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Problems with Drawing Lines: Theo-Geographies of the Catholic Parish in Ireland.

ABSTRACT: While people in Catholic parishes in Ireland appear keenly aware of parish boundaries, these understandings are more often oral than cartographic. There is no digital map of all of the Catholic parishes in Ireland. However, the institutional Catholic Church insists that no square kilometre can exist outside of a parish boundary. In this paper, I explain a process whereby the Catholic parishes of Ireland were produced digitally. I will outline some of the technical challenges of digitizing such boundaries. In making these maps, it is not only a question of drawing lines but mapping people's understanding of their locality. Through an example of one part of the digitisation project, I want to talk about how verifying maps with local people often complicates something which may have at first sight seemed simple. The paper ends on a comparison with how other communities of interest are territorialised in Ireland and elsewhere to draw out some broader theoretical and theological issues of concern.

KEYWORDS: cartography, Catholic, parish, Ireland, representation

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Introduction

This paper is about a project to create digital maps of Catholic parishes, conducted by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, University College Cork and NUI Maynooth since 2008. It is the story of making a map and also making a territory that had not existed before. There is currently no publicly-available digital map of Catholic parishes in Ireland. The Catholic Church in Ireland insists that no square kilometre of Ireland's landmass and islands can exist outside of a parish. The Gaelic Athletic Association (the largest voluntary sporting organisation in Ireland) has a defined need for maps which delineate the parish boundaries. Conversationally, many people in Ireland use the word parish everyday, often without reference to it as a religious territorialisation. While people in parishes appear aware of parish boundaries, the understandings are more often oral than cartographic. The parish's centrality in everyday life is not represented in any commonly-known cartography.

The project brings together some of the more difficult problems with re-making maps of these territories. Making maps brings with it a variety of political problems. Chief among these problems is agreement on the representation of particular geographies. This paper provides an overview of the process of creating digital parish maps, known as digitising, for the island of Ireland. While it outlines some of the technical challenges, it also reflects on the broader epistemological issues raised by the process. Making these maps is not only a question of drawing lines but about how people create and narrate an understanding of their own locality. Secondly, the paper will show how verifying maps with people who know, work and live in these parishes is a contested activity. I draw some comparisons with non-territorial parishes to bring forward some of these problems, both for re-making these maps and for the Catholic Church as an institution. Finally, I raise some broader questions about the spatialisation of the Church in Ireland and some broader theological unfoldings from delineating digital parish boundaries.

The Map is not the Territory: No Direct Access to Reality

In the last ten years, cartography has undergone a transformation, principally related to the increasing availability of maps. Most mobile phones and all internet-enabled computers give access to maps. Location-based online services work across these publicly available representations of the places that we inhabit. The ubiquity of these cartographic representations is such that we have access to a vast array of information which was formerly the domain of expertise. This expertise laid out the territory to be mapped as knowable. However, maps are not images of the world as it is. They are representations of apparent naturalness. What we see around us does not match the map we look at on our phone or on a street map that we hold in our hands. Because of this, maps are powerful tools which have the ability to convey a power in a landscape. This power is both in the map and the understanding of the user in its imminent power to adequately represent reality (Katz 2001). Secondly, maps are arbitrary mechanisms of control. In Brian Harley's (2006) terms:

...all maps, like all other historically constructed images, do not provide a transparent window on the world. Rather they are signs that present "a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparency concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification (Mitchell 1986, 8).

Maps are central to a reading of a landscape that needs to be made knowable and historically this has linked map-making with military conquest (Withers 2007, 88-99). From the maps of the Down Survey of Ireland in the 1660s to the maps of areas for carpet bombing in the Vietnam conflict to the mapping technologies used in drone strikes over large swathes of Afghanistan and Pakistan, maps have played a central role in violent conflict over land and access to its resources (Elden 2013). This is a relationship still evident to map making in Ireland through the history of Ordnance Survey Ireland, an organisation with strong links to the Irish army. Ireland was one of the first territories in Europe to be mapped using a mathematical methodology. This mapping process was a central element in the dispossession of the Gaelic chieftains following the settlements acts of the 17th century (Withers 2007, 104). In the terms of this paper, I want to treat maps as part of a larger circulation and production of specific forms of knowledge; a form of stadial thinking which creates a unified territory and which bounds politics to place making. The congruence of identity, place and politics is a central concern for much geographic thought (Pierce et al. 2011; Gill, 2010). Without becoming too concerned with the detail over this congruence, an integration of place-making, networking and politics is often seen as important to seeing places as relational. Identities and politics are bundled within these places, often drawing on a range of scales. Within this though, the Enlightenment view from nowhere is slowly being eroded in favour of a relational understanding of place. This view from nowhere is the result of stadial thinking. Stadial thinking is where the world can be classified into groups, as if all that we see is all that there is. For Withers (2007, 65) maps and their historical development have been about stadial thinking. The process of mystification that takes place through map making is often thought about as an objective practice, as if somehow disconnected from the relations from which it arose. Territory is thus naturalised. It is produced as a natural occurrence to which change occurs only on the surface. As Withers demonstrates, this mystification arises from a set of relationships between an Enlightened Europe and an empty rest of the world, only waiting to be mapped properly. Thinking about places stadially means an understanding of the world which takes in the entire world, seen as one undifferentiated place. I will return to this view from nowhere at the end of this paper.

