

COMMUNITY DIFFERENTIALS

1. In this part of the presentation the current situation in Northern Ireland is considered from 3 perspectives:-
 - i. the most up to date information on socio-economic differences and differentials between the 2 sides of the community;
 - ii. evidence for linkage between differentials and negative attitudes or extreme behaviour;
 - iii. consideration as to whether current policies will impact on any major differentials identified in the short to medium term.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

2. Before considering the current position, the present demographic structure in the Province in terms of community affiliation should be noted. Approximately 60% of the population are Protestant, 40% are Roman Catholic. There are significant differences in age structures between the 2 sides of the community, with for example around half the children aged 16 and under being Protestant and half Roman Catholic. Significant differences in fertility remain, with the Roman Catholic birthrate being considerably above the Protestant (though with some evidence of a recent drop); household and family sizes are significantly greater for Roman Catholics than Protestants.
3. The socio-economic profile of the 2 sides of the community is also different, as figure 1 illustrates. This indicates that Catholics are significantly less likely than Protestants to hold either

professional/managerial or other non-manual positions, and in contrast Catholics are over represented in the semi and unskilled manual occupational groupings.

4. It is, however, when one considers unemployment rates that the most striking differences occur. The most recent figures (for 1985/87) suggest that overall unemployment rates are 27% for Roman Catholics, 12% for Protestants.
5. The greatest differentials exist between male unemployment rates, with 36% of Roman Catholic males unemployed compared to 14% of Protestant (figure 2). The figure also indicates that when young (under 25) males are considered, the differential is rather less but still considerable.
6. Equivalent information for women shows that 15% of Catholic women are unemployed compared with 9% of Protestant women. The difficulties in interpreting female unemployment rates are widely recognised.
7. The third figure presents the information on male employment and unemployment in a different manner. It illustrates the religious affiliation of all males currently in full time employment, of all males unemployed, and of all males unemployed for more than one year. The figure shows that:

- around 69% of all males in employment are Protestant, around 31% are Roman Catholic;

- 60% of all unemployed males are Catholic, 40% are Protestant;
 - for the long term male unemployed over 65% are Catholic, 35% Protestant.
8. If length of male unemployment is considered (of those males unemployed), 57% of Catholic males have been unemployed for 2 years or more in contrast to 45% of Protestant males unemployed.
9. Differences exist between the 2 sides of the community in many other social and economic areas. In education, whilst differences between the Protestant and Roman Catholic school systems have declined over the last 20 years there remain a number of continuing differences (figure 4):
- more Roman Catholic pupils leave school lacking any "A", "O" level or CSE qualifications of any kind than do Protestants;
 - there remain differences in the curricula followed by Protestant and Roman Catholic children, with significantly fewer Roman Catholic pupils following science courses to O and A level than Protestants;
 - in the NI educational system attendance at grammar school is particularly important for future access to higher education, for many jobs and to higher incomes. There is significantly greater provision of grammar school places for Protestant children than for Roman Catholic children.
10. The pattern of differences in attainments amongst school leavers is particularly obvious amongst Roman Catholic boys in Secondary Intermediate

schools, who show the worst educational performance - 40% leave without "O", "A" level or CSE qualifications of any kind.

11. Whilst major strides have taken place in housing over the past 15 years, differences remain between the 2 sides of the community as figure 5 illustrates:

- there is a different pattern of tenure, with significantly more Catholics living in public authority (NI Housing Executive) levels of housing;
- overcrowding remains a problem for Catholic households (in all types of housing) with levels of overcrowding around 3 times that for Protestants.

12. On virtually all other indicators of disadvantage or deprivation the Roman Catholic population experiences higher levels of need or disadvantage than does the Protestant. Figure 6 shows some examples:

- almost double the proportion of Roman Catholic households are dependant on social security than are Protestants;
- significantly more Roman Catholic households experience lower levels of income than do Protestants, despite the fact that Roman Catholic household sizes are significantly greater;
- on all measures of ownership of consumer durables (possession of telephone, car or van, freezer, etc) Catholic households display a consistently lower level of ownership than Protestant

households (the one exception is television - virtually 100% of households possess one!).

- in areas identified as being most disadvantaged (Belfast Special Action areas, severely disadvantaged least favoured areas in EC terms ie most disadvantaged rural areas) there is a significant concentration of Roman Catholics.

