

Sectarianism and Social Capital:

Community Development in Northern Ireland

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Introduction

Sitting on the bus going to Belfast to begin my ISP, I was so nervous that I couldn't read, I couldn't sleep, and even my apple and honey was unappealing. I had turned in a project proposal to Aeveen, in fact, over the past week I had turned in several proposals to her, but I was still not satisfied. I knew that I wanted to focus on the economy, preferably the social economy of Belfast; however I had no idea which angle I wanted to pursue. Economic regeneration and social development has always fascinated me. Is economic regeneration and development a worthwhile tactic to pursue in a peace process? Will the reduction of unemployment and a growth in education performance lessen identity and religious tensions? Is dealing first with community development and second with community relations an effective way to go about conflict transformation?

When I visited Northern Ireland the first time, the election campaign was on everyone's minds. As we drove into South Armagh the first thing that really struck me about the election posters were the numerous references to water charges. I was really confused because I had thought that the real issue was constitutional, not economic. When I looked further I was even more confused because every single party opposed the water charges. How is this issue an actual election issue if everyone agrees?

After my initial shock, I realized that this was a tax which came from Westminster to help alleviate the amount of money that British Exchequer apportions to Northern Ireland for the maintenance of their economy. Not only that, but every single community development group we spoke with emphasized the public spending and the lack of a distinct private sector economy. I was intrigued by the enormous public sector economy that the UK had been nursing in Northern Ireland for almost three decades. This really peaked my interest, especially since the USA has an extremely large private sector economy and a relatively small public sector. I wanted to know how much of Northern Ireland's economy was wrapped up in the public sector, if that would change with the reinstatement of the Northern Ireland Assembly, what the United Kingdom was going to do to alleviate the burden on their exchequer, and how that

would affect the people of Northern Ireland. However I really didn't know how to go about this in only three weeks, because this was something that you would need to study over a long time period.

My first thought was to focus specifically on the Ardoyne neighborhood in North Belfast and discuss the economy in that region tying it back to the bigger economic realities facing Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole. I wanted to see if the public sector would stand up to the peace process. However as time progressed and I had still not made any contacts, I realized that there was something about this topic that didn't ring with me. I simply could not see myself spending one month looking at this one particular region; I wanted to look at the big picture. Not to mention, I simply didn't have enough time to look at the topic in depth.

My second thought was that I didn't actually want to focus on a particular region, but I would rather tackle the entire six counties in one go. I knew this was possible, but it simply wouldn't be as focused or narrow, and would quite possibly be so vague as to be useless for any practical purposes. However I was determined and began looking at all of the reports I could find from the Department of Finance, the Department of Social Development, the Northern Ireland Economic Council, and the Northern Ireland Economic Research Center. I gathered so many written resources on the topic, but still something was bothering me about the project. I personally, appreciated the fact that I was now doing a macro project rather than a micro project, but I knew that this was supposed to be a field study project. I might have been able to pull this project off, but it simply wouldn't have done my resources justice. Here I was in Belfast, able to talk to everyone and anyone about everything, and all I had to do to complete this research was to get reports of the internet.

Finally, after a meeting with my advisor, I settled on my topic. I had been unable to read the Northern newspapers while I was in Castlebar and was thus unacquainted with the fact that the Ulster Political Research Group was going to be receiving £1.2 million for community development. As soon as she told me about this, I knew it was the topic I really wanted to

investigate. It covered so many issues I had been questioning such as issues of maintaining and sustaining a divide between Catholic and Protestant communities, possibilities of paramilitary decommissioning, and conflict transformation through economic regeneration. However it was this last topic which really intrigued me, so I tried to incorporate it as much as possible. I quickly ran across the debate about a community development disparity between Catholics and Protestants. This fit so well with my topic, it was easily incorporated into my project. Finally the theoretical overview through which I studied my topic was social capital and the debate surrounding the viability of social ties helping create a stronger economy.

When I told Patricia I had decided to pursue the £1.2 million issue and the community development debate, I didn't realize how current my topic actually was. At first, I thought I knew the types of theoretical questions I would be looking at, but I soon got a real wake up call. Concepts including social capital, community need, inclusion and exclusion (both voluntary and involuntary), funding paramilitaries to change, conflict transformation through social development, and how to appropriately do quantitative measurement on all of these topics all began to crowd my head as I searched for a focus. My first interview served to help focus my project, not only on the UPRG funding, but on a current debate within the field of community developers. I found, by talking with Jackie Hewitt at Farset, that there was a huge debate about the suitability, not of giving funds to a known paramilitary, but of giving funds only to the Protestant community.

There is a prevailing belief within the majority of the community sector and indeed, amongst many politicians and policy makers that there is a gap between Catholic and Protestant community development. However it is also argued that the Catholic community has more calculated social need than the Protestant community. It was not my desire, nor within my ability with my limited time frame to measure the capacities of the two communities and determine if there is presently a gap, but simply to look at the reasons put forth by community developers, politicians, and academics for the reason this gap exists. This could be seen as a

indirect approach to the question, because how can you try and determine the reasons a thing exists without actually proving that it does in fact exist. However, sometimes the prevailing attitude is just as important and has more influence on the actions of the people involved, than the truth does. Thus, what follows is both a look at the debate on the UPRG funding and a survey of the reasons put forth for a disparity between Catholic and Protestant community development. First, though, it is important to assess which factors affect community development and specifically how they affect Northern Ireland's policy towards community development.

Methodology

The moment my project changed from the very macro level of looking at the viability of Northern Ireland's economy as a whole to the more micro topic of the social capacity of the two different communities, my entire list of contacts changed. I was positive there would be a lot of information on my topic and that the sources for this information would be varied enough including community activists, grant makers, academic theorists, newspaper articles, paramilitaries and politicians. I was less concerned about interviewing the politicians than I was about the people on the ground because they were one step further removed from the debate, but I still felt they would have an interesting viewpoint on the issue.

However, when I started my project I was more focused on the issue of the UPRG receiving £1.2 million. This being the case I started out by going to the Linen Hall Library and looking up all of the newspaper clippings on the topic, to acquaint myself with the well known facts. This led me to understand that the UPRG grant was going to be managed through Farset International, the very same hostel and community organization fellow students inhabited during the first three days of the project. I decided that my first step to understanding what was really going to happen with the money was to talk with the director of Farset, Jackie Hewitt. He then recommended several people to talk with.

Looking at news articles also helped me pinpoint the views of the various political parties on the grant. I quickly realized that the Social Democratic Labor Party was very outspoken on the issue, and decided to speak with one of the more outspoken members of the party, MLA Alban Maginness of North Belfast. I wanted to speak with a Sinn Féin MLA and picked Francie Molloy, for his reputation of speaking only the party line, which seemed useful because I didn't have time to survey all of the Sinn Féin politicians. Unfortunately he was so busy getting ready for the Assembly, he didn't have time to meet with me.

