

## **An Investigation of People's Everyday Journeys across the Irish Border: The Case of County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry**





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**Abstract:**

Mobilities across borders are often at the expense of more localised understandings of everyday mobilities and usage, which emerges from the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders. This discussion primarily concentrates on macro strategic scales such as travel-to-work areas, and the Brexit debate is a clear example of that. The focus on macro strategic scales is often at the expense of more localised details on the border and people's everyday movements across it. In the process of writing the thesis, I have developed an increased frustration that there appears to be a lack of concentration in the literature and in the Brexit debate on people's everyday journeys across the Irish border.

The aim of this master's thesis is to investigate people's everyday journeys across the Irish border through a case study of border crossings and utilization in the North-west of Northern Ireland between County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry.

To answer the aim of this study, ten people including locals and experts have shared their personal experiences of crossing the Irish border between County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. Additionally, three border crossings were observed in the case study location. These border crossings represent different types of crossings, which affect different everyday mobilities. The key finding is that people who live in the border area between County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry perform several different everyday journeys across the border ranging from social purposes to ones that are more economical. From a social perspective, people visit friends and relatives over the border. From an economic perspective, people shop across the border. Other cross-border journeys that may be done for both social and economic reasons include commuting, attending educational institutions and benefitting from health services on the other side of the border.

This master's thesis concludes that ordinary movements across national borders are highly varied. The thesis has served to highlight the significance of localised everyday mobilities by comparison to more strategic, quantitative driven interpretations such as travel-to-work areas. In doing so, it shows that small changes to these borders will have an array of unforeseen or forecasted effects on people's everyday usage and mobilities.

## **Preface**

The first time I visited Ireland and Northern Ireland was about five years ago during a family holiday. After this, I recall a growing interest in the history of the population of the two countries that lie side by side on the same island in the Atlantic Ocean. Ireland and Northern Ireland own a unique history of religious differences between Catholics and Protestants and violent conflicts, culminating with The Troubles, which was a time of armed officers and customs checkpoints along the Irish border. Since the Peace Agreement in 1998, violent conflicts have been significantly reduced and people have been able to move freely over the border to a wide extent.

In relation to borders and mobilities, I am curious how people manage to live their lives in regions along the Irish border in the light of a complicated and unique relationship between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Particularly, I have an interest in hearing local people's personal stories of their everyday journeys across the border and how the border has influenced their lives throughout the years.

In 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum where they voted themselves, including Northern Ireland, out of the European Union. In the wake of 'Brexit', as it is popularly called, questions have been raised about the future of the Irish border. Can people continue to cross the border seamlessly and unhindered in the future? Are customs and security checkpoints reintroduced and, worst case scenario, violent conflicts? The uncertainty related to Brexit and the consequences that follow is massive. As of today, the United Kingdom is still a member of the European Union but are supposed to leave the EU on November 1, 2019.

While working on this master's thesis, I have developed a growing frustration that there seems to be a lack of focus in the literature and in the Brexit debate on local people's everyday journeys across the Irish border. These journeys may be 'ordinary' in their nature, but I argue that they are at least as important as discussing the border in a macro-level perspective.

What needs to be investigated are the everyday movements performed by people living in border regions between Ireland and Northern Ireland, who travel across the border daily for many different purposes. The border is part of people's lives, and they will certainly be able to feel changes at the border in their everyday lives. These people are at the center of my thesis.

## **Acknowledgements**

First, I would like to express a big thank you to my supervisor Michael Martin. Your excellent guidance and valuable feedback in the process of writing this thesis has been of great help and significance to me, especially in those times when the thesis seemed an enormous task to fulfill.

I would like to say a big thanks to Darren Kirby for arranging several interviews with local people who live in Co. Donegal and work at the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership in Derry-Londonderry. I am sincerely grateful for the invaluable insights into your everyday lives and personal stories. Without your help, I certainly would not have been able to conduct the analysis of my thesis.

Lastly, I would like to give thanks to Dr. Neil Galway from Queen's University Belfast, who helped me to arrange an interview with Senior Planner at Donegal County Council, CEO at Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce and Senior Environmental Consultant at Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. Thanks to all of you for sharing your professional views with me.



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Context of the Study

This master's thesis brings into focus people's everyday journeys across the Irish border between County Donegal in Ireland and the city of Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland. It concentrates on more ordinary variations of mobility, and by doing that a rich appreciation of how everyday mobilities work in specific contexts across time and space can be developed. The reason for focusing on more everyday variations of mobility is that limited research on everyday life practices on a micro-scale in the interrelating field of mobilities and borders has been done (Richardson, 2013).

Additionally, this study is set in a context of the United Kingdom's planned withdrawal from the European Union. The United Kingdom's membership of the European Union was put to the vote on June 23, 2016 (McCann and Hainsworth, 2017). The result of the referendum was that 51.89 per cent voted to leave the EU, though in Northern Ireland 55.8 per cent voted to stay in the EU. Consequently, the UK is due to leave the EU on October 31, 2019 at this present moment in time (European Council, 2019).

The UK's planned withdrawal from the EU and the uncertainties that follow has raised a debate on the Irish border (McCann and Hainsworth, 2017). The border debate has raised questions on the outlook for the Irish border, such as concerns regarding the return of customs and security checkpoints along it.

With the ongoing debate on the Irish border in mind, this piece of research sets out to explore the everyday journeys of people who regularly travel across the Irish border. It is the everyday movements and practices related to cross-border journeys that are of interest to the researcher. The reason for this is that these everyday practices on a micro scale tend to be overlooked in the broader discussion of the Irish border, which is concerned with the border as a macro strategic component that facilitate large commuting flows. As a supplement to the Irish border debate, and border discussions in general, this master's thesis brings forward more details on people's everyday journeys over the border between County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry and their personal experiences of crossing it.



## **1.2 Research Aim and Objectives**

### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to critically explore people's everyday journeys across the Irish border through a case study of County Donegal in Ireland and Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland.

### **Objectives**

Five objectives have been set to assist in achieving this aim:

1. Critically investigating and reviewing the literature on everyday mobilities and borders.
2. Identifying a valid case study location (County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry).
3. Investigating people's everyday journeys in the case study location.
4. Mapping people's everyday journeys and exploring key border crossings in the case study location.
5. Synthesizing the research findings to critically examine the significance of people's everyday journeys in the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders to provide a set of recommendations for the future.

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

After having introduced the thesis, Chapter 2 will contribute with a literature review on the concepts of everyday mobilities and borders, which provides the reader with insights into the present broader international discussion on these concepts.

Following the literature review, Chapter 3 describes the methodology that has been developed to answer the aim of the research. First, the aim and objectives of this research is introduced. Then, the research strategy and the three phases of the research are outlined.

Chapter 4 provides the reader with knowledge about the regional context of the case study location, which is situated within Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. This includes descriptions of Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry respectively as well as an explanation of the relationship between these two areas through an examination of relevant planning policies. Secondly, the chapter provides a quantitative perspective of cross-border commuting in the case study location. Lastly, it contributes with a brief overview of major Brexit events as the time context of this research.

In continuation of this is Chapter 5, which investigates and analyses people's everyday journeys over the Irish border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. The first part of the chapter investigates people's everyday journeys based on semi-structured interviews with people living and working in the case study location. The second part of the chapter is mapping of people's everyday journeys across the border. Lastly, the third part of the chapter involves an examination of three key border crossings in the case study location.

Throughout Chapter 5, people's everyday journeys over the border and experiences of crossing it are discussed in relation to the broader discussion on everyday mobilities and borders as presented in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the everyday journeys are related to the planning policies presented in Chapter 4

This thesis finishes with Chapter 6, which provides the conclusions of the research and discusses how knowledge produced through this study about people's everyday journeys may contribute in the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

The aim of the literature review is to provide knowledge on the topics of everyday mobilities and borders and to identify gaps in literature in relation to these topics. The identified gaps in literature provides the justification for this research, which focuses on people's everyday journeys across an international border.

This literature review introduces to the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders. It draws on the work of key scholars within these fields. Furthermore, it connects the fields of everyday mobilities and borders and describes how these concepts are related to each other.

### 2.1 Everyday mobilities

*“Mobility is one of the most important constituents of everyday life. Few individuals are totally immobile, and the ability to move freely around the city or the countryside is a flux that makes society work and allows people to live their everyday lives.” (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005, p. 119)*

Several scholars (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005; Manderscheid, 2014; Doughty and Murray, 2016) define everyday mobilities as an important part of people's everyday lives. Shortly explained, everyday mobilities make life possible. It involves the many everyday journeys of people, such as going to work and school, visiting friends and family as well as attending leisure activities. Everyday mobilities is about having social relationships with people that may be situated far away, such as family, friends and work colleagues (Manderscheid, 2014). In other words, everyday mobilities plays a central part in our lives.

Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005) suggest that the significance of everyday mobilities can be divided into three levels. The first level is connected to the *practical value* of mobility, which is about mobility that makes it possible for people to function. These kinds of mobility consist of everyday journeys such as going to school and work, shopping or visiting friends. In other words, those are everyday activities that make life possible.

The second level is related to everyday mobilities as having a *social function* in addition to a practical function. Everyday mobilities will often create interactions between people, and an example of this is when people travel to visit friends as a type of everyday journey. The social function of everyday mobilities means that new friendships can be formed, and old friendships can be maintained. In other words, everyday journeys can extend the social network of people. (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005)

Thirdly, everyday mobilities has a *cultural function*. This means that everyday mobilities practices are part of constructing our personal identities, and in that way it can add meaning to our lives and the places we live in. It is also suggested that everyday mobilities can strengthen local communities and therefore also develop society in general. (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005)

## 2.2 Borders

*“All borders, each act of debordering and rebordering, and every border crossing are constitutive of social relations, and, as such, help us orientate ourselves to the world.” (Rumford, 2006, p.167)*

*“...the need to think about borders in ways which takes us beyond the logic of open versus closed, or security versus network. Borders may take the form of political boundaries and securitized perimeters but they are also increasingly mobile and dispersed, and, as a consequence, more commonly encountered and frequently traversed (although not by all). Importantly, borders are not experienced in the same way by all people.” (Rumford, 2006, p.159)*

The following paragraphs will turn towards borders and a discussion of how they are related with everyday mobilities, which is the core theme of this thesis. The section will draw on some key scholars within the academic field of everyday mobilities and borders (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Rumford, 2006; Jensen, 2013; Richardson, 2013).

As with everyday mobilities, borders can be a part of people's everyday lives, especially for people living in borderland territories. The impact of the border on people's everyday lives depends, among other things, on the nature of the border. For instance, does the border facilitate free movement across it, or is it more like a 'hard' border, where movement across the border is regulated and restricted by guard posts and customs checks?

Rumford (2006) argues that the way people experience borders and what they think of borders is very much down to personal circumstances. For example, one person may experience the border as a physical boundary dividing two countries or territories, whereas another person may experience the same border more like a gateway between two places. Furthermore, Rumford (2006) highlights that all people live both within and across border, and that thinking about borders is included as a natural part of people's thoughts and how they experience the world.

According to Rumford (2006), there has been a key shift in the way we understand and experience borders. Today, borders are not just physical barriers, which are drawn as lines on a map, with customs and security checkpoints. In other words, borders are not just 'hard' borders that act as physical barriers between two countries. In the contemporary world, borders can have many faces. There are still security borders, but there is an increased amount of other types of borders, such as educational borders that facilitate the movement of students or telecommunication borders, which facilitate movement of virtual information and data. Furthermore, Rumford (2006) introduces to the idea of 'borderless worlds' such as the EU's internal market, which facilitates economic mobility.

## 2.3 The interrelated field of everyday mobilities and borders

So far in literature, existing work containing valuable elements has been done about the relationship between border studies and mobilities studies (Paasi, 2009; Jensen, 2013; Richardson, 2013). Work on borders and mobilities in the form of travel-to-work areas and considerable quantitative datasets is fairly common, see for example García-Palomares (2010) and Ozkul (2014), but there is a lack of focus on the localised details on people's everyday mobilities across borders. This suggests that there is a need for additional breadth on mobilities and borders in the literature, and especially everyday mobilities is a component of research that remains detached.

According to Richardson (2013) and Jensen (2013), mobilities relates to borders and bordering practices, in the sense that mobility can be regulated and confined by borders, and often the linkages between mobilities and borders are taken for granted. The interrelation between borders and mobilities plays a central part in this thesis.

Richardson (2013) argues that the conceptual vocabulary within the interrelated field of mobilities and borders should be strengthened. The paper argues that social sciences can benefit from connection the notions of borders and mobilities, and it focuses on including everyday life perspectives in the discussion of borders and mobilities. Borders often deal with differentiated mobilities consisting of both elites and immobilities. It is put forward that borders can be seen as ‘gates’ that have the ability to regulate movement, both in terms of limiting movement or making movement across the border easier and more seamless.

Richardson (2013) along with Rumford (2006) also argue that we should rethink borders. This is needed because there is an increased focus on mobilities and flows, globalization and networked communities. It is argued that if we theorize mobilities and networks we also theorize border, which suggests that there is a close relationship between the concepts of mobilities, borders and networks.

An interesting concept in relation to everyday practices, mobilities and borders is that of ‘transnational urbanism’, which is discussed in a special issue by Conradson and Latham (2005). According to Conradson and Latham (2005) it is during the last few decades that transnational urbanism has become a new way of thinking about mobility in the modern world, and transnational urbanism is an academic field that is still developing.

Conradson and Latham (2005) focus on exploring everyday practices across borders in relation to transnational mobility. This means investigating “how particular people negotiate life-worlds that involve shuttling across international borders” (Conradson and Latham, 2005, p.228). Transnational urbanism can involve the investigation of the life-worlds of people living transnational lives in border regions. An example is Anke Strüver’s study of the Dutch-German border, where Dutch migrants have benefitted from living on the German side of the border, which had lower housing prices.

The thoughts of Conradson and Latham (2005) can be linked with the thoughts of Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005), since all these scholars are interested in people’s ordinary movements and practices. The difference is seen in the sense that Conradson and Latham (2005) includes thoughts on crossing borders in relation to their discussion of everyday practices. As with Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005), Conradson and Latham (2005) are also interested in how the identity of people and their social networks can be influenced by movement and mobility, and they argue that this is a field in academia that has not been investigated thoroughly.

## **2.4 Summary**

The above discussion of the literature on everyday mobilities, borders and the interrelated field between the two concepts shows that some valuable elements concerning people’s everyday journeys across borders have been studied. Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005) have investigated the significance of everyday mobilities and brought out three levels or functions of mobility: The practical value of mobility, the social function of mobility and the cultural value of mobility. All three levels of mobility constitute a part of people’s everyday journeys across borders. Conradson and Latham (2005) have studied transnational urbanism, focusing on people’s everyday practices across borders and how people negotiate life-worlds when they travel across international borders.

