

**CONFLICT IN CITIES AND THE CONTESTED STATE**

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**'Walking' with de Certeau in North Belfast:  
Agency and Resistance in a Conflicted City**

**Audra Mitchell**

**Department of Politics**

**University of York**

**and**

**Liam Kelly**

**Institute of Irish Studies**

**Queen's University Belfast**



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## Editorial note

This invited paper is an outcome of a programme of research entitled 'Talking About Transformation', part of the Liberal Peace Transitions II' project run by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of St. Andrews (other reports can be found at [http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/cpcs/cpcs\\_papers/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/cpcs/cpcs_papers/)). It engages directly with several themes investigated by the *Conflict in Cities* project, including the nature and dynamics of conflicts in divided cities, and the ways in which cities and urban life are both used and abused in the management, regulation or resolution of such conflicts.

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## Biographical note

**Dr Audra Mitchell** is a Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics, University of York, UK (as of 1 October, 2010). She was previously Research Fellow at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of St. Andrews, and co-investigator of the 'Liberal Peace Transitions II' project. She is the author of *Lost in Transformation: Violent Peace and Peaceful Conflict in Northern Ireland* (Palgrave: forthcoming, 2010) and co-editor (with Oliver P. Richmond) of *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From the 'Everyday' to Post-liberalism* (Palgrave: forthcoming, 2011), as well as articles in *Millennium*, *Review of International Studies*, *International Peacekeeping* and *Irish Political Studies*.  
Email: alm21@st-andrews.ac.uk

**Mr Liam Kelly** is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast. His research focuses on the early years of the 'Troubles' and he is currently finishing his Ph.D., entitled *Belfast: August '69*, which explores events in the city of Belfast during the tumultuous year of 1969.  
Email: liam.kelly@hotmail.com

# **'Walking' with de Certeau in North Belfast: Agency and Resistance in a Conflicted City**

Audra Mitchell and Liam Kelly

## **Abstract**

Peace-building involves a range of powerful strategies, including those of governance, securitization and development. These, in turn, are realized through policies and initiatives involving, amongst other things regeneration, development, surveillance and event or crowd control. Since 1998, North Belfast has been a focal point for many of these strategies, as it abuts the 'epicentre' of redevelopment and the most visible manifestation of peace-building in the area: Belfast's city centre. Since the interfaces, deprived neighbourhoods and socio-economic patterns of this area disrupt, contrast with or even threaten the former, there has been a concerted attempt to extend the strategies of peace-building outwards from the city centre to encompass these contested spaces. This, however, has been greeted with various responses on the part of local actors, from simple disengagement to outright resistance. Drawing on the theories of Michel de Certeau, we examine how 'tactics' of everyday life are used to contest the 'strategies' of peace-building, development and securitization in these neighbourhoods. In so doing, we challenge the assumption that they are merely un(der)developed hinterlands of the peace process, and highlight the various forms of creative (or destructive) praxis emerging from them.

**Keywords:** peace-building strategies, resistance, agency

Peace-building entails (re)building the spaces in which various forms of conflict - whether physical, symbolic, social or economic- unfold, often in the attempt to preclude or control it. Mainstream discourses of peacebuilding, which are rapidly becoming conflated with the construction of functioning, democratic, market-based polities (see Duffield, 2007; Mitchell, 2010; Richmond, 2005) promote the ongoing reconstruction of conflicted spaces through logics of democratization, securitization and development. In practical policy-making terms, this is manifested in the use of policies of urban regeneration, socio-economic development and local conflict management and control. Although these policies may not attempt explicitly or exclusively to promote 'peace-building', they do embody a very specific model of peace: one based on the creation of stable, secure, governable spaces in which the processes of democracy and economic development can unfold. As this article argues, this has created a dynamic of co-dependency between the logics of peace-building and those of 'post-conflict' reconstruction and development: peace is believed to inhere in the smooth unfolding of

democratic and developmental processes, whilst stability or the control of conflict is perceived as a precondition for this. This has resulted in a trend towards the use of 'post-conflict' reconstruction strategies as a major instrument of peace-building – and one which is experienced vividly at the street level.

The city of Belfast, and Northern Ireland as a whole, has been a focal point for such strategies since the mid 1990s (and in some cases, for many decades before), as promoted by such bodies as the Belfast City Council, the Belfast Regeneration Office, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Department for Social Development and the European Union's Programmes for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE I, II and III). These bodies have sponsored a range of strategies targeting key social, economic and cultural 'problems' associated with conflict and its ongoing 'legacy' (see Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). By altering the physical, social, economic and cultural environment of urban Belfast, they have created a visible, tangible 'peaceful space' – epitomized by Belfast's new city centre – *and* a very visible outside. This outside, a patchwork of urban spaces textured by interfaces, enclaves and complex patterns of conflict, tends to be treated as a sort of hinterland for the peacebuilding process, or the space into which the latter will next be extended (see Belfast City Council, 2010). It thus tends to be assumed that the elements of conflict that remain in these outside spaces – whether rioting and violence, segregation or 'interfacing' or socio-economic marginalization – are the remainders of an as-yet incomplete process of transformation (Mitchell, 2009).

This article will take a different tack, arguing that the spaces outside the reach of peacebuilding strategies are in fact places of creativity, action and resistance that take place within the 'everyday' activities of the actors that inhabit them. Drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau, we shall argue that many of the phenomena dismissed as 'crime', 'disorder', 'underdevelopment' or 'sectarianism' are in fact 'tactical' responses to specific strategies of peacebuilding that have been implemented in the last fifteen years. Thus, the seemingly barren, dangerous and conflicted spaces outside the reach of peacebuilding policies are not simply desolate spaces waiting to be transformed, but the site of rich contestation, resistance and everyday action – as well as alternative ideas about how peace should take shape.

### *'Walking' with de Certeau*

Peacebuilding is an assemblage of what Michel de Certeau might call 'strategies': comprehensive, rationalizing logics of power that control and shape an 'environment' by appropriating their own space external to this environment, "from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats ... can be managed" (de Certeau 1984, 36) (de Certeau 1984, xix, 36). These logics may be administrative, economic, security-oriented, related to social structures and interactions, or to public order. Crucially, in so ordering space, strategy "rejects the relevance of places it does not create" and frames those spaces which fall outside it as a 'wasteland' which are, inevitably, to be enfolded in within the scope of strategy (de Certeau 1984, 94, 201). It is important to note that de Certeau's framework was not developed to respond specifically to contexts in which protracted violence was an important factor; rather, his ideas were derived from and applied to the dynamics he observed in seemingly 'peaceful' cities. Nonetheless, we have adapted this theoretical framework to such a context for two main reasons. First, whilst de Certeau's work does not respond to the social or cultural impact of large-scale violence, it is attentive to the dynamics of conflict and contestation that occur in everyday life. It is our contention that so-called 'post-conflict' societies may have moved into a state of (more or less) post-*violence*, but that everyday forms of conflict are still present. According to Mitchell (2011), this is not a reflection of the failure of peace interventions, but rather a reflection of the complex ways in which communities attempt to resist, respond to and cope with the threat of violence. De Certeau's work helps to highlight the dynamic ways in which a number of seemingly banal everyday activities can function as tactical responses, not only to the threat or memory of violence, but also to the policies intended to control it. Indeed, our second rationale for adopting de Certeau's framework is the manner in which it sheds light upon the sources of resistance to the logics of peace-building and 'post-conflict' reconstruction. As mentioned in the introduction, these logics have become increasingly blurred and conflated with processes of state-building and governance (see Chandler, 2006 and Richmond, 2005). Thus, resistance to these policies occurs not only at the level of formal politics, negotiations and consultations, but also at the interface between policies designed and implemented as part of 'peace processes' and the everyday contexts in which they are realized. De Certeau's framework provides insight into the multiple, subtle ways in which peace interventions – as strategies designed to manage, shape and ultimately control conflict – are resisted and contested at this level.

