

Institution: Queen's University Belfast		
Unit of Assessment: 20		
Title of case study: 'Avoiding a hard border': Multi-level impact on the management of Brexit for Northern Ireland		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2013- December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): 1) Katy Hayward 2) Milena Komarova	Role(s) (e.g. job title): 1) Professor of Political Sociology 2) Post-Doctoral Research Fellow	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1) 1 June 2003- 31 Sept 2005; 1 Oct 2007 - present 2) Nov 2007- May 2016; Jan-May 2017; June 2019 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: October 2016 - December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>'Avoiding a hard border on the island of Ireland' was one of the top three priorities in the UK-EU negotiations (2017-2020) and central to their most complex deliberations, but it was highly contentious and little understood. UK and EU policymakers, diplomats and negotiators used Katy Hayward's research to shape their understanding of, and approach to, the problem. Hayward's work also benefited a wide range of stakeholders, including those in private, public and local community sectors most directly affected, and helped equip them to meet the challenge. Overall, Hayward has made an essential contribution to managing the impact of UK withdrawal from the EU on this fragile region.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Hayward's research on the impact of European integration on the island of Ireland has long-evidenced the connection between cross-border cooperation and peace-building. This came into its own following the 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which would see Northern Ireland bordered by the EU's external border (between Ireland/UK) and a new customs/regulatory border (between Northern Ireland [NI] and Great Britain). There are four elements to Hayward's work that underpins the impact her research has had since the referendum.</p> <p>First, Hayward was a partner in the Borders In Globalization project funded by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, with 54 partner organizations across 11 countries [2013-2020; PI Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, University of Victoria, British Columbia]. The project sought to inform border policy around the world through a global network of expertise on country case studies. Hayward was Lead on the Ireland/Northern Ireland case study. Informed in part by her work on European Cross-Border Cooperation Policy, [1] Hayward organised knowledge-transfer workshops for some 60 cross-sectoral public, private and community stakeholders in 2016. This formed the basis for a policy and practitioner network that Hayward would continue to draw upon. It also informed single- and jointly-authored articles by Hayward and Komarova on Brexit and the Irish border. [2, 3] In early 2017, the Irish Central Border Area Network of local authorities commissioned Hayward to carry out three 'rounds' of research and reports on the impact of Brexit in the border region. [4, 5, 6] In total, the research consisted of 3 online surveys (which generated c.1400 responses from across the central border region) and 15 focus groups of over 100 participants altogether. The findings of these reports were unique in being substantial, 'up to date', cross-border, and cross-community qualitative studies on the potential effects of Brexit in the border region of Ireland/Northern Ireland. They showed the connection between the open border and the peace process and the negative impact that even the mere anticipation of the UK's withdrawal from the EU was having on cross-border cooperation and movement.</p>		

Working with economist Eoin Magennis [InterTrade Ireland, and later Ulster University], Hayward conducted research in 2012-13 on the all-island business community using interview and ‘witness seminar’ data, as well as statistical data on trade flows. [7] This research showed the importance of the 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement for creating the conditions in which businesses on both sides of the border began to make the most of EU single market membership in developing the all-island economy. Overall, it showed how sensitive cross-border business and trade is to political and societal conditions.

Finally, after the negotiation of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement that contained the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, Hayward’s interdisciplinary expertise was applied to analysing the potential change for Northern Ireland and its borders (including the Irish Sea border). Her work on the implications of the Protocol and the future UK-EU deal built upon her expertise in border studies and in the 1998 Agreement. This included research commissioned by the Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland) and reported in May 2020. Hayward was the Principal Investigator and lead author (co-investigators and co-authors were David Phinnemore and Milena Komarova, both QUB) on this research. The research comprised case studies of comparator non-EU regions plus two rounds of workshops with 100 stakeholders from across public, private and community sectors in Northern Ireland and resulted in 80 policy recommendations. [8]

