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Joseph S. Robinson

Derry, Bloody Sunday, and the "Great Sea-Change"

In 2010, 13 of the 14 victims of Bloody Sunday were publicly exonerated by the Report of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry after the lengthy struggle of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign (BSJC). By 2011 however, the BSJC publicly fractured over the impact of the Report and whether to continue the annual Bloody Sunday March. This article argues the split in the BSJC is a proxy for a broader struggle between divergent "spatial stories" (de Certeau 1984) of the city of Derry itself. Will Derry be narrated as a city transcending its difficult past or will the original struggle remain perpetually present?

Keywords: Northern Ireland, Derry, Bloody Sunday, spatial stories.

Derry, krvava nedelja in "velika sprememba"

Po večletnih prizadevanjih gibanja Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign (BSJC) je bilo leta 2010 z objavo poročila uradne preiskave dogodkov na krvavo nedeljo 13 od 14 žrtev javno oproščenih. Le leto kasneje pa so se mnenja znotraj gibanja BSJC glede ugotovitev poročila in glede vprašanja, ali naj še naprej vsako leto organizirajo protestni pohod, razdelila. Članek ugotavlja, da razkol v gibanju BSJC na nek način simbolizira "nasprotujoče si razlage" (de Certeau 1984) omenjenega dogodka v samem mestu Derry. Vprašanje je, ali se bo Derry v zgodovino zapisal kot mesto, ki je preseglo breme preteklosti, ali pa bo prvotni konflikt za vedno prisoten v zavesti ljudi.

Ključne besede: *Severna Irska, Derry, krvava nedelja, nasprotujoče si razlage.*

Correspondence address: Joseph S. Robinson, 1621 Goode Place, Woodland, CA, USA, e-mail: jsrobinson2311@gmail.com.

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1. Have We Overcome?

On June 15, 2010, in front of a crowd of over 10,000 people in Derry's Guildhall Square (Campbell 2012), the Report of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry was finally revealed. The Report exonerated thirteen of the fourteen victims[1] of the original massacre and placed the blame for Bloody Sunday squarely on 1st Battalion, Paratroop Regiment of the British army. After nearly 40 years of being portrayed by the official 1972 Widgery Report and elements of the British media as gunmen and nail-bombers (McLaughlin & Baker 2015), the Report concluded: "None [of the victims] was posing a threat of causing death or serious injury" (Saville et al. 2010a, Ch. 5.5).

The original Bloody Sunday (1972) atrocity has been commemorated since 1973 by an annual Bloody Sunday March (BSM) near the anniversary of the massacre. The BSM re-traces the route of the original march that ended on the killing ground in the centre of Derry's Bogside neighbourhood. Six months after the celebratory release of the Report, the largest local newspaper, the *Derry Journal,* carried an editorial penned by Tony Doherty (2011) entitled Come March with Us – For the Last Time. Doherty is the son of Patrick Doherty, one of the fourteen victims of Bloody Sunday. In his editorial, Doherty claimed that the 2011 BSM would be the "end of an era." "The family-led struggle" had been successful, the victims "vindicated." "We have overcome," he argues. However, Doherty's desire to end the BSM was and is not universally shared.

For the first time in the BSM's history, the supposed last 2011 BSM would not culminate at the local landmark of Free Derry Corner, mere metres from where many of the original murders occurred, rather in Guildhall Square, where the Report was issued. The spatial symbolism was obvious. The original BSM, kettled in the Bogside before the paratroopers descended, had been prevented from reaching its intended destination of the Guildhall, the symbolic governing centre of Derry. The 2011 BSM would do what none of its predecessors had done, it would complete the original BSM, thus inscribing a triumphant conclusion of the struggle for Bloody Sunday justice. The essence of that story was powerfully contained on the single word of the banner that fronted the supposed last March: "Vindicated" (Figure 1).

However, as the BSM headed for the Guildhall, a small number of people broke away in protest. The protesters rejected, in part, the Report itself, but their breakaway in 2011 was more a protest against the attempt to end the BSM. And it is no coincidence that the protesters returned to Free Derry Corner, to the place where the spatial story of Bloody Sunday remains unfinished and incomplete.

