

PUL PAPERS

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28/11/2003 11:13

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Subject: RE: DISCUSSION PAPER - ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

Please find enclosed a short contribution to your debate. As I cannot be present, I would appreciate being kept in the loop about outcomes and any further meetings.

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-----Original Message-----

From: McQuitty, Anne [mailto:Anne.McQuitty@dsdni.gov.uk]

Sent: 27 November 2003 17:12

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Subject: DISCUSSION PAPER - ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

Please see the attached Paper from Dave Wall.

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Paper from Duncan Morrow (CRC)

Purpose

To contribute to the discussion on addressing the needs of protestant working class communities

Background

I am unable to attend the meeting on addressing the needs of Protestant working class communities on 28th Nov. This is a short addendum to DW's paper from CRC.

Considerations

1. **History:** Protestant communities in Northern Ireland traditionally looked to the institutions of state, including the monarchy, the armed forces, elected politicians, the government administration and local government for identity, protection and services. The Protestant churches, the largest *extra-state* institutions, were supportive of this stance of 'good citizenship', e.g. transferring their schools to the state on the basis that the state would protect core values. The Orange Order functioned to create an emotional/political/institutional/ cultural/religious coherence to a disparate community determined in enmity to an identified opponent. The declaration of two public holidays in July for (de facto *partisan*) Orange events is indisputable evidence of this bond. This created a pattern of
 - individual loyal citizenship,
 - direct access to public services,
 - liberal voluntary institutions with limited purposes (ie no wish or mandate to represent 'the community' as in community development),
 - voluntary military service and
 - identity with the symbols and institutions of the state.
2. **Economics:** The protestant working class emerged with the imperial heavy industries of the Victorian British Empire. Long before 1920, sectarian divisions had generated a segregated workforce, with protestants dominant in shipbuilding, engineering, linen and rope-making. While there was no shortage of poverty, the community as a whole had a relative economic advantage over their catholic neighbours. Male employment was largely focussed on the traditional industries or security/military activities. Manual skill not education was the primary means of gaining advantage in the labour market. The collapse of employment in traditional industries, recent changes in policing and the huge premium placed on educational achievement in service industries have left industrial working class men seriously disadvantaged. In Northern Ireland this has had sectarian implications, as it has been particularly harsh in those areas which expected relative advantage and were tied to the old pattern of employment. Relative decline has been sharpest for protestant working class men above all other groups,

paradoxically as a result of their previous 'success'. Furthermore, there is no tradition of educational achievement for children to mimic.

3. **Current reality:** The direct bonds of Protestants with the institutions of state have eroded since the collapse of Stormont in 1972. Old attachments are no longer secure but the consequence has been a scattering of leadership in many different directions. The first phases of change under the GFA (especially in relation to the police and prisoners) were seen as detrimental to traditional protestant institutions. The failure to secure decommissioning in parallel has seriously compounded this difficulty. The absence of a tradition of organised community solidarity and protection (as in Catholic NI) has meant that 'The Community', a concept with clear boundaries in Catholic areas, is little more than a geographical idea in protestant areas. Instead, within localities, many different groups compete to represent everyone, shifting coalitions are the lasting experience and there is little sense of single direction. Furthermore, the lack of solidarity and the opportunities for relocation in nearby suburbs tend to mean that people move out of difficult neighbourhoods when the opportunity arises. Meanwhile, the middle classes have largely disowned the Orange Order, especially in the Greater Belfast area. The tradition of accessing public services as good citizens remains (see Mark Langhammer's paper of March 2003) but bereft of any sense of identity, while there are numerous groups claiming competing rights to speak for the area. In a context of conflict, where working class communities feel unprotected by the state, the result has been paramilitarism. In a sense, the old gods failed and finding new ones has led to splintering and a 'headless chicken syndrome.'

