troubles as one direct cause of poverty in these areas, and this is true.  The nature of the economy of the western portion of Northern Ireland and the Irish counties that border it

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is obvious to everybody, creating a proactive stance in remedying at least the economic woes among other things.

The conflict has also affected the attitudes of the newer generations, differing somewhat from the generations that experienced the Troubles.  Bottos and Rougier (2006) did a study on the generations before, during, and after the Troubles in Ireland.  When speaking of the generation that grew at the height of the Troubles, they discovered that "Overall, this generation, although defining itself and its Irishness quite significantly in reference/opposition to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, were the ones most looking forward to both the future and the broader European/international context- even if they sometimes seemed to be struggling to situate themselves from their country and their Irishness in that globalized context" (Bottos and Rougier 2006, p.635).  It can be argued that this generation is responsible for the progression of peace in the region.

Identity, as it were, is one of the results of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.  Many Irish and Northern Irish people proudly feel connected to their resilient heritage.  However, the most common characteristics of heritage, tradition, and identity come from religion, according to MacLaughlin, Trew and Muldoon (2006, p.600).  Catholics are still Catholic and Protestants still Protestant.  The upside is that these once tension-strengthening aspects of culture are today accepted across the border, with Catholics and Protestants more integrated than ever (it should be noted that while each others' respective religions are recognized, the extraordinary differences remain, meaning some bitterness remains).

Not to say the road to this new civil attitude was a smooth one.  For the agreement to work, both governments had to instill solid faith in their citizens that such

an accord would work.  Coakley and O'Dowd (2007, p.80-81) relay that, for Catholic-nationalists in Northern Ireland, the agreement loosely "provided a mechanism for ending partition" with the idea that a proable, not inevitable, Catholic majority could ultimately mean reunification.  Also, it stated that Protestant-unionists should not worry about a Catholic electoral majority, which is not likely for many decades.  While this may have been a tactic to sustain any anti-nationalist anxiety, it was technically correct—the growth of Catholicism in Northern Ireland had not been fast enough over the past half-century to overwhelm the current Protestant majority, lessening the threat of takeover.  However, the decades thereafter appear to favor Catholic majority in all of Ulster based on recent trends.

But many still insist the Good Friday Agreement was merely a tactful suppression of undying animosity.  Unionists argue they held the greater hand in the accord while Nationalists argue quite the opposite—both sides saw themselves as the underdog in the drawn-out conflict and so heralded their 'bigger role' in the terms of the agreement (Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson 2007, p.9).  Agreements can change relations quite rapidly, but traditions and sentiments take time to adjust to a culture's new setting.  Naturally, both sides harbored an abundance of resentment toward each other after the Good Friday Agreement.



**Figure 3.7  Sniper Road Sign**
www.ulsterflash.iofm.net

RESISTANCE

There can never be peace in Ireland until the foreign, oppressive British presence is removed, leaving all the Irish people as a unit to control their own affairs and determine their own destinies as a sovereign people, free in mind and body, separate and distinct physically, culturally and economically

– BOBBY SANDS, 1954-1981

**Figure 3.8  Nationalist Progaganda Poster after Good Friday Agreement**

www.answers.com

The border, however, remained after the Agreement ended the fighting between nationalists and unionists.  The physical landscape of Ireland and Northern Ireland, especially around the border itself, received no sudden makeover following the agreement.  Years of fighting brought about anomalous markers referring to the Troubles, as referenced by a "Sniper at Work" road sign (figure 3.7) and a poster about the 'heresy in surrendering' to the agreement (figure 3.8), which for staunch nationalists effectively means surrendering to Great Britain.  Apart from the remnants of the Troubles, the change was seen in cross-border interaction.  One could travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland without checkpoints, leering eyes, or the threat of a terrorist attack.  Indeed, this change was incredible.

The overall change on the island has been significant, regardless of traditions and antipathy.  Certain maps display strong exemplification of the Good Friday Agreement's success.  The following map shows election results of Northern Ireland within the five major political groups—the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and finally Sinn Fein—from 1997 (prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement) and 2001.  The districts in Northern Ireland, according to the

map, are undergoing a transformation away from Protestant-unionist sentiment.  These

results display a change of opinion in certain groups throughout Northern Ireland.