There are several compelling studies of the public memory of Bloody Sunday, however, all were published before June 15, 2010 (Conway 2008; 2010; Dawson 2005; 2007; Herron & Lynch 2007), excepting Bentley's (2021) excel-

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lent intervention. Yet even before the issuance of the Report, Herron and Lynch (2007) were already warning that any attempt to impose narrative uniformity through the Report was dangerous. They caution:

> It is often asserted that the establishment of a final and singular truth of what happened on [Bloody Sunday] will allow for a process of closure and resolution [...]. But there is a danger that what is being pursued is something which will ultimately smooth over the actual and very real inconsistencies, partialities and blank spots of an event such as this (Herron & Lynch 2007, 71).

The academic and journalistic literature written after the Report suggests that this warning has not been adequately heeded (e.g., Aiken 2015; Petropolous 2022). Approaches that uncritically accept the temporal assumptions that Doherty and others attempted to impose ignore the vocal minority who view the Report as insufficient and the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign (BSJC) as radically incomplete (Bentley 2021). This article avoids relegating the BSJC to the completed past. Rather, I consider the contested politics of inscribing Bloody Sunday into the ongoing story of Derry itself.

Figure 1: Vindicated, 2011, Bloody Sunday March, Derry.

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Drawing on de Certeau's (1984) concept of "spatial stories," I contend that June 15, 2010 is uniquely situated within a particular theatre of action, the city itself. June 15, 2010 represents the key plot point in a transcendentalist Great Sea-Change narrative of Derry, one in which the victorious arc of the BSJC does not

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merely reflect the vindication of the victims of Bloody Sunday and their families, but the city itself.

The Great Sea-Change interweaves three major strands. The first is June 15, 2010, the second Derry's experience as the inaugural (UK) City of Culture in 2013, the third a supposed Derry Model of difficult yet fruitful inter-communal peacebuilding. I employ the "Great Sea-Change" moniker after Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (1991).

> So hope for a great sea-change
> On the far side of revenge.
> Believe that further shore
> Is reachable from here.
> Believe in miracle
> And cures and healing wells.

To challenge any of the three mutually entangled strands of the Great Sea-Change becomes a challenge to the idealised futurity of Derry itself. It undermines the story of a city and its residents who have been vindicated, who have overcome, who have a new story to tell. Thus, when some marchers broke away from the supposed last BSM in 2011, they went beyond merely disrupting the supposed triumphant social catharsis of June 15, 2010. This disruption ultimately provokes the major question of this article: Who gets to narrate the story of not only Bloody Sunday, but post-Report and post-culture year Derry itself?

To help answer this question, I utilised a mix of archival, discursive, and in-situ qualitative methods. Between 2016 and 2019, I interviewed 27 different "memory curators" (Robinson 2018, 13) of Bloody Sunday. These included family members of those murdered and others directly affected by the massacre as well as activists within the former Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign (BSJC) and the current Bloody Sunday Trust (BST) and Bloody Sunday March Committee (BSMC), respectively. I have given all memory curators directly referenced in this text unique pseudonyms. I also created a digital archive of news articles, political leaflets, campaign posters, and other digitised material to assist my analysis of Bloody Sunday memory politics from 1972–2015. Finally, from 2016–2019, I personally attended the Bloody Sunday Week in Derry, taking detailed ethnographic notes and photographs.

2. Spatial Stories of Derry

Michel de Certeau (1984) argues that narrative activity structures, organizes, and renders intelligible human representations of territory, order, and mobility. In the case of Belfast, O'Dowd and Komarova use the idea of spatial stories to describe a city: "Structured by interweaving ontological narratives that reflect attempts by organised groups to impose order and coherence on a fluid and often incoherent urban reality" (2013, 526–527).

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Thus, spatial stories are attempts to impose narrative order on space, generally in the form of an intelligible sequence of events strung together to promote a shared understanding of what space in this context fundamentally represents. Yet, the ultimate power of a spatial story is both an extension of existing power-dynamics and a function of how well it adheres to the conventions of culturally-learned genres (Polletta et al. 2011). Doak (2014; 2020) attempts to position post-Culture Year Derry at the intersection of a "new" and "old" dominant spatial story of the city. The old story is that of a "loser city" (Rousseau 2009), a distinction that generally refers to post-industrial cities struggling with issues such as demographic decline, persistent unemployment, and high rates of urban violence. Loser cities suffer two inter-related deficits, economic and symbolic, the latter a persistent bad image. These deficits motivate local politicians and civic boosters to build a counter-image rooted in creative urban regeneration and neoliberal gentrification.