The most interesting angle and the one I wished to pursue though was the community developer's opinions, both on the £1.2 million issue and the perceived disparity of funding issue.

I spent the most time speaking with these people, although I only had four formal interviews. To this end, I spoke with Mabel Doole with the Community Dialogue Project, an organization focused on bridging the two communities, Sinead O'Regan with the Job Assist in Upper Springfield, a Catholic organization trying to reduce unemployment, and Jackie Hewitt, with Farset, who has been working on Protestant community development since the early 1970's. I also contacted Monina O'Prey who has worked as a policy researcher for Community Foundation Northern Ireland, one of the major local grant makers in Northern Ireland, since 1996 and was instrumental in reviewing government policy on areas of social need.

The hardest person to contact, the man who would have been invaluable to my research, was the UPRG spokesman, Frankie Gallagher. I immediately started trying to find inroads to speak with him and ended up at the John McMichael center on Sandy Row. At this center I spoke with Pastor Paul Burns in an extremely informal interview, and also found out how to contact Frankie. I called his office in East Belfast that same day and learned that he was going to be in Mexico until Wednesday, just two days before I left Belfast. I called three more times, and never managed to catch Frankie, but will simply have to settle for quotes from the newspapers.

The only angle I felt was missing in my paper was the academic one, and for this my advisor recommended Dr. Peter Shirlow of Queens University. I spoke with him, and he gave me a rather cynical, yet extremely useful view of community development and the debate between the two communities. I also looked at academic articles on the merits of community development, to further my academic viewpoint. My last interview was completely unplanned but still very useful. I was walking around the Village neighborhood in Southwest Belfast with another student and found a housing protest in progress. We were approached by several of the community leaders of the area including the PUP Regeneration Officer and ex-UUVF political prisoner Jim McKinley. He invited me down to his office for a brief meeting and gave me an invaluable two hours of his time where we discussed community development in depth.

Throughout my interview process, I never used a tape recorder. This did have some drawbacks such as missing vital information and not being able to recreate the tone of voice of my interviewee. However I really did like just using my notepad. I felt more comfortable speaking with people like Jim McKinley who was constantly asking for things to be off the record. I also felt it made me more accessible to the people I was interviewing. If I did the project again I would have used a tape recorder, even though that might seem a bit too formal. Going back over my notes on my interviews, I found that the written words lacked the characters of the people I interviewed. The personality of those I interviewed was such a part of the actual interview; I was distinctly handicapped trying to put their words on paper with any sort of accuracy.

Being a female also impacted my interviews. When I was interviewing men, it made me more able to flatter them into giving me information and after a few persistent questions they realized that I wanted all the information so they stopped self-censoring. With the women, it allowed me to see eye-to-eye on a level, men simply wouldn't be able to reach. However the most important factor I found was my history of community activism in my hometown. I could relate to what they were doing and had encountered the same problems doing my own work including publicity and funding. It made it much easier to relate both to my topic and to my interviewees on a professional level.

I felt that I had an overwhelming amount of information on my topic. Between the newspaper articles and editorials I began with, the Farset Think Tank pamphlets and the Community Transition Initiative pamphlets which gave me the opinions of many different community activists and paramilitaries, academic articles and books on social capital and development, and the material from the different community organizations, I was covered in all aspects. I made sure to read books in social capital like Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* and David Halpern's *Social Capital*. The book I found the most helpful in understanding the case in Northern Ireland was Cochrane and Dunn's work, *People Power?*

The micro topic I focused on, giving the UPRG £1.2 million, is absolutely of the minute in Northern Ireland encompassing themes of decommissioning, conflict transformation, development and identity. The meso-topic which stemmed from that, the community development disparity debate, impacts every single person living in Northern Ireland. Although I primarily focused on Catholic and Protestant working class communities in Belfast, it affects people living in rural locations, people living in towns, middle class people, people living in mixed areas; simply everyone. I soon discovered that the macro topic of social capital is also a raging debate among academics and, although not real or ground-level, is important in that it affects policy decisions made by grant making organizations and governments.

This paper begins with an overview of Social Capital and its basic principles. It goes on to discuss how social capital as a theory is used and affects people in Northern Ireland. I then discuss one current instance of community development, the UPRG funding, and introduce the ongoing debate around these funds. I then tie this debate into the wider debate about the disparity in community development and the reasons given for this disparity. This is meant to be a survey of attitudes and opinions of those people working on the ground in Northern Ireland every day. It is not intended to be a conclusive study on whether or not an actual disparity exists. This paper finds that the overwhelming and most reasonable explanations for the gap can be found in the history of Northern Ireland.

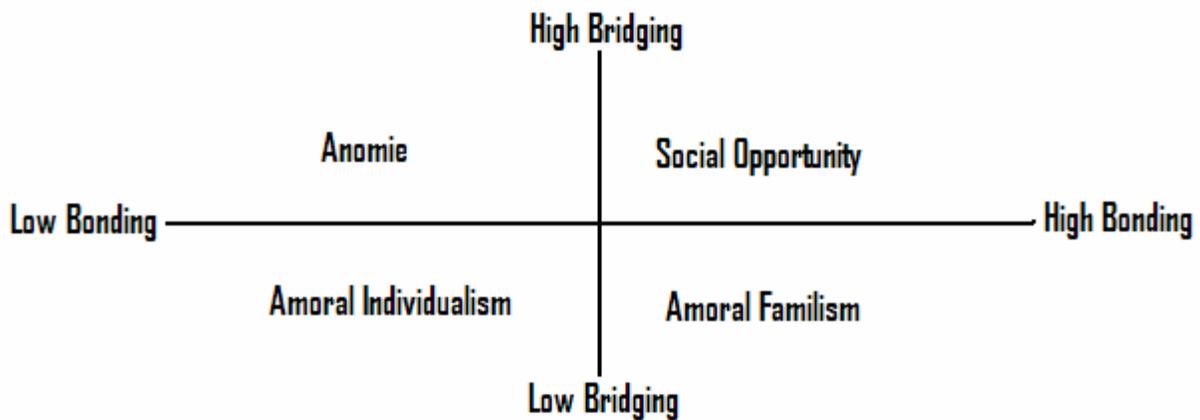
Theoretical Overview: Social Capital

Social capital is a concept which has “been independently invented at least six times in the twentieth century” (19) according to Robert Putnam, the Harvard professor who brought the concept into the mainstream vocabulary of social developers, critics, and policy makers alike. However, it is rarely defined, and if it is, the definition is rarely agreed upon. It can be broadly defined as the “everyday networks including many of the social customs and bonds that define them and keep them together” (Halpern, 2). It is these networks that social scientists believe influence and increase community building capacity.

Social capital is credited as the key concept to building and sustaining community development. It is “valued for its potential to facilitate individual and community action, especially through the solution of collective action problems” (Halpern, 4). There are three main aspects of social capital: a network, such as a neighborhood; a cluster of norms, ethics and experiences common to the group members; and sanctions - punishments and rewards - which help to maintain the first two aspects. It is these three components which help maintain the cohesiveness of the group and allow it to grow into a stronger entity.