Consequences for support and funding: The legal and administrative context is well outlined in DW's paper. The difficulties of delivering a coherent plan are also acknowledged. The core question is how to use policy to support protestants in Northern Ireland to find a new place as secure citizens, accessing all of the rights and goods of the state, while organised in such a way as to secure long term stability. Under present circumstances this includes setting down a number of parameters:

- Services will continue to be delivered on a needs basis.
- Structures of delivery can be flexible to accommodate different cultures and circumstances.
- The government cannot support the emergence of armed paramilitaries as gate keepers for entire communities. However it will work with all those committed to civic purposes, regardless of their past.
- The government cannot get into picking 'gatekeepers'. Protestant communities should be encouraged to organise locally responsible agencies with clear structures of wide accountability. In the absence of these agencies, government should promote models of good practice (eg Inner East Forum, Shankill Partnership) and consider direct funding in areas of crisis (eg Lower North Belfast). It should make clear that the structure of service delivery is dependent on the capacity of a local partner and provide support for structured organisational development and

Paper from

leadership. Churches should be integrated into this model not set up as alternatives, where possible.

Purpose

To create the

community

Background

I am unable

community

- Protestant structures must work within a diverse and mobile whole, they can claim no rights to services beyond need. Community relations and the need to ensure that services are universal, effective, economical and efficient (ie minimum duplication) must be part of all community development. The government cannot promote a system which ingrains hostility or sets community off against community. Equality means equality of access and freedom of mobility.

- All government support is subject to above-board legal scrutiny.

Considerations

1. **History:** Protestant communities in Northern Ireland traditionally looked to the institutions of state, including the monarchy, the armed forces, elected politicians, the government administration and local government for identity, protection and services. The Protestant churches, the largest voluntary institutions, were supportive of this stance of 'good citizenship', e.g. transferring their schools to the state on the basis that the state would protect core values. The Orange Order functioned to create an emotionally/political/institutional cultural/religious coherence to a disparate community determined in crisis to an identified opponent. The declaration of two public holidays in July for (de facto) parades/Orange events is indisputable evidence of this bond. This created a pattern of:
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- Services will continue to be delivered on a needs basis.
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DISCUSSION PAPER - ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

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- All government support is subject to above-board legal scrutiny.

Context

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the increasing evidence of lack of confidence in the Agreement within the protestant community as a whole is reflected in the conditions of protestant working class communities, particularly in Belfast and the larger towns and cities. Particular concerns focus on fragmentation and often conflicting leadership, continued paramilitary criminal activity, and the social and physical deterioration of areas and communities. Both political and community based representatives of these communities continue to argue that their difficulties are resource based, with a continuing lack of investment in their communities. However, whilst comprehensive evidence is not available, it is clear that the level of resources available to the protestant community is not commensurate with the needs of the community.

Firstly, resources are distributed in urban areas through the Department's Disadvantaged Areas on the basis of need and are available to all sections of the community. There is no evidence to suggest that there has been any draining of resources away from protestant communities, or an identifiable approach to the allocation of resources. The success of some community-based organisations in protestant areas is a testament to this. Examples include the Shankill and East Belfast Area Partnership, both have been very effective in attracting and securing resources from a number of sources. Additionally there is no evidence that the level of mainstream financial resources deployed to public services generally are inequitable.

Second, whilst there is an argument that government has not sufficiently shown resources to areas of social need, there is again no evidence to suggest that protestant areas of high social need have suffered more than other areas.

* The lack of such data prevents us from being able to support effective policy making in this area.

DISCUSSION PAPER - ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

Introduction

This short paper has been prepared as a basis for discussion at the meeting scheduled for 28 November at 3.30 pm in the conference room, Churchill House. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the position in relation to the development of protestant working class areas. The paper examines the current context, the impact of government investment on these communities and identifies some tentative 'lessons'.

Context

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the increasing evidence of lack of confidence in the Agreement within the protestant community as a whole is reflected in the condition of protestant working class communities, particularly in Belfast and our larger towns and cities. Particular concerns focus on fragmented and often conflictual leadership, continued paramilitary criminal activity, and the social and physical deterioration of areas and communities. Both political and community based representatives of these communities continue to argue that their difficulties are resource based, with a continued lack of investment in these communities. However, whilst comprehensive data on the allocation and deployment of resources is not readily available¹ to aid this discussion there are points worthy of mention.

for spread
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Firstly, resources are distributed in urban areas through the Department's Development Offices on the basis of need and are available to all sections of the communities. There is no evidence to suggest that there has been any skewing of resources away from protestant communities nor an inequitable approach to the allocation of resources. The success of some community-based organisations in protestant areas are a testament to this. Examples include the Shankill and East Belfast Area Partnerships; both have been very effective in attracting and securing resources from a number of sources. Additionally there is no evidence that the level of mainstream financial resources deployed by public services generally are inequitable