In Derry specifically, this old story is that of Derry as Northern Ireland's distant second city, dwarfed by its larger neighbour of Belfast. It is bound up in the decline of textile production, Derry's persistent deprivation, and in the stereotype of Derry's mostly working-class residents as possessing a "whining and whingeing" collective mentality (Boland et al. 2019, 252). The material fabric of the city remains saturated with the imagery of past violence in the form of large murals, places of paramilitary commemoration, transient graffiti, and violence-justifying sloganeering (Robinson 2018). Derry also has a reputation as an ongoing hub of "dissident" Republicanism (Morrison & Horgan 2016). In short, Doak's old story is that of a post-industrial backwater still trapped in the shadow of its past and populated by a people eternally dependent on public welfare, a city deeply in need of a Great Sea-Change.

3. The Trajectory of Bloody Sunday Memory

The main commemorative space for Bloody Sunday in the city has always been the Bloody Sunday Weekend, a series of events leading up to the annual BSM. The Weekend has had four recognisable chronological phases (Conway 2010; Dawson 2007). The first encompasses the direct aftermath of the atrocity, 1972–1974, when the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) umbrella and Provisional Sinn Féin competed for the right to stage the story of the atrocity through duelling marches. The NICRA march was a silent march and participants were asked not to bring flags or banners or engage in any activities that would "discredit" the memory of those killed (Conway 2010, 81). NICRA made a formal request to Sinn Féin to yield the commemorative space but were rebuffed, and the latter march was highly militarised, framing Bloody Sunday as another atrocity in the bloody history of British imperialism.

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The decline of NICRA left Sinn Féin as the only political actor with both the ability and willingness to curate the memory of Bloody Sunday in public space. In the second stage, 1975–1992, Bloody Sunday became "a Republican issue; its memory at once sustained and also limited by Sinn Féin's support and commitment" (Dawson 2007, 154). However, as the Northern Ireland Peace Process emerged in the late 1980s, Sinn Féin may have sensed a need to step back from their central role in organising the BSM and weekend. Republican curatorship of the weekend alienated potential allies, especially nonviolent nationalists on both sides of the border and insulated British and Unionist false narratives of the victims as gunmen and nail bombers (Ó Dochartaigh 2010). As Dawson notes, "Bloody Sunday was becoming a *historical* event of the past rather than a living memory with real relevance to continuing politics" (2007, 154).

Sinn Féin's slight public step-back helped create the space for the BSJC, publicly organized and led by key family members of the victims. The BSJC was formed around three central demands: 1) The British government acknowledge the unambiguous innocence of those killed and injured on Bloody Sunday, 2) the official repudiation of the Widgery Report, and 3) the prosecution of those responsible (Campbell 2012). Under the BSJC, Bloody Sunday became an internationalist humans-rights issue which Dawson (2007) and Conway (2010) claim widened the net of people and institutions that could safely support the BSJC. This third stage dovetailed with the publication of exhaustively researched reports (McCann 1992; Mullan 1997) and searing popular films (Herron & Lynch 2007; Pötzsch 2012) that further impressed the injustice of Bloody Sunday, especially on British and North American audiences.

By 1997, the BSJC's three demands seemed to have crystallized into one demand: a second Inquiry. Some within the BSJC, such as Liam Wray, objected to this: "We did *not* campaign for a new inquiry. It was not one of the campaigns three aims" (quoted in Campbell 2012, 130). Yet, in January 1998, a new U.K. Labour government announced a new Bloody Sunday Inquiry (BSI) to supersede Widgery. The BSI proceedings were interminable, lasting nearly six years (1998–2004). The BSI would then take another six years to issue its report. During this time cracks began to appear in the consensus presented to the public by the BSJC. In addition to members disassociating the BSI from the original goals of the BSJC, the Weekend became a forum for controversy between the historically Republican aspects of the weekend and its new human-rights framing. It also became a forum to question Sinn Féin's ongoing legitimacy to represent Irish Republicanism in the city.