There are also two major types of social capital: bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding capital can be defined as “the type that brings closer together people who already know each other,” while “Bridging capital is the type that brings together people or groups who previously did not know each other” (Gittel and Vidal, 15). Sociologists immediately picked up on these two terms but Putnam issues the caveat to this separation that bonding and bridging capital are rarely split into either/or categories (23). Instead they work together simultaneously to create a bigger broader social network for all involved in the group.

David Halpern created a model for the different combinations of bridging and bonding capital which occurs in various different cases.



Halpern, 21

These four categories are not black and white; a group can function anywhere along the continuum. Halpern describes anomie as the effect of recent modernization and urbanization or of the outbreak of conflict, amoral individualism as isolated self-interested individuals, amoral familism as closed communities or families, and social opportunity as mature and industrialized nations (21). Thus, if a community is in a period of high bridging and high bonding, social capital is being used to good effect. However if a society is experiencing either low bridging, low bonding, or both it can create an affect which is detrimental to part of the society, excluding individuals and groups from participating in society.

However social capital has Tajfel's in-group and out-group theory worked implicitly into it. The dichotomy of the in-group and out-group can produce problems when attempting to build a social development structure, for the purpose of bettering community relations, in a region tormented by sectarian tensions. Dr. Peter Shirlow pointed out this issue bluntly, "Bonding social capital is by nature sectarian" (Interview #6). By bonding closely with one group, an in-group is created but so is an out-group. Although this critical position is technically true, it doesn't negate the value of bonding within a community.

However social capital is just a theory and as such has several flaws when applied to reality, especially reality in Northern Ireland where sectarian politics have permeated normal society. Bonding social capital is already a large part of the problem in Northern Ireland, with

the Catholics and the Protestants so deeply identifying themselves by their religion and culture. This sectarianism has great affect on the community development in the region. Recently, community development in Northern Ireland has been given a unique place in politics: “voluntary and community organizations are now seen as the standard bearers of participative democracy and are recognized as such even when Northern Ireland was ruled directly from London” (Shortall, 4) These organizations have increasing merit with every aspect of the government: “local development is emerging as a powerful catalyst for change in a deeply divided society through its capacity to nurture a new style of governance which links representative and participatory democracy” (NIEC, 2).

Recently the government made the decision to give funding to the political wing of the Ulster Defense Association for community development purposes. The money was given to help the UDA lead their supporters away from violence and into a community strengthening role. A debate arose around this funding about the propriety of funding a known paramilitary organization to transform itself into a community group and to decommission its weapons. A second debate arose around the issue of funding dispersal and the possible existence of a community development gap between the Catholic and Protestant communities. This paper will first discuss the opinions surrounding the funding of the Ulster Political Research Group and then follow with the related debate on community development disparity.

**The Micro Issue:
£1.2 Million goes to the UPRG**

In late March 2007, the headlines cried out that the British government was going to fund a scheme developed by the UPRG. Headlines like “£1m is confirmed for UDA project” and “Loyalist group to get over £1m government funding” flashed across the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the RTE news website. However this was not the beginning of the funding project. In mid September of 2006, the government gave an initial chunk of funding to the UPRG to help develop a funding plan to remove weapons and criminality from the UDA.

This initial project “will last up to six months and the funds - £135,000 to employ project workers - will be administered by Farset Community Enterprises” (“NIO fund UPRG Proposal”). However even before the UPRG received the first set of funding, they were meeting with various UDA brigade leaders and rank and file members to see if they were willing to transform their organization. “The UDA approached government officials in late 2005 urging support for an initiative which would (i) identify and deal with the causes of the conflict (ii) equip the Loyalist community with the skills and ability to move on (iii) contribute positively to the reduction of criminality and (iv) create an enabling environment which could bring an end to all paramilitary activity...” (*Loyalism in Transition 1, 4*). They spent then end of 2005 and half of 2006 discussing the possibility of transformation and drawing up the initial funding request.

They finally arranged their final proposal and were granted £1.2 million over a three year period to go towards community development. The UPRG decided, with Farset’s approval, that the money would go “back to the brigade areas - places that the UDA has support and a presence - Londonderry, East Belfast, North Belfast, West Belfast, South Belfast, and South East Antrim” (Interview #8). From there the UPRG will “employ twelve people across Northern Ireland to enable loyalist communities to access social and economic regeneration funds” (“Loyalist Group”). Two of these community development workers will be employed in each different brigade area.

This whole program seems straightforward enough, but there are many people who are

concerned with the arrangement. There are also people who are thrilled that this is happening and are convinced it will help with decommissioning. Interestingly enough, there are both Protestants and Catholics on both sides of the debate and several for very different reasons. Not to mention that the government and the PSNI are taking on a considerable responsibility by backing the project.

Immediately after announcing the funding plan, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Hain, immediately began to defend his position. He said ““We gave them a trial period, over a period of months to see how this work could progress and now we have agreed a long-term support for this objective, which I think is vital,” (“£1m is confirmed”). A different spokesman for the NIO also made the remark that ““Continued funding is conditional on clear evidence that the levels of criminality are reducing” (“NIO places conditions...”).

The Department for Social Development published an article concerning the issue with Social Development Minister David Hanson as the main spokesman. Hanson said that this is a “project to free communities from the influence of paramilitaries” (DSD). He also claimed that “the development work has led to an action plan that has identified a clear path towards the ending of paramilitary influence and control of communities” (DSD) referring to the previous work done by the UPRG with the first grant.

Directly after this news was published there was an article from the PSNI that extortion was still a major problem in Protestant neighborhoods. The PSNI Chief Constable “demanded tangible changes in the UDA’s behavior as well as decommissioning” (Rowan). Regarding this issue a NIO spokesman said, “This is exactly the kind of criminality the initiative is intended to tackle” (“NIO places conditions...”).

The Protestant community is not surprisingly divided on the issue, with many people believing that this is a deserving plan and feeling it is a gross misuse of government money and that the government is funding a terrorist organization. Jackie Hewitt at Farset was of a positive opinion saying that “the people who think the money is just going to the UDA aren’t looking at it

straight. The UDA is a criminal organization working in things like extortion. Why would they take only one million quid when there are millions and millions out there.” (Interview #1) He believes that “this is probably the safest money [the government] is spending. Besides if things go wrong and people start shooting again, its not the government who pulls the plug on it, we do. We aren’t involved in it” (Interview #8)

Frankie Gallagher, the spokesman for the UPRG had very similar things to say on this issue. He said, “We have been arguing that loyalist communities need a process, they need a more structured approach to give us a change to help build a new society” (“Loyalist Group...”). He also said, referring to Farset, “[The money] is going to a legitimate organization which has existed for some 20 years and which has been at the forefront of peace-building” (“£1m is confirmed...”).