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Second, whilst there is an argument that government has not sufficiently skewed resources to areas of social need, there is again no evidence to suggest that protestant areas of high social need have suffered more than catholic areas

¹ The lack of such data perhaps indicates one area for rapid development to support effective policy making in this area

Despite what appears then to be a level playing field in terms of resource availability differences in the pace and level of development in the protestant community are marked in comparison to catholic/nationalist areas. The reasons for this would seem to be related to issues outside the level of resources available to these communities.²

Impact of Investment on Communities

Whilst protestant and catholic areas of high social need have not changed significantly (in terms of indicators of social need) there is certainly evidence to suggest that poverty is better managed by the communities themselves in catholic as opposed to protestant areas. A study of deprivation levels in both protestant and catholic communities shows little change over the recent years however in catholic areas this situation seems to respond in different ways to manage the difficulties. This is illustrated through the greater success of mixed tenure of housing in West Belfast bringing with it a growing number of local people returning to live in the area with consequential benefits in terms of local capacity and continued private development and investment.

Working class catholic areas then often exhibit well developed community infrastructure and effective engagement between community activists and political leaders. In comparison the situation in areas such as Shankill shows a continued decrease in the local population with many protestant areas have the following characteristics:

- a) A high level of paramilitary activity involving, intimidation, violence and criminal; activity.
- b) Decreasing populations where it would appear that the most able and mobile within these communities vote with their feet and move out. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that we are dealing with populations where the leadership cadre is gradually haemorrhaging.³
- c) A residual population where social need is increasing and skills and capacity for generating income are decreasing.
- d) Increasing numbers of individuals moving into these communities who exhibit antisocial behaviour
- e) Poorer performance in all measures of social need; education, crime, and health for example.

On the issue of community infrastructure, while there is as yet no established and recognised means of identifying areas of weak community infrastructure pending further work, there is a good deal of

² In many discussions we have held with catholic community activists about the Local Community Fund, concerns were raised about allocating resources to protestant communities that had failed to make effective use of resources allocated to them.

³ Voluntary and Community organisations complain that it is increasingly difficult to recruit protestant community workers

evidence beginning to emerge illustrating the weaknesses and difficulties being experienced by some communities. The Protestant Unionist Loyalist network, (PUL) have undertaken some focus group work demonstrating the feelings of rural unionist communities, the view emerging is of being left behind, seeing their Catholic neighbours so much more advanced in relation to community development. The PUL research has suggested the need for single identity work as a means of assisting these communities to "catch up"

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In addition evidence from the recent analysis of funding delivered in Northern Ireland under the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation suggests that the situation is deteriorating. Analysis of funding applications shows that Protestant project funding accounts for only 44 % against the Catholic share of 56% of approved funds. Subsequent work by SEUPB to analyse the impact of Peace II Programme funds on loyalist communities is underway, however it is clear that a number of obstacles exist related to limited capacity and confidence in identifying potential sources and accessing funding streams.

Over recent months a number of Government policy initiatives have been launched with the underlying aim of facilitating the transformation of loyalism. Some of these have been more explicit than others, for example the announcement of Government support for a series of pilot community conventions is a direct response to the case made by the Loyalist Think Tank who noted that whilst working class Protestant communities have much in common with Catholic communities, in other respects the experience of loyalist areas is quite distinct and particular. Specific issues identified included educational underachievement, influence of paramilitaries, alienation and stigmatisation.

The Local Community Fund launched as a Fund to establish community capacity and leadership was largely aligned with the needs of the loyalist community although not exclusively so. In announcing this Fund the Government acknowledged that the extent of the problem was greater in loyalist areas. Announcing the Fund, Des Browne said the Fund was being established to "*develop capacity where there is none. And that unfortunately is sometimes in loyalist areas, but we will also use it to reinforce capacity where it is and disproportionately that capacity appears to be in nationalist or republican areas*".