Peace-building is a strategy insofar as it creates a base of power (national or international institutions) which is exerted over a perceived environment of targets and threats: conflict, its perceived causes and its manifestations, largely through the logics of securitization, democratization, governance and development, through which it seeks to transform conflict (Mitchell, 2010). In Northern Ireland, since the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (GF/BA) in 1998, these strategies have been 'rolled out' by a range of actors, from the Belfast City Council to the Department of Social Development to the European Union and a range of local and international private investors (Mitchell, 2010). As we shall discuss below, their policies have included initiatives to redevelop Belfast's economy and physical architecture (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006; Lagside Corporation, 2007); to regenerate its derelict spaces (DSDNI, 2005), ; to 're-image' areas marked by murals, flags and other symbols (Belfast City Council, 2010; Bryan and Gillespie, 2005) and to change social interactions through the funding of a service-based voluntary sector committed to fostering goals of 'reconciliation', social and economic development (see European Union, 2008; NICVA 2009). Although divergent in their specific goals and means of implementation, together these policies and approaches constitute a powerful strategy of peacebuilding in Belfast which targets perceived causes of conflict or disorder, and aims literally to (re)build 'peaceful' – that is, secure, democratic, governable and market-driven – spaces. From the perspective of their proponents, the ultimate goal of these strategies is that they should encompass the entire city (and region) and thus become a dominant mode of life. Those elements that resist transformation, whether in the form of ongoing conflict, poverty or disorder, are thus treated as remnants of conflict that must themselves be transformed, and not as evidence of normative critique or resistance to peace itself (Mitchell, 2009).

We shall argue, instead, that many of these phenomena may be what de Certeau may have called 'tactical' responses to the strategies of peacebuilding<sup>1</sup>. Tactics differ from strategies in that the former contest, subvert or disrupt the latter in an emergent, transient, unpredictable, and often irrational manner. They are not attempts to consolidate power, but rather subtle acts of resistance to it. According to de Certeau,

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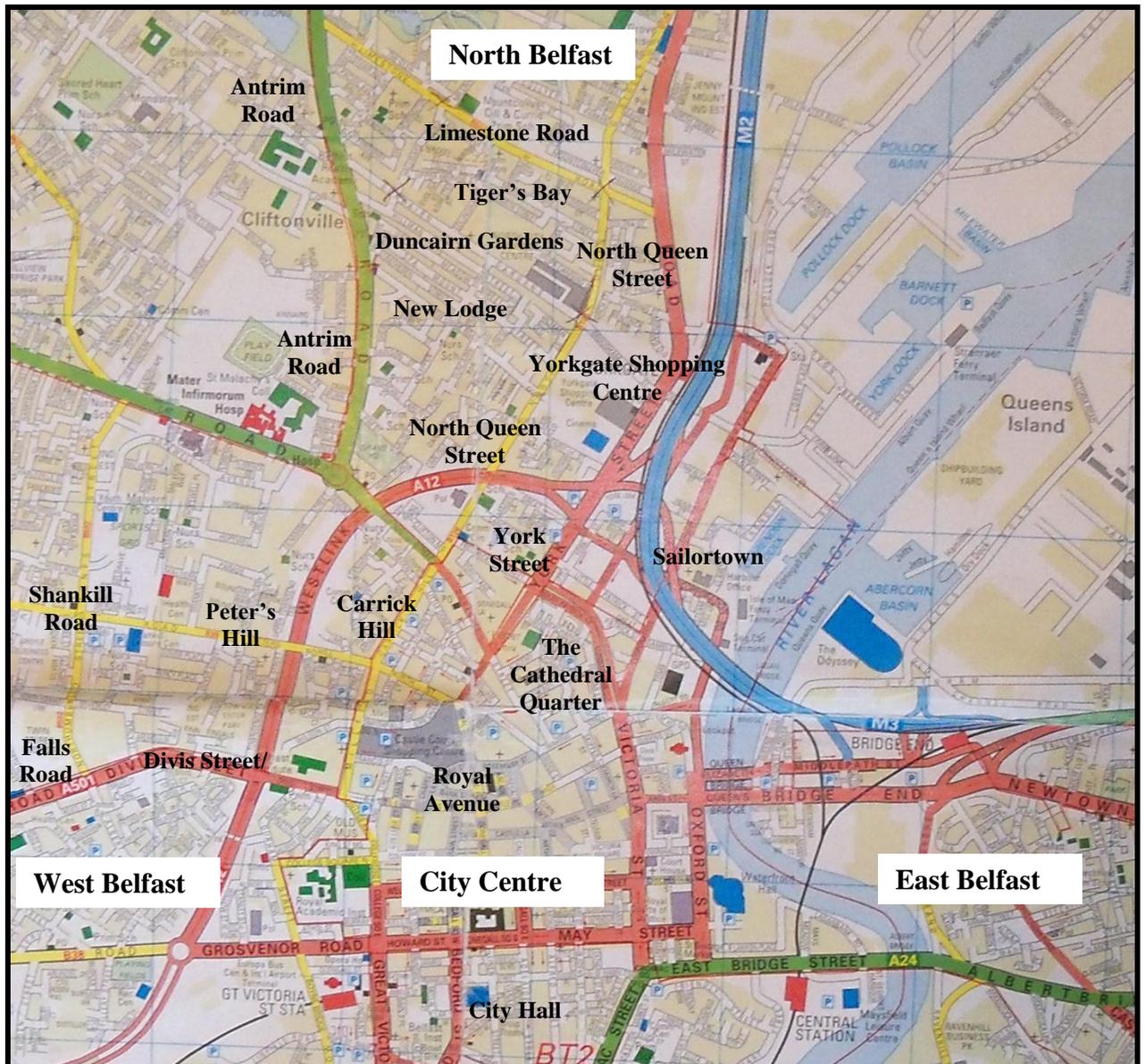
<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that they emerged in reaction to peacebuilding; many of them have existed in Northern Ireland for decades. However, the manner in which they are used now, vis a vis the dominant discourses of peacebuilding, are tactical in nature.