In 2006, with the St. Andrew's Agreement, Sinn Féin accepted the legitimacy of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Irish Republicanism has long refused to be policed by state forces that they consider illegitimate (Bean & Hayes 2009) and Sinn Féin's new stance was approved by its *Ard Fheis* (party conference) on January 28, 2007, the exact same day as the annual BSM. The decision provoked rioting during the 2007 BSM although the connection was

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denied by Sinn Féin MLA Martina Anderson: "If anyone thinks these actions were a reaction to the historic vote being held at the same time then they're sadly mistaken. These young people are devoid of anything remotely political." For leading justice campaigner John Kelly, "These people have tarnished the memory of those who died on the original march […]. The march is a dignified and peaceful act of protest" (both quoted in McLenaghan 2007). Both adopt similar language to NICRA's circa 1973 regarding Sinn Féin's parallel commemoration. The public politics of Bloody Sunday memory had come full circle.

Finally, on June 15, 2010, the long-awaited Report issued its findings in Derry's Guildhall Square. Television screens carried the live feed of British Prime Minister David Cameron's Commons' speech. Cameron said he hoped that the Report would "close this painful chapter on Northern Ireland's troubled past" (BBC News 2010). Like Tony Doherty would in his editorial the next year, Cameron explicitly positioned the RBSI as the end of the era, as a line under the public politics of Bloody Sunday memory.

The Report was initially framed as an unqualified victory for the BSJC, however, cracks emerged in that framing after the initial afterglow had worn off. The narrative framing of the Guildhall on June 15, 2010, in the respondents' memories below, becomes a key plot point in a new spatial story, the day everything changed, the clean temporal break with the past.

> When we walked out through that doorway and into the Guildhall and you seen the mass of people-like. It was incredible. Seeing all those happy smiling faces and that blue sky (James, family member, Interview with author).

> When I stepped out and the sun was shining, my initial thought was it was shining down [from] Heaven [on] us […] and you would nearly have seen a black veil lifting over the heads of the Derry people (Mia, family member, Interview with author).

> And coming down off that stage they had made, a little boy, who would have been the same age as I was when me daddy was killed […] he just […] looked up at me, and he put his hand out and I shook it. And then the petrol station man just looked at me and he said, "I'm so proud of you" (Una, family member, Interview with author).

These accounts of the day contrast sharply with the memories of those who would later reject the Report, whole or in part. For them, the day was choreographed by the Northern Irish Office and the BST. Perhaps the loudest voice condemning the supposed choreography of June 15, 2010 is the Derry-based socialist activist and journalist Eamonn McCann (2010; 2012; 2016). He writes:

> In exchange [for Cameron's apology], there would be no more Bloody Sunday Marches – and no attempt to push for prosecutions […] the British authorities were trying to put together an overall deal by which the past would be put in the past and we'd all 'move on' (McCann 2016).

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The following testimonials, again from the place of the Guildhall on June 15, 2010, work to concretise an alternative spatial story by evoking a narrative starkly at odds with the transcendental story.

> It was choreographed; I was aware that people were trying to orchestrate a certain portrayal of the day. It would have been very difficult for me to go out onto the Guildhall and say to the people of Derry [...] to rain on their day, in a sense (Colin, family member, Interview with author).

> I remember when I seen all the platforms, I had seen them getting built the night before when I called down, and I remember thinking to myself, this is all getting staged! So we were just pawns in it (Finn, family member, Interview with author).

> I felt we were just absorbed in the whole furore of the event [...]. I think it suited some people that 15 June appeared to be the end of [the BSJC] (Cillian, family member, Interview with author).

While certainly underwritten by the divergent political opinions on the Report, the split in the BSJC spilled into the open over the Trust's attempt to end the annual BSM. Colin here details his perspective:

> I can't prove it, but there was a political drive to stop the March, and that was even just before the Report came out. I was very vocal [...] that the March would continue. And quite a lot of pressure was applied, they put it out in the paper. (Colin, family member, Interview with author).

What Colin refers to is an open letter placed in the *Derry Journal* in January 2012 (Duddy et al. 2012, 34). The letter is collectively signed by various family members of the original casualties purportedly representing the "vast majority of family members and wounded." The letter positions June 15, 2010 as the "end of an era," and attempts to position the BST as the only legitimate curator of Bloody Sunday public memory.

Colin argues that the attempt to end the BSM was spearheaded by Sinn Féin, because Sinn Féin could no longer exert a behind-the-scenes discipline or control over the public performance of the BSM (also McCann 2016). In addition to this, Colin also implicates Sinn Féin's larger role in the Northern Irish legacy process. He argues:

> The reason people don't want to grasp the nettle [of pursuing justice for past violence] is not for any other reason besides they're the very people who are in government and are vulnerable if that process continues, because they might be [vulnerable], the cry might come out, what about you, what about you? (Colin, family member, Interview with author).