**Figure 3.9  Republican Changes in Northern Ireland from Elections in 1997 and 2001**
www.irelandstory.com
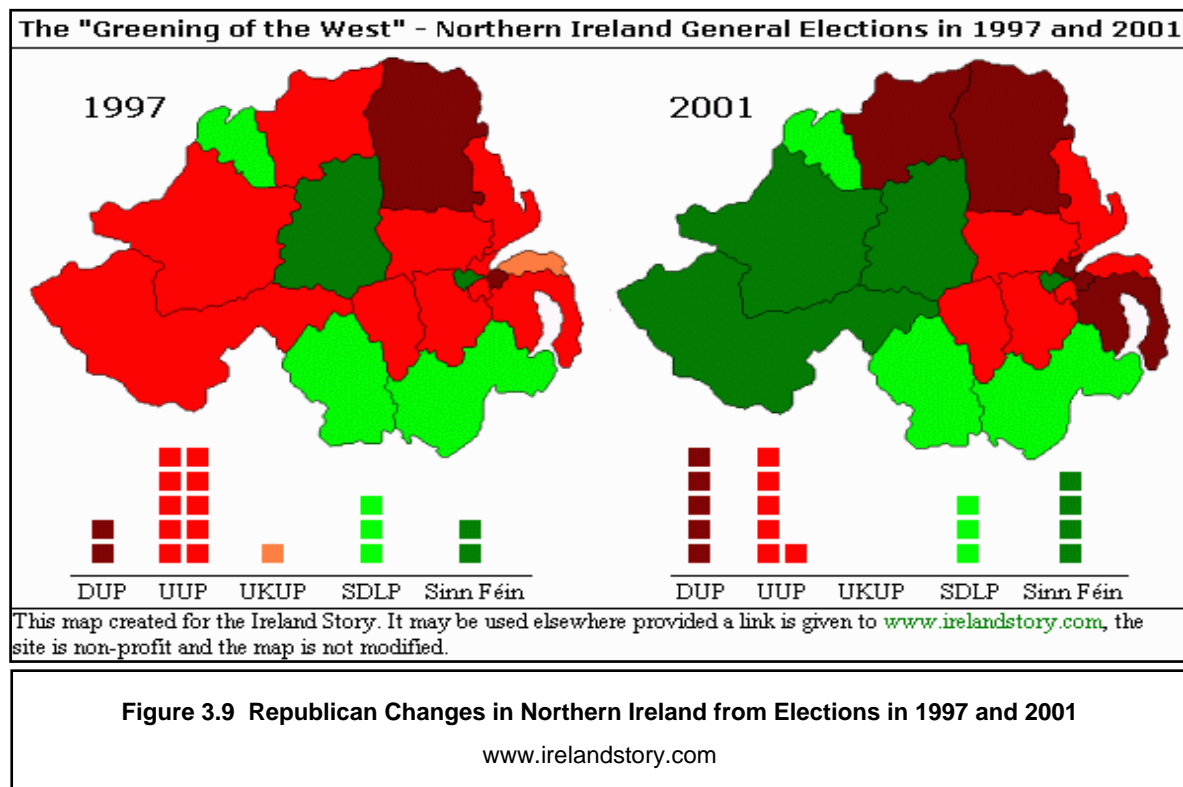
Sinn Fein and the SDLP are Nationalist organizations, desiring a unified Ireland.

The others desire to remain part of the United Kingdom.  After the Agreement, Ulster's

cultural infrastructure mildly changed, specifically in the western three counties where

Nationalist activity had always been higher than in the east.  The United Kingdom

Unionist Party, a supporter of the United Kingdom through non-sectarianism, had limited

support before the Good Friday Agreement, whereas afterwards it won not a single

district in the general election.  Granted, the district was replaced by the Ulster Unionist

Party, it still stands as a testament to the change in Northern Ireland after an accord of

such momentous magnitude.

The map presents a direct correlation to the timing of the Good Friday

Agreement.  The first map illustrates how one year before the agreement the numbers

of unionist camps were strong enough for a majority in the western counties. However, Catholic-nationalist groups shortly after the agreement used the newfound peace to gain a majority in those counties by means of convincing the already established nationalist population there to unite, but not with a violent or threatening approach. Similarly, the counties furthest from the border appear to have gained Protestant-unionist population, which may be the result of plentiful doubt in the agreement—with an increase in nationalist sentiment in the west, unionist sentiment was, perhaps, forced east toward Great Britain.

McCall (2002) studied the politically choreographed resurgence of the culture of the Ulster-Scots, descendents of Scottish settlers who settled in Ulster in the seventeenth century. It was once its own language and culture along extreme northeastern sections of Ulster and the adjacent land across the North Channel in Scotland. They still recognized their 'Britishness' because of the connection with Scotland, which is British and on the island of Great Britain, and for that it was harder to consider themselves Irish. The Good Friday Agreement allotted space for peace in the area. However, as Muldoon *et al.* (2007, p.94) describe in a study of post-agreement sentiment, while most citizens along the border recognized themselves as Irish, the majority clarified that they were either Northern Irish/British or southern Irish, meaning although differences are recognized at the border, identity remains a very sensitive subject.