Nevertheless, the investigation of literature on everyday mobilities and borders and the interrelated field between those subjects has shown that especially the field between studies of everyday mobilities and studies of borders is a component that needs further exploration. In other words, there is a gap in the literature in terms of investigating everyday mobilities in the form of people's everyday journeys across borders.

It is in this field of study, containing elements from both everyday mobilities and borders, that this piece of research takes its departure. This research focuses on the importance of people and the typical journeys associated with their everyday lives, and these 'mundane' elements are important in the study and development of a rich appreciation of everyday mobilities and borders.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to bring forward people's everyday journeys across the Irish border, and the next chapter turns towards a presentation of the methodology chosen to answer this aim and its associated objectives.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methods that are used to answer the aim and objectives of the thesis. To answer the aim and objectives it was found useful to be in the field, which means being in Co. Donegal in Ireland and Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland. During the fieldwork, a number of methods were used to collect data. The primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews conducted in the field, which is supplemented by observations on three different types of border crossings in the case study location.

First, this chapter outlines the aim and objectives of the thesis. Following this, it explains the research strategy and the three research phases utilized to answer the aim and objectives.

### **3.1 Aim and Objectives**

#### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to critically explore people's everyday journeys across the Irish border through a case study of County Donegal in Ireland and Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland.

#### **Objectives**

Five objectives have been set to assist in achieving this aim:

1. Critically investigating and reviewing the literature on everyday mobilities and borders.
2. Identifying a valid case study location (County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry).
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4. Mapping people's everyday journeys and exploring key border crossings in the case study location.
5. Synthesizing the research findings to critically examine the significance of people's everyday journeys in the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders to provide a set of recommendations for the future.

### 3.2 Research Strategy & Phases

In the following, the research strategy and phases of the research shall be described. The overall research strategy is an exploratory case study approach (Bryman, 2012). The exploratory case study is an empirical investigation of a phenomenon, and the case study being exploratory means that the outcome of the research is unknown. This requires an open approach from the researcher, who is trying to explore a phenomenon without having much previous knowledge about it. In this case, the phenomenon of interest are people's everyday journeys across the Irish border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry.

This research is divided into three phases in order to answer the aim and objectives of the study. The first phase is identification of the case study and its location, which has primarily been identified through a desktop study of various planning documents. Information provided by the interview respondents has also helped in defining the case study location, since this information shows the geographical area in which much of the cross-border movement takes place.

The second phase is interviews that are used to investigate people's everyday journeys in the case study location, and the method used to collect the necessary data on people's everyday journeys is semi-structured interviews all conducted in the field, except one Skype interview. This data is used in phase three, which is mapping everyday journeys, based on information from the interview respondents. The mapping of everyday journeys is then used to identify key border crossings in the case study location that are being explored by the researcher.

Phase	Objective	Method
-	Objective 1	Literature review
1) Case study identification	Objective 2	Planning document research and semi-structured interviews
2) Interviews	Objective 3	Semi-structured interviews
3) Spatial mapping and observations	Objective 4	Mapping everyday journeys in ArcMap and observations of three key border crossings.

Table 1: The table shows the links between the phases, objectives and methods of this research. Own table.

#### Phase 1: Case study identification

Identification of the case study and its location is partly done through desktop research on various planning documents. The planning documents explored are mostly planning strategies on regional and municipal levels, describing Derry & Strabane District Council as well as Co. Donegal. These planning documents also describe the North West City Region and the relationship between the two counties, which shows that cross-border movements are also relevant on a strategic level.

Additional to an investigation of planning documents, the location of the case study is justified by information provided by the interview respondents. The information on their journeys as well as knowledge about other people's everyday journeys over the border makes it possible to identify where most of the cross-border movement takes place. This knowledge provides the researcher with the opportunity of defining the location of the case study more specifically.



## Phase 2: Interviews

The aim of the interviews is to explore the different types of everyday journeys performed by residents mainly situated in Co. Donegal and working in Derry-Londonderry, who cross the Irish border on a regular basis.

During the fieldwork in Ireland and Northern Ireland between March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face. The questions asked in semi-structured interviews are more general and flexible than questions found in structured interviews, which gives the interviewer the possibility of asking relevant follow-up questions on the replies of the interviewee (Bryman, 2012). Also, the flexibility of the semi-structured interviews provided a good basis for obtaining insights into how the interviewees experience everyday mobilities across the Irish border. This means that the researcher was asking the respondents about their everyday journeys over the border, and how the border influences these everyday cross-border journeys.

The qualitative interview method is a valuable tool when doing an in-depth investigation of people's personal experiences of crossing the Irish border daily. The method allows for the researcher to get many details from the interview respondent, which is valuable when it comes to understanding personal experiences of people. The interviews being semi-structured meant that the researcher could go down different tracks that came up as interesting and relevant to the aim of the researcher while still having an agenda and interview questions to rely on.

The semi-structured interviews were face-to-face, which means that the researcher could get a sense of the atmosphere of the place and emotions expressed by the interviewee. This was valuable in terms of identifying sensible aspects of everyday mobilities and the border. Also, the interviews being face-to-face makes it possible to do a little small talk before and after interview, which can make the situation more comfortable for the interviewee.

Additionally, a semi-structured Skype interview was conducted when returning to Denmark after the fieldtrip. This interview form made it possible to conduct the interview though the researcher and the interviewee were situated in different places, which is an advantage of Skype interviews. The interview was conducted and recorded as a video call, making it possible to see facial expressions on both the researcher and the interviewee. This, I would argue, created an interview situation almost comparable with face-to-face interviews.

Three types of interview guides were developed in advance of the interviews, but all of them are centered around how the Irish border affects people's and businesses' cross-border everyday journeys in the case study location. The first type of interview guide is directed towards local people who live on one side of the border and work on the other side. The second type is for planning professionals in the case study location, and the third type is for Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce.

All interview guides include questions on background information of the respondent at the top. The interview guide for local people includes questions about what kind of cross-border everyday journeys they perform and how the border influences their everyday lives. The interview guide for planning professionals focused more on the views of Donegal County Council and Derry City & Strabane District on how the border affects people's everyday lives. Lastly, the interview guide directed towards Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce on how businesses are affected by the border. The interview guides can be seen in the Appendix.

The reason for choosing to interview people that live in Co. Donegal and work at GSAP is that they are travelling across the border every day when they go to work. This means that they have many personal experiences of crossing the border, and these are valuable in relation to the aim of my research. Also, many of them live close to the border and have friends and family on the other side, or they may travel across the border for other

purposes such as shopping and health care. These experiences are also very relevant information in trying to map people's everyday journeys across the border.

The two planning professionals, Senior Planner at Donegal County Council and Senior Environmental Consultant at Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd, were chosen as interview respondents because they possess knowledge on a more municipal and regional level. This means that they have knowledge about the planning implications of living on one side of the border and working on the other. For example, where they should provide houses for people to live in and where they should improve the infrastructure. The CEO at Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce was chosen as an interview respondent because she has knowledge about how businesses and their employees in the region are affected by the Irish border.

In the following, I shall make a brief introduction of the interview respondents, including where they reside and work as well as a short presentation of their relations to the Irish border. People employed at the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership will be referred to as people working at 'GSAP'.

Title	Place of residence	Gender	Interview date
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at GSAP	Co. Donegal	Female	13/3 2019
Part-time employee at GSAP	Co. Donegal	Female	13/3 2019
Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group	Co. Donegal	Female	13/3 2019
Development Officer at The Forge, GSAP	Co. Donegal	Female	13/3 2019
Project Manager at Fab:Social, GSAP	Co. Donegal	Female	14/3 2019
Trainer at Fab:Social, GSAP	Co. Donegal	Male	14/3 2019
Retired resident in Malin Head	Co. Donegal	Male	14/3 2019
Senior Planner at Donegal County Council	Unknown	Male	19/3 2019
CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce	Derry-Londonderry	Female	20/3 2019
Senior Environmental Consultant at Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd	Dublin	Female	26/3 2019

Table 2: The table provides an overview of the interview respondents. Own table.

### Interview respondent A: Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at GSAP

The interview respondent lives in Co. Donegal in Muff and works at GSAP in Derry-Londonderry, where she is employed as a Monitoring and Evaluation Manager. Her job at GSAP involves working with disadvantaged schools and provide opportunities for school children. She has three children under the age of two, and one of her children will be sent to nursery school in Northern Ireland in September 2019.

### Interview respondent B: Part-time employee at GSAP

This interview person was born in Australia and she moved to Co. Donegal in Ireland when she was 10 years old. She grew up very close to the border and remembers customs and smuggling at the border. Today, she lives on a farm very close to the border with her husband and four children. She works part-time at GSAP at least three days a week and commute over the border on these days.

### **Interview respondent C: Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group**

This interview respondent used to live in Derry-Londonderry and moved over the border to Co. Donegal about 20 years ago. She is employed as a Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group based in Shantallow, Derry-Londonderry. As a Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group she organizes educational training, health programs and community relations.

### **Interview respondent D: Development Officer at The Forge, GSAP**

The interview person has lived almost all her life in Derry-Londonderry and moved to Iskaheen near Muff in Co. Donegal in October 2018. Iskaheen is about 3 km from the border. Her mother was from Co. Donegal, so she used to travel across the border very often while she grew up. The interview respondent works as a Development Officer at The Forge in GSAP, and her job tasks include doing photographs and digitizing.

### **Interview respondent E: Project Manager at Fab:Social, GSAP**

This interview respondent lives in Co. Donegal about 12 km from the border. She grew up in Co. Donegal and attended college in Derry-Londonderry and university in Northern Ireland. She is employed as a Project Manager at Fab:Social in GSAP. The interviewee has worked in Derry-Londonderry for about 20 years.

### **Interview respondent F: Trainer at Fab:Social, GSAP**

The interview person lives in Buncrana in Co. Donegal, which is about 15 km from the border. He grew up in Derry-Londonderry during The Troubles and often went to his grandmother's house in Buncrana in weekends and holidays. This interview respondent works as a trainer at Fab:Social in GSAP.

### **Interview respondent G: Retired resident in Malin Head, Co. Donegal**

This interview respondent lives with his wife in Malin Head in Co. Donegal. Malin Head is situated about 40 km from the border. He grew up in Derry-Londonderry, where his son, daughter and grandchildren live today. The interview person retired in November 2018 and before retiring he travelled across the border to his place of employment in Derry-Londonderry.

### **Interview respondent H: Senior planner at Donegal County Council**

The residence of this interview respondent is unknown. He has worked in Ireland since 1991 and as a Senior Planner in Donegal County Council from 1994 up until now. The Senior Planner is often interfaced between local governments and the central government.

### **Interview respondent I: CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce**

The interview person lives in Derry-Londonderry and works as the CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce, which is situated in Letterkenny in Co. Donegal. The Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization for businesses and has about 260 members from both small and big companies. The tasks of the Chamber include lobbying, arranging events and improving business conditions for its members.

## Interview respondent J: Senior Environmental Consultant at Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd

This interview respondent is originally from the US and has lived in Co. Donegal for 30 years. She recently moved to Dublin for work and she will move back to Co. Donegal after a period of 9 months. The interview person is employed at Nicholas O'Dwyer, which is a consultant engineering firm. She works with environmental impact assessment in water projects.

## Processing of the interviews

After conducting the ten interviews, these interviews were imported into NVivo, which is a software used for audio coding. In NVivo, different categories were made with the purpose of making all the interview material more manageable. The categories were mainly related to people's everyday journey activities across the border such as visiting friends and relatives, shopping, health care services and so on. By making the categories it was easier to group the interview respondents to find patterns in their everyday journeys across the border. The categorization of the interview respondents' everyday journeys over the border also made the following analysis more manageable.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Context section (case study location, border history etc.)	8	20	27-03-2019 16:59	CN	02-04-2019 20:20	CN
People's everyday journeys across the border	0	0	27-03-2019 14:17	CN	17-05-2019 14:28	CN
Cars	2	3	27-03-2019 14:22	CN	28-03-2019 13:34	CN
Co. Donegal	2	6	02-04-2019 10:52	CN	02-04-2019 17:21	CN
Cross-border movement	9	17	27-03-2019 15:03	CN	19-04-2019 12:40	CN
Currency	8	13	27-03-2019 14:58	CN	02-04-2019 16:53	CN
Customs	5	9	27-03-2019 14:18	CN	02-04-2019 13:57	CN
Housing	2	2	27-03-2019 14:44	CN	27-03-2019 17:10	CN
Identity	7	13	27-03-2019 15:06	CN	01-04-2019 12:04	CN
Police	1	1	01-04-2019 11:44	CN	01-04-2019 11:45	CN
Politics	5	12	27-03-2019 17:12	CN	01-04-2019 15:41	CN
Services	4	6	27-03-2019 14:37	CN	01-04-2019 10:18	CN
Education	4	4	27-03-2019 14:39	CN	02-04-2019 17:10	CN
Health care	3	7	27-03-2019 16:51	CN	01-04-2019 10:16	CN
Shopping	5	9	27-03-2019 16:41	CN	02-04-2019 16:51	CN
Significance	5	14	27-03-2019 14:42	CN	02-04-2019 13:59	CN
Social network	6	12	27-03-2019 16:43	CN	02-04-2019 16:40	CN
Transport links	1	1	31-03-2019 20:39	CN	31-03-2019 20:39	CN
Various	4	8	28-03-2019 13:46	CN	02-04-2019 17:36	CN

Figure 1: Screenshot of some of the categories made in NVivo. Most of the categories relate to people's everyday journeys. Information from the interview respondents are imported into the categories to make the following analysis easier to conduct. Own image.

### **Phase 3: Spatial mapping and observations**

The last phase of this research is spatial mapping and observations. Information provided by the interview respondents about their as well as others everyday journeys across the border in the case study location made it possible to map these cross-border journeys. The mapping shows that most of the movement across the border takes place in a specific border area, and that made it possible to select a number of border crossings to observe. Due to limitation of time in the field, three border crossings were chosen, and they each facilitate different types of everyday mobilities heading in different directions.

ArcMap is applied as the software to map the everyday journeys based on information from the interview respondents. The different types of everyday journeys are put in categories, such as commuting and retail, and provided with different colors. Each line with a specific color in ArcMap thereby represents a certain type of movement. The lines drawn in ArcMap do not represent the actual routes of people, but are drawn to provide an overview of where the flow of travel is and what type of movement it is.

Additionally, circles are drawn on the map to provide with more detail of the everyday journeys. The circles have different sizes with the purpose of showing that the amount of for example people performing the everyday journeys is different depending on the journey. Again, the circles do not represent the actual amount of for instance people, goods or jobs, but they show that there is a difference in the amount of people performing the everyday journeys.