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Colin's argument must be seen in the context of Sinn Féin's sometimes contradictory and evolving stance on legacy of violence issues in Northern Ireland (Hopkins 2015). Politically, Sinn Féin seeks simultaneously to retain its anti-imperial armed revolutionism credentials whilst simultaneously transforming into a palatable mainstream Irish political party. As Colin notes, Sinn Féin is in a difficult spot when it comes to demanding justice for the perpetrators of State violence as it simultaneously faces justice campaigns for the victims of IRA violence (Robinson 2022).

But the question of stopping the BSM cannot be reduced to alleged Sinn Féin machinations. People who wish to stop the BSM also possess deeply-held emotional investment in the transcendentalist spatial story of the BSJC. Ben, a justice advocate, argues that the meaning and resonance of the BSM is intimately bound up in a time and space that has passed.

> The March is **over** [original emphasis] [...]. This thing [the March] couldn't just be allowed to peter out [...] there was always a fear it would end up as 400 people trickling down the Southway [...] (Ben, a justice advocate, Interview with author).

For Ben, the continuing BSM reflects badly on not only the legacy of BSJC, but on Derry itself. The triumphant plot arc of tens of thousands of people on the 2011 BSM is at risk of devolving into a story of a few old crotchety leftists and Republican dissidents marching lamely down a hill. Likewise, Ilsa (family member) grieves at the divergence between what the BSM has become and what it used to mean "for the people of Derry:"

> On the day of the Saville Report, everyone besides the Donaghys[2] (which I didn't know about until a couple hours later), everyone was happy with their lot and thinking, 'Oh my God, see what we've done [...]!' It was just all of a sudden they didn't believe in the **entire** Report, **which called into question everything that [they] had worked for[...]!** [original emphasis]. [They] kept [the March] family-led [...] a thing for the people of Derry (Ilsa, family member Interview with author).

For Ilsa, the grand arc of the BSJC has to culminate in the celebration of June15, 2010 because of what the spatial story says about Derry and Derry-people. In her eyes, the BSJC is populated by heroes, small, plucky individuals who were willing to stand up against the might of the British establishment. To have the BSJC tarnished by the lack of a triumphant conclusion, a clean temporal break, diminishes not only the BSJC and the accomplishments of her loved ones, but the larger spatial arc of the city itself.

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4. Derry City of Culture 2013

Less than a week after June 15, 2010, The Derry city Culture Steering Group presented the city's bid to be the inaugural UK City of Culture. Boland et al. (2019, 250) write: "For seasoned commentators and local people, securing [the City of Culture] was a direct response to [the Report]". Gordon-Nesbitt (2013) alleges the Culture Year decision-makers chose Derry over better bids from Birmingham and Sheffield because June 15, 2010 was so fresh in their minds. Regardless of how and why the city came to be chosen, the Culture Year represented a unique opportunity to decisively cement a new story of the city.

The Steering Group presentation included an official short film entitled *Voices* (Peto 2010). The film begins with Seamus Heaney himself reading the Great Sea-Change stanza cited above. After a montage of images of Derry's people and places, Heaney returns to finish the stanza before yielding to the final scene, a young girl in a white dress who walks towards the camera. She smiles and supplicates the viewer (and the Culture Year decision-makers): "I have a new story to tell. I **need** to tell a new story."

The UK City of Culture, inspired by other European Capital of Culture designations, is intended to celebrate, showcase, and incentivise cultural production within a given locality. Presumably, the designation can stimulate local economic development and tourism, attract external investment, and increase residents' senses of belonging to a city or a region (Garcia et al. 2010). Consider how Emma, a former local politician and both a supporter of the BSJC and local driver of the Culture Year, frames June 15, 2010.

> I think that day, there was a relief across the city, and like a black cloud has lifted, and it was nearly like a new beginning for the entire city [...]. And as a city, I think we have a new story to tell, which was the theme for the City of Culture in 2013, and I think the new story started the day Cameron gave that apology. There's new confidence back in the city [...] our pride instilled back in our city that day (Emma, local politican, Interview with author).