tactics are the everyday activities, such as walking, speaking, interacting, consuming or moving through space, in which “everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others” (de Certeau, 1984, xii). In other words, even as they engage in the practices promoted by strategies, such as the consumption of goods, or the use of public services, people take opportunities to challenge, subvert or resist these logics by using them in their own unique way or for purposes unintended by the strategists. Unlike strategies, tactics do not have a ‘proper place’ or source of power, nor an over-arching logic, but rather exist in the fleeting moments of ‘opportunity’ seized by actors (de Certeau, 1984, 30), and thus they may be difficult to observe. However, in the case of urban space where conflict is played out, they leave visible traces, from spray-painted graffiti to the shapes of walls and houses to the manner in which (in)visible boundaries are erected and transgressed. According to de Certeau, such boundaries act not only to separate but also as sites of contestation, transgression and interaction (de Certeau, 1984, 127). Here, we shall examine a number of these traces of the use of temporal tactics such as rioting, walking and the occupation of houses and facilities by observing how their traces have become inscribed on the urban space increasingly controlled by the strategy of peace-building. One of the most important examples of such tactics is the simple act of walking. From de Certeau’s perspective, the act of walking allows us to subvert strategies of control: although we may walk along roads that embody and impose strategies of control and governance, the pattern in which we walk and the ‘poetics’ of movement contest this space and mark it in a manner that is ephemeral, and thus ‘illegible’ to the strategies that govern us (de Certeau, 1984, 93).

To this end, we have adopted the tactical approach of walking in order to research this article. Literally walking through the area of north Belfast which most closely abuts the city centre, an epicenter of peacebuilding strategies, we use this tactical perspective to observe the manner in which the strategies of (re)development, (re)generation, securitization and governance are contested through everyday tactics. To this end, we rely on visual anthropology, emphasizing the visual, semiotic, aesthetic and physical aspects of everyday life, and ethnographic knowledge gleaned from both authors’ experience of living and researching in Belfast for several years. It also draws upon interviews with people living and working in North Belfast, or involved in the projects discussed here, undertaken by one of the authors in the spring of 2010. We have elected to organize the article along the narrative of our walk, as this provides the most

accurate reflection of the manner in which the phenomena we discuss are experienced, and how they can be observed from street-level. Moreover, rather than discussing each phenomenon in isolation, this narrative structure allows us to present the various tactics and strategies we discuss as they are found: in a fluid, interacting and ever-changing assemblage.

**Figure 1 - Belfast City Centre and its Borderlands**



## *The Walk:*

**Starting point** - Belfast City Hall.

North along Royal Avenue and York Street to the Yorkgate Shopping Centre; west to Duncairn Gardens and then into Tiger's Bay via North Queen Street; exit Tiger's Bay west along Limestone Road and into Newington before heading south down the Antrim Road; back to the Yorkgate Shopping Centre via Duncairn Gardens and New Lodge; from North Queen Street south to Carrick Hill and then west into Peter's Hill.

**Finishing point** - Lower Shankill.

*Out From the Epicentre: The City Centre and Its Borderlands*

We start at the 'epicentre' of peacebuilding strategies in Northern Ireland since the late 1990s: Belfast's newly rebuilt City Centre. This area, the heart of the city's (re)development, embodies each of the main logics of peacebuilding. First, it is a sight of intense securitization. Since it is intended to act as a neutral, 'cosmopolitan' space, it is carefully policed and managed, especially around key events such as St. Patrick's Day, where police and city officials operate a 'festival' that is highly regulated (Hand, 2010). Secondly, it is a site of socio-economic development; it is not only the centre for shopping, tourism and consumption, but also the locus of some of the most intensive investment for redevelopment, for example the establishment of 'quarters', at the last count there were (paradoxically) eight of these. Thirdly, it is a site of governance in that, unlike many of the surrounding areas, due to the level of control established here it can be *effectively and consistently* managed, developed and maintained by a wide range of agencies and their various policies, from those associated with infrastructure and utilities to those which govern the use of imagery and symbolism in public spaces (Francey, 2010, Hand, 2010). It thus acts as a visible epicentre of peacebuilding strategies, and is the expansion of such strategies outwards along the axis of the city's 'key gateways'. A strong example of this is the Belfast City Council's 'Renewing The Routes' (Belfast City Council, 2009). According to the project's framers, the "arterial routes radiating from the city centre are key gateways and the lifeblood for the social and economic functioning of the city. Previously these once thriving locations supported their surrounding neighbourhoods but now require investment to tackle problems of economic, social, physical and environmental decline. By developing and implementing local regeneration

plans the actions or interventions have secured local ownership and helped link wider regeneration activity” (Belfast City Council, 2009, 2). Thus, the regeneration of this roads is viewed as a means for extending the scope of the redevelopment project that has taken root in Belfast’s city centre, and for unifying the various strategies of development used across the city. It is interesting also to note that the focus on arterial routes promotes a vision of regeneration which involves connecting ‘nodes’ of developed spaces – a strategy which may lead to the creation of developed ‘bubbles’ and reinforce the exclusion of impoverished areas.

We begin our walk on Royal Avenue, one of Belfast’s main shopping routes, and head northwards towards York Street. Here, Victorian and Edwardian buildings (many of which have been listed and restored for the tourist market) stand side by side with more modern buildings with their glass facades, the result of earlier regeneration schemes and bombing campaigns. This area has been the site of major redevelopment since 2009, which is slated to be completed in 2013. According to the Belfast City Council, “The development is a 74,000 sqm mixed use, retail regeneration scheme comprising 39,000sqm of retail space, 8,6000sqm office space, 240 apartments and 700 car park spaces. The project will involve investment of up to £360 million” (Belfast City Council, 2010b). It is interesting to note that this development, along with several of the regeneration projects promoted by the Belfast City Council, has been delivered through a public-private partnership with a private development company (Ewart). To our right we can see the dome of Victoria Square, a modern £320m shopping centre opened in 2008, the epitome of ‘retail-led development’, which cost £320 to develop and was opened in 2008 (Belfast City Council, 2010b). In its shadow we glimpse the new ‘Spirit of Belfast’ sculpture, a symbol of “peace and progress” according to Dan George, its creator . Modernistic in style, it is typical of ‘public art’ in any other urban centre (ironically, given its title), and is a place where children and teenagers often gather outside of school hours (footage of this is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFLRQz0nq3M>).

On York Street, we move past the University of Ulster campus and the park known as ‘Writers’ Square’. This recently created urban park is the result of a multi-million pound regeneration programme in this area, now known as ‘Cathedral Quarter’. The plan to revitalise this part of the city has been contested by local residents under the umbrella of

the Community Arts Forum (Community Arts Forum, 2010). Here, it is possible to see traces of that which the strategy of regeneration has overwritten. Local city planning expert Brendan Murtagh (Murtagh, 2010) talked of how this neighbourhood was never known as the 'Cathedral Quarter' instead it was known as the 'Half Bap'. He claims that there is a small, local historical society that is erecting 'alternative' plaques (vis a vis the 'official' blue plaques placed by the City Council) detailing the local history of this district. This area has another alternative and largely silent history: during the Troubles the City Centre became largely deserted at night time because of the deteriorating security situation, this provided the 'marginalized gay community' with a 'social, public and central space to call their own' (Faught, 2003, 16). The echoes of this can be seen in the number of gay bars and nightclubs still situated in this part of the City Centre.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the gay community has challenged typical understandings of space, identity and plurality in Northern Ireland throughout this period (Nagle, 2008). The alternative histories and uses of this space contest the assumption, which appears to underscore much urban policy-making, that issues of conflict, security and disorder are the only concerns to citizens (Mitchell et al, 2010).