McCall (2002) describes how the agreement led to deeper division between nationalist and unionist camps, and how cultural identity between the two parties has greatly intensified since the late 1990s. The general idea here is that releasing a land

from specific power leaves it 'open for the taking' in that stability formed under that power can easily be shaken and another power, whether stronger or lesser, can do harm to that land.  Consequently, some unionists in Northern Ireland feel that the Republic of Ireland could economically devastate the six counties in Ulster should reunification happen, although such fears are one-sided and somewhat uneducated.

A popular notion amongst researchers of the Good Friday Agreement was that it caused problems just as much as it solved them.  For instance, Mac Ginty, Muldoon and Ferguson (2006, p.9) detail how the agreement is peaceful in name only, that the cease of violence is shaky at best.  They insist that both sides have found new grievances within the agreement, essentially fueling the continuation of the bitterness.  The grievances are not mentioned, but one can assume they would consist of perceived inequality from one side of the border to the other.

But what of the border itself?  True, it still separates the north from the south, the United Kingdom from Ireland, but after successful measures to somewhat homogenize the area politically, which entails an all-encompassing set of procedures in political practices in both Ireland and the United Kingdom for the sake of cooperation, what is its current importance?  Clearly, this question is not an easy one to answer.  This relates to an article by Bottos and Rougier (2006), who examined younger generations along the border by gathering sentiment on the new look of the border after the Good Friday Agreement.  They determined that the younger generation's idea of 'Irishness' was more conditional and open than that of the older generations who grew up amidst the height of the Troubles, although the younger generation is more leery of the Good

Friday Agreement in that it, again, seems to be a temporary solution to a bigger problem.

A number of people in Northern Ireland were interviewed who were brought up during the Troubles to gather an overview of post-Agreement identity within their ranks. Of incredible interest is the remark of one individual, who states, when asked about the changing times, "…I suppose at 10 or 12 years old like you know you're intimidated by [Troubles] but now there's no real border. I don't see it as a border anymore" (Bottos and Rougier 2006, p.631). While this individual's opinion may be a fluke, an anomalous sentiment, it is highly unlikely that before the Good Friday Agreement many would publicly announce such a view through fear of being ostracized by their respective parties. McLaughlin, Trew and Muldoon performed a similar study, but their questions were aimed directly at the youth of current Ireland. They found that many Irish adolescents, both Protestant and Catholic, had, for the most part, a rather accepting view of religious diversity (McLaughlin, Trew and Muldoon 2006). This does not prove or imply, in any way, that the border no longer means anything; it only heightens the idea that things, indeed, have changed. Literally, it is not their fathers' border.

These views changed because of increased interaction across the border, with the north and south widely being considered a common market, not separate entities (Hayward 2006, p.908). This is evident by the Republic's active role in making significant "constitutional and institutional adjustments in north-south relations" and making "more productive, positive and peaceful relations between the Republic of Ireland and its neighbours" (Hayward 2006, p.913). Undoubtedly, cross-border activity is stronger, and moreover safer than before the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

The youth of the region have different opinions as a result of a lessened sense of animosity brought about, mostly, by the Good Friday Agreement.  This is directly related to their parents' changing views of the border, a sign that the cycle of dissent toward the opposing side has waned appreciably since the accord.

Ulster is a different place now than before 1998—the citizens walk the streets with a lessened sense of urgency as a result of apparent peace.  Along with walking freely came a greater acceptability of nationalist/unionist expression in regions where the other was once taboo.  All the same, some feel withdrawn from the Good Friday Agreement; it is seen as though Ulster is left vulnerable by the accord, and as such they, too, express their dissent freely, as mentioned by Dochartaigh (2007, p.480) in describing how Belfast residents use the internet to express their outrage of purported nationalist-on-unionist crimes.

Although the violence has essentially ended at the border, there still exists, as McCall (2002, p.200) points out, a conflict.  He explains that "…enough resolution was possible to cause a major shift in the conflict from the violent to the political", which means instead of minor riots and menial hate crimes transpiring along the border, delegates have taken the 'war' and gradually transformed it into a war of words and then into words of negotiation, hence the Good Friday Agreement.  But logic states that since two entities are talking, there must be a border between Catholic-nationalists and Protestant-unionists on some grounds.

Regardless of a heightening of peace in the region, the border has experienced some Troubles-like violence since the agreement.  However, there are those who insist that whatever brief and mild violence was left after the agreement was emphatically

altered by events taking place after 1998. For instance, Pollak's (2007, p.63) statement

that "the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 in the U.S., which heralded a new era of

conflict in the Middle East, may have indirectly prompted republican forces in Northern

Ireland to suspend their armed struggle", provides the suggestion that the reasons for

years of fighting in Northern Ireland were finally put in perspective, as a crisis much

larger and, certainly, more modern gave Northern Ireland's case less meaning. The

highly-publicized and unifying tragedy prompted peace through the recognition of its

potential for aiding allies aimed at preventing the looming violence in the Middle East.