The spatial mapping of people's everyday journeys over the border in the case study location provided knowledge on the types of everyday journeys, the amount of journeys associated with each category as well as the location of the journeys. This information was used to identify and explore three key border crossings in the case study location, which shall now be presented.

#### *Observations of selected border crossings*

Additional to the semi-structured interviews, three different border crossing locations were observed during the fieldwork in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Observing these border crossings gave a sense of the border as a place as well as how each border crossing is unique and has different characteristics. The three border crossings are all situated on the border between Derry-Londonderry and Co. Donegal, and the location of the observed border crossings can be seen on figure 2.

Based on the outcomes of the interviews and the spatial mapping three key border crossings were identified and chosen for further exploration. The two major crossings at Bridge End and at Muff are two of the most trafficked crossings in the case study location, as explained in Chapter 4. These two crossings facilitate a large amount of commuting over the border. The border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge is smaller and probably facilitates other sorts of everyday journeys, such as visiting friends and family in the area.

All border crossings were observed during daytime on Friday March 15, 2019. Pictures were taken on all border crossing locations, which are later used to document how the crossings differ from one another in their physical appearances, such as in terms of the width of the road and road surface markings. A video was recorded at the border crossing in Muff to get a snapshot of the cross-border traffic on the specific date and time.

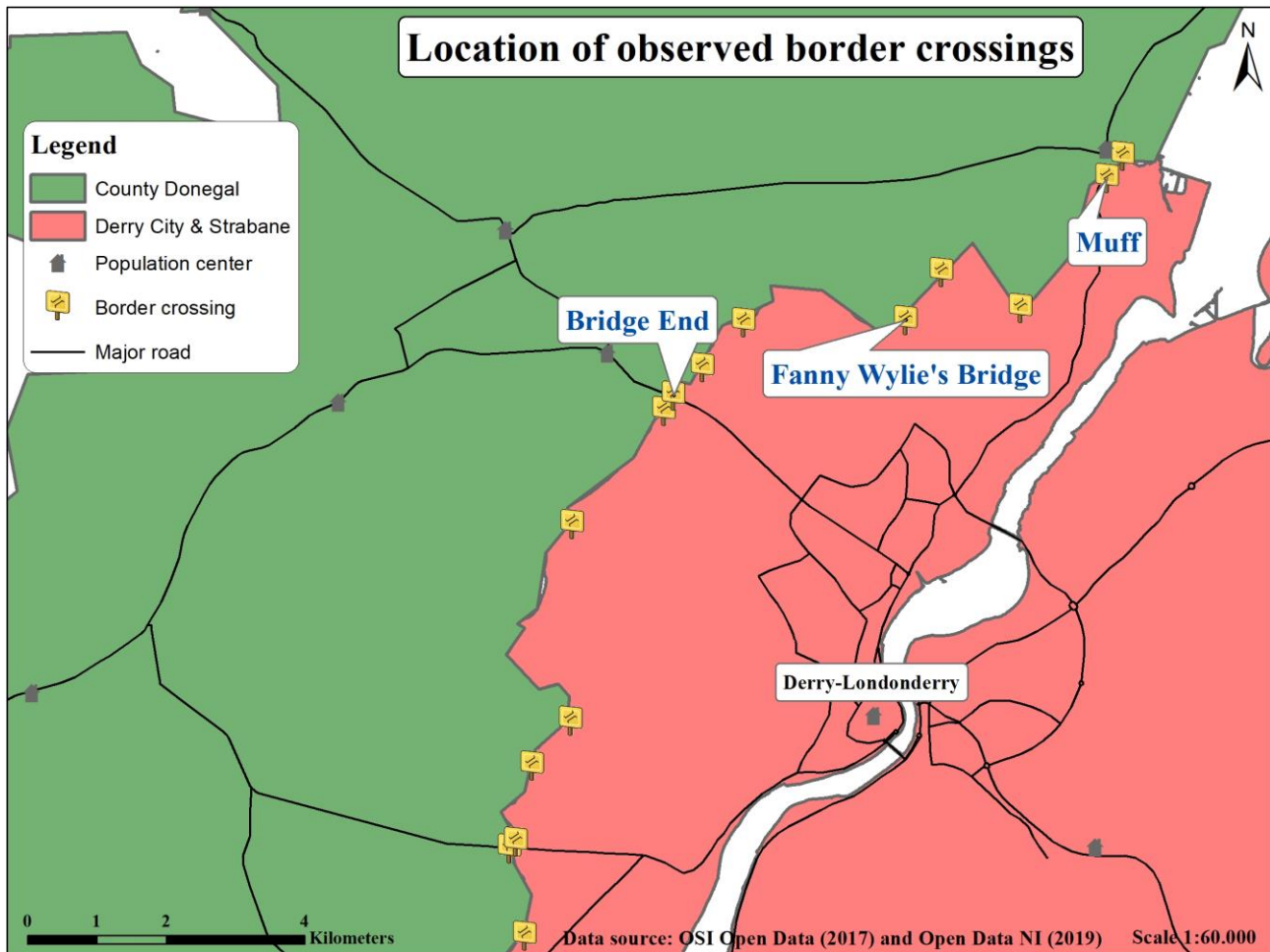


Figure 2: Map showing the location of the three observed border crossings between Derry-Londonderry and Co. Donegal. Own map produced in ArcMap.

### 3.3 Summary

Chapter 3 has set out the methodology for this piece of research. First, it has presented the aim and associated objectives of this study. Then, the chapter has explained the research strategy, which is based upon an exploratory case study approach. This was followed by a presentation of the three phases of the research. The first phase of the research was to identify the case study location through an examination of planning policies and semi-structured interviews in the field (objective 2). The semi-structured interviews are also used in phase 2 of this research, which is the investigation of people's everyday journeys in the case study location (objective 3). The third and last phase of this research is spatial mapping of people's everyday journeys in ArcMap and observations of three key border crossings in the case study location (objective 4). Mapping people's everyday journeys provided information that was used to select the three key border crossings.

The next chapter presents the case study location in a regional context, primarily drawing on various municipal and regional plans and strategies. It provides a quantitative perspective on the border in the case study location by including statistics on cross-border traffic for work and study purposes. Lastly, Chapter 4 introduces to the United Kingdom's planned withdrawal from the European Union, since this piece of research is conducted during that process.

## Chapter 4: Introduction of Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the case study and its location on the border between Co. Donegal in Ireland and the city of Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland, and the chapter is thereby mainly directed towards answering the second objective of this research.

First, Chapter 4 provides an understanding of the case study location as a place and situates the area in a regional context by framing it around the North West Region. This part introduces to Co. Donegal, Derry City & Strabane as well as the city of Derry-Londonderry. Following this is a description of the relationship between Co. Donegal and Derry Londonderry, focusing on their locations within the North West Region.

The next part then concentrates on mass flows of commuting to work or study across the border in the case study location, providing a more quantitative perspective to this research.

The final part of the chapter relates this study to the United Kingdom's, and thereby also Northern Ireland's, planned withdrawal from the European Union, since the withdrawal can affect the everyday journeys of people in the case study location.

### 4.1 Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry in a regional context



Figure 3: Map showing the North West Region in Ireland and Northern Ireland. (Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council, 2017, p.6)

The following section introduces the North West Region, which sits as the regional context of this thesis. Furthermore, it presents Derry-Londonderry as part of Derry City & Strabane in Northern Ireland and Co. Donegal in Ireland.

Geographically, the North West Region is situated in the northwest corner on the island of Ireland. To the east, The Northern Irish council areas of Derry and Strabane are placed in this region. To the west, the region reaches into County Donegal in Ireland.

Overall, about 410.000 people live in the North West Region, and according to Donegal Co. Council (2018a), the area is unique. The population in the North West is both

young, skilled and innovative, and the research institutions in the area are globally recognized. 35 % of the population is under 25 years old, and there are 40.000 highly educated people in the region. In terms of businesses, the North West is home to 40 overseas companies.



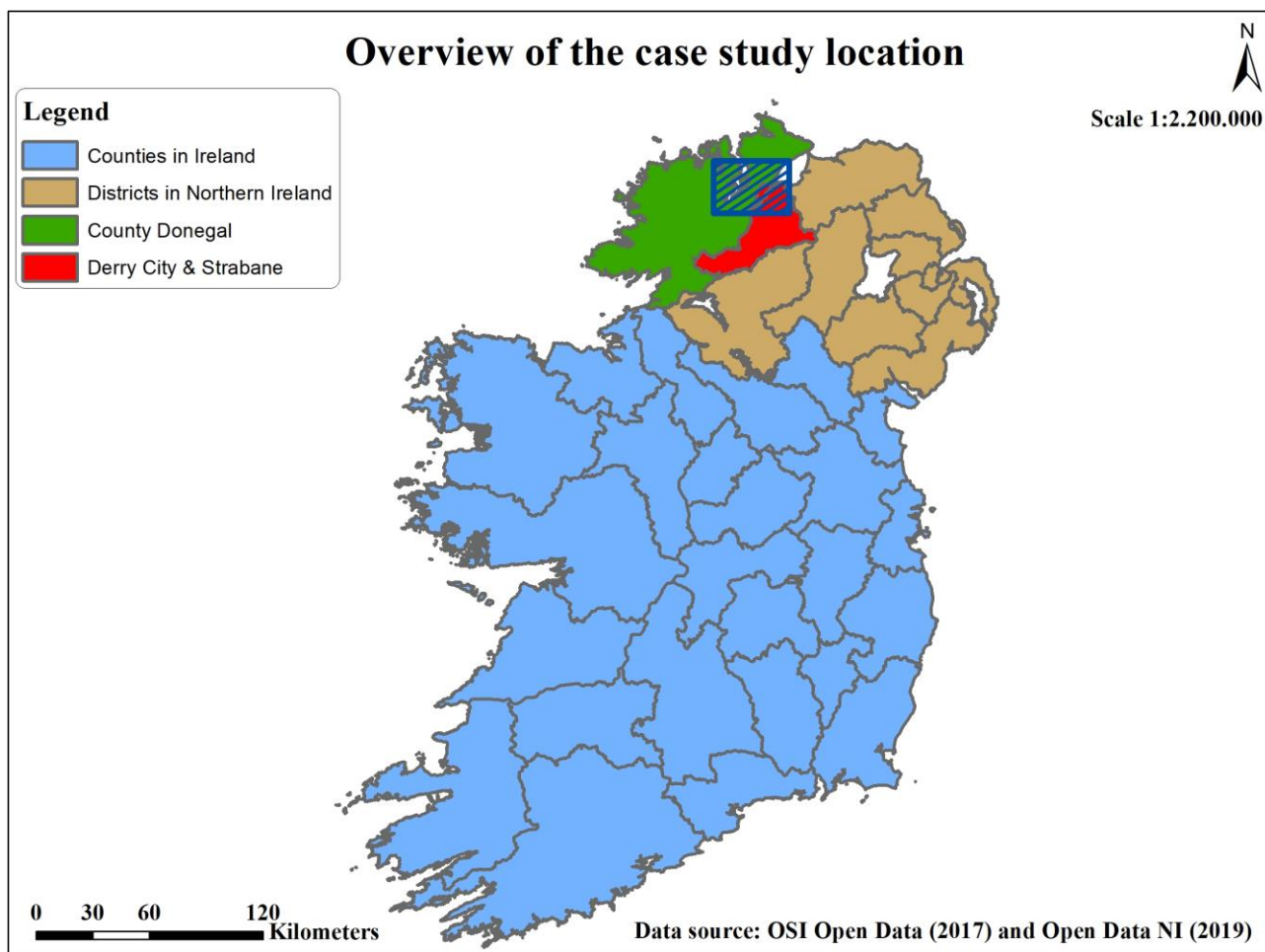


Figure 4: Map of the Counties of Ireland and Districts of Northern Ireland, including Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane. The case study location is marked in a square with blue sloping lines. Own map produced in ArcMap.

Following the local Irish elections in 2014, 114 local authorities were reduced to 31, of which 26 were merged into County Councils (Quinlivan, 2015). As seen on figure 4, one of these is Donegal County Council, which together with the city of Derry-Londonderry sits as the geographical focus of this study of local residents' everyday mobilities across the Irish border.

The population of County Donegal is approximately 160.000, and the key urban center in this county is Letterkenny, which has a population of about 20.000 (Donegal Co. Council, 2018a). According to County Donegal Development Plan (2018a), the aim of the county is to reach 200.000 people by 2038, which will possibly result in increased traffic and movement of people and goods across the Irish border to Derry City & Strabane. County Donegal has a size of 4.861 km<sup>2</sup> and it shares a long borderline of 181 km with Northern Ireland, of which most of this stretch is shared with Derry City & Strabane (Donegal Co. Council, 2018a).

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2015, the former 26 councils in Northern Ireland were amalgamated into 11 new 'super' councils. The councils are run by democratically elected councilors, and they are responsible for providing a number of services to its citizens. Some of these services are health care, leisure facilities and community centers. In terms of planning, the councils are responsible for local development planning, including local economic planning and local tourism planning. (NI Direct, 2019)

The geographical focus of this study contains Derry City & Strabane, and more specifically the city of Derry-Londonderry, which is situated in the northwestern part of Northern Ireland, as seen on figure 4. The size of Derry City & Strabane is 1.245 km<sup>2</sup> and the population of the council is approximately 150.000. The largest



urban center in the council is Derry-Londonderry, which has about 108.000 inhabitants. (Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017a)

Derry-Londonderry is the principal city of the North West Region, and furthermore it is a regional as well as an international gateway. The city is the second largest in Northern Ireland, with a population of a little more than 100.000. Derry-Londonderry is connected with other vibrant towns in the North West, such as Strabane and Letterkenny. The city of Derry-Londonderry has developed significantly socially and economically over the recent years. Examples of this development were seen in 2011, when a Peace Bridge was built across River Foyle, and in 2013, when the city was named the UK City of Culture. One of the key historical and cultural features of Derry-Londonderry is the Walled City, which is dominated by many historic buildings and some museums. (Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017b)

Additionally, Derry-Londonderry is home to important educational institutions. The city hosts Ulster University at Magee, which is ranked in the top 3 % in the world, as well as the largest campus of The North West Regional College, which has over 20.000 students (Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017b)

## **4.2 The relationship between County Donegal and Derry-Londonderry**

There seems to be a strong emphasis on the relationship between Derry-Londonderry and County Donegal, particularly Letterkenny, which is described in a number of national and regional strategies of both Ireland and Northern Ireland, such as (Government of Ireland, 2002; Department for Regional Development, 2012; Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017a; Donegal Co. Council, 2018a).