A little further northwards, and immediately beyond the edges of the 'Cathedral Quarter', we pass into an empty, liminal space characterized by deserted streets and empty office blocks. This demarcates the northern boundary of the City Centre. At the junction of York Street and Great Georges Street the built environment is dominated by a number of very busy road networks and junctions. We are now in 'Sailortown': once populated by '5,000 souls' there are just three houses left in the neighbourhood, effectively 'Sailortown' exists in the historical memory, and organisations such as the 'Sailortown Cultural and Historical Society' (2010). The germ of its decline was sowed in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the establishment of the Belfast Ring Road (Paul McLaughlin, n.d.), reflecting the fact that the City's recent social history has not only been defined and shaped by the 'Troubles' but also by processes of urban regeneration and economic development.

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<sup>2</sup> For the contemporary Gay Belfast Scene please see: <http://www.gaybelfast.net/scene.htm>, accessed 5 July 2010. It is also interesting to note that the voluntary collective and planning group for the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Trans Community of Northern Ireland, Queerspace, also has its headquarters in this location (please see: <http://www.queerspace.org.uk/googlemap.htm>, accessed 5 July 2010).

After negotiating a series of tricky pedestrian crossings (foot traffic is now almost non-existent in this area) we enter the Cityside Retail Park (established in 1991). This shopping centre exemplifies the attempts of developers to fill in the spaces torn open by both conflict and the patterns of development which follow. It constitutes part of an interface which divides the Catholic New Lodge and Protestant Tigers' Bay, and acts as a neutral place in which members of both enclaves can engage in what is perceived as a peaceful and non-sectarian activity: consumption. This strategy is reflected not only in the redevelopment of contested space as a place of consumption, but also in the way this site is accessed by consumers: primarily by car, from various parts of the city, rather than on foot. Brendan Murtagh describes this activity as 'bubbling': according to him "people live in... their residential bubbles, and then they get in their cars and they go along these protected highways into other bubbles...So they just travel from bubble to bubble. And it's sanitized, and they don't see poor people, they don't see flags or graffiti" (Murtagh, 2010). This point is highlighted by what lies just outside the 'bubble' in which we stand: behind the shiny facades of the various storefronts, the housing stock is quite poor and dilapidated, covered with graffiti, damage and signs of deprivation. In this manner, the 'bubble' of the retail park embodies the extension of strategies of development into the spaces outside the range of peacebuilding policies.

However, despite its status as an example of economic development strategies, it is also the site of a range of tactics. According to senior staff of the BRO (MacDermott and McAvoy, 2010), customers approaching from Protestant Tiger's Bay enter and exit through the lower (Eastern) gate, whilst those approaching from Catholic New Lodge enter and exit through the upper, Western exit (McDermott and McAvoy, 2010). These patterns are common in developments constructed to promote 'shared space'; indeed, in visiting an integrated school in South Belfast, we observed how the Catholic and Protestant children entered and exited through separate gates. Whilst this kind of behaviour tends to be dismissed as atavistic sectarianism or prejudice, it can also be perceived as a tactic: by using the 'neutral' space created through redevelopment strategies to maintain or preserve patterns of activity, the individuals involved contest the strategy of and the norm of shared space it promotes.

### *Walls, Fences, and Interfacing*

'Interfacing' refers to the range of practices used to create and maintain lines of division between areas inhabited by groups engaged in conflict. Examples of interfacing include rioting (used to mark or defend territory), the erection of walls or other dividing lines (although this may also be used as a strategy), the marking of spaces with graffiti, flags, and emblems, or the simple use of landmarks to navigate particular streets or neighbourhoods (see Wilson and Donnan, 2006). Interfaces directly challenge strategies of city planning, development, and even the provision of services, including policing, by bracketing off space and maintaining subtle forms of control over its use. They may be maintained through a number of tactics. For instance, many people will drive for several miles around a perceived interface to get to a shop that is only half a mile away as the crow flies, in order to avoid transgressing a boundary (McDermott and McAvoy, 2010; O'Halloran, 2010). Moreover, simple acts like refusing to use shared facilities or retail areas, scrawling graffiti on the walls of redevelopment projects (see below), or simply existing in conditions of poverty in areas next to luxury developments transgress the shifting boundaries erected and maintained by the strategies of development. Indeed, on the outer wall of the retail park we see a range of graffiti reading 'KAT' (Kill All Taigs (Catholics)) and 'KAH' (Kill All Huns (Protestants)). Such street art may be an important way of reclaiming or reshaping the spaces portioned off by walls such as these. In a sense, the wall, intended to discourage violent expressions of sectarianism, provides a canvas onto which an opportunity for possible forms of contestation can be played out.

'Interfacing' is not only a tactic, but also a powerful form of strategy, intended to separate groups whose contact might be perceived as a source of conflict or disorder. The most obvious example of this strategy can be seen in the city's numerous 'peace walls', large structures located in interface areas which physically separate residents from various enclaves (Community Relations Council, 2009). However, there are more subtle forms of 'interfacing' that form part of the strategies of development and securitization. One of the best examples of the latter is the (segre)gated communities of luxury flats built around the city in the early 2000s (see Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). Another example is the formation and strategic development of 'Quarters' throughout the city (see above), which are marked off by banners erected by the City Council as a mechanism for tourist promotion and urban redevelopment.

Moreover, even the strategies of socio-economic development create their own interfaces. This can be observed in Duncairn Gardens, which runs westwards from Cityside and demarcates the boundary between New Lodge and Tigers' Bay, this street has been 'filled' with organizations perceived to be neutral and to promote the strategies of peacebuilding. These include the large and well-fortified Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) building. The latter in fact looks like a police station, with a corrugated fence, high, narrow, barred windows and metal sheets to cover the lower windows (possibly to protect the premises during riots). NICVA acts as a hub for the hundreds of voluntary organizations in Northern Ireland – many of them funded by PEACE grants – and the site of many of the consultations and meetings used to legitimate and provide 'inputs' into governmental policies and those of funders (Mitchell, 2010a). Although the location of these offices is intended to act as a 'shared space' and a mechanism rejuvenate a buffer zone (where no one lives), these buildings are literally a continuation of the peace walls which stand on either side of the road and separate the two neighbourhoods. These security barriers are broken only by a number of gates which provide access into both Tiger's Bay and New Lodge. These access points tend to be closed at the weekend, when there is a greater chance of rioting or other disturbances, and open only on the weekdays during the hours of daylight. In this sense, interfacing is used as a strategy to control or prevent its use as a tactic.

