

Thematic review

Northern Ireland: where is the peace dividend?

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Northern Ireland has been described as a 'post conflict' society with a stable political environment following the peace process, and yet it is a hugely segregated society with significant social deprivation. With peace came the promise of a 'peace dividend' for those most affected by the violence. This paper uses the Department for International Development's (DFID) 'state building for peace' model as a way of understanding and analysing the fragility of the peace process, in particular how the Northern Ireland Executive, in order to maintain legitimacy and stability, has failed to meet public expectations to improve the quality of their lives.

key words: state building for peace • Northern Ireland • quality of life

Introduction

Northern Ireland has enjoyed a period of political stability from 2007 onwards and a significant decline in political violence. While regularly described as a post-conflict society, peace remains fragile not least because of legacy issues such as the highly segregated nature of Northern Ireland and lack of political consensus on how to deal with the past. There also remains an insidious undercurrent of dissident loyalist and republican activities preying on vulnerable communities where they exercise greatest influence. One issue promoted by negotiators in reaching a political settlement was the notion of a 'peace dividend', the likely consequence of which was a better quality of life for those most affected by the 'troubles'. There were at least two elements to the prospect of a better future: attracting inward investment or economic reconstruction; and, a local devolved government using its resources to create a more equal society by targeting the most disadvantaged. The former was premised on the assumption that a peaceful Northern Ireland would attract international investment from companies which previously regarded it as too unstable for a business location. Typical of this international 'open-for-business' endorsement was New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, who addressed an investment conference in Belfast at which he highlighted American support in four key areas: infrastructure, small business development, tourism and private investment. He noted: 'I would be willing to bet that a decade from now, the Dublin–London–Belfast triangle could be one of the largest and most competitive financial hubs in the world if the political situation continues to improve', although he qualified his remarks with reference to demolition of the 'peace' walls (Bloomberg, 2008, 1). The devolved government has also directed its resources towards disadvantaged areas in an effort to deliver improvements in the quality of life

1 for those communities which are marginalised by poverty, social exclusion and the
 2 legacy of conflict but thus far has been unable to strengthen state–society relations.

4 **State building for peace**

5
 6 In broad terms a twin track methodology has been adopted to peace building in
 7 Northern Ireland: structural and behavioural approaches. In terms of the former, the
 8 aim was to secure political accommodation through the establishment of inclusive
 9 power sharing devolved institutions (McGarry and O’Leary, 2004) and put in place
 10 equality and human rights legislation which would guarantee fairness for the minority
 11 community (Dickson and Osborne, 2007). It is important to note, however, that
 12 devolution in itself was a necessary but insufficient prerequisite for peace building
 13 in Northern Ireland. As Morrow (2010, 12) argues, ‘devolution was a vital new
 14 beginning, holding out the possibility government might lead by symbol and action
 15 to a just, peaceful, secure and inclusive future. What it was not, was the totality of
 16 peace building’. The legacy of violence and division, not least a highly segregated
 17 society, remains unresolved. In terms of the behavioural approach to peace building,
 18 there is ongoing support for reconciliation through cross–community contact schemes
 19 which aim to reduce prejudice, increase tolerance and promote mutual understanding
 20 between the two main communities (Hughes et al, 2011).

21 The international literature on peace building endorses these two approaches albeit
 22 with some limitations and refinements (see Moaz’s study (2011) on reconciliation work
 23 between Israeli Jews and Palestinians in the past 20 years). Wolff (2011), for example,
 24 argues that establishing consociational (power–sharing) institutions offers significant
 25 opportunities for building democratic states after conflict in divided societies.
 26 Hoogenboom and Vieille’s study (2010) on Bosnia stresses the importance of fostering
 27 reconciliation and recreating social trust as necessary elements for ensuring lasting
 28 peace. O’Brien’s comparative study (2007) of South Africa and Northern Ireland
 29 emphasises the need for people participation through a community development
 30 approach as a way of sustaining peace and reconciliation in post–settlement contexts.