*“The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) identifies Letterkenny-Londonderry as a linked gateway to the North West and recognises the importance of further development of this core area and its economic social and other relationships and functions in strengthening the wider North West region.” (Department for Regional Development, 2012, p.61)*

According to the Department for Regional Development (2012) and Derry City and Strabane D.C. (2017a), Derry-Londonderry should benefit from its role as a key cross-border gateway, which provides access for cars, trains and ferries, and Strabane is the main hub in this area. Strabane may benefit from its close proximity to Lifford, which is situated in Co. Donegal. Derry City and Strabane D.C. should keep the close co-operation with Letterkenny and thereby try to pursue the potential of the North West Region. This includes potentials in the transport sector as well as in health care services and education.

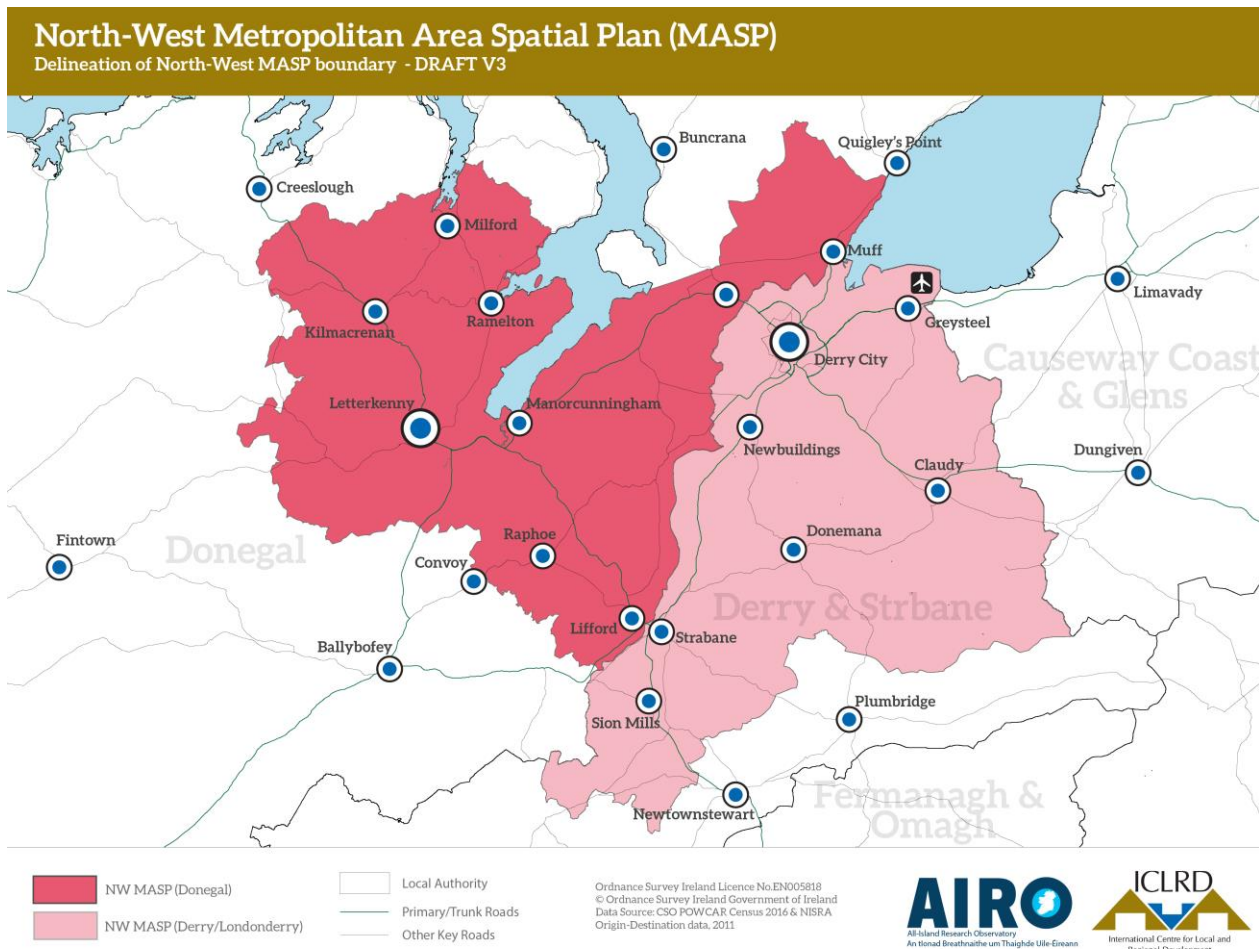


Figure 5: The map shows the Spatial Plan for the North-West Metropolitan Area, which stretches over the border and into both County Donegal and Derry City & Strabane. (Northern & Western Regional Assembly, 2019, p.2)

The Department for Regional Development (2012) describes Derry-Londonderry as a key city in the North West Region. Derry-Londonderry's status as a strong and vibrant city is important to maintain in order to ensure the wellbeing of the region, both economically and socially. The city's importance for the whole North West is one of the reasons it seems relevant to dig into the cross-border everyday mobilities of people living in and around Derry-Londonderry. Furthermore, co-operations and collaborations across the border is a means to strengthen the competitiveness across the island.

On the Irish side of the border, the Development Plan for County Donegal describes how the border has affected everyday social and economic activities and reflects upon the impacts of Brexit (Donegal Co. Council, 2018a):

*"The border dimension has impacted upon and shaped day-to-day social and economic activities in County Donegal as well as higher level strategic policy formulation, implementation and investment. The impacts of Brexit, while yet unknown have the potential to result in a combination of challenges and opportunities and this Plan aims to be robust and ready to respond to the potential outcomes." (Donegal Co. Council, 2018a, p.6)*

### 4.3 The Irish border between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane

This part of the thesis investigates statistics on cross-border journeys between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane. It particularly focuses on cross-border commuting of workers and students. The section does not include statistics on other types of everyday journeys such as those pointed out by the interview respondents, since those numbers were not available. By including statistics, this section of the thesis provides a more quantitative perspective on everyday journeys over the border than the perspectives from the interview respondents.

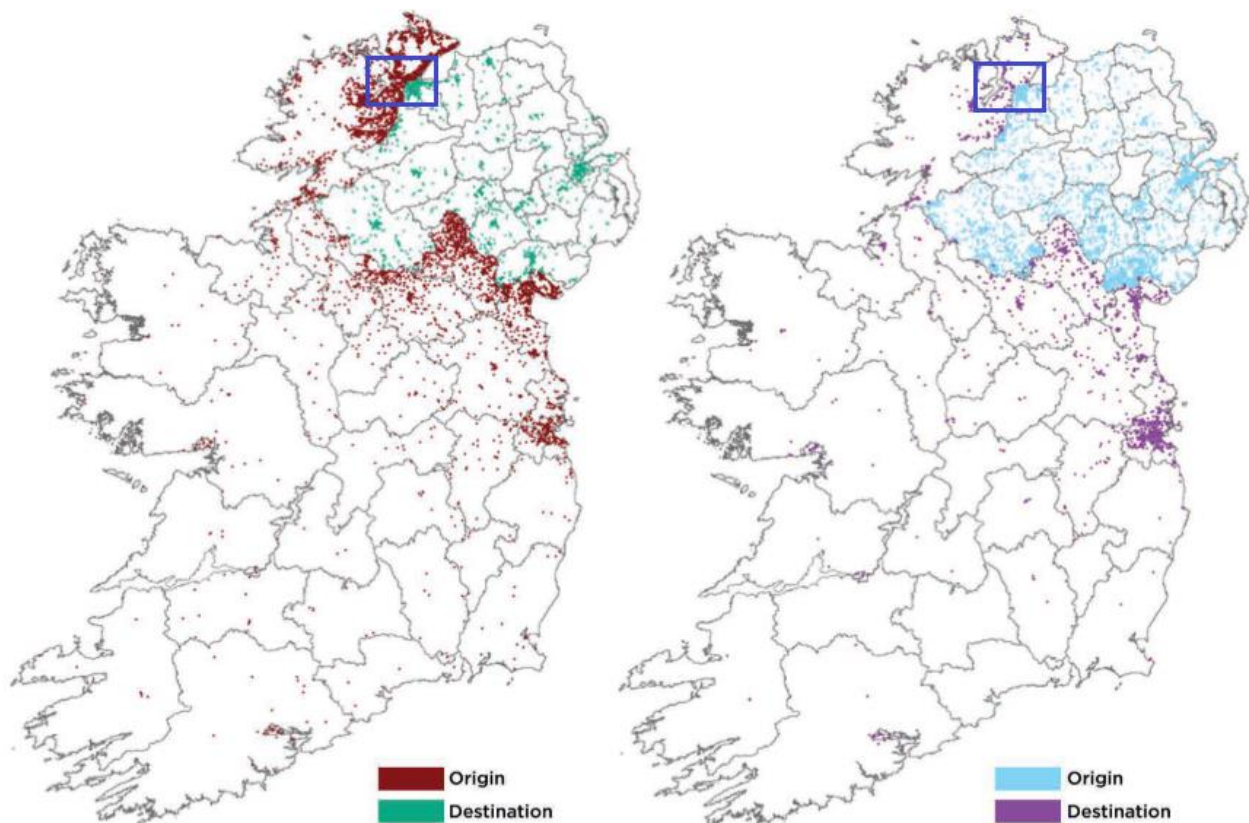


Figure 6: The left map shows cross-border commuters from Ireland travelling to work or study in Northern Ireland. The right map shows cross-border commuter from Northern Ireland travelling to work or study in Ireland. Data is from 2011. The case study area is located inside the blue squares. (Strabane District Council & Donegal Co. Council, 2017, p.32)

In relation to the Irish border, many journeys are made across the Irish border between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane. In 2015, 326,577 cross-border journeys in both directions per week were made across three major crossings at Derry-Bridgend, Derry-Muff and Strabane-Lifford. The border crossings at Derry-Bridgend and Derry-Muff were observed during the fieldwork. This data shows that cross-border traffic is very significant in the North West Region, suggesting that many people cross the border every day. (Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council, 2017)

According to Derry City & Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council (2017), most of the cross-border commuters in the North West are people who live in Ireland and cross the border to work or study in Northern Ireland, which can be seen on figure 6.

Zooming in on commuting between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane, the most cross-border commuters living in Ireland are situated in Co. Donegal; this number was 5.600 in 2016. In terms of cross-border commuting to Derry City & Strabane, in 2016 there were 4.256 workers and students situated in Co. Donegal who crossed the border to Derry City & Strabane every day. These commuters accounted for 76 % of the total cross-border commuters situated in Co. Donegal. (Ireland's Central Statistics Office, 2016)

This section has shown that there is a significant amount of everyday journeys between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry for work and study, which means that many people can be affected by impediments at the border.

## **4.4 Research conducted in a Brexit context**

This piece of research is conducted while the United Kingdom is planning to leave the European Union, which can involve impediments at the Irish border in the form of customs and security controls along the border. This may also affect the everyday journeys of the interview respondents, which is the focus of this thesis. Therefore, it is found relevant to include a section on the history of free movement between member states of the EU as well as a presentation of major Brexit events

In the section below, I shortly introduce the European Union and its significance in terms of free movement of people and goods across international borders. This is followed by an introduction to Brexit and the uncertainties it brings along, and lastly a timetable of major Brexit events will be presented.

In 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community was formed, which aimed to secure peace after World War II by cooperating politically and economically. The founding countries of this new organization was Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In the 1960s, EU countries remove custom duties on trade between members of the Union. (European Union, 2019)

The UK joins the EU in 1973 along with Denmark and Ireland. In 1985, the Schengen Agreement is established, which gradually makes it possible for people to travel across international borders without having their passports checked. The Schengen agreement is implemented in 1995. Furthermore, 1993 is an important year in terms of freedom of movement, since this is the year the Single Market is completed, ensuring free movement of people, goods, services and money across international borders between member states of the EU. Today, the European Union has 28 member states, including Great Britain, with Croatia being the last country that joined the Union in 2013. (European Union, 2019)

Throughout the years, the UK has made some noticeable exceptions from EU agreements. One of the exceptions is the UK not joining the European Monetary System in 1979 or in 1992 through the Maastricht Agreement, which means that the UK today has its own currency, the Sterling. Great Britain also did not take part in the Schengen Agreement, which was implemented in 1995. (Warlouzet, 2018)

The referendum on whether the United Kingdom should stay in the European Union or not took place on June 23, 2016. 51.89 percent of the electorate voted to leave the EU, while 48.11 percent voted to stay in the EU. In Northern Ireland, in comparison, 44.2 percent voted to leave the EU and 55.8 percent voted to stay in the Union. The results indicated that traditional unionist areas in Northern Ireland voted to leave the Union, whereas traditional nationalist areas voted to stay in the EU. (McCann and Hainsworth, 2017)

On 29 May 2017, Theresa May officially triggers Article 50 from the Lisbon Treaty (European Council, 2019). According to EUR-Lex (2012), Article 50 makes it possible for a member state to withdraw from the Union.

In line with Article 50, the EU must negotiate an agreement for the withdrawal of the member state in question, which also means discussing the future relationship between the member state and the Union. If a withdrawal agreement is not obtained, the member state must leave the EU within two years from the date of triggering Article 50, unless the European Council in agreement with the member state decides to extend the period.

For this study, investigating everyday journeys for interview respondents crossing the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry, the outcome of the impending exit of Northern Ireland from the EU can influence those journeys. A 'hard' border with customs and passport checks could potentially slow down the movement of people and goods crossing the border, whereas a 'soft' border is likely to secure a better flow of people and goods across the border. In other words, there are many uncertainties connected with the post-Brexit situation in the case study location. According to the Strategic Growth Plan of Derry City & Strabane District Council (2017b), Brexit brings along economic uncertainties in terms of trade and commuting across the border. Again, the aim of this research is to investigate and map people's everyday journeys over the border in the case study location, and therefore the uncertainties related to Brexit is not the primary focus of this study.

## **4.5 Summary**

Chapter 4 has set out the regional context of this piece of research by introducing to Co. Donegal in Ireland and the city of Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland. Regional and municipal plans have highlighted that on a strategic level there is a focus on developing the North West City Region through co-operation over the border between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane (Department for Regional Development, 2012; Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017a). The chapter has provided a quantitative supplement to the qualitative focus of the interview respondents by including statistics on commuting for work and study purposes between Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane. Furthermore, the timeline of Brexit events has raised several complications and uncertainties, especially during the fieldwork period from March 6 to March 21, 2019, when the deadline for withdrawal from the European Union was fast approaching.