3. References to the research

1. Harguindéguy, J-B., & Hayward, K. (2014) The institutionalisation of the European Internal Cross-Border Co-operation Policy: A first appraisal. *European Planning Studies*, 22(1), 184-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.741571>
2. Hayward, K. (2018) The pivotal position of the Irish border in the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, *Space and Polity*, 22:2, 238-254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2018.1505491>
3. Komarova, M. & Hayward, K. (2019) The Irish Border as a European Union Frontier: The Implications for Managing Mobility and Conflict, *Geopolitics*, 24:3, 541-564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1496910>
4. Hayward, K. (2017) *Bordering on Brexit: Views from local communities in the central border region of Ireland/Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Queen’s University Belfast [QUB]/Irish Central Border Area Network [ICBAN].
5. Hayward, K. (2018) *Brexit at the Border: Voices from local communities in the central border region of Ireland/Northern Ireland*. Belfast: QUB/ICBAN.
6. Hayward, K. & Komarova, M. (2019) *The Border Into Brexit: Perspectives from Local Communities in the central border region of Ireland/Northern Ireland*. Belfast: QUB/ICBAN
7. Hayward, K. and Magennis, E. (2014) ‘The Business of Building Peace: Private sector cooperation across the Irish border’, *Irish Political Studies*, 29 (1), 154-175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2013.875896>
8. Hayward, K., Phinnemore, D. and Komarova, M. (2020) *Anticipating and meeting new multilevel governance challenges in Northern Ireland after Brexit*. London: UK in a Changing Europe.

4. Details of the impact

When setting their objectives for the first phase of the withdrawal negotiations, the UK and EU agreed that one of their top three priorities was to ‘avoid a hard border’ on the island of Ireland. [1] Katy Hayward brought research expertise and evidence to what became the most high-profile and sensitive topic in the reformulation of the UK-EU relationship in the period 2016-20. The subject is intrinsically international, as well as of major national significance and local consequence. It is therefore appropriate that the impact of Hayward’s work has been transnational, cross-sectoral and multi-level. It has taken four main forms: informing, shaping, benefiting, illuminating. Overall, Hayward has equipped policymakers and stakeholders to better understand and manage the consequences of Brexit for Northern Ireland (NI).

1) *Informing all sides of the international negotiations*

A lead official in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and later the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) describes Hayward as “highly regarded” as an “authoritative voice” by UK government officials. [2] She has given invited talks to UK officials at critical moments in the UK-EU negotiations (including a masterclass at the Foreign Commonwealth Office, 15 Jan 2019, and to over 120 BEIS officials, 2 July 2019). [2] Since mid-2019 she has held frequent confidential meetings to advise and liaise with senior officials in UK Government and Northern Ireland departments tasked with managing Brexit for NI. [2]

Hayward’s research informed the briefings and recommendations regarding the Irish border provided internally to the UK government throughout the Brexit negotiations. The Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Dublin testifies her reports on the central border region “provided very useful, fact-based evidence to support the analysis and advice of officials”. [2]

Hayward was one of only three academics appointed to the UK Government’s 15-member Technical Expert panel on the Advisory Group on Alternative Arrangements in June 2019. In his letter of invitation to Hayward to join the Group, Secretary of State for Exiting the EU and Chief Negotiator for the UK, Stephen Barclay, stated that the Government would engage with the group to develop “the UK’s understanding of alternative arrangements to inform negotiations with the EU” and confirmed that members had been “chosen on the basis of their expertise and experience”. [3] Secretary of State Barclay attended all meetings of the Advisory Group and was the lead UK minister for the renegotiation of the backstop with the EU in 2019.