Much stadial thinking is grounded in the territorial politics of the state. That is to say, the state becomes the basis upon which social and political action is frequently framed and altered. In his work on domopolitics, Walters (2004, 243) traces the development of diagrams as something at work across different institutions although not necessarily the results of specific plans by any one of these institutions. For Foucault, for example, the diagram is the panopticon. For the welfare states of Europe in the 20th century, social insurance was a diagram. Social insurance, says Walters:

Provided a mechanism through which an important set of identities and practices were established. This included a definition of the state as a welfare state caring for all its members who are, in turn, constituted as 'social' citizens bearing certain social rights and responsibilities; a definition of society as a solidaristic collective whose members bear certain risks together; a definition of the family as a household unit comprising a gendered division of paid and caring work; and so on. Through insurance, the state was crystallized in this particular form (Walters 2004, 243).

These diagrams provide a way to define who we are, who governs us and in what ways are we governed. Competing diagrams can co-exist in the one territory although they compete for resources, both political and financial, and for definitions of how public space is defined. In this way of thinking about how elements of political and social imaginaries are territorialized, parishes are the diagrams for the Church's establishment of practices and identities. It is a way of seeing the parish as a political imaginary in space. The parish is not just as a line on a map but as a diagram through which important sets of identities and practices are established, maintained and re-created. The parish is the basis of a faith community for the Catholic Church although not always seen as public space. Parishes are the basis for the practices and identities we can associate with the Catholic Church in Ireland. Parishes have a church, a hall and a parish pastoral committee. Catholics living in parishes invest time and effort in a parish baptism team and ensuring that the people of the parish who are unable to receive the consecrated bread of Communion in the church building are able to receive it. They are the places that create and recreate a politics of belonging within a faith community. It is the place, not always thought of territorially, where the Church is made diagrammatic.

The parish is the territorialisation of these politics of belonging, which Trudeau (2010, 422) defines as 'the discourses and practices that establish and maintain discursive and material boundaries that correspond to the imagined geographies of a polity and to the spaces that normatively embody the polity'. For Trudeau and others, belonging is inherently spatial and so defines an exclusion about what is acceptable and unacceptable. In a Catholic parish, there is an imagined geography of a polity and there are spaces in which this is embodied. Places are created and recreated from these imagined polities and, following Massey (2005), they are constituted as trajectories of negotiation in the same manner as other political spaces although they have not always been theorised as such. At weekends, the politics of belonging brings faith communities together around the consecration of the bread and wine. They have material boundaries of a church building and an imagined political space within which the people of the parish come together to recreate their sense of belonging in this place. From this then, a geography of Catholic practice can be built up with its own spatial politics. One of the ways in which this spatial politics is played out is through the mapping of the parish boundaries. This kind of spatial politics is formal and bureaucratically-imagined but a political project nonetheless.

I want to argue that the concealments, distortions and ideological mystification that is needed to digitise Catholic parishes is more than a technical

exercise. Making parish and diocesan maps for the institutional Catholic Church means asking more fundamental questions about particular forms of practice, discourses of power and the relationships between places. As the project attests to, it has sometimes been about laying bare those discourses of power in the relationships between priests and their bishop as well as between Catholics dwelling in a bounded territory and the meaning of the religious belief in place.

The project to digitise the boundaries faces significant technical challenges: scanning, geo-referencing and tidying up these representations. In five years, the project has been working through some of these challenges. As cartographic representations of a 'Catholic Ireland' in retreat, they are already historical documents. They represent a form of imperial ideology which seeks to encompass all of the territory of the island of Ireland. They also represent a high-tide mark of the political and symbolic power of the institutional Catholic Church on the island. Furthermore, the term 'Catholic Ireland' creates difficulties for representing parishes that are not based on territory, for example the Parish of the Travelling People or the ministry assigned to those working on board ships in Dublin Port. In the next section I will explain how the project arose and describe in detail what is involved.

The Project to Digitise Catholic Parishes and Boundaries

Following on from unpublished work conducted by William Smyth (UCC) in the 1980s and Paddy Duffy (NUIM) in the diocese of Clogher in the 1990s, a project to create a series of digital maps of the parishes and dioceses of Ireland has been running since summer 2008. Making paper maps into digital maps can be done in one of two ways. In the first method, paper maps can be photographed or scanned, geo-coordinated (aligned with agreed upon geographic coordinates and projection systems) and then the boundaries can be traced using a computer program. The second method involves using existing digital boundaries and redrawing them to suit what is believed to be the parish boundary. This is called redistricting. This project uses both methods to try to digitise the Catholic dioceses and parishes on the island of Ireland. Paper maps of Ireland's 26 Catholic dioceses had of course been drawn before as had maps of the 1,360 Catholic parishes covering the entire territory of the island. Notably, Michael D. Gleeson's map (of unknown origin) had adorned Catholic publications from the 1980s until a few years ago. However, there was no digital map of parishes and dioceses, and at a time when spatial information was increasingly available online, a diocesan online map would be a useful resource and tool for analysis. At the outset of the project, I had the sense that tracing lines on a map was merely a technical challenge, and that we could easily use Geographic Information Software (GIS) to produce a map that had not been drawn electronically before.