Johnny Adair, the former UDA commander who was expelled from the UDA for his direct challenge of the UDA’s leadership, has a different attitude towards the funding plan. Adair said, “The UDA is a thuggish criminal organization. It doesn’t need to be there. There is no threat to the communities and no threat to Ulster” (Smith). He also believes that “The government needs to come down on the leaders harder instead of giving them millions of pounds. It needs to go after them” (Smith). He doesn’t believe that the UDA will ever be ready to reform and should instead be completely dismantled.

Jackie Hewitt believes differently he feels that they have to change from within and that if the leadership simply decides to walk away from it all it will leave a residual resentment among the rank and file members, creating even more problems. “The leaders could have just left, but that would have left the people who knew only the organization on their own. It would have left the young people with nothing but anger; anger at the organization, anger at the politicians, anger at the other community. The organization had to change, had to evolve.” (Interview #1). He is convinced at the sincerity of the UPRG in their attempts to change and that internal change is the only way forward.

Certain members of the PUP also felt that the UPRG was sincere and should not be reviled for their attempts to change. Jim McKinley, the PUP regeneration officer said “I think in our current climate [funding the UPRG grant] is a very good thing. That money is going to open up offices in the six brigade areas. If it has a ripple effect into the whole community, it is a good thing. Think there is so much controversy over this because of the track records of paramilitaries, especially the UDA. People don’t want to believe and aren’t ready to believe they can change, but they’ll get there.” (Interview #9).

One DUP leader could not believe that the British Exchequer would be willing to fund this program. Sammy Wilson, East Antrim MP, said “he was amazed that money was being handed over even though recent reports by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster had shown the organization was still heavily involved in criminality and extortion” (“Loyalist Group...”). He wishes that the UDA would decommission and cease their paramilitary and criminal activities but “this type of Government bribery is not the way to achieve that”, he said” (“Loyalist Group...”).

The Catholic community is also quite divided on the issue, with the SDLP being quite outspoken against it and Sinn Féin being remarkably silent. The SDLP’s North Belfast MLA Alban Maginness said, “It goes against good public policy because it is actually subsidizing Paramilitarism.” (Interview #2) Maginness also said that “Quite simply, this grant can’t go ahead. This huge sum of money cannot be paid out to representatives of an organization which has not decommissioned and is actively using its armed force to extort vast amounts of money” (“NIO places conditions...”). He however also said that “there is no guarantee of decommissioning. If there were evidence of decommissioning I might reconsider my criticism” (Interview #2).

The SDLP’s MLA from East Londonderry is also quite strongly outspoken against the funding plan. He said, “It’s hard to think that money I have contributed to the British Exchequer in income tax is now being used to reward the agents of killing gangs who murdered my

constituents” (“Loyalist Group...”). This fiery language was followed up by the comment “It is like being made to pay for the bullet that kills you” (“Loyalist Group...”). Frankie Gallagher in the same news article followed this statement with “John Hume, when he was SDLP leader, was a pioneer of the Hume/Adams talks which came up with a process that lasted more than 15 years to take republican communities away from violence” (“Loyalist Group...”).

A news writer for the Andersontown News, the longstanding Republican newspaper, had different views. Robin Livingstone believed that “If Frankie Gallagher and his colleagues are serious about moving away from Paramilitarism and criminality, then they need to be tested, not derided and reviled” (Livingstone). She followed this with a comment along the same lines as what Jackie Hewitt and Frankie Gallagher had been saying: “It’s facile and simplistic to allege that the British government is giving money to loyalist godfathers...The fact of the matter is, of course, that every cent has to be accurately accounted for, as it is with any other government grant” (Livingstone).

Community funders like Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI) take a completely different view on the project. Monina O’Prey said, “I don’t think it’s helpful when politically motivated funding is handed out to new groups completely disregarding the groups that have been serving the communities for years with under funded budgets. As a model I don’t think it’s good. People should be funded on the basis of need, but need can be described in many different ways” (Interview #7). However she remains hopeful for the outcome of the project saying “It has happened so we need to work with it” (Interview #7), implying that it will be possible to work with the project for the good of the Protestant community.

Even the bloggers have completely mixed opinions on the subject. The prevailing attitude is that it is “disgusting” (UTV Blog) that the government is giving funds to the UPRG. However, when the blogger identifies their religion, there are some opinions which are contrary to what one might think. For example, Wilma from Ballymena said, “I am the same religion as these people and am disgusted that they are getting this funding. I know of a very sick baby

who needed an MRI scan and was refused but still the money went to these people. There are disabled children and old people who need it more. What is the government thinking about? I say halt the payment and put it to better use” (UTV Blog). However another blogger of an unidentified religion said, “I disagree, they should not only get the money, it should be doubled or tripled” (UTV Blog). Further along JJ from Londonderry (a Protestant) said, “I welcome this. The money is NOT going to the actual UDA, it is going to Protestant communities to help them rebuild and educate themselves to be able to have a future without violence” (UTV Blog)

On a different blog, run by Slugger O’Toole, there was a similar debate. The only difference is that this debate ran in September when the UPRG was first allocated money. A blogger calling himself ‘unionist’ said, “Obviously the success or otherwise will depend on the ability of the ‘project workers’. Farset are old hands at development work and will provide the leadership that is required. The question will be however, what happens at the end of the six months and will the projects compete on a level playing field with other very worthwhile projects in working class areas” (Slugger O’Toole Blog). There is one other optimistic post on this blog, otherwise everyone is skeptical of the UPRG’s ability to use the money for its intended purpose.

While researching this debate it was impossible not to come across the raging debate about which community is receiving more funding and which community being better developed by its community workers. It especially came out in the blogs. Some bloggers would make the assertion that the Provisional IRA had received money in return for transformation and decommissioning so the UDA should as well. Others were outraged by this statement. Although the debate does not focus on paramilitary funding in particular, it generally follows similar lines, with Protestants arguing that they are under-funded and underdeveloped and Catholics believing that this is for the most part, false.

This debate is significant for many reasons, not the least influencing funding organizations and the government in where they distribute their money. There is a lot of pressure on the government currently about which communities they are funding and which

communities demonstrate the most need. This is causing even more rifts within the ranks of community developers as everyone fights for the same funding. However, there are many people, Catholics and Protestants alike, who believe that the Protestant communities are currently lagging behind the Catholics in the community development.

**The Macro Issue:
The Community Development
Disparity Debate**

As discussed previously, social capital has recently played a large role in assessing community development. This is no different in Northern Ireland. Cairns et al examined the social capital, both bridging and bonding capital, of Catholic and Protestant communities. Brendan Murtagh also studied this question in a recent Life and Times Survey. Both the Cairns and the Murtagh surveys discovered that although there might be a perception that Protestant communities have weaker social capital, in actuality, they do not. Cairns et al reported “the quantitative phase of the study concluded that there was no evidence of Catholic/Protestant differences in social capital as measured in a random sample of the population of Northern Ireland” (4).