There is a clear disagreement within the small literature on the Culture Year (compare Doak 2014; 2020 and Boland et al. 2019; 2020). This disagreement concerns how both the material and intangible legacies of the Culture Year should be understood, however, they converge over how the narrative legacy of the Culture Year is felt in Derry. The Culture Year comprehensively failed to deliver on its admittedly grandiose promises of socioeconomic transformation. To cite one youthful respondent (Boland et al. 2020, 802): "It's like a depression. To come back to the legacy, it's a depression [...] a massive event, once that left and everybody went [...] it's just back to reality then." After a brief flirtation with the promise of a new spatial story of the city and all the new opportunities it promised, the old story returned once more to prominence. Yet Boland et al. (2019,

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259) argue that we must not only consider the "limp" material and economic legacies of the Culture Year, but rather its legacy as a "peace resource." The legacy of the Culture Year as peace resource dovetails with final strand of the Great Sea-Change, the Derry Model.

5. The Derry Model

The Derry Model refers broadly to a particular methodology designed to steer cities away from urban intercommunal violence and hostility supposedly pioneered in the city of Derry beginning in the 1990s (Bentley 2021; McClements 2018). Crucially, this methodology is presented as a successful and exportable model, one that other places plagued by intercommunal hostility can emulate. It is also the title of a project run under the auspices of the BST.

The Derry Model (the project) puts it this way: "Derry has addressed many of the difficult issues which remain unresolved elsewhere in the North and aims to share, reflect upon and debate the learning from the 'Derry Model' of dialogue and reconciliation" (Museum of Free Derry, N/D). The Derry Model (generally) is structured on the alleged cessation of intercommunal hostilities after the 1998 Belfast Agreement due to direct, face-to-face, negotiation between the Apprentice Boys, the largest Protestant-Unionist parading group in Derry, and a community-based organisation, the Bogside Residents' Group (BRG). It is important here to note that the BRG is widely understood in Derry to have been a group with close ties to Sinn Féin (Cohen 2007).

Cohen (2007) argues that the parade negotiations represented a unique opportunity for the Apprentice Boys to re-brand their external reputation. If they could secure the parade route as well as access to the walls and city centre through a negotiated settlement, they could present themselves as an organisation at the forefront of cross-community peacebuilding. While the Apprentice Boys may not have altered this perception of all Loyal Orders, Cohen (2007, 962) convincingly argues they "undertook a reworking of their public persona, their needs, and the meaning of the parade."

At the time of these parade negotiations, 1998–2001, Sinn Féin was not in government and was not considered to be a central party to the Northern Irish peace process, but rather a potential spoiler of that process. Thus, not only could the BRG negotiate a removal of many of the most contentious aspects of the parades for their erstwhile local constituency, they could also assist Sinn Féin's legitimation efforts by demonstrating that a residents' group with close ties to Sinn Féin could successfully and peacefully negotiate with a Loyal Order (Cohen 2007, 963). Thus, both parties to the negotiation had a vested interest in re-branding themselves through the Derry Model.

The Derry Model, while certainly mentioned prior to the Culture Year, gained added symbolic weight during the year itself. Several high-profile events

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within the Culture Year programme were explicitly positioned as "peacebuilding resources" or vehicles to promote "intercultural tolerance" (McDermott et al. 2016). The Culture Year thus, in addition to its many other facets, also represented a coordinated attempt to entrench the Derry Model narrative of difficult yet fruitful intercultural cooperation and tolerance.

This narrative fed directly into the larger Great Sea-Change narrative through downward social comparison with Derry's larger neighbour Belfast. There is a widespread belief in Derry that Northern Ireland is essentially a Belfast city-state that chronically deprives Derry and the Northwest of investment, employment, and regeneration opportunities (Bradley 2018). Yet in better-resourced Belfast, deeply contentious parades and flags protests, among other flashpoints, routinely provoked violent clashes and explosions of sectarian and paramilitary imagery. Derry, in contrast, undertook successful parades negotiations and ushered in over a decade of relative political normalcy. Thus, the Derry Model strand of the Great Sea-Change positions Derry as successfully overcoming the worst of Northern Ireland's ostensibly intractable political and sectarian issues, despite its chronic under-resourcing by the Belfast-Centric Executive (Doak 2014).

But the central catalyst of the Great Sea-Change in Derry remains June 15, 2010. While the role of June 15, 2010 in promoting peace and intercultural tolerance is minimized in the subsequent literature, my conversations with some of the days' main curators reveal it was a central concern of the BST, especially regarding the days' subsequent reporting by international media (Campbell 2012). Ryan (family member, BST), is very clear on how the day was meant to be positioned within the DM of intercommunal peacebuilding.