13. In summary, whilst at regional level Northern Ireland experiences higher levels of social and economic disadvantage than other areas of the UK, this tends to be concentrated within the Roman Catholic component of the population. Roman Catholics, and particularly Roman Catholic men, experience significantly higher levels of chronic unemployment, those in employment demonstrate a socio-economic profile skewed towards the semi-skilled and unskilled areas (even within professional and managerial areas, there is evidence that Protestants tend to occupy the higher status or more senior posts and Roman Catholics the lower), educational and housing differences remain, and when those areas in both rural and urban Northern Ireland which experience the severest multiple disadvantage are considered there is a disproportionate concentration of Roman Catholic families and households.

THE LINK BETWEEN DEPRIVATION AND ATTITUDES OR BEHAVIOUR

14. There is considerable research available which has considered the links between deprivation, disadvantage and both attitudes and political identification. Figure 7 summarises the research which suggests:

- in relation to numerous economic, social and political factors Catholics had (and retain) a persistent feeling of being second

class citizens compared to Protestants in Northern Ireland, ie Catholics feel as a group relatively disadvantaged across a wide range of issues compared to Protestants;

- those Catholics who felt more deprived relative to Protestants express more negative attitudes to Protestants than did Catholics who did not feel as highly relatively deprived, ie within the Catholic community attitudes are related to economic well-being.

15. The importance of perceived equal opportunities for both sides of the community by Roman Catholics is demonstrated in figure 8. This reports a recent study on attitudes of a large sample of the general population who were asked which one change was most needed to end 'The Troubles'. The figure indicates:

- for Protestants an end to the Anglo Irish Agreement was seen as the most important change;
- for Catholics equal opportunities for all the community was the most important;
- both traditions agreed on the importance of destroying organisations which used political violence.

16. One key area where the 2 sides of the community do not perceive equality of treatment relates to the security forces. Figure 9 records the proportion of Protestants and Catholics who think that the police, regular army and UDR treat Protestants and Catholics equally (the situation may have changed due to recent developments). The results indicate:

- the regular army is seen as the component of the security forces which most closely treats both sides of the community equally;

- there is a very clear difference in perception by Protestants and Catholics as to whether the UDR treats all sides of the community equally.

17. A number of studies has considered in detail characteristics of supporters of Sinn Fein. Figures 10, 11 and 12 compare the profiles of Sinn Fein and SDLP supporters. The information would suggest that, in comparison to SDLP voters, Sinn Fein support is maximised amongst young male unemployed Catholics with lower levels of occupational skills.

18. Thus, to summarise the information in this section, there is considerable evidence to highlight a continuing feeling of alienation by considerable proportions of the Roman Catholic population, to link these attitudes to group feelings of disadvantage in social and economic areas and to indicate that, within the Catholic community, greater socio-economic disadvantage is associated with more extreme and negative views and attitudes.

IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICIES

19. The likely impact of current policies on key problem areas identified earlier is now considered, in particular the likelihood that significant change in the differential position of the 2 communities will occur in the short to medium term (ie 5-10 years).

20. Employment and in particular unemployment is a critical issue; it relates to many of the other problems and disadvantages identified. The new Fair

Employment legislation is coming on stream in 1990, and there is some anticipation that it will impact on the unemployment differential between the 2 communities. However, whilst the new legislation should ensure that for those in employment opportunities will be more fairly distributed than is the current position, it would appear unrealistic to anticipate that the new legislation will impact significantly or rapidly on the unemployment differential between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Figure 13 indicates some of the reasons behind this pessimistic view:

- i. **demographic factors**, which include not only the fact that proportionately there are more Catholic young people entering the job market than previously, but that leavers from the job market must also be taken into consideration. For a variety of reasons there are less Catholic than Protestant leavers from employment, and one recent study has suggested that for every 100 Catholic male employed leavers from the labour market there will be 480 entrants. This is a significantly worse balance than applies to male Protestant entrants;
- ii. there is a **mismatch** between where Roman Catholics tend to live and where jobs are located: the majority of the Roman Catholic population lives in the West or South of the Province, the majority of jobs are located in the East;
- iii. **skill levels** differ between the 2 sides of the community; in addition, when the "rump" of long-term male unemployed is considered (which is predominantly Roman Catholic - see figure 2), this group is largely without educational or skill qualifications;

iv. employment in the security services is particularly important for males in NI. The proportion of Roman Catholics employed in the RUC, UDR or Prison Service is extremely low, and it would appear unlikely that much expansion is likely in the foreseeable future;

v. the amount of Public Expenditure allocated to training and employment measures in NI is greater per head of population than in GB. When, however, expenditure is related to either total unemployment or total long-term unemployment the position changes and the proportion spent on such measures in NI is significantly less. For example, using 1989/90 figures, if expenditure on training and employment in GB per thousand long-term unemployed is taken as 100, equivalent expenditure in NI is 57.