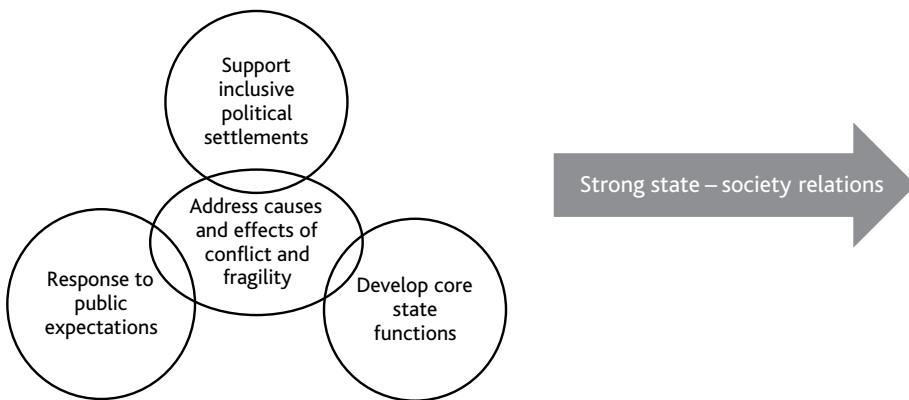
31 There are also international lessons for peace building from the ongoing experience
 32 of post–conflict Northern Ireland. Rocha Menocal (2011) outlines the two leading
 33 approaches to promoting peace in conflict–afflicted fragile states as: (i) *peace building*
 34 defined as building ‘positive peace’, characterised by social harmony, respect for
 35 the rule of law and human rights and social and economic development (Galtung,
 36 1996); and (ii) *state building* or the state’s capacity, institutions and legitimacy, and
 37 the political and economic processes that underpin state–society relations (Fritz
 38 and Rocha Menocal, 2007). Rocha Menocal highlights the recent trend to conflate
 39 these two approaches into a new ‘state building for peace’ model endorsed by the
 40 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2012). The Department for
 41 International Development (DFID, 2010) has also developed an integrated approach
 42 to state building and peace building which it uses to inform its work in fragile and
 43 conflict–affected countries.

44 DFID’s composite state building for peace framework comprises four key elements
 45 aimed at strengthening state–society relations through the following inter–related
 46 objectives:
 47
 48

1. address the causes and effects of conflict and fragility focusing on prevention and supporting positive capacities for peace, and build conflict resolution mechanisms;
2. support inclusive political settlements and processes that can promote more inclusive decision making beyond the preserve of elites;
3. develop core state functions such as security, law, justice, financial and macro-economic management of the state; and
4. respond to public expectations for jobs and growth, delivery of basic services, human rights and democratic processes (DFID, 2010).

Successful interventions by DFID and other donor organisations in conflict countries offers support for the robustness of this model aimed at strengthening state–society relations (see Figure 1). This conceptual framework is useful in analysing the circumstances of Northern Ireland as a country involved in peace building and assessing the causes of fragility in the process thus far.

Figure 1: Building peaceful states and societies



Source: DFID (2010)

This paper will argue that although Northern Ireland has been largely successful in addressing the causes and effects of the conflict and putting in place inclusive political institutions with core state functions such as security, law, justice and macro-economic management, it has failed to meet public expectations for a 'peace dividend' from those most affected by the conflict. The paper is organised in four parts – first, it examines the fragility of the Northern Ireland peace process to date; second, it considers the impact of the strategy deployed by the devolved government to meet public expectations for peace, in particular through the *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*; third it outlines a new approach, entitled *Delivering Social Change*, as a framework for tackling multi-faceted deprivation problems which thus far appear to have been intractable; and finally it reflects on the DFID framework as a conceptual map for strengthening state–society relations based on the experience of Northern Ireland.

A fragile peace

Notwithstanding the two major achievements since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of political stability and a significant decline in violence, there remains a


1 significant undercurrent of discontent among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable
2 in Northern Ireland and questions are asked about what the peace process has meant
3 for them. Since many of these communities were in the front line of violence, not
4 surprisingly people in these areas expected a better quality of life at the other side of
5 a peace process. The fact that this does not appear to have happened may, at least in
6 part, explain the fragility of post-conflict Northern Ireland.