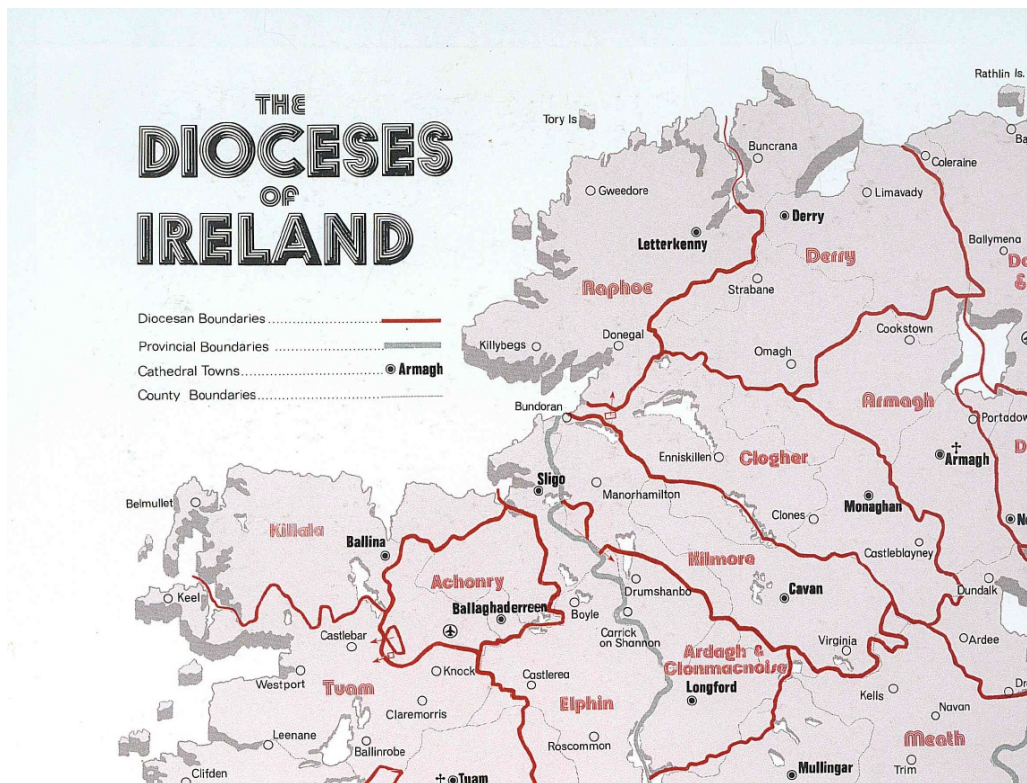


Figure 1: Gleeson diocesan map (part). Copyright: Veritas Communications.

To ensure the project got off to a good start and with the right expertise, the Irish Bishops' Conference sponsored an eight week studentship which began in the summer of 2008. This first project depended on the availability and accuracy of source maps, however, at this point there were not that many sources, aside from Gleeson's poorly rendered boundaries. Within weeks, this project had digitised the diocesan boundaries, based on a number of historical and other courses. That summer, the student, Omar Sarhan, tried to collect as many parish boundaries as he could in the course of the 8 weeks of the project. This involved writing to each of the 26 diocesan offices in Ireland and asking them to provide appropriate parish maps. A small number of the diocesan offices responded to the initial request for maps. For a number of reasons, including the lack of resources available to the project, we managed to collate the parish boundaries for four of the 26 dioceses: Kildare, Cashel & Emly, Kildare & Leighlin and Waterford & Lismore. Sarhan set about digitising and geo-rectifying the parish boundaries that we got from these dioceses, some of which were not always suitable for the work involved. They ranged from the clumsily large to the plainly touristic. Omar Sarhan's work that summer raised some questions for me about the drawing of lines to form distinct shapes on the landscape. It is not solely an artistic endeavour but one with direct political consequence. Placing a line on a picture of an area means that some are one side of that line and the others are on another.

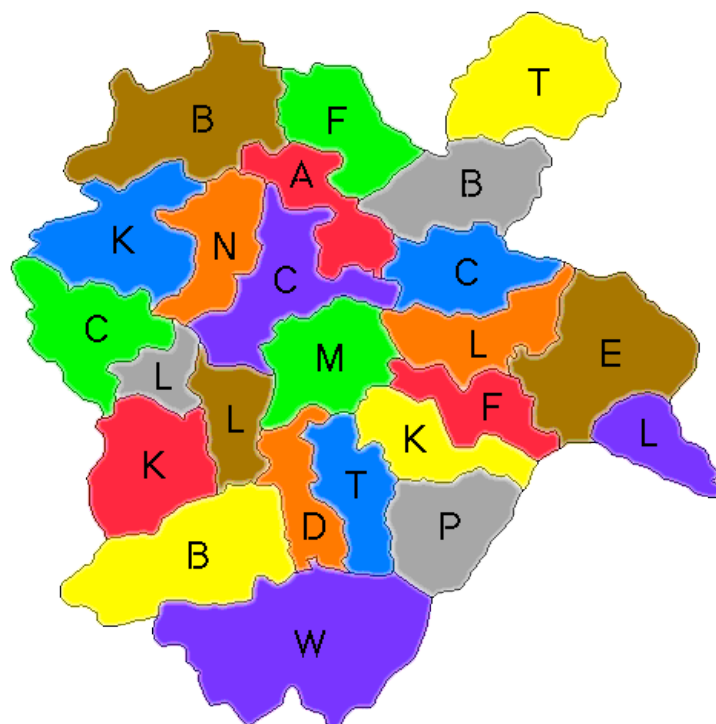


Figure 2: an example of a jpeg file used for the 2008 parish boundary project. No copyright.