### *'Carnival' and 'Festival': Riots as Tactics of Occupation*

Duncairn Gardens, therefore, acts as a site in which the strategies of control and development collide with various tactics. Despite being 'filled in' with seemingly neutral developments, this area is still a 'flashpoint' for rioting between people from both of the enclaves. This activity is generally considered to be a symptom of disorder or even criminality, but in the context of peace-building strategies in North Belfast, it is much more nuanced, and can be interpreted as a tactic leveraged against the various strategies of control and development described here. According to young people who have taken part in these disorders, or have friends who have, this rioting is not necessarily associated with violence, nor with inter-ethnic resentment (Group Interview, 2010). Nor, however, should it be reduced to mere 'recreation', as some suggest (Jarman and O'Halloran, 2001; Farrell, 2010), or an unthinking response to boredom.

The young people interviewed by Mitchell perceived rioting to be both part of the traditions they grew up with and a rite of passage (Group Interview, 2010). They suggested that rioting was not a simple act of disobedience, but rather that it involves a complex mix of motivations, including the desire for excitement, but also the ability to access local collective memories of repression and protest, and to engage in rebellion, contestation, and the testing of authority, whether that of the police, local paramilitary actors or other young people living in the area. For instance, they mentioned the manner in which young girls would often provoke each other across a local interface to see whether and how their boyfriends might respond by fighting as a means of 'defending' their girlfriends. In this case, the young people in question were able to test their own social relations, their ability to gather a crowd and mobilize a riot, their capacity to stake and defend space, and their ability to undermine the local power structures that constrain their behaviour (largely, the police and paramilitary organizations). This suggests that rioting is neither an expression of deeply-engrained ethnic hatred, nor a reaction to mere boredom. Rather, it acts as a means for momentarily upending the structures of power and order, and for using these structures (for instance, the organization of space around interfaces or the responses of police to rioting) as a means for subverting them. In this sense, rioting more closely resembles the Bakhtinian 'carnavalesque' (Taylor, 2007), or what Henri Lefebvre calls 'festival' or 'play' (Lefebvre, 2008). These concepts refer to the sudden, temporary, collective overturning of power which enables creative human action and resistance against systems of power by momentarily disabling them. They are also 'tactics' in de Certeau's terms, in that they are brief, ephemeral, and their 'content' exists only in their enactment, yet, in enacting them, the actors in question briefly reclaim the space they occupy (de Certeau, 1984).

### *Belfast's 'Big Brother': Strategies of Surveillance*

Another powerful strategy of securitization is surveillance, conducted largely by the PSNI and private firms and used as a means for monitoring and responding to acts of violence such as rioting or criminal activity. Evidence of surveillance in this area is rife, sometimes subtle and sometimes purposefully very visible; the Community Relations Council (2009, 21) states that 44 cameras were introduced in interface areas since 2002. According to this source, "initially there was considerable opposition to the

cameras and in some cases they were physically attacked and damaged. However, since that time the cameras have become an established feature of the geography of interface areas” (Community Relations Council, 2009, 21). However, simply because they have been established does not mean that they are uncontested or that people have grown accustomed to their presence. Young people who live in the area described to Mitchell what it is like to be closely surveilled by cameras, which are generally mounted quite high and angled down upon the street, reinforcing the position of power held by the surveillor. They believe these cameras are used primarily to target certain individuals involved in rioting, often after the fact: ‘if they [the police] can’t get them on the night, they’ll come back and get them whenever they can’ (Group Interview, 2010). Indeed, they claimed that police would often provoke or tease young people whom they believed were ‘bad kids’ on the street<sup>3</sup>, possibly on the basis of having seen (or suspected) them, or others similar to them to be involved in rioting footage. They claimed, however, that the security provided by such surveillance did not benefit them in return: ‘if something happens in the street, and the police just don’t want to be annoyed – [they’ll say] the cameras weren’t on at that time. But the cameras are on 24/7’ (Group Interview, 2010). They also described the feeling of being watched by these cameras, which they claimed was ‘like being on Big Brother...you can actually maybe tell what people are talking about. They can see *everything*, but they don’t see what they don’t want to see’ (Group Interview, 2010).

A number of tactics are used to contest these surveillance cameras, many of which challenge their physical presence or their functionality. An example can be found in the graffiti written on them on the Limestone Road, which marks the northern boundary of Tiger’s Bay and is an interface between that and the mainly Catholic Antrim Road. Near this set of highly visible and extensive cameras we observe graffiti reading FTBIS (Fuck the British Intelligence Service) and UTH (Up the Huns (Protestants)). By inscribing such phrases literally on the surveillance equipment, the writers of the graffiti are testing the limits of surveillance by seeing what they can get away with without being caught on

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, one respondent complained that police officers working in her neighbourhood frequently harassed young people as they left the local convenience stores, alleging that they had hidden alcohol in their drink cups and, quite often, pouring these out onto the pavement. As a result, bystanders and even parents would assume that the young people were breaking the law or their parents’ rules, or engaging in ‘anti-social’ behaviour. This, she claimed, is an example of how the police ‘harass’ young people in ways that leave little evidence but may have a profound impact on their reputation or self-esteem.

camera or being 'lifted' by the police. Moreover, young people from the area recall collecting materials such as milk bottles to help prepare petrol bombs and paint bombs, the remnants of which are visible near to the security cameras. Furthermore, activities have been adapted to respond to and subvert the process of surveillance. For instance, (young) people often contest the placement of these cameras by breaking them with stones or wearing hoodies over their faces so that they cannot be identified in footage (Jarman and O'Halloran, 2006). In addition, these young people have become adept at estimating the amount of time between the beginning of the riot and the time it takes the police to arrive on the scene, allowing them to engage in rioting and then disappear before they are caught (Group Interview, 2010). In this manner, they briefly occupy the streets, calling to mind the tactic of *kale borroka* observed in the Basque Country, in which sudden appearance and disappearance are used to challenge the boundaries and capacities of power to maintain order (Aretxaga, 2005).

It is important to note, however, that forms of surveillance may also be used as a tactic, or in such a way that they seek to challenge or replace authorities such as the police. Liam Kelly remembers watching how during a public order exercise in Belfast City Centre when the PSNI began to film certain sections of the crowd a number of those being recorded then began, using their mobile phones, to openly film the police in return, much to their obvious discomfort. Another instance of surveillance being used as a tactic can be gauged as we pass through both the New Lodge and Tigers' Bay, with residents keeping a close eye on us as we traverse the streets. In enclaves such as these, it was common for most members of the community to know, or at least be able to identify, many or most of their neighbours. Such forms of identification were, and are, crucial for collective security. This is also one of the ways in which paramilitary organizations have traditionally consolidated power within a neighbourhood and protected their leaders. On a later date, we travel with UDA brigadier Jackie MacDonald to his previous home in the Taughmonagh estate in south Belfast, to which there is only one entry and exit access point. As we pass through this estate, each of our party is observed and acknowledged by all those we pass. It was, MacDonald claims, this vigilance on the part of residents – not to mention their capacity to man their own armed road blocks and establish their own security cameras - that allowed him to survive the Loyalist feuds of the early 2000s (see MacDonald and Cusack, 2004).

In this manner, informal modes of surveillance may act as tactics which contest formal (state) surveillance, the lack of appropriate policing, or, in the case of some Republican and Loyalist communities, they may act as an expression of distrust or dissatisfaction with policing (Sheehan et al, 2010; Bird, 2010) and thus they actively resist the strategy of securitization.