7 This fragility is exemplified in street riots (December 2012) which followed a
8 decision by Belfast City Council to limit the number of days the Union flag could
9 be flown over the City Hall from 365 to 17 designated days throughout the year.
10 Nationalists on the Council had wanted to remove the flag permanently but voted
11 in favour of a compromise proposal by the Alliance Party, which holds the balance
12 of power, to restrict it to designated days, consistent with practice in Stormont's
13 Parliament Buildings. Riots resulted as 1,500 objectors gathered outside Belfast City
14 Hall in protest, followed by violence orchestrated by loyalist paramilitaries and a
15 campaign of blocking roads across Northern Ireland. Much of the anger was directed
16 towards members of the Alliance Party, several of whom witnessed their properties
17 being attacked or, in the case of Naomi Long, MP for East Belfast, received a death
18 threat. The fragility of the peace process is also apparent during the traditional
19 marching season. In July 2009 riots broke out in North Belfast (Ardoyne) following
20 parades by the Orange Orders through nationalist/republican strongholds. Each year
21 since then there has been significant violence surrounding contested marching routes
22 with the police appealing for a political consensus on parades which has thus far
23 been impossible to achieve. As one former Alliance Party leader put it: 'the war may
24 be over but the battle for reconciliation has not even begun' (Cushnahan, 2012, 14).

25 Protestants claim that since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, republicans
26 have engaged in a campaign of stealth to erode their Britishness. Loyalists, in turn,
27 feel alienated from the state, an example of which is the police service of Northern
28 Ireland, which stands accused of inconsistency in their approach to street protests. These
29 assertions has been buoyed up by the release of the 2011 census figures which show an
30 increase (since 2001) in the overall Catholic population from 44 to 45% and a decline
31 in Protestants from 53 to 48%, the first time the latter are in a minority in terms of
32 the overall population, although just one in four of Northern Ireland's 1.8m people
33 sees themselves as exclusively Irish (NISRA, 2012). Unionists cite the disbandment
34 of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, successive inquiries into alleged atrocities against
35 nationalists during the conflict, former IRA 'terrorists' sitting in government and
36 restrictions on Orange Order parades as examples of an insidious process to dilute
37 their British identity – the issue of the Union flag was merely an extension or a
38 tipping point in these developments. The Protestant working class consider itself
39 badly served by traditional unionist parties providing little more than voting fodder.
40 This is combined with a withdrawal from political activity by the Protestant middle
41 class. Some attempts have been made to reinterpret the loyalist tradition through a
42 more class-based focus led by community activists which is attempting 'to organise
43 the Protestant working class into a self-conscious political force' (Cassidy, 2008, 411).

44 Other factors have fuelled loyalism's sense of embattlement – as one commentator
45 put it 'the economy has collapsed, leaving working-class Protestants jobless – a
46 common refrain is that they cannot afford to visit the new Titanic Centre [a tourist
47 attraction in Belfast] even though their grandfathers built the ship' (Fletcher, 2012,
48 3). As business and tourist leaders warn, images of rioting attract international media

1 coverage which makes their job of securing inward investment hugely difficult at a
 2 time when the unemployment rate (December 2012) is 7.8%, and specifically for
 3 18–24 year olds is 18.9% (Department of Finance and Personnel, 2012). This was
 4 conveyed by a leader article discussing disorder following the loyalist marches in July
 5 2012 as follows:

6
 7 The task of creating new jobs is made more difficult by riots, yet most of
 8 those in balaclavas are themselves jobless. They come from tough areas;
 9 their families never placed proper value on education. A dismayingly large
 10 proportion of young people have trouble reading and writing. But there
 11 they are, every 12th July, illiterate politically as well as academically, supplying
 12 dramatic pictures [of Northern Ireland to the media]. (Independent, 2011,
 13 8) **[[not in references, is 2012]]** 