According to Dochartaigh (2007, p. 476), there has been a shift of the violence.

The information describes how a mixed Catholic/Protestant neighborhood in the

northern outskirts of Belfast between 1996 and 1999—the time just before and after the

Good Friday Agreement—had become "one of the most intensely concentrated sites of

violence in Northern Ireland". Dochartaigh also contends that the intense rate of new

communication technology development and consumption has essentially led to a

"deterritorialisation of social interaction" and has reshaped, or made visible again, the

border (Dochartaigh 2007, p.477-478). The deterritorialisation of social interaction

means the size and importance of places where personal interaction occurs are

shrinking thanks to intense communication advancements. Evidently, the advent and

accessibility of items such as mobile phones and the internet over-simplifies the

organization of minor crimes such as riots and property damage, mostly aimed at the

opposing group, i.e. unionists versus nationalists and vice-versa.

There appears a plethora of mixed feelings regarding the state of the border

today. Some arguments weigh more than others, with religion, for example, repeatedly

being seen as a barrier to the validity of the agreement over something such as health care. Is this enough to answer the question of whether or not the border is still important in Northern Ireland? Yes, it is enough, for the basics of the border have been thoroughly covered. However, it is a reserved yes. Differences across the border and the potent patriotism are two undeniable reasons why the border is still important today. The criteria used to determine this was the extent of peace as a result of the Good Friday Agreement, the change, or lack thereof, in sentiment from both sides, and a close examination of the pros and cons of viable Ireland reunification, which ended in more cons, at least in the short run, than pros. Although it is important, it is not to say that this border is absolutely necessary, which is different. Thus the answer to the question must be addressed with care.

But how stable is that peace? The next chapter will dissect this and many similar questions to grasp a better understanding of the border and, eventually, evaluate its current necessity, adding to the question for borders worldwide altogether. This question will be answered again after exploring in great detail the entire idea of borders. Northern Ireland is merely a case study in the broad scheme of global borders in general. There can be no conclusive answer until similar border disputes are analyzed, dissected, and concluded upon themselves.

**Chapter 4**
**Global Comparison**

While a respectable amount of attempts have been made in Northern Ireland to

contain the conflict, the same cannot be said for the rest of the world.  For every

Northern Ireland of today, there are ten Northern Irelands of forty years ago.

Globalization, perhaps, has been absent from these locations.  But that is not fully the

case, as even the most remote and seemingly third-world locations experiencing conflict

are in touch with the latest technology on some level.  Often, the reason for conflict has

a far more specific, somewhat less political nature, such as freedom.  Darfur, a region of

Sudan in Africa, has been of recent interest.  It has been a center of violence stemming

from a rebellion based on oppression, with a rebellion pushing Muslims out of their

hometowns and creating countless refugees (Paul 2007, p.21). Recently, the Darfur region of Sudan has been globally considered a genocidal situation. Tibet, too, belongs in that group. Once an independent state, Tibet (figure 4.1) became ruled by China in the mid 20th Century, casting the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan

**Figure 4.1  Map of Tibet Under Chinese Rule**
www.tibet.net
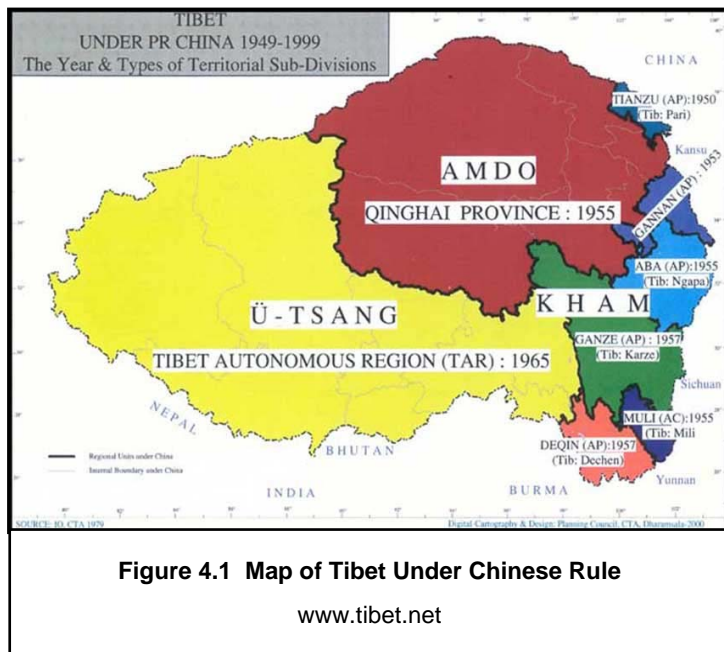
government into exile (Davis 2007, p.167).  Tibet was granted autonomy, but with strict

provisions of voting representation from Beijing (Davis 2007, p.169).