### *InterFacebook*

As mentioned above, graffiti is one of the most visible traces of the verbal and social tactics used to contest strategies of peacebuilding, whether it is written on the walls of new (re)developments, surveillance cameras, or buildings owned by governmental agencies. The graffiti used in this area also provides evidence of the tactics of ongoing conflict exchanged between residents of the area, which use the rebuilt spaces provided by securitization and re-development as their canvas. Indeed, the graffiti here is not used to convey one-way messages, but rather as a means for carrying out communicative forms of conflict and resistance (see Kenney, 1998). This occurs when members of another group respond to the messages left by one person or group, often by subverting their meaning. For instance, in several cases we observed, where someone has written 'KAT', someone else has used the 'A' as the centre of the acronym 'KAH', therefore reversing the syntax of the original message.

We observed similar tactics and interaction on one of the security gates in Duncairn Gardens, on the Tiger's Bay side of the peace wall. The original spray-painted message in red reads: 'UTH [Up the Huns (Protestant)] Michael KAT [Kill All Taigs (Catholics)] T. Bay [Tiger's Bay] 2008'. On top of this, in black paint, the KAT has been crossed out to read KAH (Kill All Huns) and F (presumably meaning Fuck) has been put in front of 'T. Bay'. So the original message has not been obliterated. Rather, it has been left intact – but altered – as a message of resistance to the original writer, and perhaps an invitation to respond. Graffiti can also be used in a more directly personal manner: other messages in and around this interface read 'A is coming to get you' and 'B gave him the drugs'; the latter, later confirmed by interviewees, refers to a situation in which a young man from the area was sold drugs and died of an overdose, to which the community reacted with great anger (Group Interview, 2010). At the intersection of Duncairn Gardens and the Antrim Road, we see graffiti that says 'C is a tout (informer)', which also appears in nearby North Queen Street. Such phrases are used to communicate

threats, to rouse the indignation of local residents who might know either party. In some cases, they may be used to convey information to local paramilitary actors who might wish to punish (usually young) people for engaging in activities such as drug dealing or use, or indeed communicating with 'peelers', often through 'punishment beatings' or other forms of discipline (Roche, 2008). The young people Mitchell interviewed have experienced threats such as these, some subtle and some outright, due to their work in liaising with community police (Group Interview, 2010). However, due to their resentment of the disciplinary role of local paramilitaries, whom they appear to treat like just another quasi-police force mis-perceiving and abusing them, they ignored the threats, and thus challenged the power of paramilitary actors (Group Interview, 2010). Indeed, in many areas, paramilitary actors do assume some of the roles traditionally taken by policing, including the management of protests and riots, and may take a role in defusing threats against members of their own communities (Bird, 2010; MacDonald, 2010). It is not surprising, therefore, that young people rebel against paramilitaries' strategies of power as well as those of the PSNI.

This graffiti acts as a tactic in more than one sense. First, as mentioned above, it uses the walls, fences, poles and other spaces erected as part of the strategies in question as a blank space in which to engage in conflictual relations. Secondly, it acts as a forum in which people may conflict in a relatively non-violent manner (even if it may indirectly encourage violence) and challenge the ability of members of another group to enter the space in question; indeed, in order to engage in such acts, the individuals in question often need to cross an interface or leave their own enclaves. In this sense, the surfaces built by strategies of development and securitization are subverted and used as a form of 'interFacebook': that is, they are used in a way similar to online social networking sites to communicate and interact.

### *Paramilitary Power and the Threat of 'Dissidents'*

Whilst graffiti and the tactics of 'interFacebook' provide visual evidence of the tactics used to contest strategies of development, governance and securitization, their removal is also an act in which tactics confront strategy. As we walk down Atlantic Avenue, into a predominantly Catholic area, we notice that a large portion of the graffiti in the area has been wiped out or painted over. Given the rather hasty and inconsistent painting, it is unlikely that this has been done by the City Council or other formal bodies; more likely, it

is the work of local Provisional IRA (PIRA) members. The Provisional Republican movement (including Sinn Fein and a range of voluntary organizations) exerts control over its 'message' largely by controlling the language used to represent its causes and goals (Sheehan et al, 2010). For this reason, the use of slogans which challenge the message of PIRA/mainstream Republican organizations, or which represent the aims of the 'dissident' groups which challenge it, is often controlled in enclaves such as this one where Sinn Fein/PIRA members have significant influence (see O'Doherty, 2010). Indeed, much of the graffiti we observe, which is partially visible through the paint that covers it, refers to 'dissident' Republicans, such as 'RIRA' and 'CIRA'. The traces of this graffiti attest to an ongoing struggle within Republicanism that has unfolded in recent years.

In response to the relatively frequent activity of 'dissident' Republicans in the past two years, including the recent bombing of a courthouse in Newry, and several attacks on police and military personal (see Breen, 2010), mainstream Republicans have tended to take a hard line against 'dissidents'. However, it is clear that they have had to shift their policy and rhetoric recently in order to maintain their local political influence in Republican areas such as this one, 'so that they aren't out-Republicaned by the dissidents' (MacDonald, 2010). In addition to 'dissidents', non-violent challengers have emerged, such as Éirígí, a political party which seeks to re-interpret the socialist Republican tradition (also stemming from the 1970s) in contradistinction from the policies of Sinn Fein/ PIRA. This group organizes campaigns, creates 'street art' (what we have called graffiti)<sup>4</sup> and distributes leaflets throughout the island which focuses on issues such as the rejection of the PSNI as a legitimate police force, and its continued use of anti-terrorist legislation (Mackel, 2010).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in a recent interview with six former PIRA political prisoners, several expressed differing views about dissident republicans: one dismissed them as 'thugs and criminals', another claimed that they were returning to 'old-style politics' (meaning the physical violence Republicanism of the

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that Éirígí (like most Republican organizations) is concerned to promote its visual forms of activism as 'street art' rather than graffiti, although to the untrained eye, it closely resembles what we have described as 'graffiti' throughout. Henry McDonald, the *Observer's* Ireland correspondent, has also commented upon Éirígí supporters 'alleged' engagement in what he conceptualised as 'a graffiti campaign throughout republican redoubts in Northern Ireland' (see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/sep/01/ulster.violence> Henry McDonald, 1 September 2008, accessed 5 July 2010).

<sup>5</sup> For examples of Éirígí 'street art' please see: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/woesinger/344320509/>, accessed 5 July 2010.

1970s (Patterson, 1989)<sup>6</sup> and another that some of them have valid political aims, even if their use of violence is unacceptable (Sheehan et al, 2010). These comments reflect a recent shift in Republican and Loyalist discourse alike from the flat-out denial of any ‘politics’ (Sheehan et al, 2010) common in the past two years to a recognition of the normative aims of so-called dissident groups. Former UVF member Billy Hutchinson warns that regardless of their possible criminal motivations, dissident Republicans have a ‘strong ideology’ and that they ‘should not be underestimated’ in terms of their power within certain communities or to disrupt the existing system (Hutchinson, 2010).