14
 15 Education underachievement among the Protestant population is particularly acute.
 16 From the 10 electoral wards exhibiting lowest levels of education attainment, seven
 17 are in Protestant working-class areas (Nolan, 2013). Historically, Protestants living in
 18 these areas attached much less importance to education given their access to traditional
 19 industries and networks (such as the Orange Order) which facilitated employment
 20 opportunities. Conversely, the Catholic working class saw education as the route out
 21 of deprivation. Notwithstanding evidence on education, deprivation data show that
 22 overall, Catholics experience much greater socio-economic disadvantage. Of the top
 23 twenty most disadvantaged wards, 16 have a majority Catholic population and, at the
 24 other end of the scale, only six of the 20 least disadvantaged wards have a Catholic
 25 majority (Nolan, 2013). The Family Resources Survey (2013) **[[not in references]]** 
 26 shows 22% of Catholics living in households experiencing poverty, compared to 17%
 27 of Protestants. There are also regional perceptions of disadvantage and discrimination.
 28 Catholics in Derry/Londonderry, the site of the civil rights movement, some 45 years
 29 on, feel that Protestant/Unionist ministers have re-routed structural funding (on roads
 30 and railways) away from the north-east of the Province towards the unionist east.

31 To add to the fragility of peace on the ground, confidence in the achievements of
 32 political institutions is low. A public opinion poll for the *Belfast Telegraph* conducted
 33 in May 2012 (random sample of 1,267 residents aged 18+) asked respondents the
 34 following question: ‘Compared to direct rule from Westminster, how would you rate
 35 the performance of the Northern Ireland Assembly?’ A small percentage (9%) of
 36 respondents suggested performance was ‘excellent’ (1%) or ‘good’ (8%); 33% stated
 37 that the Northern Ireland Assembly was making ‘no difference’; and 41% felt that
 38 performance was ‘poor’ (27%) or ‘very poor’ (14%); and the remainder (17%) expressed
 39 ‘no opinion’. The results were consistent across the religious divide and varied little
 40 by gender, age or social class. As one commentator pointed out, the question posed
 41 in the survey ‘sets the bar very low for the main political institution arising from the
 42 Belfast Agreement of 1998: before the Agreement, direct rule was widely castigated
 43 for its democratic deficit’ (Wilson, 2012, 33). Devolved government has much to do
 44 in order to inspire public confidence.
 45
 46
 47
 48

Where is the peace dividend?

Not surprisingly, given the above, there has been much discussion on the ‘peace dividend’ – in other words, what has been the impact of peace on those areas most affected by violence and social disadvantage in Northern Ireland? Although there is much anecdotal evidence from community organisations operating in working-class areas that they have been ‘left behind’, little independent research exists (although see Nolan’s work on inequalities, 2012, 79–112).

To capture the extent of the absence of a peace dividend and whether the peace process has met public expectations, we first consider data from the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM). The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure was first produced in 2001 and used to identify the 10% most deprived electoral wards at that time. The NIMDM was updated in 2005 and in 2010. The 2010 measure comprises seven domains of deprivation, each developed to measure a distinct form or type of deprivation, and weighted as follows: income deprivation (25%); employment deprivation (25%); health deprivation and disability (15%); education skills and training deprivation (15%), proximity to services (10%), living environment (5%); and crime and disorder (5%). The deprivation domains are constructed from indicators grouped according to the type of deprivation they measure. In total 52 indicators were included in the overall multiple deprivation measure (NISRA, 2010).

It is not possible to compare the three datasets (2001, 2005 and 2010) to assess changes over time because: NIMDM is a relative measure of deprivation and cannot be used to assess absolute changes in deprivation; indicators used to make up each domain changed; ward boundaries changed; and, population size and demography changed over time (Love, 2011). It is, however, possible to consider the rankings of the top 10% most deprived wards ($n = 56$) between the periods 2001 to 2010. Of the 56 wards that were ranked in the 10% most deprived wards in 2001, 42 were also ranked most deprived in 2010. So in relative terms, 75% of wards which were in the top 10% of most deprived in 2001 are still those most disadvantaged areas in 2010.

To obtain a more detailed picture of changes over time it is possible to consider a different unit of analysis than electoral wards (linked to the multiple deprivation measure) and build a picture of changes in the quality of people’s lives since the political settlement. In June 2003, the government (under Direct Rule Ministers) launched a policy document entitled *People and place: A strategy for neighbourhood renewal*. This long-term (10+ years) strategy targeted those communities throughout Northern Ireland suffering the highest levels of deprivation. Neighbourhood renewal is a cross government strategy, led by the Department for Social Development, and aims to bring together the work of all government departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in all aspects of everyday life. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme was therefore to reduce the social and economic inequalities which characterise the most deprived areas. It does so by making a long-term commitment to communities to work in partnership with them to identify and prioritise needs and co-ordinate interventions designed to address the underlying causes of poverty.

