

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Ulster</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Supporting Post-conflict Reconciliation and Social Inclusion</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has considerably enhanced understanding of the forces at play in a society coming out of conflict;</li> <li>• Has especially enhanced understanding of the role that the media, both in their formal structures and in their more diverse forms, have played and can play in promoting reconciliation and understanding;</li> <li>• Has devised means and strategies to include previously excluded communities in the process of reconciliation;</li> <li>• Has helped communities deeply affected by the conflict to tell their own stories and to share their own experiences of trauma, loss and reconciliation through use of the media;</li> <li>• Has had an impact on post-conflict research internationally and has influenced approaches in other conflict cultures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>For over two decades, the unit’s researchers have explored the way in which the media has represented the violence and communal conflict in Northern Ireland (the ‘troubles’). Much of this research was innovative and challenging and helped to raise awareness, among the general public as well as with media professionals, of the pressures and difficulties involved in covering a civil conflict. The unit’s research concerned itself with fictional material (<b>McLoone</b> 1991, 1996, 2000, 2008, 2010; <b>Hill and McLoone</b>, 1994, 1996), photography (<b>Edge</b>, 2000, <b>Baylis and Edge</b>, 2007) local, national and international journalism (<b>Gregory McLaughlin</b>, 2002, 2004, 2006) and documentary representations (<b>C. McLaughlin</b> 2010, <b>G. McLaughlin and Baker</b>, 2010). Most of its concerns were with mainstream film and television but it was a characteristic of a number of publications emanating from the unit that they involved a continuing dialogue with media professionals themselves and the 1994 and 1996 publications were supported by the BBC, UTV and RTÉ and had contributions from broadcasters across the independent sector.</p> <p>Central to the debate was the question of national or cultural identity and related issues to do with tolerance, diversity and equality of esteem. In particular, this research was concerned with how different groups were represented in the media (the nationalist and unionist communities in general, republican and loyalist paramilitaries in particular) and with identifying groups who went largely unrepresented as a result of security issues, policy decisions or professional practices (paramilitary activists, prisoners and ex-prisoners, victims of violence and their families, police officers, prison officers and women in general). This research became increasingly more concerned with other media practices – community video, independent production, on-line communication as well as video installation and photographic representation. A growing concern was the need to develop other media outlets to achieve a more plural and inclusive representation and especially to access voices, opinions and stories that had been left unrepresented by mainstream media sources (all of which were identified in the underpinning research).</p> <p>In the last decade, Northern Ireland has moved from a society in conflict to a post-conflict society and the unit has continued to research the ways in which the media operate in and on this post-conflict culture. This case study demonstrates how the Unit’s long experience with studying the</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

media in a period of conflict, prepared it well to research and make an impact in and on this post-conflict culture. Central here has been the research of **McLoone** (2010); **Greg McLaughlin** and **Baker** (2010). Of particular importance was Cahal McLaughlin's development of the *Prisons Memory Archive* (PMA), which was developed in the CMR during the period 2005-12 (with the assistance since 2008 of PhD researcher **Jolene Mairs Dyer**, now an ECR in the CMR).

During the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, prisons operated as both touchstone and tinderbox for the political climate outside their walls but for a whole variety of reasons, the stories of those most deeply involved could not be accessed or reported in the eye of the storm itself. The PMA is a filmed record of the memories of 175 ex-users of Northern Ireland's prisons - including prison staff, prisoners, teachers, visitors, maintenance workers and welfare officers. These are filmed in 'walk and talk' interviews inside the sites of Armagh Goal and the Maze and Long Kesh Prison, providing a unique record of these unheard voices and unseen stories. Jolene Mairs Dyer adopted and adapted the methodology to look at victims of violence giving them access to tell their own stories. The key criteria of ethical co-ownership and location-as-stimulus help provide this archive with its uniqueness.

### 3. References to the research

- *This underpinning research was entered into RAE 2008 where 75% of the Unit's outputs were deemed to be 3\* or better and 95% 2\* or better.*

Cahal McLaughlin (2005) *Inside Stories: Memories from the Maze and Long Kesh Prisons* (Exhibition, Catalyst Arts Gallery).

McLoone, Martin (2008) *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland: Cityscapes, Landscapes, Soundscapes* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press)

McLaughlin, Cahal (2005 -10) *Prisons Memory Archive*

The archive was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and from various community and local government sources and developed in the CMR between 2005-10.

McLaughlin Gregory (2006) Profits, politics and Paramilitaries: The Local News Media in Northern Ireland in B. Franklin (ed) *Local Journalism and Local Media* (London: Routledge), 60-69.

#### See also

McLaughlin, Gregory and Baker, Stephen (2010) *The Propaganda of Peace: The role of Media and Culture in the Northern Ireland Peace Process*. Intellect Books. ISBN 9781841502724 (REF 2)

McLoone, Martin (2009) *Film, Television and the Troubles: A 'Troubles Archive' Essay*. Arts Council of Northern Ireland. ISBN 978 -0 -903203-13-5 (Part of the Arts Council's 'Troubles Archive' (details in REF 2).