The technical and logistical challenges were apparent from the start of this first project. More than this however, the idea that these shapes being derived were containers of experience came to the forefront for me. By this I mean that parishes are thought to contain the devotional and liturgical practices of those who reside within each of the parish boundaries. The gap between representation and an unknowable reality became larger and not smaller (Harley 1989, 2). Between late 2008 and 2010, in my position as researcher for the Irish Bishops' Conference, I struggled to find uses for the boundaries that had been created by Sarhan. Census data could be matched with these newly digitised boundaries such that more accurate population data for each diocese could be derived. In 2009, I was asked to produce a map showing the number of allegations of sexual abuse made against priests of each diocese. This was required for an annual report to be published later that year. When I produced the map with a number assigned to each diocese, the map was dropped from the annual report. I was not party to the decision not to use this map but it perhaps linked the actions of priests too forcefully with the territory of a diocese. It placed the number of allegations on top of a shape recognisable as Galway, Raphoe, Meath etc.

Between 2009 and 2011, there was little or no activity on the digitisation of the parish maps. However, in 2011 the cartographer from UCC's Department of Geography, Mike Murphy, made contact with me. Murphy had found a paper Catholic parish boundary map derived from a project coordinated by Smyth in the 1980s. In summer of 2011, we met with several other parties, including representatives from Ordnance Survey Ireland and the Central Statistics Office

and set about planning a project to digitise the boundaries of the scanned paper map. This second project would use the existing townland boundaries to redistrict the shapes derived from the scanned paper map of the Catholic parishes. The process involves redrawing the boundaries of the 61,104 townlands of the island, dissolving the internal boundaries and incorporating these new shapes into the larger and scanned units, now defined as the Catholic parishes. The diagram below shows a result of this process: the parish of Ballon in the diocese of Kildare & Leighlin with the parish boundary marked in blue. This was a more accurate process of devising the boundaries than had been employed in 2008 where we relied on poorly drawn diocesan map resources of unknown provenance.

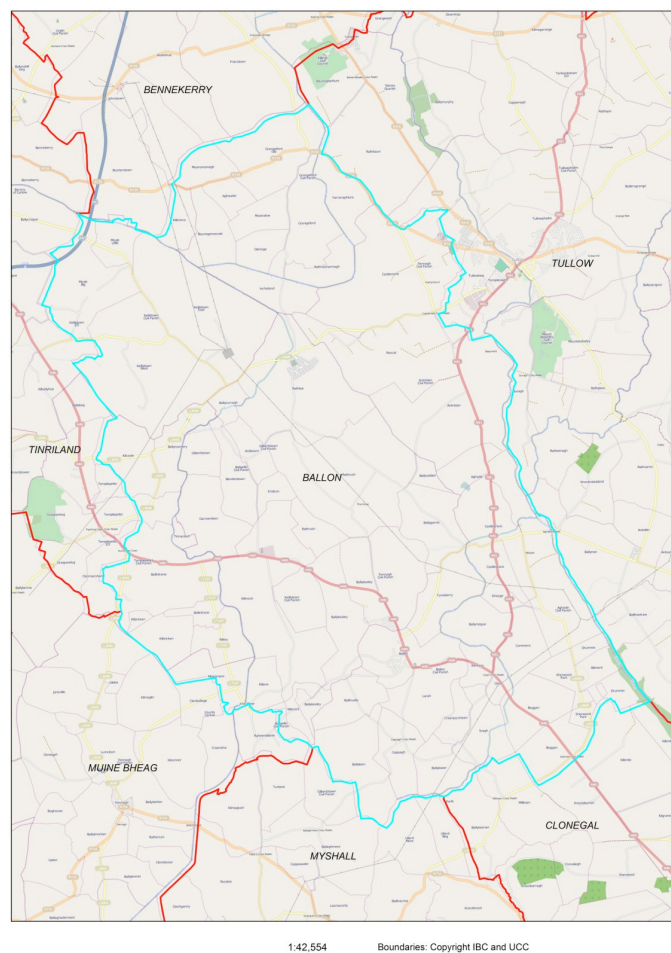


Figure 3: Ballon Catholic parish boundary with the townland boundaries marked in lighter grey. Copyright: OSM contributors.

That this process had not been done up to this point is of interest here. If maps are territorial units of control and attempts to capture the landscape within them, why didn't the dioceses (nor the institutional Church as a whole) place emphasis on knowing where the boundaries begin and end? Murphy in UCC