The programme had four key elements:

- 1 • community renewal: to develop confident communities that are able and
- 2 committed to improving the quality of life in the most deprived neighbourhoods;
- 3 • economic renewal: to develop economic activity in the most deprived
- 4 neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider urban economy;
- 5 • social renewal: to improve social conditions for the people who live in the most
- 6 deprived neighbourhoods through better co-ordinated public services and the
- 7 creation of safer environments;
- 8 • physical renewal: to help create attractive, safe sustainable environments in the
- 9 most deprived neighbourhoods.

10
11 In the seven year period (2003–10) some £140m was spent on the neighbourhood
12 renewal programme to improve social, economic and physical conditions. In addition,
13 there was £77.5m spend in 2008–11 on urban regeneration projects which included
14 the transformation of the City Centre of Derry/Londonderry, the new Peace Bridge
15 over the river Foyle, the Belfast Streets Ahead project (implemented to transform
16 Belfast City Centre) and major public realm improvements (Northern Ireland
17 Executive, 2011, 17). From 2011 onwards there is a £20m recurrent and £6–£8m
18 capital funding yearly resource commitment for a four-year period.

19 These resources were targeted using the following selection process. Neighbourhoods
20 in the most deprived 10% of wards across Northern Ireland were identified using the
21 multiple deprivation measure discussed above. Following extensive consultation, this
22 resulted in a total of 36 areas, and a population of approximately 280,000 (one person
23 in six in Northern Ireland), being targeted for intervention. The areas included: 15
24 in Belfast; six in the North West (including four in the city of Derry/Londonderry)
25 and 15 in other towns and cities across Northern Ireland.


26 Neighbourhood partnerships were established in each neighbourhood renewal area
27 as a vehicle for local planning and implementation. Each neighbourhood partnership
28 included representatives of key political, statutory, voluntary, community and private
29 sector stakeholders. Together, they developed long-term vision and action plans
30 designed to improve the quality of life for those living in neighbourhood renewal areas.

31 A limited range of data are available which allow us to build a picture of changes
32 in the quality of life over time between those living in neighbourhood renewal areas
33 (NRAs) and the rest of Northern Ireland (non-NRAs). The basket of indicators
34 could be more comprehensive in depicting what constitutes 'quality of life' but we
35 are limited to the available data over the timeframe relevant to this paper. We have
36 chosen six key indicators (in no order of importance) as follows:

- 37
- 38 • Education: the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs A*–C grades, including
- 39 English and Maths in the respective areas (neighbourhood renewal areas and
- 40 non-neighbourhood renewal areas)
- 41 • Social welfare 1: Disability Living Allowance recipients as a percentage of the
- 42 population in the respective areas
- 43 • Social welfare 2: Jobseeker's Allowance as a percentage of those eligible to work
- 44 in the respective areas

45
46 The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme refers to these two social welfare
47 indicators as measures of 'worklessness'.


- 1 • Mental health: suicides per 100,000 population in the respective areas
- 2 • Health: life expectancy (males) per 100,000 population in the respective areas
- 3 • Crime: recorded crime (offences) as percentage of the population in respective
- 4 areas.

5
6 The data available were limited by collation of information using neighbourhood
7 renewal areas as the unit of analysis. Hence the tables of results below **[[no tables,**
8 **if this is referring to the figures, best to say, Figures 00 to 00]]** were built 
9 from the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) database
10 held by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). In selecting
11 these measures we have attempted to be consistent with the outcome indicators for
12 the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme which officials categorise as: education,
13 worklessness, health and crime (DSD, 2011, 138).

14 15 Improved quality of life: evidence

16
17 We examine each of the six selected indicators in turn as evidence of an improvement
18 in the quality of life or a peace dividend for those living in the most disadvantaged
19 areas of Northern Ireland.