However there is also debate about how much of a role social capital plays in identifying all aspects of communities in Northern Ireland. Kat Healy with Community Foundation Northern Ireland argues that “while social capital has merit in detailing relationships between individuals and groups, it is not a robust framework for explaining all the relevant conditions and characteristics of a particular community” (14). She describes four aspects which help evaluate the health and welfare of a community: social need, social inclusion, social cohesion, and community capacity (15). Social need “refers to the quality of life in an area”, social inclusion is “whether all individuals within a community have access to the same opportunities and resources”, social cohesion “includes the three components of social capital; it also refers to the way people have a shared sense of belonging” and finally community capacity “is a measure of the structure and organization with a community” (15). In brief, Healy argues that although social capital does facilitate community development, it is only part of a bigger picture which fully describes the nature of community capacity building.

One label given to a model similar to Healy’s is community infrastructure. This is often described as “comprising of the combined resources of facilities, skills, networks and capacity required in local areas to enable people to participate and engage collectively in self-determined positive social action to address social need” (O’Prey and Magowan, 5), extremely similar to

Healy's model. This refers to the whole of social capital, both bridging and bonding, as well as the physical resources within the community. A community with strong infrastructure is one which consists of a population with good connections within and without it, knowledgeable community workers, physical resources to use such as halls, and the ability to use all of their resources. If a community is underdeveloped, it is often considered to have weak community infrastructure which "often exists in communities where social need and disadvantage sit alongside the absence of locally organized, locally managed, accountable and participative community development activity" (O'Prey and Magowan, 5).

Accurately measuring the development of a community seems a daunting task, and, to date, there is yet to be a published report comparing the community infrastructure of Northern Ireland's communities. However there are many opinions on the subject, especially among community development workers and politicians. David Hanson, Social Development Minister recently said, "Whilst disadvantage and poverty are still greater in Catholic communities, there is a better developed capacity at community level to take advantage of the opportunities offered by government funded programs and services to support those communities" ("Spending in Protestant..."). This opinion is for the most part corresponds with various community development workers in Belfast.

Jackie Hewitt at Farset said that "there is not a great divide between the Catholic and Protestant community development, and what there is will change naturally." and quickly followed it with "It is catch-up time for the Protestant community, not in ideas in ability but in structure" (Interview #1). He is convinced that both communities will say that they are the most disadvantaged and could all come up with data proving their case. (Interview #8).

Sinead O'Regan a community worker with the Job Assist in the Upper Springfield neighborhood said, "The Catholic communities have noticeably better bridging and bonding social capital" (Interview #5). She gave the example of the strategies used within West Belfast to prove her point, "we have five neighborhood groups: the Falls Neighborhood Partnership, the

Colin Neighborhood Partnership, the Lenardoon Community Forum, the Upper Andersontown Forum, and the Upper Springfield Community Trust to which all of the community groups feed. Then these five groups sit on the West Belfast Partnership Board which helps the neighborhoods come up with neighborhood action plans and such. This means the different groups aren't competing for the same funding and grants" (Interview #5).

Monina O'Prey with CFNI thinks "it is fair to say that community funding is now almost 50/50. Under Peace I Protestants did get less but as of Peace II and Peace II+ it has come out to almost 50/50" (Interview #7). She also noticed that "there are high disparities within the local authorities' budgets. Some areas give lots of money to community development, while others hardly any" (Interview #7), but she stressed that it was not particular to one community. The funding was simply poorly allocated by the local authority governments with no concern for religion.

Elaine Mansfield with the PUP had a similar opinion when it came to the European Union funding. She said, "there were massive mistakes made with Peace I. From and community development perspective the catholic structure was a lot more advanced and when Peace I came out, our groups hadn't a clue. The Protestant groups were smaller groups working individually but the Catholic groups came under one umbrella. The Protestant groups were isolated" (Interview #9). She followed with the opinion that the Peace II funding was much more appropriately dispersed.

There are certainly as many different opinions on the quantity of disparity displayed by the two communities. However this paper is also interested in the reasons that community workers, grant-funders, and politicians give for this perceived community development disparity. The reasons the developers and politicians give are just as widely varied as their opinions on the quantity of disparity, however all believe that the Protestants have a weaker community infrastructure, although the Catholics might technically have greater social need. Their opinions can be broadly divided into seven categories although these categories often overlap however

they can almost all be grouped under the heading of a fractured community.

This fragmentation is described both by quantitative researchers like Cairns as well as various Catholic and Protestant community developers. The Cairns et al group said in preface to their research, "In Protestant communities a very significant degree of fragmentation was observed" (Cairns et al, 4). The Cairns group continued with noting how detrimental to the health of the community this fragmentation has become. Community developers who work with Protestant neighborhoods have also recognized this fragmentation. Monina O'Prey however noticed that the level of fragmentation is often exaggerated: "I think there is a huge over-exaggeration of how fractionalized and the feeling of being lost is in the Protestant community." (Interview #7). Although there is no coherent quantitative data on the nature and level of fragmentation is, many reasons are given for the phenomenon. Cultural differences, religion, Protestant despondency and apathy after the Belfast Agreement, paramilitaries influence, lack of leadership are all given as reasons for this fragmentation.

Many people say that there is an intrinsic cultural difference between the two communities which has led to the disparity. One of these cultural differences is the propensity of Catholics to be more tied to their neighborhoods than Protestants. A community activist said, "if any of our people get a chance to move up on the ladder a bit, the first thing they want to do is to get out of the community - and stay out" (*Uncertain Future*, 7). This was further commented on by members of the Loyalist Conflict Transition Initiative, a primarily UVF measure which set up ex-prisoner rehabilitation centers. LCTI members suggested that "the republican community were better at retaining their educated classes, while the educated or professional classes from loyalist backgrounds tended to move away, physically and ideologically, from their communities" (Gribbin et al, 72). There is an evident perception that Catholics are much more tied to place than Protestants.

Another cultural difference which was put forward was that Protestants are more self-help oriented and believe that receiving help is something one shouldn't do except in extreme

situations. In this case self-help does not imply that as a community they help themselves, but that individually they take care of their own needs. The Cairns et al report indicated “that some members of the Protestant working class place a high value on self-help and are reluctant to look to external sources of support because they consider it demeaning to accept what they have not earned or otherwise worked for” (4). Jim McKinley with the PUP agreed with this statement, but he called this individualism ‘Protestant work ethic’. He said, “Protestant work ethic also has a lot to do with it. There’s this culture that if you accept money you are selling yourself down river. We don’t ask for handouts” (Interview #9). This belief that Protestants do not accept help is prevalent throughout the Protestant community and was echoed many times by other community activists.