undertook the painstaking and time-consuming process of the dissolution of the townland boundaries into Catholic parishes during 2011 and 2012. This work is still on-going. The creation of this new digital cartography comes at a time when the institutional power of the Catholic Church is waning and when that power is re-entering an altered public sphere in a new way (Casanova 1994, 51-63). The use of a verified and agreed upon shape for each parish does not hold as much power for an institution like the Church in Ireland as it may have had in the past. While the townlands nest into Catholic parishes, we have no easy way to verify that the drawing of these boundaries is being done in the correct way. What is meant by correct is itself under scrutiny if no digital representation of the parishes had been attempted before. Verification of the boundaries therefore brought up two additional problems. Firstly, the degree of accuracy demanded by a digital map, where lines crossing individual fields and housing estates cannot be confined to existing features on the human landscape, can be difficult to maintain. Secondly, these boundaries are not commonly agreed lines on a map which relate to actually existing features (both human and physical) that are known by those who understand themselves to be part of a parish. Were the lines that UCC was deriving matching with the parishes' understanding of itself as a bounded territorial unit? Could we get the Episcopal authority to agree on boundaries given the limited understanding of where the lines fell on the landscape? At this point in 2013, the project consists of verifying each of the 1,360 territorial units (within 26 larger units) we believe are the parishes with those we believe to be the best authorities on the matter: the Catholic dioceses themselves. The importance of defining parish boundaries also has an uneven geography. At the same time as this set of projects was being coordinated in Maynooth and Cork, the Dublin Archdiocese had a working group on defining its own parish boundaries for the purposes of allocating financial and other resources. The neighbouring diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, where some of the Republic's fastest growing towns are, required a digital map of its parish boundaries as part of its involvement in the State's school divestment programme. However, there is little current diocesan interest in the parish boundaries in Northern Ireland or in the dioceses west of the river Shannon.

Looking for opportunities to make the parish maps relevant to the work of the dioceses is, however, a secondary concern at this stage. As a researcher interested in geography, I have asked in the past why the parish boundaries are not used on a more regular basis by a diocese. At a time when the number of priests is smaller than the number of parishes, and when the financial prospects of individual dioceses is under strain, the parish boundaries could be used as tools of analysis and planning. There has been some developmental and managerial work conducted using the maps. On a limited basis, the parish boundaries are currently being used by *Trócaire* to assist their fundraising strategy. The development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland approaches individual parishes to fundraise. The fundraisers do not wish to enter a parish without the permission of the priest and so they need parish maps to see where the parishes begin and end. They require parish boundary maps to facilitate this work. That the priest in a parish is required to give permission for *Trócaire* to work in the parish is not unusual. Some aspects of my own work, and that of colleagues at the Bishops' Conference, requires an invitation from the priest to work in a parish.

As part of the verification process, I am engaged with a handful of diocesan offices. This work consists of producing and printing an A3 sized map of each parish unit available to them in a printed format. There is something about the printed map of each parish that resonates with a diocese's effort to verify the lines drawn through specific areas.

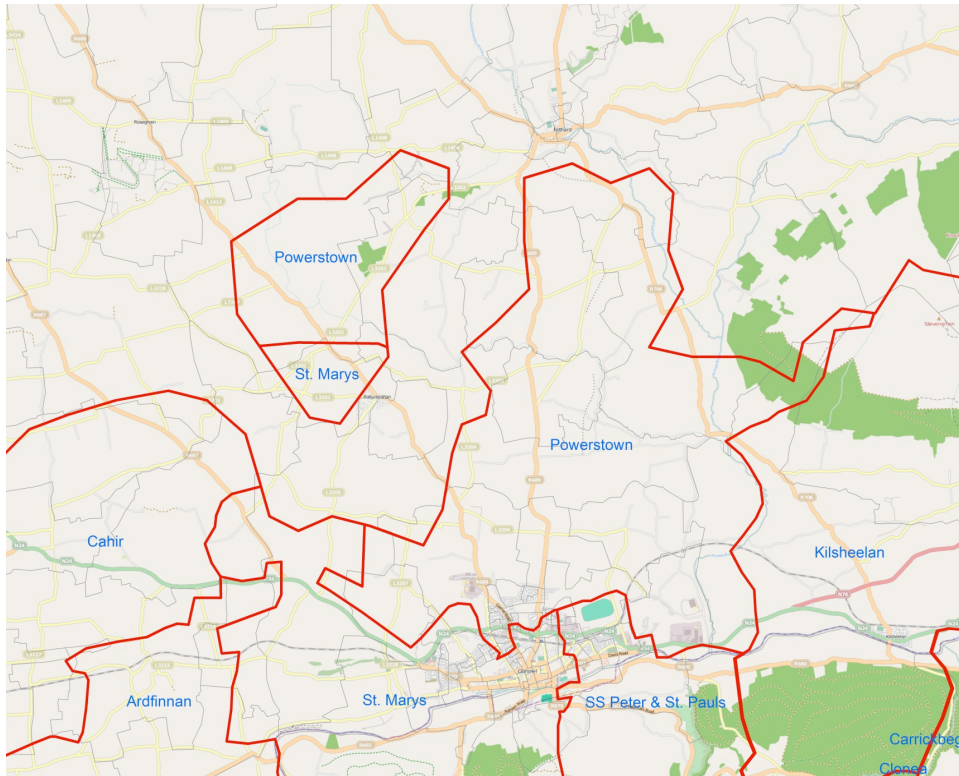


Figure 4: a representation of the Catholic parishes of north Waterford and south Tipperary (including the town of Clonmel) with the Open Street Maps as a background. Copyright: OSM contributors.