20 21 *Education*

22
23 Education achievement is a key determinant of life chances and lifetime earnings.
24 The indicator: percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs at A*-C (with English and
25 Maths), is seen as being a more accurate measure of educational achievement than
26 the equivalent which excludes English and Maths. The Department of Education
27 did not disaggregate results in this way until 2007 onwards. An independent-samples
28 t-test compared GCSE performance in both areas. There is a significant difference in
29 educational attainment for neighbourhood renewal areas ($M = 37.13, SD = 2.11$) and
30 non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have added in opening parenthesis – OK?]]** 
31 ($M = 62.35, SD = 62.35$); $t(6) = -20.52, p = 0.000$ two-tailed). The magnitude of
32 the difference in the means (mean difference = -25.22 , 95% CI: -28.23 to -22.21)
33 is very large (eta squared = 0.98). Therefore 98% of the variance in GCSEs result is
34 explained by location, whether one lives in a neighbourhood renewal area or not. The
35 data show a marginal increase in education performance over time but less than 1%
36 decrease in the educational performance gap between non-neighbourhood renewal
37 areas and neighbourhood renewal areas (see Figure 2).

38 39 *Social Welfare/worklessness 1*


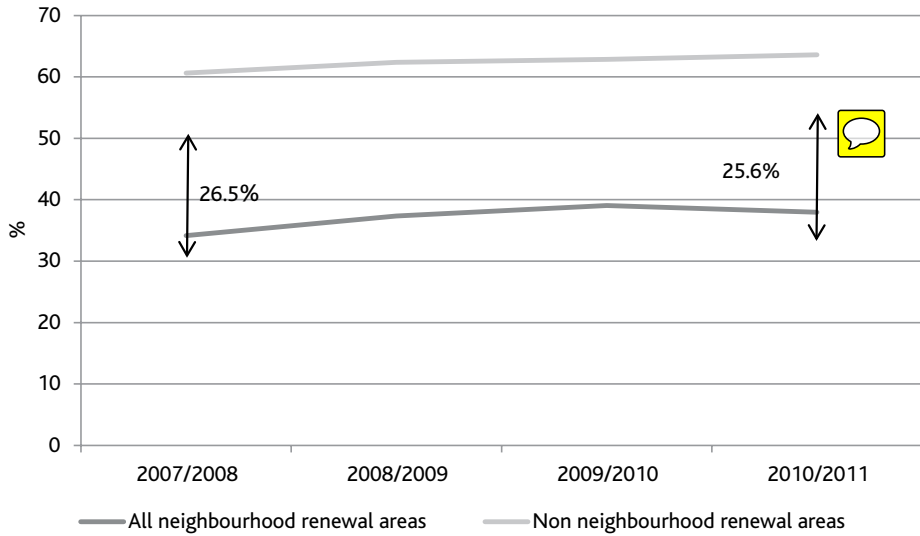
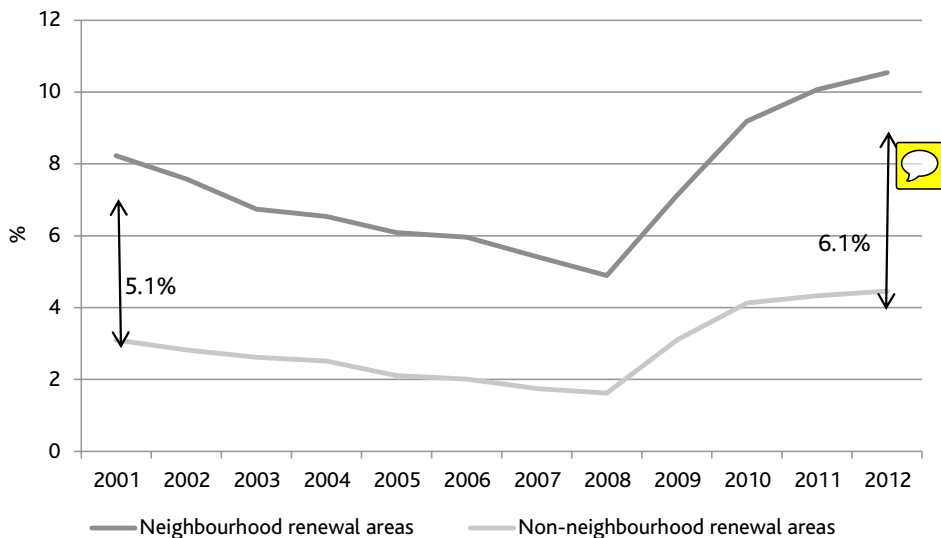
40
41 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a state benefit for those who need help getting
42 around and/or looking after oneself because of illness, disability or terminal illness.
43 Disability Living Allowance can also be claimed for an ill or disabled child. Disability
44 Living Allowance (DLA) is not based on one's disability but the needs arising from it.
45 An independent-samples t-test compared disability allowance claimants in both areas.
46 There is a significant difference in the percentage of claimants from neighbourhood
47 renewal areas ($M = 16.84, SD = 1.32$) and non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have** 
48 **added in opening parenthesis – OK?]]** ($M = 7.72, SD = 1.02$); $t(26) = 20.38, p$