The Catholic community supports this belief that Catholics are much more supportive of community groups, however they define self-help as in terms of the community helping itself with no reference to the government. Sinead O’Regan said in an interview, “Catholic culture is very much about supporting the community groups” (Interview #5). SDLP’s Alban Maginness felt the same way: “There’s more social outreach in the Catholic communities than in the Protestant communities. Social action is more of a Catholic concept. It derives from their beliefs” (Interview #2). There seems to be an overwhelming belief by both communities that Catholics have a much more communal nature than Protestants who are individualistic.

Religion is another reason often given for the community development disparity, although it strongly relates back to the cultural reason. Activists seem to believe that communalism is an aspect of Catholicism while the fragmentation within the Protestant church is reflected in their community development. The LCTI members suggested that “Catholicism as a unified religion aided in the cohesion of the republican community, whereas the factions within Protestantism contributed towards the fragmentation of the loyalist community” (Gribbin et al, 72). The Cairns report also revealed the overwhelming belief that Catholics are more collectivist by religion and nature while Protestants are individualistic (Cairns et al, 4).

There is also a belief that because Catholic churches are based around parishes, it leads the community to be more inclined to help within their own neighborhood parish. To illustrate this point, Maginness said, "Protestant churches are congregational not parish based. Catholic schools are serviced by Catholic teachers who tend to contribute more in terms of voluntary work for the immediate community. This [affinity for the neighborhood] is not reflected in state school teachers. Catholic teachers tend to live in the community and to contribute as members of the community" (Interview #2). Pastor Paul Burns of Sandy Row also felt that the churches provided significant leadership in the community, "The Protestant communities have no real leadership whereas the Catholics had their churches." (Interview #3)

However others are of a completely different opinion. Monina O'Prey believes that Protestants are much more likely to go to church and although their churches are congregational rather than parish based, they are more likely to organize activities around their church. She said, "the Protestant community organized around churches, especially in the border counties." However she qualified this by looking at the different nature of community organizing which occurs in Catholic and Protestant communities. She sees that "the Protestant groups were more services oriented and not so much community action oriented" (Interview #7), meaning that although they do not advocate for themselves, they will organize activities like hall dances within their congregation.

Another reason, although entirely distinct from the previous two, people give for the lack of community development is a despondency and apathy coming out of the Belfast Agreement and peace process. They see their treatment as unfair and are, instead of rising up, becoming disinterested in the whole process. Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh in their book *Belfast* discuss this concept: "what began to emerge, in a more forceful and organized way, was the perception that 'concession' to the minority population had ushered in an unequal treatment of the majority party" (39). They say that this feeling of inequality led to indifference. Protestant community developers concurred with this idea during a think tank project, "Protestants feel that

it is they who are now being put to the bottom of the heap. And leaving aside the fears they have that their cultural identity is being slowly eroded, the social fabric of our communities is beginning to disintegrate” (*Uncertain Future*, 5). In a second think tank project a similar attitude was expressed, “I think Loyalists feel disenfranchised with the whole system...They feel they were used by the two governments to get the political process consolidated and then discarded” (*New Crossroads*, 6).

Both Protestant and Catholic community activists believe that the paramilitaries are a bad influence, however it is a theme which comes up more often with the Catholics. For the most part, the Protestant community developers believe that the paramilitaries can help the community, if they want to. The Catholic workers see them as a solely negative influence on the Protestant communities. Sinead O’Regan describes the negative influence of paramilitaries where funding is concerned: “A lot of the money the community supposedly gets is siphoned off into those paramilitaries. Catholics don’t have to, and refuse to, give money to the paramilitaries for security and protection, but the Protestant community developers have to work it into their budgets” (Interview #5). She also compares their influence in the community with the IRA’s influence. O’Regan sees the IRA as a more positive force for change because they began as a group with socialist views and because they stayed away from the more criminal aspects which the UDA and UVF did not. O’Regan explained,

During the troubles there was a power vacuum in Northern Ireland. This vacuum was filled by the different paramilitaries. The difference really came out of the ideologies of the organizations. The IRA thought of themselves as an army and had extremely strict discipline and order. They wouldn’t abide by gangsterism, drugs, or prostitutes. They were built out of the Civil Rights movement of the ‘60’s so they already had strong supporters of the socialist policies. The loyalist paramilitaries were extremely fractured to begin with but they were also created out of sectarian values. The IRA was anti-British, not anti-Protestant, the UVF and the UDA were anti-Catholic. Not only were they built off of sectarian and fractured foundations, they also brought drugs into the communities. (Interview #5)

She mixes the history of the policies of the two different paramilitary groups to justify the belief

that the Republican paramilitaries would have an easier time readjusting to a non armed conflict era.

Some Protestant community developers take a more positive view of the paramilitaries' influence on the working class neighborhoods. One woman, working in a think tank project said, "In East Belfast, the paramilitaries are starting to help us. When we held our July 11 festival on Newtownards Road, they were the first to come forward and say: 'What help do youse need? Do youse need us to do anything?' It is about building up relationships with them" (*Uncertain Future*, 8). However the paramilitaries still have the negative affect on their communities of maintaining a closed neighborhood. Another Protestant community developer said, "I think people in Protestant areas are still scared to talk out because of paramilitaries" (*New Crossroads*, 11). The paramilitaries still wield iron control over their respective areas. O'Prey with CFNI spoke about this control in relation to a community development project she ran in Larne. She was running eight neighborhood renewal programs, four within Belfast and four without, with equal numbers of Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods. She said, "The only group that failed was in Larne. The paramilitaries started to take over and created serious problems" (Interview #7). It seems that although the paramilitaries are starting to do some good in their neighborhoods, they still have a long way to go.

Cairns et al published similar findings in their report. They found that "there was much evidence of the strongly negative impact of paramilitary organizations which tended to inhibit or to seek to control, community development activity" (Cairns et al, 4). Not only was the existence of the paramilitaries a negative characteristic of Protestant working class communities, but the internal Loyalist feud was also damaging. Cairns et al reported that there, "was much evidence that the Loyalist feud was a strongly negative influence on those communities and that this internecine conflict strongly inhibits community development" (Cairns et al, 5). There seems to be overwhelming arguments that the paramilitary influence on communities is extremely detrimental to community development although there are signs that they are moving in the right

direction.

A lack of leadership is often pointed to as one of the major reasons for a fractured Protestant community and poor community development. There were three major views which were advocated by various community workers and politicians. The first was that the Protestant politicians were for the most part inept and did not truly advocate for their constituents, referring to Democratic Unionist politicians and Ulster Unionist politicians alike. The other main view was that there was no political leadership in the Protestant community, but there were also people who were completely opposed to this view, believing that the DUP and Ian Paisley is for the Protestant community what Sinn Féin and Gerry Adams is for the Catholic community.