This is to provide each diocese with recognisable features against which to verify the lines of the parish boundary. As can be seen from the image above, the unverified parish boundary does not always follow civil and other political boundary markers nor do they always conform to features of the physical landscape. While the boundaries are sometimes old roads, rivers, and mountain ranges, the peculiarities of these bounded spatial units are evident. Like many other spatial units, the fewer people that have historically inhabited an area, the larger and less defined it tends to be. So in sparsely populated areas, parish boundaries are drawn straighter and the units tend to be larger; in densely populated areas they tend toward greater complexity. The parish boundaries are rarely coterminous with the existing spatial units of the Irish state's statistical agency, the CSO. The units do not conform to the lines on maps created by the planning of housing estates in the 1970s or by larger and recent roads. This is largely because the parish boundaries date from about the middle of the 19th century, at a time when the Catholic Church in Ireland was growing in reach. In

providing the A3 maps of each parish to a diocese in the south west of Ireland, I was asked to provide the same maps with the smaller (and older) townland units represented on them as well. This diocese wanted to relate to their own parish boundaries through the use of the townland boundaries. In the course of the verification process with the dioceses, I made an assumption that people within parishes would know their parish boundary when presented with this map. I was wrong to assume this. Underlying the boundary verification work is a historical memory which is subject to the same limitations as all other memory (Rose-Redwood et al. 2008)

There are a number of other questions not being asked by this verification process that could form the core of a further and valuable research project. Why are these units shaped in the way that they are? Why, for example, do some parishes exist as islands in the middle of other dioceses? Why does a particular parish boundary line turn sharply and accommodate this street but not the one adjacent to it?

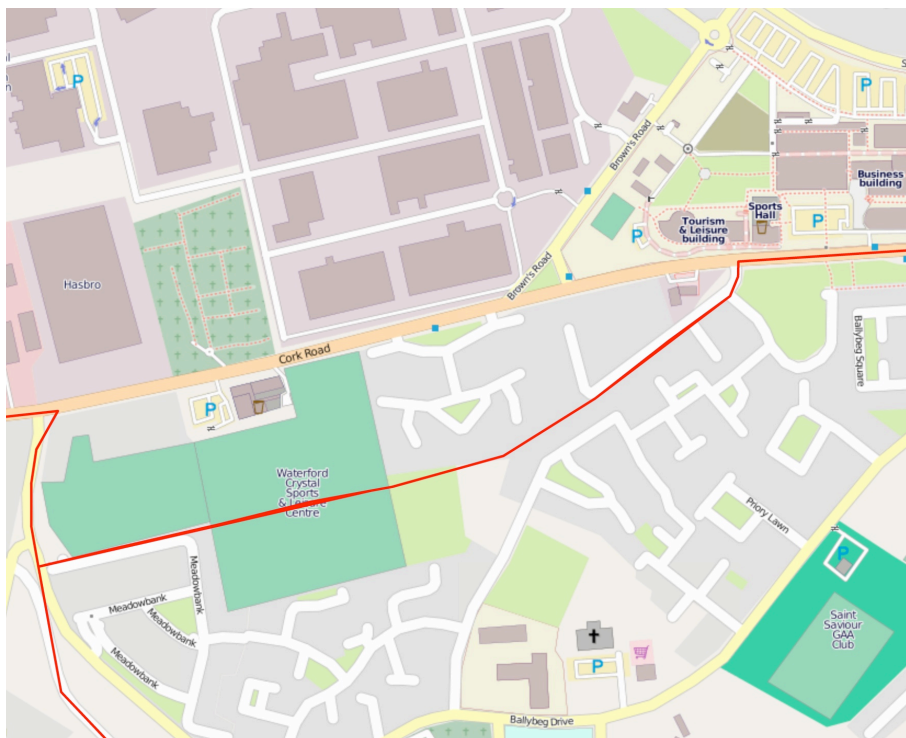


Figure 5: an example of a parish boundary line, red line, cutting existing landscape features. Copyright: OSM contributors.

There are as many stories in response to these questions as there are boundaries and many of these will never be known more widely or written down. They represent local histories and geographies as well as collective representations of memory at various scales (Hoelscher & Alderman 2004, 351-353). The inscriptions on the landscape and how they are territorialized is beyond the scope of what is, in effect, a technical project to map the parish boundaries. What is clear however is that they are not lines on maps, drawn merely for their own sake. The boundaries of parishes and dioceses are ways to concretise the spatial

politics of religious place making and of belonging. They are the outcomes of specific ways of thinking about social life as much as they are ways to run a ruler over a landscape. The boundaries are principally the concern of a biopolitical control, the characteristics of which have changed utterly in recent decades. To this point, I have shown how maps are instruments for the control of territory and how our project has tried to create and use these instruments in various ways. Before discussing the political implications of these maps and asking some further questions, I will illustrate the process of boundary verification with an example.

Verifying the Boundaries of a Parish

In the course of 2012 and 2013, an opportunity arose to verify the Catholic parish boundaries of Waterford city, a small city in the south east of Ireland. The Society of St Vincent de Paul (an anti-poverty organization rooted in the Catholic tradition) wanted a map of the parish boundaries of the city because they wished to understand where the areas of greatest financial need were. An older paper map of the city's parishes was available but it did not conform to the Society's understanding of where the boundaries lay. The paper map was also older than what was available through web-based mapping services. Through the diocesan offices, two members of the Society's city Conference (the local unit of the Society) sought technical advice from me on how best to redraw the city's parish boundaries. To redraw them, I devised a new city parish layer using standard GIS techniques and utilising their existing paper map as a guide. I compiled all eight existing parish boundaries, the outer boundary of which did not conform to the shape abutting the boundaries of the surrounding parishes produced by UCC.