Hayward’s work was also drawn upon by EU negotiators and EU26 leaders. In his public lecture at Queen’s University on 27 January 2020, which was livestreamed and received international media attention, the EU’s Chief Negotiator for the UK/EU withdrawal and future relationship negotiations, Michel Barnier, remarked: “On Brexit, researchers such as Dr Katy Hayward and Professor David Phinnemore have made an important contribution to the debate, in Northern Ireland, in Westminster, and beyond. Thanks to you, Northern Ireland’s unique political, social and economic reality is understood more broadly.” [4]

The Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU during the Brexit negotiations confirms that Barnier’s EU negotiating team “spoke to me on a number of occasions about the value and importance they attached to [Hayward’s] work”. [5] He states that he “found Katy Hayward’s informed, sophisticated, sensitive, and logically and factually rigorous research work on the Brexit process to be of great value to me and my team in Brussels, to my colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, and to the European Commission” and that it “filled a crucial gap”. [5]

Hayward was one of 15 individuals, and the only academic, invited by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to a private audience with Chancellor Angela Merkel on her visit to Ireland in April 2019, to brief her on the Irish border and the effects of Brexit on local border communities. The discussion and contents of that meeting are confidential but in the press conference afterwards, Merkel stated that “the EU will do everything it can to avoid a hard border”. [6]

Hayward’s research also informed the interventions made on the topic of Brexit and the Irish border by influential actors in the United States. The Ad Hoc Committee for the Protection of the Good Friday Agreement is a bipartisan group of over 50 leaders, advisors, experts and diplomats (including two former US Senators, five former US Ambassadors, and leaders of prominent Irish American organisations). It holds frequent meetings with the highest levels of government. It is co-chaired by Democrat and Republican former congressmen who testify:

“Hayward’s research has proven to be a trustworthy, rigorous and an independent source of information that we have used as we have developed our policies and engaged with senior [US] government officials... [Her] presentations and briefings became a unique opportunity to keep all Ad Hoc members keep up to date as the Brexit negotiations unfolded as we engaged leading political actors in the USA, the UK and Ireland.” [7]

2) *Shaping legislation for post-Brexit Northern Ireland*

Between October 2016 and December 2020, Hayward presented oral evidence to parliamentary committees on over twenty occasions, and has presented written evidence to committee inquiries in both chambers in of the UK Parliament, the NI Assembly, the Scottish Parliament, the Oireachtas, the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, and the European Parliament Committee on Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs. Her evidence has been cited in nine reports made by Westminster committees, including in their recommendations. [8] For example, she gave oral and written evidence to the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee inquiry on the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. [8] Hayward was cited ten times in the subsequent report (published 16 March 2018). Her explanation of the increased cost and complexity of doing business across the post-Brexit UK/EU border due to tariff and regulatory divergence was reflected in the report’s conclusions and recommendations. In its response (15 June 2018), the UK government stated it wanted ‘as frictionless trade as possible in goods’ with the EU and sought to avoid a hard border. [8]

Hayward was also the only academic cited in the House of Lords European Select Committee inquiry report on Brexit negotiations and the Protocol (published 25 March 2019). [8] The report’s conclusion repeated her suggestion about the governance of the Joint Consultative Working Group for the Protocol. [8] Hayward has also been cited in oral contributions to Parliamentary debates in Dáil Éireann, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. [8] Hayward’s briefings informed amendments tabled to the UK Withdrawal Act, the Withdrawal Agreement Act, the Trade Bill and the UK Internal Market Bill in the UK Parliament. [9, 10] A former Secretary of State to Northern Ireland credits Hayward’s expertise “including her timely research in the central border region” as providing “a fount of evidence to inform my contribution to the debates.” [9] For example, “Her collaborative work with business leaders in Northern Ireland drove the tabling of key amendments in the Lords to the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.” [9] These particular amendments on ‘unfettered access’ between NI and GB appeared in the names of Lord Peter Hain (Labour), Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (cross-bench, former [nationalist] SDLP), the noble and right reverend Lord [former Archbishop] Robin Eames, and Lord Reg Empey (Ulster Unionist Party), with the support of the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin and the Alliance Party – a rare example of cross-party collaboration from Northern Ireland. [10] An amendment tabled by Lord Hain on the Trade Bill that was informed by Hayward’s expertise passed the House of Lords on 6 January 2021. [9]

3) *Benefiting a wide range of stakeholders*

Providing detailed information, explanation and analysis of Brexit, Hayward’s work has enabled stakeholders to know what to expect after the end of the transition period and to be better prepared for it. The NI Business Brexit Working Group is a group of 14 business bodies and representative groups, covering thousands of businesses in Northern Ireland across all sectors. It testifies that the papers she has collaborated with them on:

“have had a major influence and direct impact on shaping the response and asks of Northern Ireland Business, the operation of the internal market and the engagement with UK Government and the EU. She has given the business sector confidence to speak out with the knowledge that our papers are based on the solid foundation of academic research. Her academic analysis has proven useful in helping us as a group compile complex arguments and information, as well as explain it to a public audience.” [11]

Her reports for the Irish Central Border Area Network, its CEO testifies, “have been reviewed by those involved in Brexit negotiations at the highest levels of the EU and in the governments of Ireland, UK and N. Ireland.” It notes its appreciation “that it has been the very good standing of Prof. Hayward and her command of the subject that has enabled the voices of citizens and workers in our region to be heard at these levels.” [12] This research “also provided an invaluable evidence base to inform the development of our new strategy for the Central Border Region”, proving an impact that goes beyond the immediate event of Brexit. [12]

4) *Illuminating the subject for the wider public, through global and social media*

In the period October 2016 - December 2020, Hayward was featured in over 1300 news and current affairs articles, items and programmes across 36 different countries. [13] She was awarded Political Communicator of the Year (2019) by the UK Political Studies Association and a special Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize (2020) for her media/social media contributions on Brexit. [13] David Allen Green (*Financial Times*) described Hayward’s Twitter account as “A perfect example of sheer expertise laid out practically and informatively for lay people”. [13] Hayward uses social media to communicate insights and explanations based on her research expertise. Her Brexit analysis has been publicly endorsed by diplomats on both sides. [14] Her 25,000 Twitter followers include politicians and diplomats key to the Brexit negotiations, including Donald Tusk, then-President of the European Council, and Lord David Frost, chief UK negotiator on the UK-EU future relationship and Joint Committee co-chair. [14] Her Twitter threads on Brexit have often reached hundreds of thousands of people; and her tweets in the critical last 3 months of the transition period were seen a total of over 3.8 million times. [14]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. See impact evidence document 1: Negotiating priorities of the UK Government and European Union Council re: the Ireland/Northern Ireland border.
2. See impact evidence document 2: (a) Testimonial from the deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, IRL (23 Feb 2021); (b) BEIS invitation/thanks (Mar/Jul 2019); (c) Corroborator.
3. See impact evidence document 3: Letter of invitation from the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU to join the technical experts’ panel of Advisory Group on Alternative Arrangements.
4. [Speech by EU Chief Negotiator](#) Michel Barnier at the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute, Queen’s University Belfast, 27 January 2020.
5. See impact evidence document 5: Testimonial from the Irish Permanent Representative to the EU (2013-2020) (14 January 2020).
6. Quoted in [RTÉ news report](#), 4 April 2019. It also states: ‘Earlier, the two leaders took part in a round-table discussion with 15 people from Northern Ireland and the border area.’
7. See impact evidence document 7: Testimonial from the co-chairs for the Ad Hoc Committee for the Protection of the Good Friday Agreement (USA) (15 January 2021).
8. See impact evidence document 8: Citations of Hayward’s research and evidence in Parliamentary committee reports and debates.
9. See impact evidence document 9: Testimonial from former Secretary of State for NI (17 January 2020). He is willing to corroborate all these statements.
10. EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill, [Amendments to be moved in the House of Lords](#) (No. 13, 14, 16, 17 and 20), 10 January 2020.
11. See impact evidence document 11: Testimonial from the NI Business Brexit Working Group (14 January 2021).
12. See impact evidence document 12: Testimonial from the Irish Central Border Area Network of local authorities from both sides of the Irish border (14 January 2021).
13. See impact evidence document 13: (a) Brexit-related Media Coverage; (b) Awards for Public Communication; (c) Endorsements from Journalists.
14. See impact evidence document 14: (a) Twitter Analytics (Oct-Dec 2020); (b) Reach of Twitter Threads; (c) Endorsements from Politicians/Diplomats key to UK-EU negotiations.