Abstract
In this paper, I examine the presence of conflict-related rituals, symbols and commemorations in Northern Ireland’s smallest rural district, an area that claims to be removed from ‘the Troubles’ and its effects. Based on an analysis of material culture, with specific attention paid to parades, flags and commemorative markers in Moyle District, County Antrim, I demonstrate that material evidence of the conflict is widely evident across Moyle, but that its visibility has been permitted to shift and recede into an unquestioned cultural landscape in which its absence is presumed, and even desired.

Drawing on evidence from analyses of District-level decisions, official reports and documentation and photographs, I reveal how conflicts in Moyle are consciously minimized and shifted onto other spatial locations and onto specific groups of people in an effort to re-write local narratives. These local narratives are instrumental in portraying Moyle as conflict-free. They normalize existing patterns of residential segregation, exonerate individuals and communities from participating in difficult cross-community work and maintain dominant conceptualizations about rural spaces as generally peaceful. Grounded in questions raised by anthropologist Michel-Rolph Troulliet, I consider the wide scope that is taken in the production of these narratives about the past and their silence in enhancing local cross-community relations and for engaging in wider reconciliation efforts in Northern Ireland (1997). This research advances understandings of conflict beyond from the often-examined spaces of contested border counties, counters dominant narratives about turban/rural spatial dimensions of conflict and points to significant challenges in future conflict reconciliation efforts in Northern Ireland.

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