Thus, the patterns of painting and over-painting in this area attest to the currents of this power struggle within Republicanism. The struggle itself constitutes a tactical challenge to the strategies of peacebuilding, in that the local power and influence maintained by paramilitary groups and other local organizations undermines the primacy of the state and parliamentary institutions. Moreover, as the participation of Sinn Fein in the GF/BA, the St. Andrews Agreement and more recent power-sharing negotiations has been central to the overall strategy of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, this evidence of attempts to contest the power of mainstream Republican at street-level attests to the struggle between tactics and strategy. In Northern Ireland such insight into these struggles can be quite literally gauged by reading “the writing on the wall[s]” (Kenney, 1998, 167).

### *Aesthetic Resistance: New Lodge and Tigers’ Bay*

One of the most powerful strategies of peacebuilding is to alter the physical, structural and ultimately, the aesthetic, elements of enclaves and interfaces. As mentioned, the physical, cultural and social interfaces that demarcate Tigers’ Bay and New Lodge are amongst the most visible in north Belfast, and they act as a site at which tactical responses directly confront strategies of peacebuilding. A crucial locus for this confrontation is at the site of reimagining projects: that is, projects aimed at removing visual or physical images that appear ‘conflictual’ or offensive to one or another community and replacing them with more ‘peaceful’ or ‘neutral’ images (see Belfast City Council, 2010a) Heading north, we pass a ‘reimagined’ mural, which is painted in bright,

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<sup>6</sup> This dichotomy derives from a significant split within Republicanism in the early 1970s (see Patterson, 1989), in which the newly-formed ‘Provisional’ IRA (PIRA) elected to use physical violence to disrupt the state, whilst the rump organization, the ‘Official’ IRA (OIRA) restricted itself and its membership to the use of collective action based on the principles of socialism.

non-traditional (that is, not red, white and blue) colours and is intended to show 'positive images' of Tigers' Bay. It reads 'Tiger's Bay – Community, Pride' and shows a large image of a Tiger, and is typical of the non-specific, vaguely inspirational themes of re-imaged murals. Previously, it would have borne a paramilitary image and perhaps the slogan and insignia of the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF). According to Francey, whose Good Relations Unit helps to oversee a number of re-imaging projects, it is a difficult task to align the views of different governmental bodies on what kind of images are appropriate for re-imaging, and not all communities are as keen on the re-imaged murals as others (Francey, 2010). This can be for a number of reasons – some murals are protected by powerful paramilitary leaders (Hutchinson, 2010); in some cases, people would simply prefer the money to be spent on other services and facilities (Murtagh, 2010); and in some cases, it is believed, communities may retain these murals as a 'bargaining chip' when negotiating funding and other relationships with governmental bodies. According to Francey 'they know what's acceptable and what's not' and may use the latter as leverage (Francey, 2010). This rather common assumption strikes a nerve with Billy Hutchinson, and ex-UVF leader and politician who is now heavily involved with re-imaging projects in the North Belfast enclave of Mount Vernon. According to Hutchinson, this kind of resistance may not emerge due to a desire to manipulate policy-makers so much as from local frustration with the extent of what they wish to have removed or altered (Hutchinson, 2010). In some cases, therefore, non-participation may be a sign of dissent, not 'mere' disobedience.

In other cases, re-imaging itself may be used in tactical ways to subvert the largely facile images promoted by re-imaging projects. For instance, in the New Lodge estate there is a mural re-painted in 2000, which shows children drinking in the streets, a newspaper headline reading 'teen suicide the highest in Europe' (a reference to the suicide rate in North Belfast) and the poverty of the area, probably to reflect the reality of life in this enclave. This contrasts starkly with the positive images on most of the more recently re-imaged murals in the area, including the mural painted in primary colours and showing child-like drawings and images of rainbows that covers the gate to Duncairn Gardens through which this enclave can be entered and exited.

Other, more subtle tactical responses to the strategy of reimagining are also in evidence. For instance, in both enclaves, garbage is strewn about the streets almost as soon as

one enters, and we watch as several people dump their garbage in empty lots, development sites and on the pavements. Whilst this may simply reflect poor public sanitation services in the area, it may also express an unwillingness to conform to the tidy, clean image promoted by local development strategies. Another example is the way in which visual damage has been used to mark the physical structures built through peacebuilding or other governmental interventions. For instance, just within the boundary of the New Lodge sits a heavily-fortified and thoroughly paint-bombed youth club. According to Nicola Farrell, who has worked extensively with youth in North Belfast, many young people find these youth centres ignore their needs for a relatively unsupervised space and offer services that are not age appropriate, which may explain some of the attacks upon them (Farrell, 2010). A local young person, who has also trained as a youth worker, claims that it is often exclusion from these youth clubs, often due to bad behaviour, that causes young people to attack them (Group Interview, 2010). In such cases, the aesthetics of development, order and governmental control are subverted through the use of simple tactics such as littering and vandalism, which subvert the image of tidiness and orderliness which these (re)images promote.

### *The Shankill: Transition and Tactics*

As we exit the New Lodge and head south back towards the city centre, we arrive at Peter's Hill which demarcates the start of the Shankill Road district. The Shankill Road is a predominantly Protestant area, renowned for being the heartland of Loyalism in the city, which runs westwards from the City Centre, is bordered, to the south, by the Catholic Falls Road. In-between the two districts stands the largest continuous peace wall in Belfast, over a mile in length and forty foot high in places. This area of West Belfast has been the site of a high number of killings, beatings, intimidation, the infamous 'Shankill Butchers' and the recent Loyalist paramilitary feuds<sup>7</sup>. The Shankill has, like the other enclaves we encountered, been a target for securitization and redevelopment, and most recently it has been 'rebranded' as a site of interest for tourists. This is evident as we enter the area: turning westwards we notice a relatively new sign of the kind erected by the City Council throughout the city to promote tourism.

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<sup>7</sup> The 'Shankill butchers' were a gang (ostensibly acting on behalf of the Loyalist UVF) who tortured and/or murdered a number of individuals, both Catholic and Protestant, in the early 1970s (see Dillon, 1989). The 'Loyalist Feuds' refers to internecine fighting between Loyalist factions (including – and within – the UDA and the UVF) that has emerged at several points since the early 2000s (see Mitchell, 2011).

It reads 'Welcome to the Shankill Road' and provides short blurbs about the civic history of the area, but makes no reference to the Troubles or the main events for which the road is well-known, except for an image of the 'peace wall'. Indeed, it is puzzling to see that the Shankill area has here been represented as an area of general interest to tourists, and not as a site for the 'dark tourism' on which many local tour companies capitalize (see Coiste ni Iarchimi, 2010). This is an interesting strategy of erasure (or at least omission) on the part of the City Council, given that the area still lives in the memory of local residents as a site of violence and fear. In addition, we note that all of the roads selectively marked on this conceptual map are predominantly Protestant areas, which means that tourists following the map would steer relatively clear of the major interfaces and flashpoints. This reflects the attempt to show 'the world' an image of a peaceful, prosperous Belfast simply by allowing its other realities to remain hidden. Paint bombs have been thrown liberally around the sign; indeed, the very point at which the sign is erected would have been a major flashpoint in the past.