Now, the master's thesis turns towards Chapter 5 and an analysis of people's everyday journeys over the border between Co. Donegal and the city of Derry-Londonderry, which is the main point of investigation for this thesis. The first part of the analysis investigates people's everyday journeys based on the semi-structured interviews (objective 3). Based on the information of the everyday journeys in the case study location, a map is then developed to show the everyday journeys in a spatial context (objective 4). Lastly, the Chapter 5 contains an investigation of three key border crossings that are chosen based on the outcome of the map of everyday journeys across the border (objective 4).

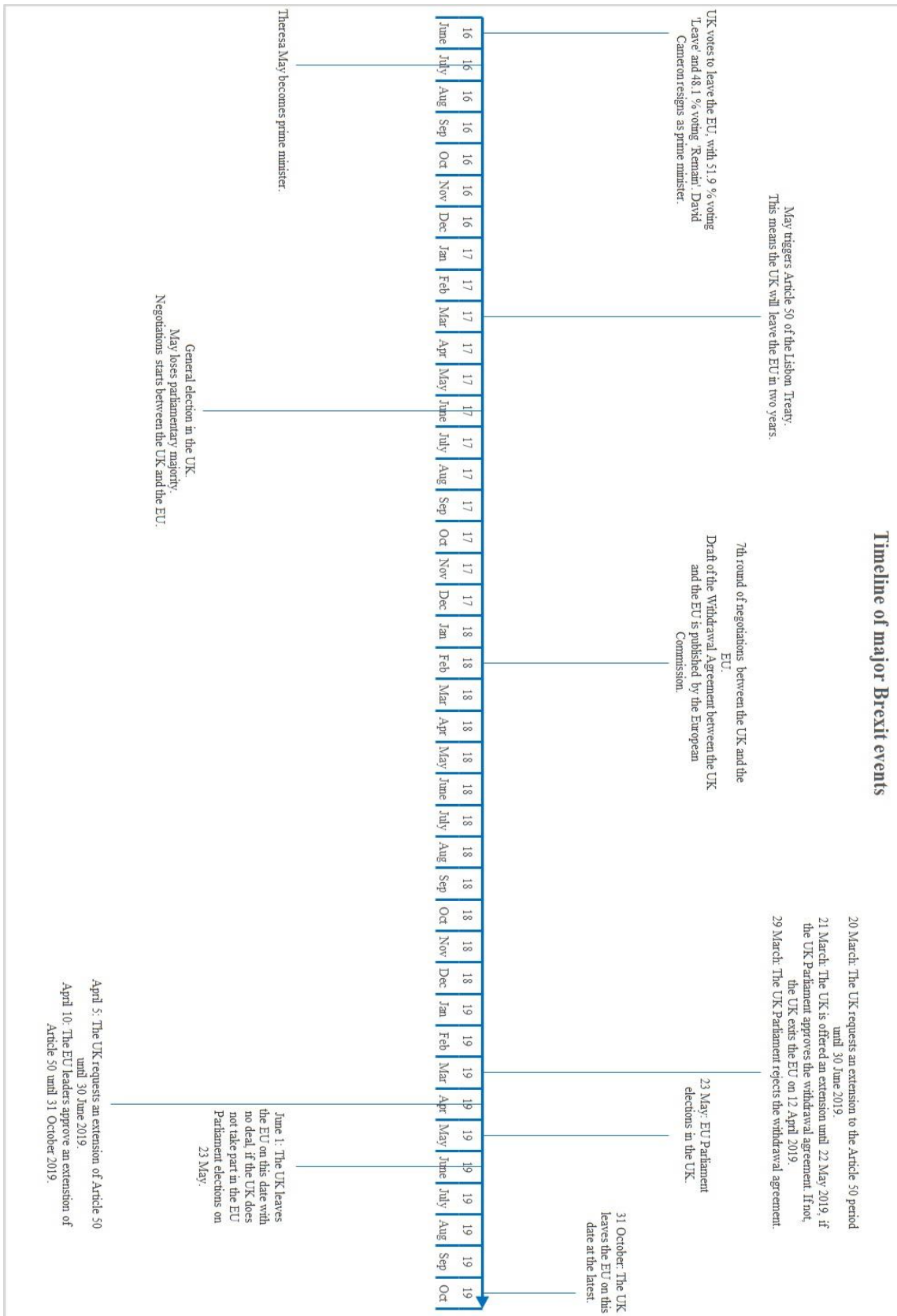


Figure 7: The diagram shows an overview of major Brexit events from the referendum in June 2016 to date. Own diagram based on information from the European Council (2019).

## **Chapter 5: People's everyday journeys across the border**

### **5.1 Structure and purpose of the analysis**

The aim of the analysis is to investigate and map people's everyday journeys over the border in the case study location (objective 3 and 4).

First, the different types of everyday journeys across the border are investigated based on information provided by the interview respondents. In connection with this, a table is developed to outline the different types of everyday journeys. The first part of the analysis also discusses the everyday journeys against the background of the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders.

Secondly, a map is developed based on the table in the first part of the analysis. The map provides a visual overview of the everyday journeys in the case study location.

Lastly, based on the outcome of the map, three key border crossings in the case study location are being investigated. They each represent a certain type of border crossing and facilitate different sorts of everyday journeys.

### **5.2 Investigating the different types of everyday journeys across the border**

This part of the thesis primarily draws on information provided by the interview respondents on everyday journeys over the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. It brings forward the many different types of journeys across the border and thereby argues that crossing the border is not only about commuting on a macro-scale. Here, the focus is on the micro-scale of mobility that consist of many types of journeys. In other words, those journeys are part of people's everyday practices, which is the focus of this thesis. Furthermore, this part of the analysis discusses the everyday journeys in relation to the broader international discussion in the literature on everyday mobilities and borders.

Table 3 outlines examples of everyday journeys across the border in the case study location based on information from the interview respondents. The examples are selected to show the difference in the types of everyday journeys, and these examples are categorized to create a better overview of the type of journey. By categorizing the journeys, it is also possible to identify the type of journeys that appears to be the most common among the interview respondents. Thereby not saying that the most common journeys are necessarily the most important ones for the respondents.

A common feature of the interview respondents is that they all commute to work, except the retired resident in Malin Head, Co. Donegal. Most of them commute from their residence in Co. Donegal to work at the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership located in the outskirts of Derry-Londonderry. Commuting is part of their everyday lives, and some of the respondents bring out examples of commuting as can be seen in table 3. Additionally, people commute in the other direction from Derry-Londonderry to Donegal County Council in Letterkenny, as explained by the senior planner at Donegal County Council.

Commuting in both directions over the border thereby constitutes a significant part of the interview respondents' everyday journeys.



Case Stakeholder	Category	Example of everyday journey across the Irish border
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, GSAP	Commuting	She bought a house in Ireland some time ago. At the minute, it is more difficult to buy a house in Ireland if you work in Northern Ireland because of housing prices near the border and Brexit.
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, GSAP	Commuting	Most of the people who live in Muff work in Northern Ireland, since there are not many jobs in Co. Donegal because it is more rural.
Senior Planner, Donegal County Council	Commuting	In his working team, about 10 out of 40 people live in Northern Ireland and work in Donegal County Council in Ireland.
CEO, Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce	Commuting	At the minute, there are no implications for employees who live in Northern Ireland and work in Ireland when crossing the border.
Co-ordinator, Galliagh Womens Group	Retail	She lives in Co. Donegal near the border and usually does her shopping in Northern Ireland.
Retired resident in Malin Head	Retail	There are no supermarkets or clothes shops in Muff so many people who live in Muff travel to Derry-Londonderry to buy groceries or school uniforms.
Part-time employee, GSAP	Retail	People living in Derry-Londonderry used to travel to the Irish side of the border to buy petrol and cigarettes, which used to be cheaper there. Today the price difference is smaller because the value of the Sterling has decreased.
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, GSAP	Public service (education)	In September 2019, she will send her 3-year-old son to nursery school in Northern Ireland across the border. According to her, the school system in Ireland is very different from the school system in Northern Ireland.
Project Manager, Fab:Social, GSAP	Public service (education)	She grew up in Co. Donegal and attended college in Derry-Londonderry. According to her, it is a natural progression for students who live in the Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal to attend the North West Regional College and Ulster University in Derry-Londonderry.
Part-time employee, GSAP	Public service (health care)	She earns her money in Sterling and her husband earns his money in Euro giving them more opportunities, which she refers to as 'cherry-picking'. Cherry-picking means the possibility of choosing the best options on both sides of the border. For example, she can access free health service in Northern Ireland since she works in the country.
Retired resident in Malin Head	Family	His wife and he often travel across the border from Malin Head in Co. Donegal to Derry-Londonderry to visit his son, daughter and grandchildren.
Development Officer, The Forge, GSAP	Family	Her 87-year-old father visits the grave of his late wife twice every day. He lives in Derry-Londonderry and his late wife is buried in Co. Donegal. This journey takes 10 minutes.
Trainer, Fab:Social, GSAP	Friends	He has many friends who live in Derry-Londonderry and he travels there to meet them for a drink, for example. He says that there are more facilities in Derry-Londonderry than in the small town of Buncrana where he lives, such as cinemas, sports centers and cultural events.
Project Manager, Fab:Social, GSAP	Friends	She has many friends in Derry-Londonderry who she has visited since she was young, for example going to concerts with them.
Co-ordinator, Galliagh Womens Group	Leisure	In the summer and in weekends, many people who live in Derry-Londonderry travel across the border to the beaches in Co. Donegal.

Table 3: The table shows examples provided by the interview respondents of everyday journeys and activities across the Irish border in the case study location. The examples are placed in categories to provide a better overview of the types of everyday journeys. Own table.



Commuting over the Irish border, though, is not the only reason for crossing it in the case study location. As outlined in table 3, the interview respondents have many personal stories and experiences of travelling over the Irish border. The examples are very different in their nature. Some of them are about living on one side of the border and doing your daily shopping on the other side, depending on prices and on which side of the border you find the best and largest selection of goods such as clothes and food. Other examples are much more personal and relate to the emotions of people. This is the case with the 87-year-old father of the Development Officer at The Forge, who lives in Derry-Londonderry and visits the grave of his late wife over the border in Co. Donegal near Muff twice every day.

In the following, I shall unfold some examples presented in table 3 and connect them with the aim of this thesis, which is to explore and map people's everyday journeys over the Irish border as part of everyday mobilities. All the examples outlined in table 3 show the variation in purposes of people's everyday journeys across the border in the case study location, and they are all interesting examples of different types of everyday journeys over the border. Some of the cases are of particular note and worthy of further analysis, and those cases shall be developed on in the following paragraphs. The discussion of these examples of everyday journeys across the border will primarily revolve around the three levels of everyday mobilities that have been presented in Chapter 2, which are the practical, social and cultural functions of mobilities. Also, the examples of everyday journeys shall be connected to the broader international discussion on everyday mobilities and borders, as presented in Chapter 2.

The everyday journeys performed by people crossing the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry can be seen in relation to the three levels of everyday mobilities, as presented by Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005). Mobile practices across the border, such as people who live in Muff and buy goods in supermarkets in Derry-Londonderry, is an example of everyday journeys that have a *practical value*. People need to be able to buy food in order to function and make life possible. It is a very basic need to be able to buy food and therefore everyday movements between Muff and Derry-Londonderry could be argued to be a key direction of travel in the case study location.

As mentioned by Conradson and Latham (2005) people negotiate and share their lifeworlds when they travel across an international border. People's everyday practices are often 'mundane' and 'ordinary', and people's practices across the Irish border is no exception. This is evident when looking at the examples in table 3. Many of the examples represent everyday practices that tend to be 'ordinary', such as the Trainer at Fab:Social who goes for a drink with friends in Derry-Londonderry or the Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group who mainly does her shopping in Northern Ireland. In accordance with the thoughts presented by Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005), the example of the Trainer at Fab:Social who sometimes goes for a drink with friends in Derry-Londonderry can be seen as a type of mobility that creates *social value* for both the interview respondent as well as his friends. His journey across the border is a way of maintaining friendships with people who live in the other side of the border and thereby keep a social bond between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. By visiting friends in Derry-Londonderry, he also expands his social network outwards from where he lives in Buncrana in Co. Donegal.

The third and last level of the significance of everyday mobilities relates to *cultural functions* of mobility, as it is put forward by Turnbull, Pooley and Adams (2005). One of the cultural functions of mobility is that it can be part of defining the identity of a person. The identity of people living in a border region, such as in the case study location, is an interesting theme which is discussed with the interview respondents, investigating if they see themselves as Irish, Northern Irish/British or a mix of these. Four of the five employees at GSAP (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Part-time employee, Development Officer at The Forge, Trainer at Fab:Social) consider themselves as Irish and the same does the Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group. Part of the story

is that they all live in Ireland in Co. Donegal, but several of them grew up in Derry-Londonderry, such as the Development Officer at The Forge and the Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group.

*"But I think growing up in Donegal and being so close to the border, it does have a strange impact on your identity, because Derry feels like a natural hinterland for me from Donegal. And in many ways, I have more of a connection with Northern Ireland than I do with Dublin, you know, because probably from going to university in the Northern Irish system and from working here and socializing here and having a lot of friends here." (Project Manager at Fab:Social, GSAP, 11:10)*

The Project Manager at Fab:Social appears to have a different view on her identity, which emerges from the quote above. When she was younger, she went to college and university in Northern Ireland, and she later started working there as well. This has probably contributed to her social network by adding friends and acquaintances who live on the other side of the border from Co. Donegal. Furthermore, it may have affected her identity and created a stronger connection between her and Northern Ireland. It is also interesting to note that she feels a stronger connection with Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland than with the Irish capital of Dublin, which could be because Derry-Londonderry is situated much closer to Co. Donegal than Dublin. Also, the Project Manager at Fab:Social seems to have more friends in Derry-Londonderry than in Dublin. Therefore, the 'mental' distance, which could be described as a non-physical distance, appears to be shorter for her going to Derry-Londonderry. Overall, this is an example of the social and cultural functions of mobilities, showing how obtaining an education and working in another country close to where you grew up can have an influence on your identity.

In extension of the discussion on how growing up on one side of the border has affected the identity of some interview respondents, thoughts on uniting Ireland are brought out. As explained, most of the interview respondents see themselves as Irish. The Co-ordinator at Galliagh Women's Group and the Trainer at Fab:Social explicitly mentions that they are in favor of a united Ireland. If this becomes a reality in the future, the border would completely disappear and there would be no such thing as 'crossing the border' for people in their daily lives. If the border is dissolved, though, it may remain in the consciousness of people how it used to be to travel across it.