While both of these cases contain less emphasis on borders and more on human rights, the issue of borders certainly remains.  In comparison with Northern Ireland, Darfur and Tibet, two 'globally unrecognized' areas, are in a different category.  Northern Ireland's border exists, whereas the borders to Darfur and Tibet do not on a solitary state basis.  Also, the political stress on Northern Ireland's border has waned in recent decades whereas the borders of the other two examples are undergoing extreme pressure.  The borders of Darfur and Tibet, although not on most world maps, are instances of the continuing need for borders because in these cases the borders would likely save many lives.  Also, borders represent a central theme of belonging to the individuals inside them, so they require worldwide recognition to prove both their independence and their worth to the planet.  While it is not to say every person deserves his or her own border individually by a whim, each group of people, be they a few hundred or a few million, deserves to have their case heard.

The other side of the argument *is* a political one.  When the reasons for borders contain the aspects of religion, race, ethnicity, and economics among other things, they amalgamate into a political theme.  Such is the case of Northern Ireland.  Furthering the problem is the two-party factor—one party sees oppression while the other sees disloyalty.  The Irish found British occupation oppressive and the Northern Irish thought of the Irish as fully disrespectful and lacking a needed allegiance.

More ongoing conflicts better reflect a political nature to border disputes.  The conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for instance, has more in common with the conflict in Northern Ireland.  The former Yugoslavia was comprised of many now-independent states—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Serbia—

and each location, throughout much of the latter half of the twentieth century, was

deeply fragmented by ethnic nationalism and separatism involving Muslims, mainly in

Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbian Eastern Orthodox, mainly in Serbia, Croatia, and

Kosovo, which eventually led to what many deemed 'genocide' on the part of the Serbs

(Herman and Peterson 2007, p.8, 13, 19).  Religion, nationalism, and sectarianism are

central themes of the Bosnian War, and not coincidentally are the same themes that

ruled the conflict involving Northern Ireland's border.  They are very similar.  However,

the outcomes were quite different.  Bosnia-Herzegovina's conflict was settled by

internationally-focused and humanitarian groups, such as the United Nations and NATO

(Herman and Peterson 2007, p.17), whereas Northern Ireland's situation was rather

settled in-house; that is, much of Northern Ireland's problems were fixed directly from

the parties involved, although the European Union had a share in mending the border

war.

But far and away, the most recognizable conflict directly involving borders of

recent times is that of the Israel/Palestine conflict.  And here, the ideology is simple—

both nations, not states, claim a certain territory as their own, reluctant to fully relinquish

it to the other side.  The West Bank and the Gaza Strip (shaded out in figure 4.2) inside

the border of Israel—depicted with broad borders around the entire country and dashed

semi-borders in most world maps—are occupied by both Palestinian and Israeli

nationals.  According to Biger (2008, p.73), these modern borders were created by

Great Britain between 1916 and 1937 with an emphasis on equal resource shares,

implying British anticipation of dissent on the part of Palestine.  It can never be

overstated how important religion is in the meaning of this conflict.  The Palestinians, of

**Figure 4.2  Map of Israel with Palestinian Areas Removed**
www.answers.com

the Muslim faith, have long detested the Israelis, of the Jewish faith, for taking their long-time occupied homeland.

Perhaps this example gains the world's attention so readily because of the conflict's inductive role in everyday life at the borders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The on-again, off-again dispute has forever changed life in these areas, and the documentation of this manifestation of change has been intense, not to mention often biased.  Newman (2006, p.153) points out that after the 1987 Intifada in Israel, normal life, such as crossing the then-fenceless border for groceries without much need to fear for their lives, was promptly thwarted as tensions again rose. Despite many attempts by the League of Nations and later the United Nations to create some sense of equality between Arabic Palestine and Jewish Israel around the time of the second World War (Biger 2008, p.81), the conflict carries on, although masses of Israelis and Palestinians, themselves, wish for the conflict to end.  To most, according to Biger, borders are not worth blood.

In this, Israel's example is unlike that of Northern Ireland.  Peace, on some level, was reached and maintained in Northern Ireland.  While many attempts at peace have been made in Israel over the years, much still needs to be done in order to secure what

most inside its borders want.  But according to some, the brand of resolution achieved in Northern Ireland is precisely what Israel and Palestine need.  In his article "A Northern Ireland Solution for the West Bank?", Joel Pollak (2007) suggests that the Anglo-Irish interaction in creating a fruitful ceasefire in Northern Ireland could be applied to this disturbed region, which would include a healthier relationship between Israel and Jordan, the latter acting as the kind of mediator that Great Britain was in the build-up to the Good Friday Agreement, in that Jordan would have much to lose should the conflict carry on indefinitely (Pollak 2007, p.66).