On the opposite side of the road is a mural also reading 'Welcome to Shankill' (in several languages) which shows a similar map, but painted in a more conceptual way, with pictures of the attractions in question *and* a range of the murals in the area (paramilitary and 're-imaged'), as well as images of various personalities from the Shankill area and organizations such as Shankill Restorative Justice (which suggests that local ex-paramilitaries or other local community workers may have been involved in putting up this mural). It also shows the main peace wall (dividing the Shankill and Falls roads – see above), but it also shows sites that refer to key issues of the Troubles and recent violence, including the site of the 1993 Shankill bombing. This mural, although most likely created in consultation with local governmental agencies, shows an attempt to offer a different set of historical monuments and sites of significance than that offered by the City Council's official signage.

The Shankill area is also the site of significant confrontation between tactics and strategy in the realm of economic development. We continue west up the Shankill Road. On our right side, across the street, is a site fenced off for a private residential property development (the first on the road for a number of years). The graffiti written across the makeshift walls surrounding the site reads 'we need housing, not yuppie apartments!!!' on one wall, and on the other side 'regeneration, not gentrification', 'meet our need, not

developers' greed'. There is also some graffiti referring to the Historical Enquiries Tribunal, suggesting that the process has been very one-sided because it has not, to date, focusing upon unsolved cases involving Loyalists and not Republicans. Amidst this writing specific reference is made to Gerry Adams and his, alleged, paramilitary past (see Moloney 2010). Brendan Murtagh comments on this graffiti:

I thought it was one of the most interesting and positive pieces of graffiti I've ever seen in Belfast. Because instead of King Billy...or the Unionist administration or the state, or the DUP... this is actually a statement about location, a process where somebody – I'm not saying the community there – but somebody's saying 'this is what's happening'...[the developers are] redefining those sorts of spaces for elite people, for property markets, But [the protest is] doomed to failure. The only reason it wasn't built is because of the property market collapsing.

However, a local resident we interviewed suggested that the cessation of the development had been heavily influenced by the intervention of local paramilitaries (Jackie, 2010). Indeed, many people in the Shankill area feel that they are being encroached upon by development expanding from the nearby city centre, which has been able to extrude into this space due to its increasing depopulation and the resultant availability of sites. It is also important to note that this particular site was formerly used for the major local 'Eleventh' night bonfire, held on the eve of the major Protestant celebration of the 12 of July, and thus fills another contested space (see above). In addition, it was the site of the 'Save the Shankill' campaign (see Author Unknown), which contested the use of space along the Shankill for luxury development projects and which influenced the decision-making of the Department for Social Development.

There are also more informal modes of contestation that occur through the simple ways in which people engage in shopping and selling goods. Throughout our walk, we note that there are a large number of small, presumably locally-owned, and older looking shops in the areas that are relatively removed from the city centre and its high street shops. For instance, there are shops selling furniture and furnishings, as well as traditional butchers and vegetable shops. Although subtle, the retention of these small, traditional shops may constitute a form of resistance against the encroachment of the massive economic development (embodied by the city centre and the Cityside retail park

described above) that has taken place in recent years. We notice the same patterns of development along the upper Shankill Road. It can also be observed that when one of the shops closes or moves, the owners often spraypaint a message to the community with information on their relocation on the boards covering the storefront. This suggests that the relationship between the shops and their customers is a close and long-standing one. The preservation of this traditional neighbourhood directly in the face of massive changes is an interesting use of economic tactics: it offers an alternative form of 'regeneration': the regeneration of *traditional* neighbourhoods versus the generation of new high street-style shops that has dominated the redevelopment of the city centre. Other forms of local 'alternative markets', including socially-run, co-op style businesses and patterns of informal exchange, including trading hours of childcare or repairs to buildings, also help these areas on the fringes of massive economic change to survive – and, in some cases, to contest the nature and scope of this change by maintaining more traditional patterns of consumption (Murtagh, 2010).

### *Conclusions*

Interventions intended to promote peace-building or reconstruct 'post-conflict' societies may appear to meet with little normative resistance from the communities in which they are implemented. Yet our walk through North Belfast demonstrated the range of ways in which the strategies of peacebuilding – including regeneration/development, securitization/policing and governance/regulation – are confronted by a diverse range of tactics. These tactics need not be deliberate attempts to attack images or institutions of power (although in cases such as rioting or the 'carnavalesque'). Rather, the manner in which local residents use the spaces created and altered by these strategies reflect myriad degrees and forms of resistance, as well as the constant re-definition of space. It is important to note that many of these phenomena (including rioting, interfacing and other forms of contentious public assembly) have a long history in the region (see, for instance, Jarman, 1997 and Ross, 2007). What is interesting in the case discussed above is the manner in which these forms of practice have been adapted to contest the relatively new dynamics of interventions related to peace-building and reconstruction.

These phenomena challenge the central logics of peace-building or reconstruction projects – including the core tenets of governance, development and securitization – and

the neo-liberal principles from which they derive. From this perspective, these tactical responses to strategy are not merely symptoms of underdevelopment, crime or marginality. Rather, they reflect the diverse forms of agency exercised in these areas, and their unwillingness to be reduced to a problem to be solved by the productive functionality (de Certeau, 1984) of peacebuilding strategies. Instead, they preserve, create or posit different 'worlds' than those promoted by peacebuilding, whether in keeping alive alternative histories or contesting official ones, or marking territorial space through interfacing. They also highlight areas in which strategies of peacebuilding are insufficient or even antithetical to the needs of the local communities, such as in the case of policing, surveillance and private development. In each case, they constitute not blind resistance to authority, but rather a range of normative perspectives from which the strategies of peacebuilding are contested – and should be evaluated by policy-makers.

This has crucial implications for policy-makers and agents of peacebuilding. Simply put, the lived space of North Belfast is a rich canvas upon which these normative positions and critiques are displayed, and one from which it is possible to gain a much deeper sense of the needs, concerns and frustrations of local residents and the effects which both conflict and peacebuilding have had upon them. From this perspective, the use of tactics in the streets of North Belfast may be a much more valuable source of 'input' into policy-making than extended formal consultations, however participative (Hand, 2010), or the distribution of policy documents to key voluntary organizations (see European Union, 2008). Thus, care should be taken in how these phenomena are approached. To erase this evidence, whether through more 'efficient' policing, more comprehensive redevelopment or the replacement of traditional events with 'official', regulated public festivals is to ignore its messages and the normative critiques they contain. Instead of seeking more efficient ways to control and extinguish tactical responses to peacebuilding strategies, policy-makers should attempt to acknowledge, interpret, or at least increase their cognizance of the forms of contestation that exist outside of formal consultations and electoral processes. These social, cultural, economic, spatial and aesthetic responses, in the form of everyday tactics, should be taken into account along with more formal kinds of input when feasibility or possible damages associated with any policy are evaluated. To gain access to this rich source of critique and insight into the daily lives of citizens and how they are affected by the

strategies, policy-makers need go no further than take a walk through the streets of North Belfast.

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