In a think tank project many of the community workers professed that they felt that their politicians didn't actually represent them: "in the Catholic Communities their politicians support them fully, but we have only a few who either care or have a clue about the work that's taking place on the ground" (*Uncertain Future*, 10). Another community worker with a different think tank project said, "There's also widespread feeling in Protestant areas that their leaders...are never going to put the same effort into improving their lives as you would find in Catholic areas" (*New Crossroads*, 11). Jackie Hewitt of Farset also had a cynical outlook on the Protestant politicians and did not feel that they fully represented their constituents, "Some do some don't. Some people in the DUP I have respect for, some I absolutely hate because they're and absolute hypocrisy" (Interview #8).

Loyalists, both UVF and UDA members took an even more negative view on the abilities of their politicians. Members of the Loyalist Conflict Transition Initiative said, in reference to the first operational assembly, "unionist politicians did not do much to help address the real problems they face regarding interfaces, deprivation and so on" (Gribbin et al, 69). Those same Loyalists (primarily UVF members) spoke in favor of several specific politicians: "good working relationships with some individual unionist politicians, including some UUP, but overall emphasise the lack of relationship. Most agreed that in their experience the DUP disapproved of

any engagement with paramilitaries or those in dialogue with them (although there is also some evidence of a thawing of this position). In contrast, the PUP was unsurprisingly reported to be extremely helpful” (Gribbin et al, 69). There is a belief that the DUP is more interested in their own political position than in the people. The view of one Loyalist member of the UDA said, “If the DUP lead a devolved government they will attempt to disempower us, by controlling whatever funding will be coming in to our communities. Unionist politicians are more interested in gaining political benefit than in empowering communities” (*Loyalism in Transition 2*, 10). According to these people, it is not that Protestants don’t have leadership, however all perspectives of Protestantism are not represented.

Mabel with the Community Dialogue project takes a negative view of the role of the DUP in local politics. She said, “but they are not tuned in to their whole constituency. They may have started out as a working class party, but they are now becoming a middle class party.” (Interview #4) Dr. Peter Shirlow contributes this change within the DUP as a working class party to their changing relationship with paramilitaries. Shirlow said, ““At first the politicians like the DUP worked with the whole community, but as they started sitting in the Assembly, they tried to distance themselves from the paramilitaries. This created a backlash among the average people on the ground. These feelings of alienation still exist to a degree to this day. Not buying into the peace process also led to a feeling that they weren’t buying to the communities which contributed to that backlash” (Interview #7).

Mabel also said that the leaders, who are not representative are also negative, “these leaders are exceptionally negative which feeds into the people’s attitudes and beliefs. The leaders tell their followers that they aren’t getting as much as the Catholics which is feeding into the fear and suspicion. Protestants are scared of everything, but especially that the Catholics are getting more than them” (Interview #4). Mabel believes that the while the Catholic community and Sinn Féin are so positive that they are having more success because they can convince people they are going places. The DUP and UUP with their negative attitudes, have

only served to convince Protestants that they have to be even more on their guard. This feeling of alienation, fear and helplessness has not been mended since the Belfast Agreement and has contributed to the overall feeling of political impotency.

Not only is there a belief that the politicians are not representative and negative, but there is also a prevailing argument that there isn't a unified Protestant political party. Mabel with the Community Dialogue Project calls the Protestant leaders ghost leaders referring to their perpetual absence from their communities. Mabel said, "There is a distinct lack of leadership in the Protestant side. They don't have a Gerry Adams/Sinn Féin type figure, just ordinary Joe Blow's or ghost leaders who try and run things" (Interview #4). However many people object to this statement, seeing the DUP and Ian Paisley as just as strong a political leader as Gerry Adams.

O'Regan with Job Assist felt that although Gerry Adams had more control than Ian Paisley, it would not be long before he gaought up. She said, "Sinn Féin has effectively taken control of the Catholic neighborhoods and given the people a sense of direction. The Protestants still have that sort of fractionailsim but it will decline. The DUP will take over" (Interview #6). Dr. Shirlow agreed with her statement that the DUP was in the process of taking over, "Protestants aren't a fractured people anymore, now that the DUP has taken over"(Interview #7). SDLP's Alban Maginnes also felt that the Protestant leadesr were just as capable as the Catholic leadership, "Unionist politicians are just as capable as nationalist politicians. It is really jus self-denigrating." (Interview #2). Maginness believed that the unionists are simply boosting this feeling to simply gain support from their communities.

All of these reasons can be tied back to the fragmentation of the communities, however more importantly they all came out of the history of the conflict itself. There is a long history of community and voluntary activity but it has always been much stronger in Nationalist areas. (Shortall, 10). The reasons for this are many and complex, but they primarily relate back to the first Stormont government before the troubles began.

When the island was partitioned, a majority was built into and maintained in Northern Ireland. So much emphasis was placed on the difference between Catholics and Protestants for so many years that this dichotomy began to outweigh the class dichotomy which usually takes place in modern society. This meant that “when unionists were controlling Stormont it would have been something of an anathema for grassroots members of unionism to challenge the state with a claim for their human rights” (Foster, 12). It was the government’s role to provide for the Protestant people. This had many repercussions including a legacy of de-emphasis on education and complacency around community activism and development. Jackie Hewitt but it very bluntly, “On the Unionist side we had a Unionist government and that was good enough because we could maintain the flag and we were convinced that was good enough. It was different on the Catholic side and they were more rebellious. We didn’t have to fight for your culture like they did. We didn’t do anything” (Interview #8).

The civil rights movement began to change all of this. All of a sudden there was an emphasis on rights for all, especially Catholics, but also for the working class communities on both sides. There were many calls for the vote for all, not just for homeowners. Although this would have a substantial affect on the Catholic community, there were many working class Protestants who would also be able to vote. This was the first sign of instability in Northern Ireland and it quickly brought on the troubles, which was the major turning point for community development.

The troubles brought a sense of cohesiveness within the Catholic community. There was a sense of purpose, even if someone didn’t agree with the violence of the IRA, everyone could sympathize with their cause. Mabel with the Community Dialogue Project illustrated this point extremely succinctly: “In the absence of any other services during the troubles they had to make their own. People were confined to their own areas because of the military involvement. If you wanted to go outside your home to the city center you had to cross at least four military checkpoints. This happened more in the Catholic areas than the Protestant areas so they were

forced to make do. Catholics didn't organize at the parish level, but at the neighborhood and even at the street level" (Interview #4). The Catholics had a history of community activism because they were forced to.

There is a pattern which led to the fragmentation of the Protestant communities and it came directly from the troubles. Here is a table giving an overview of the repercussions of The Troubles on both the Protestant and Catholic communities.