While there is the submission of Northern Ireland's formula to conflict resolution helping Israel and Palestine, far too many differences exist to deem it viable there.  First of all, Northern Ireland benefited greatly from the timing of the formation of the European Union, which inevitably made for the progression of peace through the 'community' effect of sharing common markets and the encouragement of cross-border interaction.  Conversely, Israel and Palestine have no such fortunes.  Without the membership of this powerful entity, Israel seemingly stands alone, barring verbal support, against Palestine.  The same is partially true with Palestine against Israel, but Palestine has the majority of support in the neighborhood of the Muslim Middle East. However, there is one place within the European Union that is currently undergoing a conflict that closely resembles the Troubles in nature yet stands far from peace.

The Basque region in Spain has been one of turmoil for more than a century.  It has only been in the past half-century when a group known as the Euskadi ta Azkatasuna (Basque Land and Liberty), or the ETA (Erlanger 1997, A13), formed and demanded that Basque, a relatively small territory in northern Spain in the Pyrenees

Mountains, be granted independence (Burnett 2007, A4). The ETA, in the eyes of the United Nations and the United States, is labeled a terrorist organization. While previous to the Good Friday Agreement this would have placed the ETA in the same category as the IRA, thanks to the progression of Sinn Fein's peace negotiations the IRA was removed from the list in 1997 (Erlanger 1997, A13). Indeed, the Basque situation has enormous similarities with the conflict in Northern Ireland—it is a fight over territory and independence. Although Northern Ireland's conflict involved remaining part of one state instead of overall independence, the common factor of a border remains.

One distinct difference exists, however. Northern Ireland has achieved peace while Basque continues to struggle with conflict (Burnett 2007, A4). The Basque region, unlike Israel and Palestine, resides in the European Union, like Northern Ireland. So how is it that the United Kingdom and Ireland were able to assemble a peace agreement under the EU while Spain has not? Again, individual cases are completely relevant. For instance, people in Northern Ireland speak the English language as they do in the Republic of Ireland. In contrast, the people in the Basque region of Spain speak the Basque language, not the Spanish language, which is a stifling road block to negotiations (Burnett 2007, A4). This can be argued as one of the target differences between Northern Ireland's conflict and that of the Basque region.

**Figure 4.3  The Basque Region of Spain in the Pyrenees Mountains**

www.d.umn.edu

These conflicts are only the most highly publicized conflicts globally. Many smaller, less known conflicts regarding borders have taken place over the centuries since civilization began. When not involving conflicts, however, the changes in borders bear quite different characteristics. These changes drastically affect foreign relations within the borders, and in some cases loosen the borders' necessity. No such place exhibits these generally non-war qualities than the continent of present day Europe.

The incredibly unique political climate of Europe makes it stand out beyond traditional and historical territories. Outside of the jumbled variety of minor languages in Africa, Europe contains the largest variation of major world languages within one continent. Language, as it were, directly relates to culture in that it creates, or restricts, nations within a certain territory, in this case being borders of individual countries. Nations and states in Europe have long been separate, individual entities. However, Europeanization has created gaps in that logic in recent years. The states, once independent of their neighbors, are currently undergoing a clustering of sorts.

Goetz (2006) contends that European states, thanks to the European Union, are being slowly but wholly conjoined with two variables—territory, in which nationalism is standard, and temporality, in which convenience and pressure from neighboring states concedes to the EU. He adds that certain regions of Europe are showing signs of clustering, such as France, Germany, and the Benelux countries, and, of course, in the United Kingdom, which includes the aforementioned six counties in Ulster. In Goetz' theory, these regions are losing their borders, or at the very least their dependence on borders, with each passing day. For Ireland, this formula implies that it could, by default, be unified.

Comelli, Greco and Tocci (2007, p.205) state that "the EU's continuously changing borders through peaceful expansion have been the norm". This is a very true statement, for there is no example of non-peaceful EU expansion. However, Comelli, Greco and Tocci are correct in suggesting that unlike other areas where borders are changing, both in the present and past, Europe sets the bar on border transitions through peaceful means. Comelli, Greco and Tocci go on to say that the European Union, since its inception, has grown its own external borders in the process of success and that "Geographical borders are seen as shaping factors of the EU identity precisely because they are associated with cultural features that are contrasted with those peoples and countries beyond the Union's frontiers" (Comelli, Greco and Tocci 2007, p.207).

Undoubtedly, anyone can see how the transition of Europe from separate states to a border-blind community within the EU is coming to fruition with great, if not controversial, success. Furthermore, the present-day image of Europe through the eyes of the EU is strikingly similar to that of the United States, in which borders have a basic role in the federal system; state borders in the United States are perhaps superficial in the light that they merely separate one local government from the next, with the only difference, sometimes, being slight cultural differences, but almost always maintaining the same language (English, and Spanish to a lesser extent). It can be argued that the European Union wishes to be more like the United States in its freedom of trade and transportation. More and more, the borders in Europe are losing their importance and ultimately the differences that promore nationality, very much like the difference between Wyoming and Montana—name and population, and little more.