### 4. Details of the impact

#### 1. Contributing to the Arts Council's *Troubles Archive*

In 2009 **McLoone** was commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) to write a pamphlet on film and television representations of the Troubles as part of ACNI's 'Troubles' archive (a box set of twelve commissioned pamphlets that looks at the response of various art forms to the conflict). As ACNI Communications Officer, points out, 'Prof. McLoone was selected as one of our art form essayists on the basis of his professional standing as a leading expert in the field and on the strength of his body of previous publications.' The Arts Council has distributed the archive to all public libraries across Northern Ireland and has again confirmed, it 'has presented many essay sets to visiting dignitaries and policy influencers and has responded to numerous requests for the essays from overseas universities and researchers'.

## 2. Social Inclusion and Reconciliation (i)

Cahal McLaughlin and Jolene Mair's *Unseen Women: Armagh Gaol* (2010), part of the Prisons Memory archive, is a documentary film on the experiences of prison staff and the female prisoners during the Troubles. It has been screened at Belfast Exposed Gallery, Feile an Phobail, Belfast and Armagh Local History Library. At **Belfast Exposed**, the screening was accompanied by four workshops:

- 1) A '50 Plus' group from West Belfast;
- 2) A 16-18 years old group from Southern Regional College;
- 3) A workshop with participants in the film;
- 4) A workshop with practitioners in oral history.

78 people attended the Armagh public screening, which was followed by a full discussion with an audience that ranged from 16 year olds to pensioners (evaluation forms available). The evaluations confirm that the film and the methodology that it proposes, has had a positive impact on people's perception of the 'other side' and has facilitated inter-communal dialogue and post conflict reconciliation.

## 3. Social Inclusion and Reconciliation (ii)

*Unheard Voices: Stories from the Troubles* (2009) was produced with WAVE Trauma Centre in Ballymoney and screened at 7 public venues organised by the Good Relations Departments of Ballymena, Coleraine, Moyle, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownards, Belfast and Newtownabbey Borough Councils. Total audience figures are now over 500 and each screening was followed by a discussion. The film proposed a method of dealing with trauma and memory for victims of the troubles, or the families of victims, and has been adopted as a methodology in dealing with post-conflict memory and offers a methodology for post-conflict work in many international contexts. Detailed feedback confirms that the film and its innovative approach to trauma and memory has had a deep impact on formerly isolated victims and has helped in the understanding of conflict resolution.

## 4. Social Inclusion and Reconciliation (iii)

The CMR-supported film *Inside Stories: Memories of the Maze and Long Kesh Prison* (2005) (submitted to the 2008 RAE) is based on selections from the Prisons Memory Archive (PMA). It has had a substantial national and international profile since then, being screened at the South Bank Digital Gallery (2008), Constitution Hill, Johannesburg (2008), Naughton Gallery, Belfast (2009), Belfast Prison (as part of Respect Week 2009). Other selections of material from the PMA have been screened, along with discussions, at Wolverhampton Gallery in 2010, International Oral History Association, Prague (2010), Irish Studies Association, Rennes (2010), International Society of Political Psychology, Paris (2009), Landscapes of War, Valencia (2009), and Interrogating Trauma, Perth (2008). The film proposes a methodology of dealing with memory and conflict developed in the University of Ulster and has had an impact specifically in other former conflict cultures, especially South Africa where a similar process of post-conflict reconciliation has been proceeding in parallel with that in Northern Ireland.

## 5. Social Inclusion and Reconciliation (iv)

**Greg McLaughlin** and **Steve Baker's** book *The Propaganda of Peace* has also had an impact on Northern Ireland's post-conflict culture as well as providing a test case for peace-building in general. The argument of the book has been taken out to the community beyond academia, the findings disseminated widely across all communities in Northern Ireland and further afield. Central to the impact strategy was discussion and workshop engagement including workshops with formerly excluded groups in the Northern Ireland Peace process, especially ex-prisoners. The book was taken up by the ex-prisoner group ExPAC in its *Conflict of Interest* programme: e.g. Monaghan VEC, Donegal Community Workers' Cooperative and The Rural Community Network bringing a new constituency into the democratic process.

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

Communications Officer, Arts Council of Northern Ireland **(ID1)**

Moyle District Council

Project Manager, WAVE, Ballymoney **(ID3)**

Curator of Art, The Naughton Gallery, Belfast

Good Relations Support Officer, Armagh City and District Council

Co Monaghan VEC Administration, Market St., Monaghan

Director, Belfast Exposed **(ID2)**

Project Co-ordinator, Expac Ltd **(ID5)**

Victims Commissioners, The Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland **(ID4)**