The basket of measures amounting to £7.4 million announced in April, under the banner of the Community Action Group, which included the Local Community Fund, publicly reinforced Government's determination to support practical and tangible measures to improve the position of disadvantaged working class communities. While few of these measures were directed exclusively at Loyalist communities they were set to receive substantial benefits from them.

The NILT data also demonstrates the views of Protestant working class communities showing that since the GF Agreement there has been a significant increase in the number of working class Protestants believing that the Agreement has benefited nationalists more than unionists. Levels of Protestants believing that community relations are worse now than five years ago have also increased significantly.

In relation to education recent research undertaken by the University of Ulster, and funded by OFMDFM, examined attitudes towards participation in Further and Higher education within Belfast found a number of significant religious/community and gender differences amongst Year 12 pupils. In the study, pupils were asked a series of questions about attitudes and aspirations towards further and higher education and the findings resulted in the identification of pupils' aspirations into four categories; 'none', 'FE only', 'University only', and 'both FE and University'

The study found that a greater number of Protestants than expected choose 'None' 'FE only' or 'both' while Catholics are more likely to select: 'university only'. Male pupils were found to be more likely than female pupils to express an intention not to progress, while females tend to select 'Both', 'FE' and 'University only'. Furthermore, the study found that Protestant males in secondary schools are more likely to select 'None' as compared with Catholic males, and Protestant females in secondary schools tend to select 'None' or 'FE only', while Catholic females indicated our categories: 'none', 'FE only', 'University only' and both.

Therefore there is substantial and growing evidence of deterioration across a range of social indicators that are having a particular impact on protestant working class communities.

In conclusion the following points are worth noting.

1. The complex mix in protestant communities of high social need, a lack of confidence in political structures and ineffective leadership will require complex solutions. Availability of resources is not the only or necessarily the deciding factor in achieving successful outcomes.
2. It is unlikely that the complex mix of problems can be addressed in the absence of a determined attempt to address social need.
3. The delivery of effective solutions will require an integrated and strategic approach from government. Uncoordinated short term funding for community programmes will simply exacerbate the fragmentation within these communities. Recent developments in terms on interventions by the Irish government must also be considered in this context.
4. The problem of continued violence by paramilitary organisations will require the co-ordination of approach across all government departments. In particular it will be important that social and economic interventions are complemented by sensitive but effective policing.

5. One size does not fit all. The different dynamics in catholic communities and the use of traditional community development techniques cannot simply be transplanted into protestant communities. As Mark Langhammer has suggested we need to consider other mechanisms for development including the churches and public service development.⁴
6. The major resources going into these communities are currently being channelled through public services. If we are going to use resources differently we must first address how public services are delivered.
7. Leadership is a major problem. We must consider how capacity can be built in protestant communities that deal with the current problems of fragmentation. It is unlikely that a solution will be found that ignores the fragmentation and conflict within political unionism.
8. We must consider whether we are simply managing poverty and declining communities or are we intent on turning those communities round. The two models require different solutions
9. Any developments in protestant areas must take into account the need to build better relations with catholic areas. Separate development is likely to lead back to violence in the medium term⁵

Questions

This analysis leads us to ask fundamental questions as follows:

Levels of investment in protestant communities have been significant and on a par with catholic/ nationalistic communities, yet these same communities have not developed on a similar pace as their counterparts, why?

✓ Have we engaged the most appropriate leaders in these communities, are there alternative/ additional contributors? Is the current leadership burnt out? What role and value could the churches make, is there a greater role for the Orange Order and should we develop relationships with paramilitaries? In rural areas where unique problems exist could organisations such as Rural Community Network and /or Protestant Unionist Loyalist Group make a difference?

How do we develop public services to meet the needs of protestant communities?

November 2003

⁴In a paper for the Task Force on resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector Duncan Morrow comments similarly, "At the risk of over-generalisation, there is a tendency for community development to have stronger roots in traditionally Catholic communities and for issue-based voluntary groups to have Protestant origins. Failure to take these differing structures and experiences into account can lead to unintended and differential consequences."

⁵Duncan Morrow again, "Voluntary and community activity which strengthens existing bonds within groups without reference to, or as an alternative to, other important bridging and linking relationships may actually undermine wider levels of trust and reciprocity. Progressive community development is dependent on improved community relations not an alternative to it"