In a sense, Europe is a microcosm of the modern use of the word 'community', in which resources, funds, transportation nodes, and to a lesser extent cultures are shared between local entities.  It is a collaboration of governments who, like their American counterparts, desire not just similar characteristics of their states, but also an overall union by which to exist, thus the 'Union' in European Union.  It is an establishment viewed globally as extraordinarily powerful and well-established.  To some, though, it more closely resembles a bureaucracy, a dynastic group with overwhelmingly colonial ideals.  To those who feel as such, the relatively borderless area of the European Union is purely a threat, much like the United States of America, especially within the past decade, has been viewed.  Proof is in the currency.  The Euro (€) has had an almost unprecedented impact on the global economy, and it is one of the youngest monetary scripts in the world (in circulation for six years as of 2008).

Nonetheless, the borders within the EU are definitely shrinking in terms of their practicality.  Whether it frightens or enlightens the observer, it cannot be denied that this collaborative effort on the part of individual European states to initiate and maintain a sturdy and established 'community' has gone from the ideas of a few to the apparent blueprint for the rest of the world.  But this argument cannot be raised without promoting downsides.  The first would be the 'absolute power corrupts' claim.  With this, the integration of nations leaves fewer and fewer leaders, and thus fewer people represented.  While the EU has made vast strides in putting together its 'community', it has sacrificed, to some degree, the majority of control that a representative—like a president or Prime Minister—has within his or her own border.

Another negative to the integration of states is the adverse effect on cross-culture standards. While understanding other cultures is indeed necessary for civilization to continue, permanently blending languages, religions, and mores can have a devastating effect on identity. Languages would be shared, altered, and eventually developed into a new language, making the previous two languages marginally abstract and impractical, much like Latin. Also, tempers from past territory conflicts sometimes remain long after the fact, and so would still linger. But as long as controls for these measures are instilled, entities such as the European Union can serve as a positive example for the rest of the world.

Ireland and the United Kingdom are part of the European Union and have heavily contributed to the process of its development. The Republic of Ireland proudly uses the EU to attempt to separate itself from its bloody past. Hayward (2006, p.897) contends that the Irish government "has interpreted the European context as not removing Ireland's borders but building 'bridges' across them". Reflexively, the apparent end to the Troubles in Northern Ireland has somewhat paved the path for the EU to succeed, whereas only decades ago such a union would have been but a pipe dream. The individual components to the Troubles and the formation of the European Union may not have been alike, but the general tone for absolution and resolution certainly was. Through analyzing the European Union's system of peaceful, non-intrusive integration, it can be said that the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, like the border between Belgium and the Netherlands, is less valuable today and will grow even more invaluable with each passing year. A border's value is determined solely through the

ideologies of the people within, i.e. its value is only worth what the people say it is worth.

The situation in Northern Ireland is rather a microcosm of the entire European Union in that tensions from voluntary interaction with Great Britain have contributed to the whole of the European Union with a long-deserved authoritative fervor (Hayward 2006, p.913), much like how many of the original states in the EU are heavily engaged in legislative interaction (Goetz 2006, p.8).  Nationalism, however, appears to be the victim in an increasingly borderless Europe.  Arguably, nationalism, like the border itself, has less meaning in Ireland and Northern Ireland than it did thirty years ago.  It is not their fathers' nationalism.  The ultimate goal of the European Union is to unite the countries, and with that, again, is the threat of dying individuality.  It is much harder to say 'I am proud to be a European' than it is to say 'I am proud to be Irish', or 'British'. The border in Northern Ireland, while still important to them, appears less attractive, if not less lucrative, today than in the past, as is the entire state of borders throughout Europe thanks to the EU.  Nonetheless, the border will *always* mean something to those within it, and for that the cost of integration, which would require allowing that attachment to the land to become perhaps an after-thought, would be quite high to the member of the Union.

Sentiment aside, Northern Ireland has changed.  Spotting the trends in recent demographic changes in Northern Ireland is key to predicting, albeit abrasively, its future.  As figure 3.9 explains, the shift of many western Northern Ireland counties from Protestant to Catholic majorities was rather sudden.  The Good Friday Agreement occurred between the two dates on the maps.  Regardless, it cannot be argued that

majorities are shifting from Protestant to Catholic throughout most of the six county region.

When referring to Coakley and O'Dowd's (2007, p.81) statement that a Catholic majority is not likely for several decades, it is imperative to notice that no such statement was made regarding Protestants in the Republic of Ireland. Also, "several decades" carries ambiguity, meaning it appears inevitable that there will one day be a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland. Whether it happens one decade from now or five is too early to predict. Nonetheless, if or when that day comes, common sense dictates that Northern Ireland will be a region of the Republic, much to the dismay of the remaining Protestant-unionists in the six counties. Unfortunately, it could reignite the Troubles, as the tensions of one hundred years ago between the two groups have yet to die even today.