According to Rumford (2006), borders are made to encourage different types of mobility for different kinds of people. The examples of cross-border journeys over the Irish border in the case study location are also examples of different kinds of mobility performed by different people. For instance, the 87-year-old father visiting the grave of his late wife is certainly another type of mobility than people living in Muff who travel to supermarkets over the border in Derry-Londonderry. The example of the 87-year-old father is probably a less common example of cross-border mobility than people travelling over the border to buy groceries. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the father's everyday journey across the border is at least as important as buying groceries, since it adds valuable meaning to his life. The two examples show that the everyday journeys can be both material and immaterial in their purposes. Buying groceries in supermarkets is a necessity in life, since it provides people with basic needs such as food. Visiting the grave of a beloved person who passed away can certainly also be a necessity in life, as it may allow you to reflect upon your life and bring back strong memories that you feel a need to express in some way. In this context, Pooley, Turnbull and Adams (2005) suggest that movement and everyday mobility add meaning to the lives of people and is also part of developing our society.

*'As I say, the border doesn't exist as you are travelling from Derry, for me, to go to Malin Head. I just drive and there is no need to stop. There is no need to observe if there is customs officers at the border. There is nothing. The border doesn't exist.'* (Retired resident in Malin Head, 10:45)

Part of exploring people's everyday journeys across the Irish border in the case study location means investigating if the border is affecting these journeys. Four of the interview respondents explicitly refer to the border as 'none-existing' at the minute, meaning that the journey across it is seamless and there is no need to stop (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at GSAP, Co-ordinator at Galliagh Womens Group, Project Manager at Fab:Social, GSAP and Retired resident in Malin Head). The border is therefore not a physical obstacle for people crossing it, and the everyday journeys across it are not affected by it. This means that the interview respondents can choose whatever route they want over the border, and they do not have to travel through certain border crossings. In relation to this, Rumford (2006) brings out the idea that some borders act as 'non-boundaries', because it has become easier for people to cross them. The border between Derry-Londonderry and Co. Donegal could be seen as such a 'non-boundary border' in that it does not act as a physical barrier for people crossing it. Furthermore, this particular border can be seen as part of a 'borderless world'.

#### *Living in Northern Ireland (Derry-Londonderry) and travelling to Co. Donegal*

From the examples presented above and in table 3 it may seem that many of the cross-border journeys in the case study location consist of movement by people who live in Co. Donegal and travel to Northern Ireland, and Derry-Londonderry in particular, for different purposes. That is not the whole story about movement between these two places, since there is also movement in the other direction from Derry-Londonderry over the border and into Co. Donegal.

The Senior Planner at Donegal County Council and the CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce provide examples of people living in Northern Ireland and working in Co. Donegal. For instance, the Senior Planner at Donegal County Council explains that about ten out of forty employees in his team based in Letterkenny live in Northern Ireland. According to both these professionals, there are no impediments at the minute of crossing the border for people living in Northern Ireland and working in Co. Donegal. As with people living in Co. Donegal and working in Derry-Londonderry, it is a seamless journey over the border.

## **Summary**

By relating cases outlined in table 3 to the broader discussion of everyday mobilities and borders, it becomes clear that people's everyday journeys across the border are meaningful and more than just physically travelling from one place to another. Seeing the everyday journeys in connection with the three levels of everyday mobilities, the practical, social and cultural functions, it is evident that the variation of everyday journeys contain all these functions and thereby provide meaning to people's lives. Regardless of it being, for example, a journey from Muff to Derry-Londonderry with the purpose of buying groceries and clothes or travelling from Buncrana in Co. Donegal to visit friends in Derry-Londonderry, these cross-border journeys are valuable for people and provide necessities in life.

The cases of everyday journeys explained and analyzed in the previous section have not yet been explored spatially (objective 4). By applying the everyday journeys to the spatial context of the case study location, it becomes much easier to grasp the distances of the travels. Mapping the everyday journeys on the basis of different categories also provides a good overview of where the different types of journeys are situated in the case study location.

The next part of the analysis sets out to map people's everyday journeys across the border in the case study location, thereby providing a spatial perspective to this piece of research.

### 5.3 Mapping people's everyday journeys across the border

This part of the analysis turns towards mapping everyday journeys over the border in the case study location based on information brought out by the interview respondents. Specifically, the mapping draws on the examples of everyday journeys across the border provided in table 3.

The first purpose of mapping people's everyday journeys is to investigate if the journeys conflict with regional and municipal plans on a more strategic level, such as the planning policies presented in Chapter 4. Secondly, the mapping sets out to explore the different types of everyday journeys over the border in a spatial context. It aims at exploring particular relationships between the different types of everyday journeys. The purpose of this is to spatially discuss the types of journeys, the directions of movement and the distance of the journeys. Furthermore, the mapping adds a more spatial perspective to the previous part of the thesis, which investigated people's everyday journeys through interviews.

As can be seen on figure 8, the map provides an overview of different types of everyday journeys over the border. Six different categories have been made to distinguish between the types of journeys: Leisure, retail, friends, family, public service and commuting. Each of the categories are represented by a line that have been given a unique color to make the distinction clearer. To further specify the everyday journeys, circles have been made, and these contain information about the purpose of the journey or the persons performing the journey.

The lines do not represent the actual route of the journey, but they are provided to make an overview of the general flow of movement over the border. Also, the circles are do not represent the actual amount of people, jobs or educations, for instance. The purpose of the size of the circles is to give an idea of the journeys that contain most of the cross-border movement.

As can be seen on the map (figure 8), most of the journeys are directed towards Derry-Londonderry. For example, as described by the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at GSAP and retired resident in Malin Head, the city offers more job opportunities and shopping possibilities than the rural areas in Co. Donegal. This can be a reason as to why many of the everyday journeys performed by the interview respondents seems to go towards Derry-Londonderry.

As explained in the context section in Chapter 4, several planning policies describe Derry-Londonderry as a key city in the North West Region that contains many jobs as well as educational institutions (Department for Regional Development, 2012; Derry City & Strabane D.C., 2017b). The town of Letterkenny in Co. Donegal and the city of Derry-Londonderry is identified as a linked gateway by the National Spatial Strategy (Department for Regional Development, 2012). This suggests that movement should go in both directions between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry, but the map (figure 8) does not indicate much movement between these places, except commuting of employees who live in Derry-Londonderry and work at Donegal County Council in Letterkenny. An explanation could be that the journeys on the map are based on information from interview respondents, and many of them reside on the Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal. This means that when they travel to Derry-Londonderry, the natural route for them does not go through or anywhere near Letterkenny, as can be seen on the map (figure 8).

The map (figure 8) shows that there are many different types of everyday journeys across the border, which is visually represented by the different colors of the lines and circles. Overall, the everyday journeys have been divided into six different categories, each represented by a line with a certain color. Additionally, the circles as well as labels on the map add further detail, meaning that there are many more types of everyday journeys than the six categories if you zoom in on a micro-level and add detail to the journey. For example, the category 'public service' contains different kinds of journeys. One example of a public service journey is brought out by the Project Manager at Fab:Social, who explains that students living on the Inishowen Peninsula in Co.

Donegal travel to attend college or university in Derry-Londonderry. The purpose of this public service journey can be described as educational. As pointed out in table 3, The Part-time employee at GSAP living in Co. Donegal mentions that she accesses free health service in Northern Ireland as an employee there, which is another example of a public service journey that relates to health service. The health service and educational opportunities in Derry-Londonderry, which can be seen on the map (figure 8), indicates that the main direction of travel for public service journeys over the border goes from the Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal towards Derry-Londonderry.

The public service journey category is not the only category that contain different types of everyday journeys. As can be seen on the map on figure 8, two different journeys within the ‘family’ category have been drawn. One of these everyday journeys is the retired resident in Malin Head and his wife, who travel from the northern part of Co. Donegal to Derry-Londonderry to visit his son, daughter and grandchildren that live in Derry-Londonderry. The other example of an everyday journey within the family category is the 87-year-old father of the Development Officer at the Forge, who travels twice every day from Derry-Londonderry where he lives to visit the grave of his late wife near Muff in Co. Donegal.

These examples show that there can be a difference in terms of both the frequency, direction of travel and distance of the everyday journey as well as the purpose. The journey from Malin Head in the north of Co. Donegal is much longer than the journey from Derry-Londonderry to a place near Muff in Co. Donegal. Another difference is that the resident in Malin Head and his wife visit contemporary family members, whereas the 87-year-old father visits the grave of his late wife, which could be a journey that brings forward strong emotions and memories from the past.

Lastly, the mapping shows that majority of people’s everyday journeys seem to be between Derry-Londonderry and Inishowen, based on information from the interview respondents. This means that the travels are mainly in a northern direction from Derry-Londonderry towards Inishowen and not so much eastwards towards Letterkenny and more central parts of Co. Donegal.

## Summary

The mapping of people’s everyday journeys across the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry has provided a spatial perspective to this piece of research. It has developed on the everyday journeys brought out by the interview respondents in the first part of the analysis by putting these journeys in a spatial context. By doing that it has become possible to get an overview of the different types of journeys on a map and thereby explore particular relationships between the journeys, such as the directions and distances of the travels.

Furthermore, the mapping has made it possible to investigate relationships between planning policies and the everyday journeys. Based on information from the interview respondents, it has been revealed that there is not much movement to support the linked gateway between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry. This suggests that the planning policies do not fully represent the reality of everyday journeys in the North West Region. Instead, the people’s cross-border travels seem to go through the border between Derry-Londonderry and the Inishowen Peninsula, thereby forming a potentially new ‘linked gateway’ between these places. It is mainly this movement between Derry-Londonderry and Inishowen that makes the basis of selecting three border crossings for observation in the next and final part of the analysis.

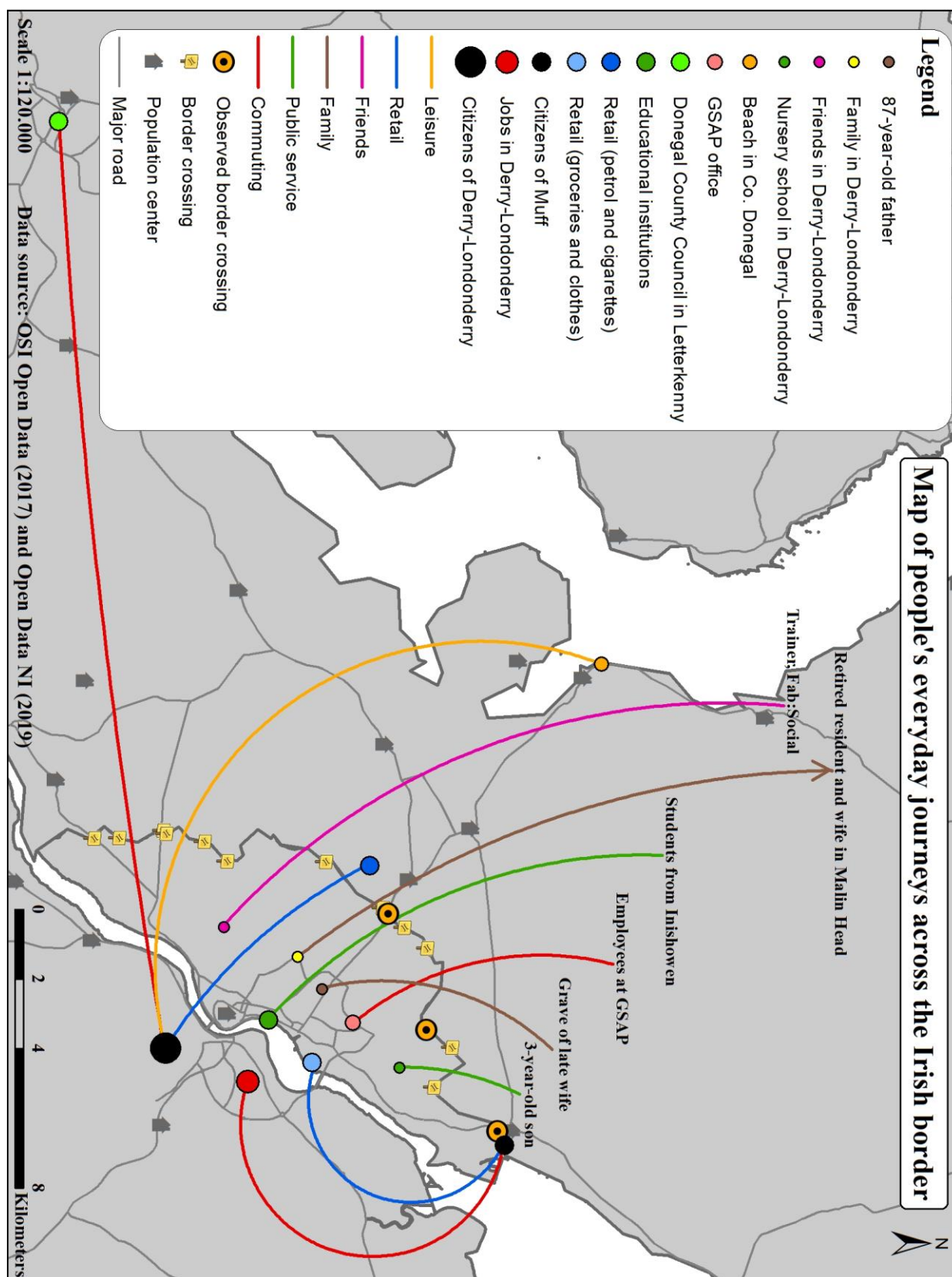


Figure 8: The map shows people's everyday journeys over the Irish border based on table 3. The lines on the map show the flow of people across the border, but they do not represent the actual cross-border routes of people. The circles add further detail to the journeys. Own map created in ArcMap.

## **5.4 Observation of three key border crossings in the case study location**

The third part of the analysis is the last part of phase three of this research, and it aims at answering the last piece of the fourth objective: Exploring key border crossings in the case study location. Previous to this, everyday journeys across the border has been investigated through semi-structured interviews, followed by mapping of these journeys to provide a spatial context to the journeys. It is the mapping of everyday journeys that has provided the knowledge needed to identify three key border crossings in the case study location. In total, there are fifteen border crossings in the case study location, as indicated on figure 9.

The mapping has revealed that the everyday journeys over the border takes place in a particular area, which is primarily through the border northeast, north and northwest of Derry-Londonderry. It is against this background that three border crossings have been chosen as relevant locations for observation, since the everyday journeys of the interview respondents and other local people seem to go through these crossings.

The border crossings were all observed during daytime on the same day during fieldwork, on Friday March 15, 2019. As part of observing the crossings, pictures were taken and videos were recorded to document how infrastructure on the border changes. One of the purposes of the border crossing observations is to investigate them in relation to policies and strategies of the North West City Region, as brought out in Chapter 3. This provides a connection between planning strategies and actual observations in the field, and it shows that some of the crossings have strategic locations in relation to development in the North West City Region. Furthermore, this last part of the analysis investigates how infrastructure changes on the border.