Year	Catholic/Nationalist/Republican	Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist
1920-1972	History of community activism	Little history of community activism
1920-1972	Looked inwards for resources and leadership	Looked to the Stormont government for resources and leadership
1920-1972	Politically fractured	Politically united
1920-1972	Low community morale	High community morale
1972-Date	Sense of more equitable political and economic administration	Sense of less fortunate political and economic administration
1972-Date	Better community morale	Deteriorating community morale
1972-Date	More united politically	Less united politically
1972-Date	Growth in community activism	Accelerated growth in community activism

(Cochrane and Dunn, 64)

Cochrane and Dunn illustrate the pattern which history followed concerning community development very well. They account for the feelings of apathy within the Protestant community, the beliefs that the Protestant community is leaderless, and the current amount and quality of community development within the two communities. It also accounts for the momentum that the Catholic community appears to be currently experiencing. This history of the troubles is the reason most often referred to in terms of calculating the reason for the nature of community development in Northern Ireland.

The history of Northern Ireland for the past ninety years and its implications have been the fundamental reason for the fragmented nature of Protestant communities. It is not that they are socially less capable than Catholic communities, they simply do not have the experience or

the historic drive to form strong communities. Religion is not the deciding factor. Cairns et al found in their study that there is no difference between Catholics and Protestants in terms of collectivism and individualism (Cairns et al, 4). Murtagh found that although there are differences as to where and how Catholics and Protestants choose to socialize, there is not significant difference in their social capital (Murtagh, 4). Community development is not an issue of greater or lesser potential capability.

The influence of paramilitaries does indeed influence the ability of community workers to help their communities. However, it appears with the advent of the Loyalist Conflict Transformation Initiative (UVF run) and Conflict Transformation Initiative (UDA run) the loyalist paramilitaries are in the process of the lessening their criminality. It seems that they would like to emerge in their communities as true community leaders and forces for positive change. How long it will take them to do so is absolutely impossible to estimate.

As far as lack of leadership goes, it appears that the DUP have the majority of the Protestant community behind them. The last election served simply to cement their position as the leading party in the North. It is fair to say that they might not represent every single one of their constituents, but then, very few parties do. The DUP is also in a period of transition, now that they have finally agreed to go into power-sharing with Sinn Féin their party is under a lot of stress. Once the Assembly has started on May 8th, things ought to get back to usual politics, with just as many helpful people as inconsistent ones.

The history of the past ninety years has had a great influence on the current capacity of communities. It has led to a more resigned Protestant community as they see their historical and traditional rights like marching being taken from them one by one. At the same time this is creating a feeling of progression and excitement within the Catholic community. The Protestant communities are learning to fend for themselves in ways that the Catholics have been doing for years. Therefore, this might seem like a period where the Protestants are falling behind in their community development capacity, but it is a time where they are decreasing the gap.

Conclusion: Whereto From Here?

When I first began looking into this topic of the government granting the UPRG £1.2 million, I realized that I was opening a can of worms. There are so many different components of community development and with each of these components comes a debate which rages in academic, political, and community workers' circles. No two people agree on any of the issues, nor are there any comprehensive reports on the subject which makes it doubly hard to come to any conclusions on the subject. Wading through the eight interviews, opinion columns, research papers, and think tank pamphlets was similar to swimming through mud. There was plenty of political jargon and every side seemed to be advocating on its own behalf.

In some small way, funding social development programs has brought on a tight competition between Catholic and Protestant community groups which echoes back to the times of the troubles. The Catholics call on data proving that they have greater social need, containing nine of the ten worst wards in Northern Ireland. The Protestants try and prove that they have less social capital and poor community development to win funding. The funding itself is tight and is often tied up in restrictions by the government and the EU.

However the interesting fact which came out of the interviewing process was that no one argued with the fact that the Protestant community suffered poor community development. The extent to which this actually affected their abilities differed, but what was more fascinating was that the reasons for this disparity. Again no one could agree on a definitive reason, but there were several reasons which stood out. The most reasonable was the impact of history on community development and the psyche of the Protestant community, which in turn influences the development of a community.

There were many things I could have done differently in this project. If I did it again, I would have focused solely on the community development disparity debate, rather than beginning with the grant to the UPRG. I also would have focused solely on community development workers and would have tried to interview as many as I could from both

communities. However, during my time doing fieldwork in Belfast I learned a great deal about the community development in Belfast.

I had absolutely no experience in doing field work before I joined this SIT program, and I learned a lot of hard lessons. I learned that simply walking around on the first day and talking to as many people as possible is extremely important. You can hole yourself up in the library behind a stack full of books, but if you don't go out and start talking to people, you will never really understand what people are thinking. I also learned that when you are doing fieldwork, it is absolutely necessary to have a permanent phone number to give out, preferably a mobile number. I probably lost two or three contacts because I couldn't give out a cell number, especially people who are affiliated with paramilitaries and would rather not do things with e-mail.

The most rewarding thing about doing fieldwork was talking to the people who are actually doing the community development work. Everyone had a different story, a different history which influences their work everyday. Some started doing it because there was no one else who was speaking for the community, others because they saw their friends and family killed in the troubles, others were ex-prisoners who felt that their efforts would be better rewarded working for the community. I never could have conducted this project from home, or even the Republic of Ireland. The personality of my interviewees influenced my project too much to have been able to do it without meeting them face to face.

There are so many options remaining for further research into this topic. Will the UDA's attempts at community development lead to their permanent decommissioning? Will the government pull their funding halfway through the project? Will the UDA cease to be a criminal organization? What will happen to all of the drug addicts, if the UDA stops providing for them? Also, effective at midnight tonight, May 3, 2007, the UVF is going to assume a non-military, civilianized role. Will the UVF and PUP try to set up a program like the UDA did to get funding for their communities? How will the British government respond, or the new Assembly which

will be running as of May 8, 2007? What programs will they be forwarding in their neighborhoods and will they be effective?

Looking at the issue of a community development disparity, will a comprehensive survey ever be completed on respective need of the two communities? How much of the disparity is in the heads of the Protestants, how much of it is real, and how much of it is rhetoric to get the Protestant community more money? Will the Protestants learn to embrace community development and will the gap decrease? But how much do the community groups actually help their communities? If they are constantly being fettered by funding regulations, how much room do they have to act on the communities' needs? How much room do they have to enact the radical change which must occur to remove bonds of generational unemployment, poor education, and the substandard housing which both communities face? These are questions that community development groups worldwide face, but no answers are forthcoming.

Community development groups are blossoming in Northern Ireland and are being called on more and more as a way out of the troubles. With the long political process, people are beginning to look to their community leaders to get things done like dealing with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and cleaning up the neighborhoods. However the question remains, does community development actually lead to a reduction in tensions and will these groups prove to be the key in creating a cohesive single community?

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Interview #4. Mabel Doole at Community Dialogue. 23 April, 2007

Interview #5. Sinead O’Regan at Springfield Job Assist. 23 April, 2007

Interview #6. Dr. Peter Shirlow of Queens University. 23 April, 2007

Interview #7. Monina O’Prey at Community Foundation Northern Ireland. 24 April, 2007

Interview #8. Jackie Hewitt at Farset. 25 April, 2007.

Interview #9. Interview Jim McKinley and Elaine Mansfield of PUP. 25 April, 2007.