# Chapter 5
## CONCLUSION

Are borders relevant anymore?  Naturally, in order to answer this question many other questions that manifested along the way had to be answered before finding a finite conclusion, or at least coming close thereto.  These questions required an extensively objectivistic mode of analyzing to answer.  Having the border in Northern Ireland as not only a starting point but also a kind of symbol for the research aided in answering subsequent problems.

Is Northern Ireland's case across the board?  Certainly not; the unique stance of the Troubles and how it got there differs greatly from other areas of the world with border conflicts.  However, the establishment of two sides fighting for or against one border is, in all its generality, the same.  In this, Northern Ireland's case does represent the basic characteristics of border conflicts.

Can Northern Ireland's case be seen as a success in border dispute resolution?  Indeed, it can; litigation and the overall 'want' for a peaceful resolution has not been inconsequential on both sides, which is evident by its depolarizing "institutionalized North-South cooperation," meaning business institutions on both sides of the border have adhered to increasingly similar codes and standards (Coakley and O'Dowd 2007, p.881).  This has created an island exhausted by years of internal strife involving the need, or lack thereof, of the border working something out.  Of course, as stated before, this peace is real but fragile.  The Good Friday Agreement is barely a decade old and could very easily crumble under the right circumstances, such as a resurgence in territoriality and blind nationality.

Does the world recognize Northern Ireland as a good example of how to resolve a border conflict?  That cannot be fully estimated, let alone assessed, without obtaining an entire database containing international sentiment on the Troubles.  However, for those who study border relations the case of Northern Ireland can certainly be considered positive, for it has led to a period of peace and a de-emphasis on the border itself.

Exactly how secure, or flimsy, is the peace along Northern Ireland's border?  It is debatable, actually.  Depending on which side of the border the answer originates, the sense of nationality the answerer has, the age of the answerer, and the amount of tension still harbored, the answer will vary.  Those in the south will say the peace is shaky and that interaction between Ireland and the U.K. is there mainly as a suppression tactic.  Bitterness remains, as Ireland is still divided, and this plays into their views.  Those in the north, barring the growing population of Catholic nationalists, tend to laud the peace, citing the success of the Agreement.  In fairness, those in the south have not been as privy to the violence along the border.  Any peace to those who experienced the Troubles is indeed a real peace, hence their reluctance to call it otherwise.  Nearly all of the literature covered insists that peace in Northern Ireland is a careful one and has to be cultured just right as not to allow a rocky past emerge once more, with some, again, deeming it a temporary solution to a larger problem.

Finally, the big question can be answered.  Are borders still relevant today?  In short, yes.  After comparing the plethora of examples with Northern Ireland as the case study, it is concluded that although their meanings have altered substantially over the years, with some borders today now meant as funding dividers as opposed to people

dividers and some borders, such as the states in Australia, not even appearing on world maps or globes, borders that separate one political entity from another remain of great importance to the people within them.  And the majority of this answer, strangely, comes not from political positions, but rather identity.  People identify with their borders, and such a fact can never be taken away.

The border in Northern Ireland, though less visible than it was thirty years ago, is how one in the north can proudly separate himself or herself from one in the south, and vice-versa.  There is a sense of British heritage in the north amongst loyalists and Irish heritage in the south, which is overwhelmingly Catholic-nationalist.  The border very much exists to those on both sides, with those in Northern Ireland seeing it as a necessity and those in the Republic of Ireland seeing it as a wall preventing unification. They identify with their country and not with the country beside them.  They take pride in that fact.  For that, there should be no rush to eliminate it.  Northern Ireland is a valiant example of something very wrong going very right.

In the end, Northern Ireland has yet to reach definitive peace, or the point where there is no possibility of a Troubles revival.  Continual maintenance is required on the volatile situation to ensure the status quo of peace carries on throughout many generations.  Based on the literature involving the opinions of current residents of both Ireland and Northern Ireland, it is unlikely that Ireland would accept part of these six counties of Ulster without requiring the entire province, and it is unlikely that Northern Ireland would allow part of its land to be divided.  However, as relayed in the previous chapter, the trend toward Catholic majority in Northern Ireland has already started and is apparently more stalwart than loyalty or identity.  Conversely, there may be a point in

time, trends aside, where both Catholic-nationalists in Ireland and Protestant-unionists in Northern Ireland may agree that it is in the best interest of both parties to unite, be it on a probationary level with the United Kingdom or as a permanent solution.  But until that point, Northern Ireland is merely a well-established proving ground for peace.

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