In the following sections, the three selected border crossings and their significance for this distortion of everyday mobilities shall be explored. The border crossings are organized in relation to the amount of movement going through the crossings. This means that the first section will investigate the most trafficked border crossing at Bridge End followed by the second-most trafficked crossing at Muff. The last section of the chapter explores the border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge, which is the smallest in terms of cross-border traffic.

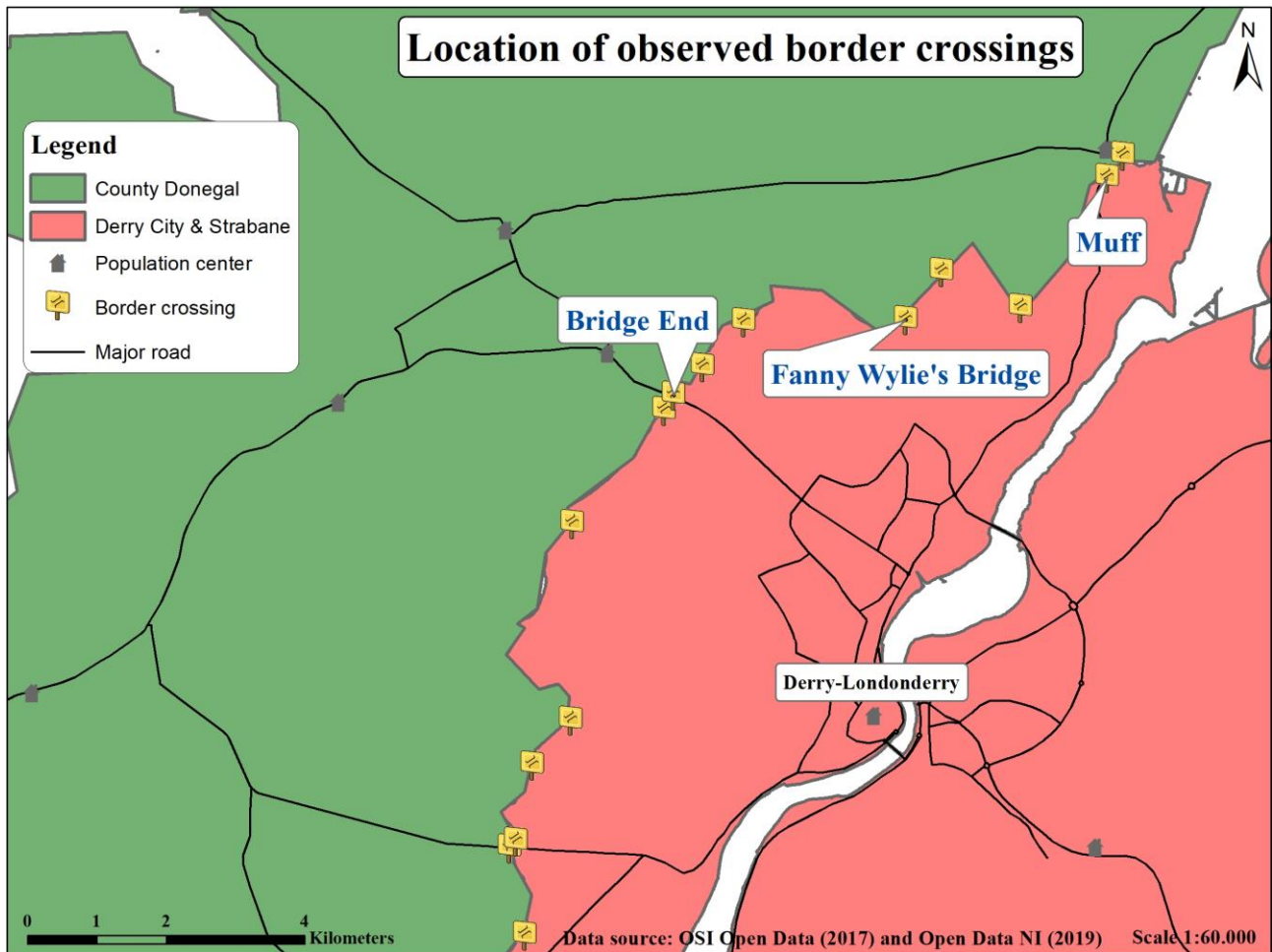


Figure 9: Map showing the location of the three observed border crossings during fieldwork between Derry-Londonderry and Co. Donegal. Own map produced in ArcMap.



## Border crossing at Bridge End



Figure 10: Major border crossing near Bridge End between Co. Donegal and Derry & Strabane District. Own picture taken on March 15, 2019.

The most trafficked border crossing point observed during the fieldwork was the one near Bridge End on Buncrana Road. Data from 2015 shows that this year about 135,000 vehicles travelled across the border in both directions per week at this crossing point (Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council, 2017). The amount of traffic, and Buncrana Road being a connecting link between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry, makes this an important frontier crossing in the North West City Region. Furthermore, people living in the western part of Inishowen Peninsula and working in Derry-Londonderry or vice versa are likely to pass through this crossing during their everyday journeys.

At the minute, there are no customs or security checkpoints at the crossing near Bridge End, and the traffic therefore passes through smoothly. The most significant physical sign of crossing an international border is the road sign to the left on the picture (figure 10) showing 'Welcome to Northern Ireland'. Interesting to note is the 'Northern' being crossed-out, which may have been done by people who favor a united Ireland. Another sign of crossing an international border is the yellow road lines in Ireland changing to white road lines in Northern Ireland.

As can be seen on the map (figure 8), the Trainer at Fab:Social who lives in Buncrana in the western part of Inishowen Peninsula is likely to pass through the border crossing at Bridge End when he travels to work at

GSAP or visit friends in Derry-Londonderry. Buncrana is about half an hour drive from the city center in Derry-Londonderry. The Trainer at Fab:Social explains that Buncrana is a small town with fewer facilities than Derry-Londonderry, which has services such as shopping centers, sports centers and cinemas as well as offers more cultural events. According to the Trainer at Fab:Social, people are travelling across the border to attend services that Derry-Londonderry offer. He also mentions that he sometimes travels to Derry-Londonderry to go for a drink with friends. When people travel in and out of Derry-Londonderry to go shopping for groceries, for example, the life-worlds of these mobile individuals are negotiated through such everyday practices (Conradson and Latham, 2005).

The map (figure 8) shows examples of other types of everyday journeys going through the crossing at Bridge End. These are for instance students who live in the western part of Inishowen and commute to educational institutions in Derry-Londonderry, such as the North West Regional College and Ulster University, as brought out by the Project Manager at Fab:Social.

As it appears from the map (figure 8), people who live in Derry-Londonderry may travel through the crossing at Bridge End to go to beaches in Co. Donegal or for retail purposes to buy petrol and cigarettes.

The above examples show that many different types of everyday journeys go through the border crossing near Bridge End. A reason for this can be the location of the border crossing. It is located on a main road, Buncrana Road, which is heading all the way into Derry-Londonderry. The location of the crossing means that it acts as a gateway between Derry-Londonderry and Co. Donegal. Out of the three border crossings observed, the shortest route from Letterkenny to Derry-Londonderry goes through the crossing near Bridge End. As described in Chapter 4, the National Spatial Strategy of Ireland describes these places as a linked gateway in the North West City Region, and that the gateway is important in strengthening economic and social relationships in the region (Department for Regional Development, 2012). The crossing at Bridge End being a central point on the gateway route between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry means that it has a strategic location in terms of development of the whole North West City Region. Impediments in the form of customs or security checkpoints at the crossing could certainly affect the linked gateway between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry and thereby the whole North West Region.

The next section turns towards the border crossing at Muff, which is the most northern and easterly located crossing in the case study location. It is an important crossing for people who live in Muff or further up the eastern part of Inishowen and travel to Derry-Londonderry for different everyday purposes.

## Border crossing at Muff



Figure 11: Major border crossing at Culmore Road in Muff, Co. Donegal, Ireland. Own picture taken on March 15, 2019.

The border crossing in Muff at Culmore Road is one of the main crossings for vehicles driving from the Inishowen Peninsula in County Donegal to Derry-Londonderry and vice versa. Two of the interview participants of this study, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at GSAP and the Development Officer at The Forge, live in or around Muff and perform everyday journeys across the Irish border to go to work at GSAP or visit family and friends in Derry-Londonderry. For these people, the border crossing in Muff at Culmore Road, which is a main road, is a central crossing point. This is one of the reasons why this place is worth investigating in terms of everyday mobilities across the border.

During the fieldwork in Ireland and Northern Ireland, two border crossings in Muff were observed, one at Culmore Road (figure 11) and one right beside at Coney Road (figure 12). On these locations, the researcher was looking for the visual indications of a border as well as cross-border traffic. At the border crossings observed during the fieldwork, there were generally not many signs of driving across an international border, with the crossings in Muff being no exception.

In Muff, one of the most significant visual signs of crossing a border are speed limit signs. When entering the Republic of Ireland, the speed limit signs will show the speed in kilometers per hour, whereas speed limit signs before entering Northern Ireland shows the speed in miles per hour. Another indication of crossing the Irish border is the condition of the road surface and road surface markings. Both speed limit signs and changes in the condition of the road surface is visible at Culmore Road in Muff. This may be seen on figure 11, which shows 50 km/h speed limit signs as well as indicates that the road surface in Northern Ireland looks rougher than the road surface in Ireland. The brown sign situated in the left of figure 11 marks the beginning of the Wild Atlantic Way, which is an Irish coastal route for vehicles.

An observation made at the Culmore Road border crossing in Muff in relation to everyday mobilities and traffic was the impression that many vehicles were driving across the border on this location. This observation is supported by Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council (2017), which states that about 71,000 vehicles drove across the Culmore Road border crossing in both directions per week in 2015, making this



crossing point the third most trafficked border crossing in the North West City Region. Additionally, Culmore Road is a connecting link between Derry-Londonderry and the Inishowen Peninsula.

The Culmore Road border crossing at Muff along with crossing at Bridge End are mentioned as key border crossings in strategic plans, such as Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council (2017) and Donegal Co. Council (2018a), which is mainly due to the amount of traffic passing through the crossings every day. According to Donegal Co. Council (2018a), this shows that there are many cross-border interactions that have both social and economic purposes. This planning perspective correlates with the outcome of the investigation of people's everyday journeys across the border, which shows that these journeys have indeed both social and economic purposes.

The next and last of the three border crossings observed shall now be investigated. It is the one at Fanny Wylie's Bridge, which is situated on the border between the crossing near Bridge End and the crossing at Muff. This border crossing is different than the other two in that it acts as a smaller gateway between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry, and yet it is the crossing situated nearest to the city of Derry-Londonderry.



*Figure 12: Border crossing at Coney Road in Muff. Picture to the left is taken in Northern Ireland, looking into the Republic. Picture to the right shows the actual border, which is a small stream. Own pictures taken on March 15, 2019.*

## Border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge



*Figure 13: Minor border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. The picture is taken in Northern Ireland, looking into Ireland. Own picture taken on March 15, 2019.*

border crossing. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at GSAP, who lives in Muff and works at GSAP, brings out the possibility of driving on back roads to avoid custom checkpoints. When looking on a road map it becomes clear that the crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge is a back-road opportunity for people who live in Muff, for example, and work in the Shantallow area just outside Derry-Londonderry. Therefore, this border crossing does provide commuting possibilities between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry, especially in the event of customs or security checkpoints at major crossing points like the ones at Bridge End and Muff.

Additionally, people who live in Derry-Londonderry sometimes travel to use the nature and the landscape in Co. Donegal, as explained by the Part-time employee at GSAP. The rural location of Fanny Wylie's Bridge means that this border crossing also acts as an entrance point to the nature and landscape in Co. Donegal.

During the fieldwork in Ireland and Northern Ireland, a minor border crossing was observed at Fanny Wylie's Bridge on Beragh Hill Road between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. As is indicated on figure 13, this particular crossing point is narrow and has no road surface markings. There are not many elements suggesting that this is an international border crossing point. The change in color of the road surface from dark grey to a lighter grey along with 80 km/h speed limit signs are among the most significant indications.

The border crossing at Fanny Wylie's bridge differ from the crossings at Bridge End and Muff. Its location is more rural than especially the crossing at Muff, and yet it is situated quite closely to the outskirts of Derry-Londonderry. Therefore, it acts as a gateway between the city of Derry-Londonderry and the countryside in Inishowen Peninsula. In this way it differs from the other two border crossings observed in that the nearest populated place in Co. Donegal, from Fanny Wylie's Bridge, is further away.

Its location quite close to the outskirts of Derry-Londonderry provides some possibilities for everyday journeys. For example, the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership (GSAP) where many of the interview respondents work is situated near the

## 5.5 Summary

The border crossing observations have provided a different perspective than the investigation of people's everyday journeys over the border and the following mapping of these journeys. Through the observations, the researcher has been in the field and experienced how the infrastructure changes between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the investigation of the three border crossings has shown that at least two of them are important from a strategic planning perspective. The crossings at Bridge End and Muff are both described in strategic plans as locations that facilitate many cross-border interactions of both social and economic character, which means that to some extent there is coherence between the strategic plans of the North West City Region and the people's everyday journeys in the area. Also, the crossing at Bridge End is located on the main road between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry and is thereby part of the linked gateway, which is described in the National Spatial Strategy of Ireland.

The border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge differs from the two other crossings in that it is not described in strategic plans, and it does not have nearly as much cross-border traffic passing through. Yet, interview respondents describe the possibility of using backroads in the event of customs and security checkpoint along major border crossings, and the crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge is situated on a backroad between Muff and Derry-Londonderry. Also, this crossing acts as an entrance to the rural nature and landscape in Inishowen Peninsula, which is sometimes visited by citizens of Derry-Londonderry.

The next and final chapter of this thesis provides a discussion and conclusion based on the outcomes of the investigation of people's everyday journeys across the border, the mapping and the observations of key border crossings. The chapter will relate the outcome of the analysis to the broader discussion on everyday mobilities and borders, thereby explaining how this master's thesis has contributed with knowledge to this field of research. Lastly, the chapter shall present this thesis' recommendations for future research in the field of everyday mobilities and borders.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 Research conclusions

The aim of this thesis has been to critically explore people's everyday journeys across the Irish border, through a case study of Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. To investigate this, the researcher has been in the field to conduct interviews with people crossing the border on a daily basis, and these interviews have provided some very useful insights into the everyday journeys of people in the case study location. Furthermore, the interviews have made it possible to map people's everyday journeys over the border, which has provided a spatial context to the journeys. Lastly, border crossings have been observed in the field, and people's everyday journeys and planning policies have been included in a discussion of the observed crossings.