vi. the final point refers to the "loose links" between changes in the number of employed and related changes in the number of unemployed. There is considerable evidence that when, for example, 100 new jobs are provided and filled, the number by which the unemployed as officially classified decreases is far from 100. This effect occurs for many reasons - many women are not officially classified as unemployed yet are interested in work if it becomes available, young people or more elderly early retired who are not categorised as unemployed take the new employment, there is displacement by those currently in employment, etc. For all these reasons, the numbers who leave the classified group of unemployed tend to fall distressingly below the numbers of jobs which appear available.

21. For all the above reasons it is held unlikely that the new Fair Employment legislation will have a major or significant impact on the unemployment differential between Roman Catholic and Protestant males over the next 5-10 years. Evidence from outside NI would confirm this. For example, figure 14 portrays the US experience. The Civil Rights legislation relating to employment came on stream in the mid-1960's. Evidence from that date indicates that for those blacks currently in employment the situation has greatly improved: average incomes have converged towards average incomes of whites, the proportions of blacks in senior professional and managerial posts has greatly increased, in particular black women in employment have benefited from the legislation. However, the rate of black unemployment remains significantly above the rate of white unemployment and, as the figure indicates, the gap may even be widening. Thus the Civil Rights legislation helped those blacks within employment, but has made no impact on those out of employment. A similar outcome is likely for NI.
22. In education, a wide range of reforms is being introduced. In terms of the differences and disparities between the 2 sides of the community outlined earlier, it is possible to predict that these reforms may have differing impacts. For example, the introduction of a national core curriculum will ensure that all children and young people follow a full range of subjects, including science, to age 16. Thus, with time, the current under-participation by Roman Catholic schools and pupils in science should disappear.
23. The position regarding lack of formal educational qualifications at school leaving is less clear. However, the impact of open enrollment at post primary school level is likely to widen the differences in the number of grammar school places available to Protestant and Roman Catholic children.

It would appear therefore that the current differential in favour of Protestant children attending grammar schools will widen following the introduction of open enrollment, and it is important to recognise the key importance of access to grammar school education for later educational and vocational achievement.

24. In housing, Roman Catholics have a greater dependance on public sector housing than do Protestants. In recent public expenditure surveys relative spending on housing has declined. Such a change in expenditure will tend to impact more heavily on Catholics than Protestants.

25. In addition, those areas with the highest incidence of housing unfitness are now in rural areas which tend to be predominantly Roman Catholic; finally, there is a disproportionate representation of Catholics amongst the younger, less well-off household forming age groups who will be seeking housing over the next number of years.

CONCLUSION

26. In summary, the information presented to date would suggest that:
 - i. significant social and economic disparities remain between the 2 sides of the community in NI, with the most serious disadvantage concentrated amongst the Roman Catholic population;

 - ii. associations exist between feelings of relative or group deprivation and beliefs in the fairness of the current situation, and between the absolute extent of deprivation within a group and extreme attitudes and voting behaviour of those members of the group;

- iii. present policies are unlikely in the short to medium term to significantly reduce these differentials, with unemployment remaining a key factor.

... the disadvantaged community remains ... the relative deprivation continues to feed political ...

... on the other hand, a major programme involving reverse or positive discrimination in favour of the Catholic side of the community would - even if legally possible - anger the Protestant side and simply deepen community divisions.

The way forward requires a programme of affirmative action to address inequalities; such a programme would involve action based on criteria of objective need, not on positive discrimination; a series of measures targeted at those in greatest need would be of special benefit to Catholics.

The key in such a programme would be access to, and opportunity for, employment; it would involve action on the creation of jobs, the location of employment and better equipping people - through

CONFIDENTIAL