Figure 6: an early draft of the redrawn Catholic parish boundaries of Waterford city. Copyright: OSM contributors.

This was not a particular problem as devising the outer boundary was a part of the project entirely within our control. While Murphy's project in UCC had devised the diocesan parish boundaries, the city's boundaries were not available. I was not aware of the specific geographies of the city and so several of the boundaries had to be changed in conjunction with the two members of the Society with whom I was working. When I brought the drafted boundaries to Waterford for the first time, we first had to adopt a form of self-authorisation to make the required boundary changes. The process of boundary change was being facilitated through the diocese but it became evident that we were devising the new boundaries as they arose. There was no single authority to decide what the boundaries were, other than ourselves, when it came to redrawing the internal or external boundaries.

If the map of the city's parishes represents who lives in the city, it became clear early in the process that some areas were inside the city's boundaries and others could not be. Not only were the outer boundaries of each of the eight parishes altered to take account of what we thought they should be, the boundaries of each parish were altered to accommodate the politics of the Church in Waterford. This is evident from Figure 5 above where the small row of housing south of the Cork road was excluded from an adjacent parish on grounds of social class. The part of the neighbourhood north of the red line was composed mostly of rented public housing and not privately owned units. The members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, aware of these contradictions insisted that the parish boundary cut across the adjacent sports ground. It was reported in the course of the work that a priest would not be pleased to have these public housing units in his parish and so they remained where they were.

In this way, the Catholic parish is made real; it is a reflection of particular power relationships and authorised through the work of the diocese. They are the spatialisation of particular political formations and the basis for associational identity (Dwyer et al. 2013, 9-12).

Over the course of late 2012 and early 2013, the Society of the St Vincent de Paul worked with priests and others in each parish to refine the red lines that I had drawn and we had agreed on as draft. The parish boundaries were refined across three drafts in each of the eight parishes to ensure that it met with local understandings of each area. This may well have been the first time these priests had seen a pictorial or cartographic representation of the parish in which they work. Some of the parish boundaries of the city centre align with the old city walls, only portions of which now remain in physical space and knowledge of which is even more tenuous. The parish boundaries at the city's edge remain largely uncontested and are bound by the river channel and its estuary. At one western parish, a particular portion of housing was again relinquished to the adjacent parish for social class reasons. In April 2013, I presented the bishop with a map of the city parish boundaries and, with the two workers from the Society's Conference, we signed off on 'official' maps. I also provided the Society of St Vincent de Paul with small area Census data in tabular format which are associated with the new parish boundaries. This is done using standard GIS techniques and in conjunction with CSO data and their spatial units. In September 2013, printed copies (on A0) of each of the eight parishes and the city parishes area as a whole were provided to the diocese and another copy for the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The project is now moving on to the remaining diocesan parishes in Waterford and Lismore and the much larger diocese of Kildare & Leighlin.

The Spatial Politics of Mapping Parishes

In this article I have shown how this five year mapping project has moved from responding to a perceived need to digitise the Catholic diocesan boundaries to a highly localised verification of one city's Catholic parish boundaries. In a traditional geographical frame of reference, the project moved from a global scale to the local scale. What began as a technical exercise to gather as much of the diocesan boundaries as we could over a short period has become a project that aids reflection on the nature of these very boundaries and their significance. The project has involved a re-thinking of the Catholic parish, a spatial unit largely unknown cartographically and by no means popularly understood. In this section, I argue that re-thinking the parish cartographically involves a re-territorialisation of the Catholic parish. Parish boundaries on a map are representations of something broadly understood or historically resonant. However, parishes are the grounding of social and political action in the world. Catholics in parishes continue to work without knowledge of where precisely their parish boundaries lie. People congregate at Mass on a Saturday or Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist. They baptise their child in this or that parish because that is where they themselves were baptised. In a broader frame, games of underage hurling and football are played, won and lost without any reference to

specific boundaries on a paper or digital map. In one sense, the drawing of a parish boundary and it becoming more widely known is not a necessity for a parish to continue. In a faith development context, where the Catholic Church works to build up an appreciation of faith and community, the parish is the people within that faith community. It is made up of their practices and their actions in particular spaces, not always bound by a knowledge that implies a cartographic 'this far and no further'. The faith development paradigm implies a more open-ended way of thinking about parish where the stranger is made to feel welcome and live and celebrate alongside other Catholics. In this sense, the parish is used to describe a community of interest rather than a defined territory (Amin 2004). These two ways of thinking about parishes could be theorised using two of Lefebvre's three ways of thinking about how space is produced. In the first kind, representations of space, the formal and technical aspects involved in and the use of paper and digital maps defines how we can think about parishes. They produce mental and material spaces through which we understand the world. In the second way of producing space, spaces of representation, it would be the people who live and experience the parish who recreate the parish and its space (Knott 2005, 26-40). I do not deal substantively with Lefebvre's theoretical position on the production of space in this paper but it may offer a way to understand the formal cartographic representation of the Catholic parish. In particular, his concern with spatial practice allows for another way to think about how rigid conceptions of the religious can be undermined.