The review of the literature on everyday mobilities, borders and the relation between those has provided knowledge in terms of the contemporary discussion of these topics. It has been revealed that some work has been done concerning people's everyday journeys, but the literature in this area of research is limited. Additionally, the literature on everyday journeys across borders is even more limited than the broader literature on everyday mobilities. This means that there is a gap in the literature in this area of research, and the aim of this master's thesis has been to contribute with new knowledge in the interrelated research field between everyday mobilities and borders.

#### Investigating people's everyday journeys across the border

The third objective of this research had been to investigate people's everyday journeys across the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry, based on semi-structured interviews. The analysis has revealed that the everyday journeys do not just consist of large commuting flows of travel-to-work areas. The everyday journeys across the border are very diverse in their nature. One type of everyday journey may involve visiting the grave of a late wife, whereas another type of everyday journey can be travelling over the border to buy groceries because of more choices of supermarkets. These are just two examples of very different types of everyday journeys that are equally important for people in their everyday lives.

The everyday journeys do play a role in relation to the broader literature and discussion on everyday mobilities and borders. When the journeys are connected with the three levels of the significance of everyday mobilities (Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, 2005), it becomes very clear that the everyday journeys over the border in the case study location are related to those levels. As mentioned earlier in this piece of research, there are examples of everyday journeys that have both practical, social and cultural functions. When people travel over the border to buy groceries or clothes, it is indeed an example of a journey that has a practical function, whereas travelling across the border to visit friends is a journey with a much more social function.

Some everyday journeys may even project beyond the three levels of everyday mobilities or combine the levels. Especially the journey that involves visiting the grave of a late wife comes to mind as an everyday journey that stands out. This journey certainly has *emotional value* attached, and this piece of research suggests this as a fourth level of everyday mobilities that goes beyond the practical, social and cultural functions of mobility.

Other everyday journeys combine the levels of everyday mobilities. When the interview respondents travel from their homes to work at the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership, they also travel to meet work colleagues.

By working at GSAP they earn money and the journey therefore has a practical function, but they meet and engage with their work colleagues as well, which adds social value to the journey. The point of this example is to say that an everyday journey does not necessarily fit into one category of everyday mobilities, but that it can fit into multiple categories.

During the process of writing this thesis, there is nothing that impedes everyday journeys over the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. The interview respondents who live and work in the area describe the border as ‘none-existing’, and though this suggests that the border does not take up much space in people’s minds, it means that the border is still a natural part of people’s thoughts. This can be related to Rumford (2006), who argues that personal circumstances are decisive for the way we experience borders. The circumstances surrounding the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry is that people can pass through it smoothly and with no impediments, and therefore people experience the border as none-existing. In that way the case study location of this research becomes a ‘borderless world’ for people.

### **Mapping of people’s everyday journeys**

A spatial perspective to this research has been provided through mapping of people’s everyday journeys over the border between Co. Donegal and Derry-Londonderry. The mapping has added new perspectives to people’s everyday journeys by providing a spatial context to the journeys. An overview of the different types of journeys has been created through the mapping, which has allowed the researcher to explore particular relationships between the journeys.

It has then become possible to spatially compare the everyday journeys with the planning policies in the North West City Region. Based on information from the interview respondents, the mapping shows that there is not much movement between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry, which has been identified as a linked gateway by the National Spatial Strategy of Ireland. This indicates that the planning policies do not provide a fully true picture of the reality in terms of everyday journeys in the North West City Region. Instead, the mapping reveals that people’s different types of everyday travels over the border seem to be between Derry-Londonderry and the Inishowen Peninsula. This suggests that a new ‘linked gateway’ has potentially been created between these places, which has not been described in any planning policies yet.

### **Observation of key border crossings**

The observations of key border crossings in the case study location have provided a third perspective in relation to the aim of this research. By being in the field and observing, the researcher has experienced how the infrastructure between Ireland and Northern Ireland changes. Pictures taken at the three observed border crossings show that there are not many physical signs of crossing an international border, apart from changes in the road surface and road lines as well as speed limit signs. The researcher experienced a free flow of traffic while conducting the observations, which backs up arguments from the interview respondents that the border ‘does not exist’ at the minute. In relation to the broader discussion on borders, as presented by Rumford (2006), the Irish border then acts as a gateway and not as a physical impediment for people.

Furthermore, the three observed border crossings have been investigated from a planning perspective to explore how they relate to the planning policies in the North West City Region. The border crossings at Bridge End and Muff are both included in planning policies as major border crossings, such as Strabane District Council and Donegal Co. Council (2017) and Donegal Co. Council (2018a). These policies describe the two



border crossings as facilitators of social and economic cross-border interactions. This description correlates with the outcomes of this research, which shows that people's everyday journeys over the border do indeed have both social and economic purposes.

The border crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge was chosen for observation, because its location on a backroad in a rural setting provides a different perspective than the other two observed crossings. This border crossing is not mentioned in any of the investigated planning policies, but based on information from the interview respondents it turns out to be an important type of border crossing for people's everyday journeys in the case study location. In the event of customs and security checkpoints at major border crossings, the crossing at Fanny Wylie's Bridge and other small border crossings can act as backroad opportunities for people's everyday journeys. Furthermore, the rural location of Fanny Wylie's Bridge makes it a gateway for Derry-Londonderry citizens to the nature and landscape in Inishowen Peninsula.

## **Concluding remarks**

To sum up, the three parts of the analysis have each contributed with a perspective on people's everyday journeys, and they have also revealed new relationships between the everyday journeys and planning policies. The interviews have provided new knowledge and more details on people's everyday journeys across the border, and the interviews have put forward everyday practices that are often overlooked in planning policies and the broader discussion on everyday mobilities and borders.

The mapping has put the investigated everyday journeys in a spatial context and revealed new patterns of everyday practices in the North West City Region that contributes to a better spatial understanding of everyday mobilities in the case study location. This creates a stronger basis for understanding how small changes on the border can have several effects on people's everyday usage and mobilities.

Lastly, the observations of key border crossings in the case study location has shown how infrastructure on the border acts as a gateway and not a physical obstruction for people crossing it. The infrastructure on the three key border crossings contributes to an understanding of the case study location as part of a 'borderless world'.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there has been a focus on investigating travel-to-work areas and large quantitative datasets when working with mobilities and borders. The lack of localized details and everyday life perspectives in such work has given rise and motivation to write this thesis. A thesis that brings into focus localized details and everyday life perspectives on travelling over the international border between Co. Donegal in Ireland and Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, Richardson (2013) argues that the social sciences may benefit from focusing on everyday life perspectives in the conversation of borders and mobilities. This master's thesis has set out to do that by concentrating on people's everyday journeys across the Irish border. The thesis has brought out people's perspectives and personal experiences on these cross-border journeys and thereby added new perspectives to the broader discussion on borders and mobilities.

It has been the aim of this master's thesis to contribute with new knowledge by investigating people's everyday journeys across the Irish border between Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland and Co. Donegal in Ireland. This master's thesis has contributed to an increased focus on the micro-scale of everyday mobilities, and it is the hope that this area of research will gain an increased focus among researchers in the future.

## 6.2 Recommendations for future research

The following paragraphs will set out some recommendations for future research that this master's thesis have given rise to.

First, by focusing on a specific area along the Irish border through interviewing people and observing selected border crossings, this piece of research is able to come up with new knowledge concerning everyday journeys that is mainly related to the area of the case study. A more thorough investigation of people's everyday journeys and practices along the Irish border as a whole would require an exploration of people's cross-border journeys in other areas along the border.

In terms of the semi-structured interviews, the gender distribution among the interview respondents is not evenly distributed. Three of the ten interviewees are male and one of the six interviewees working at GSAP or Galliagh Women's Group is male. Therefore, the views of female respondents are overrepresented in the thesis, which means that some male perspectives of crossing the border could be missed.

Furthermore, the interview respondents were adults between 30 and 70. This means that perspectives of children and young adults, who may have other views on crossing the border than older people, have not been investigated. For example, children and young adults who live on one side of the border and go to school, college or university on the other side could provide new perspectives on crossing the border.

Also, the distribution of interviews with professionals is not evenly distributed. Perspectives on crossing the border are provided by two professionals both working within Co. Donegal at the County Council and Chamber of Commerce in Letterkenny. Interviews with professionals working on the other side of the border, for example within Derry City & Strabane District Council and Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, could provide some new perspectives. Some insights into how the border affects businesses and employees in Co. Donegal, though, were provided when attending a Brexit event at Londonderry Chamber of Commerce event on March 8, 2019.

Another limitation of this research is the amount of border crossings observed. Due to research and time constraints only three border crossings were explored. By selecting three specific border crossings for investigation, the researcher precludes other border crossings that could have provided new relevant knowledge about people's everyday journeys. In the case study location, there are fifteen borders crossings, and a recommendation would be to observe more of these border crossings to obtain a fuller picture of the border and the types of everyday journeys each border crossing facilitate. As mentioned earlier, the reason for choosing the three specific border crossings is due to the variation of everyday journeys passing through those crossings.

This piece of research has taken place in the context of the United Kingdom's, and thereby also Northern Ireland's, planned withdrawal from the European Union on October 31, 2019, as it looks now. This means that it is difficult to make to make robust conclusions from this research, since the outcome of Brexit may change the situation at the Irish border by reintroducing customs and security checkpoints, for example. Customs and security checkpoints along the border could possibly affect the everyday journeys that has been the main focus of this thesis.

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# Appendix

## Interview guide for employees at GSAP and retired resident in Malin Head

### Introduction

Length: 20-40 minutes

The aim of this semi-structured interview is to explore everyday mobilities for people who live in the case study location cross the border on a regular basis for different everyday purposes.

This means discussing how the interviewee uses the Irish border in everyday life, such as crossing the border for purposes like work, school, social outings, health care services, shopping, sports, music etc.

Furthermore, the border's influence on identity and developing the social network of the interviewee may be discussed.

### Consent

Written consent was obtained from the interviewee, who has signed an Informed Consent Form.

### Background information

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

### The Irish border's influence on everyday life

- How do you use the Irish border in your everyday life?
  - o Do you cross the border when going to work or school?
  - o Do you visit friends and/or family across the border?
  - o Do you make use of services across the border, such as health care, shopping etc.?
  - o Do you participate in a local community across the border, such as a sports club?
- How would you describe the significance of the Irish border on your everyday life?
- How would you describe the influence of the Irish border on your social network (your friends, family etc. living on the other side of the border)?
- Do you see the Irish border as being part of defining who you are – your identity?
  - o If yes, how has the border been part of defining your identity?
- Do you have friends or family who cross the Irish border on a regular basis?
  - o If yes, maybe you can explain how you think the Irish border affects their lives?

### Future perspectives – BREXIT

- Has the impending BREXIT decision changed the way you use the Irish border?
  - o If yes, how?
- Do you, or people in your social network, have any concerns with regards to the future of the Irish border?
  - o If yes, please try to explain your concerns
- What do you think about the future for the Irish border?
  - o Do you see any opportunities for your everyday life, in a post-Brexit situation?

# **Interview guide for planning professionals**

## **Introduction**

Length: 30-45 minutes

The aim of this semi-structured interview is to explore everyday mobilities for people who cross the Irish border in the case study location on a regular basis from a planning and development perspective. Everyday mobilities means how people travel in their everyday lives, such as going to work and school, visiting friends and family or participating in leisure activities.

## **Consent**

Written consent was obtained from the interviewee, who has signed an Informed Consent Form.

## **Background information**

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

## **The North West Region and the Irish border**

- What is the history behind the North West Region?
  - o Can you tell a little about the linked gateway between Letterkenny and Derry-Londonderry and its significance for the North West Region?
- How would you describe the cross-border movement of people living and working in the North West Region?
  - o What are the challenges and opportunities for people crossing the border regularly to date?
  - o What may the challenges and opportunities for this cross-border movement be in a post-Brexit situation in the future?
- How does the Irish border influence businesses located in the North West Region to date?
  - o What may the challenges and opportunities be for these North West businesses in a post-Brexit situation?

## **Zooming in on Letterkenny/Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane District Co.**

- How does the Irish border influence the daily lives of citizens living and working in Letterkenny/Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane, who cross the border regularly?
- Through interviews, and according to Co. Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, it seems that more people commute from Co. Donegal to Derry-Londonderry than vice versa. Would you say that this is a typical movement pattern?
  - o If yes, how would you explain this movement pattern?
  - o If yes, what are the challenges and opportunities with this movement pattern?
- What is your view on the cooperation between Donegal Co. Council cooperating with Derry City & Strabane District Council?
  - o Are these councils cooperating with each other on matters of the border? If yes, how?

### **Future perspectives – BREXIT**

- What do you see as the main challenges and opportunities for people crossing the border regularly, as well as businesses, in a post-Brexit situation?
  - o Do you think there will be any specific challenges for people living or working in Letterkenny/Co. Donegal and Derry City and Strabane District Co. who cross the border frequently?
- How do you picture the future of the Irish border?
  - o How do you see the future of the North West Region?
  - o How do you picture the future of Letterkenny/Co. Donegal and Derry City & Strabane District Co.?

# **Interview guide for CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce**

## **Introduction**

Length: 30-45 minutes

The aim of this semi-structured interview is to explore everyday mobilities for employees and businesses situated in the case study location. For example, this means discussing how businesses and their employees use the Irish border in everyday life, such as employees crossing it to and from work and trading across the border. Furthermore, the Irish border's effects on co-operation between businesses and development in the case study location may be discussed.

## **Consent**

Written consent was obtained from the interviewee, who has signed an Informed Consent Form.

## **Background information**

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?
- What are your job tasks/job title?
- Can you tell a little about Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce?
  - o What is the history behind the Chamber?
  - o How has the Chamber developed over time?

## **The Irish border's influence on everyday mobilities and everyday life**

- How is everyday life for businesses in the North West affected by the Irish border to date?
  - o How does the Irish border affect employees in North West businesses to date?
  - o How may the exit of Northern Ireland from the EU affect employees in North West businesses?
    - May there be differences for employees living in Ireland and working in Northern Ireland and vice versa?
- How does the Irish border influence co-operation between businesses in the North West?
  - o How may Brexit affect co-operation and commerce of businesses located on both sides of the Irish border?
- What role does the EU, such as customs regulations and 'free movement across borders', play for businesses in the region?

## **Future perspectives – BREXIT**

- What are the prospects for your company in a post-Brexit situation?
  - o How do you picture the future development of businesses located in the North West Region?
  - o Do you see any opportunities for businesses in the North West in a post-Brexit situation?