> In the days running up we [the BST] had basically sent out signals to the Protestant community sector in the city that we wanted to talk to them. And at the same time they were sending stuff to us that they wanted to talk to us. And I think some of them saw it as an opportunity to reconcile differences. Because the city was divided and very, very much so [over] what happened on [Bloody Sunday] (Interview with author).

6. There Is No British Justice

This article argues that the trajectory of Bloody Sunday memory must be understood as embedded in larger spatial stories of the city of Derry itself. The Great Sea-Change hinges on the triumphant vindication of the victims of Bloody Sunday, which inexorably leads to Seamus Heaney yielding the city's future to a young girl with a new story to tell. If we accept that the Culture Year should be examined more as a peacebuilding resource than an economic resource (or even a cultural one), then Culture Year becomes a key instantiation of the supposed Derry Model. However, it is nearly impossible to countenance the Culture Year even occurring or some distinctly Derry Model of peacebuilding gaining the

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traction that it did absent the triumphant climax of June 15, 2010, when it was finally possible to believe a farther shore was reachable from here in Derry.

Yet the Derry Model intertwined with the peacebuilding legacy of the Culture Year has not "solved" urban violence in the city, as the weeklong July 2018 riots surrounding a Loyal Order parade in the city proved acutely. Rather, it now appears that the dominance of the Great Sea-Change has been pierced, forced open to competing spatial stories, including those claiming that the old story of Derry was never meaningfully transcended and the Report of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry offered scant justice for the original atrocity.

The Great Sea-Change's comparatively brief narrative ascendancy was underwritten by a particular form of political temporality that binds or constricts the discursive and material space of political action. It both reflects and contributes to powerful political programs that often depend, for their very authority, on the bracketing of past violence, a severing of the continuity between past violence and present conditions (Bevernage 2012; Robinson 2022). For many people and institutions in Ireland and Britain, including many justice campaigners, particular moments in space and time such as June 15, 2010 represent a narratologically appropriate juncture in which to publicly perform an "over" or an "end," to impose transition away from past violence as an open wound into a reconciled catharsis (Bentley 2021). Yet two issues remain, first, how these urges buttress the transitional programs of state and sub-state actors often cynically over-invested in bracketing a contentious past, and second, how the bracketing of past violence works to deafen and delegitimise those who view keeping the past alive as inseparable from any possibility of meaningful political change.

In places and cities saturated by memories of political killing, "overing" (Bentley 2021) a march is also an attempt to impose a particular temporality of grief, mourning, and commemoration. A refusal to comply with this imposed temporality not only threatens the idealised transcendental arc of justice struggles, it also functions as a stark reminder that for many in Derry, the city has failed to meaningfully transcend. Herron and Lynch's (2007) warning thus seems prophetic; organised attempts to impose a clean break with the past, not only regarding Bloody Sunday, but Derry itself, are misguided, exclusionary, and bound to be resisted.

In 2020, the U.K. government of Boris Johnson introduced the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill that proposes a sweeping amnesty for all Troubles-related killings and other crimes. The Bill would end the ongoing trial of the only person ever to be prosecuted for Bloody Sunday, a former paratrooper codenamed Soldier F. While Johnson is no longer in power, current PM Rishi Sunak continues to support the Bill. The 50th anniversary (2022) BSM's official theme, There is no British Justice, thus seems an acknowledgment that 30 years of seeking British Justice under the third demand of the BSJC is moribund. Not only is there no British justice, the theme implies, there

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never was. All that is offered now are official acts of recognition like Cameron's apology undergirded by increasing pressure to move on and draw a line under the past, platitudinous sympathy in exchange for the enforced end of the BSJC.

And this closely parallels what is on offer for the city of Derry, creaking and groaning under the weight of Brexit, economic recession, and the cascade of austerity and spending cuts levelled at it: Symbolic acknowledgment of the city's deep cultural and political import on these islands, but no substantive change to its impoverishment or marginalisation. The Great Sea-Change seems more and more like a fable designed to conceal perpetual confinement in the old story of the city, interlocking with perpetual legal impunity for the perpetrators of Northern Ireland's most well-known atrocity.

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Notes

[1] The Report did not exonerate 16-year-old victim Gerard Donaghy, claiming he was "probably in possession of nail bombs when he was shot" (Saville et al. 2010b, Ch. 145.25).

[2] See Note 1.