While Lefebvre can help to develop a theoretical understanding of the re-territorialisation of the Catholic parish, a more grounded understanding of the Catholic parish is required. How Catholic parishes are territorialised across other parts of the world can provide a basis for this. In the United States, there are a number of ethnic parishes, not always cartographically distinct. They are not characterised by geographic proximity but by a community of ethnicity. There have been a number of studies undertaken within geography which outline the experience of those in ethnicity based parishes in the US and elsewhere (Tillman et al. 1999). In Ireland, however, this form of parish community is not widely established with several dioceses merely identifying a particular location within their boundary where Polish migrants may attend Mass in their first language. A small number of parish churches have been designated as 'Polish churches' to accommodate the practice and spirituality of migrants from Poland who moved to Ireland in larger numbers in the first years of the 21st century. There is a Polish chaplaincy which coordinates the Masses and other liturgical events but it is not identifiable as a distinct parish. There is, however, a longer standing precedent for a non-territorially grounded parish amongst a group who have no formal status within the Irish state as an ethnic minority: the Travelling People. The Travelling People are an ethnic minority within Ireland but with large numbers moving between Ireland and the UK every year. They usually have a nomadic life, often confined by state policy to living in poor housing conditions on roadsides. Some provision is made by the state for accommodation but a central part of a Traveller's life remains the movement between different parts of the islands of Britain and Ireland. The Catholic faith of Travellers is often thought to be more intensely understood than most other Irish people. There is a particular devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, among Traveller women (Taylor 1995).

The parish of the Travelling People which is self-described as a parish that 'stretches across the length and breadth of the Dublin diocese, from Balbriggan to Arklow and over to Athy' (*Parish of the Travelling People* 2012). It is an agency of pastoral care across the territory of the diocese and is a parish consisting of a community across that diocese. Its interests are not confined to the diocese however, having a broad concern for the lives of nomadism within that culture. Experiences of racism and relationships with the settled community (a term used to describe non-Travelling People) are central to its work in a way that Catholic parishes in other parts of Ireland are not. The parish of the Travelling People is connected with the experiences of the community of which it is composed. Its spatial politics is not so concerned with the maintenance of a particular Church building but meeting the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Travelling People. A map of the parish of the Travelling People could be constructed from the diocesan boundary but this would not account for the experience of those it serves. The parish extends beyond a line on a map, delineating the boundaries of the Dublin diocese. This spatialisation of the parish is more frequently to be found in the US and Canada where ethnic parishes are found.

The ways in which the parish is spatialised implies a different set of relations from that implied by a bounded parish. Of course there is an imagined geography of the parish of the Travelling People and there are spaces in which this is embodied. This spatial politics implies cooperation with parishes of settled people in west Dublin. In December 2011, a community garden was opened in south west Dublin to symbolise the 'the communities [sic] self help and volunteering spirit' (*Parish of the Travelling People* 2012). The cooperation is embodied through joint Masses and pilgrimages abroad with settled people. The newsletters show the different requirements necessary for birth, death and marriage in Ireland and the UK and how these can be fulfilled. Travellers are also asked to aid in opposition to cuts in educational provision announced under the Irish government's programme of austerity. The work of the parish of the Travelling People through the diocese of Dublin extends beyond the diocesan boundaries because it involves working with people who travel outside of it. Priests of the dioceses travel to others parts of Ireland and the UK to serve the pastoral needs of the Travelling People.

Conclusion

While the parish of the Travelling People is spatialised where Travellers are, other parishes are grounded on the basis of a defined territory. As stated above, this territory is not always delineated on a map or popularly understood. The services of both these kinds of parishes are spatialised in different ways: one is understood as fixed in place while the other is understood as meeting the needs of where Travellers are. This prompts two further questions about the spatialisation of regular Catholic parishes. If each part of the island is covered by a parish, where is there left to evangelise, a central part of being a Christian according to Church teaching? The entire island is marked by Catholic parishes bounded by specific territory. This implies an imperial understanding of

biopolitical control of those within each of these 1,360 parish units. These diagrams of control, spatialised as such for the Church, are understood in terms of a stadial control of the diocese. They always extend from the boundary with one diocese to the coast or from one boundary to the next. For the institution of the Catholic Church in Ireland, where are the places left to evangelise in Ireland? Bringing the word of God to those who have yet to hear it seems redundant in a spatial politics within which every kilometre is within a parish. I am proposing here that the 19th century development of an imperial Church, one in which all of the island of Ireland is colonised by a stadial understanding of territory, has meant that the Catholic Church in Ireland lost an important part of its mission. The parish as a spatial unit provided the basis for a diagram of biopolitical control. This diagram provided a basis to a routinised practice, one that was about maintenance of territory. With each parish abutting another, there was nowhere for the Catholic parish to go but to turn in on its own maintenance as a source of its own power. As I have shown above, there is a possibility for other ways to think about the mission of the Church in Ireland through a re-territorialised church. In the parish of the Travelling People, we see a way of thinking about mission and pastoral care that places people, not the control of buildings, at its centre. In this way, there are yet more places for that parish to develop. The product of an imperial model of Catholic Church, coterminous with the boundaries of the island, is a model of parish that doesn't see the need to develop and enrich the faith of its people. As I have demonstrated above, the mapping of these parishes may well reinforce this sense that dioceses have control of a territory. Any ceding of this control, moral, cultural or political, feeds into a defensiveness which makes the red lines more important than an open-ended Christian understanding of community.

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