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs (with English and Maths)



= 0.000 two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 9.11, 95% CI: 8.20 to 10.03) is very large (eta squared = 0.94). Therefore 94% of the variance in DLA claimants is explained by location, whether one lives in a neighbourhood renewal area or not. The data show an increasing number of disability allowance claimants in both areas (neighbourhood renewal and non-neighbourhood renewal areas) and an expanding social welfare gap from 8.6% to 9.2% over time (see Figure 3).

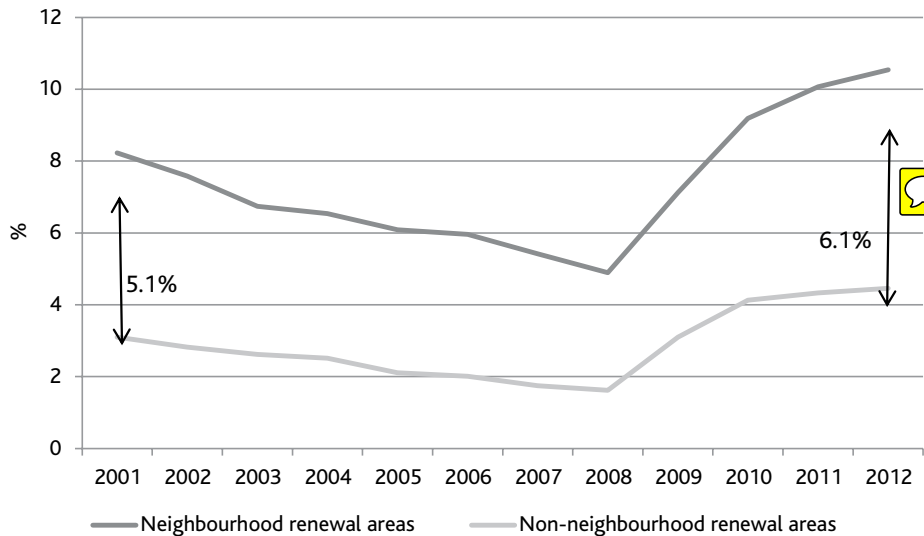
Figure 3: Disability Living Allowance as % of population in respective areas



Social Welfare/worklessness 2

Jobseekers allowance is the main benefit for people of working age who are out of work or work less than 16 hours per week on average. An independent-samples t-test compared job seekers allowance as a proportion of eligible populations in both areas. There is a significant difference in the percentage of those claiming job seekers allowance for neighbourhood renewal areas ($M = 7.36, SD = 1.81$) and non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have added in opening parenthesis – OK?]** ($M = 2.88, SD = 0.98$); $t(22) = 7.53, p = 0.000$ two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 4.48, 95% CI: 3.23 to 5.74) is very large (eta squared = 0.72). Therefore 72% of the variance in jobseekers claimants is explained by location, whether one lives in a neighbourhood renewal area or not. The data show an increasing number of job seekers allowance claimants in both areas (neighbourhood renewal and non-neighbourhood renewal areas) and an expanding social welfare gap from 5.1% to 6.1% over time (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Job seekers allowance as % of eligible population

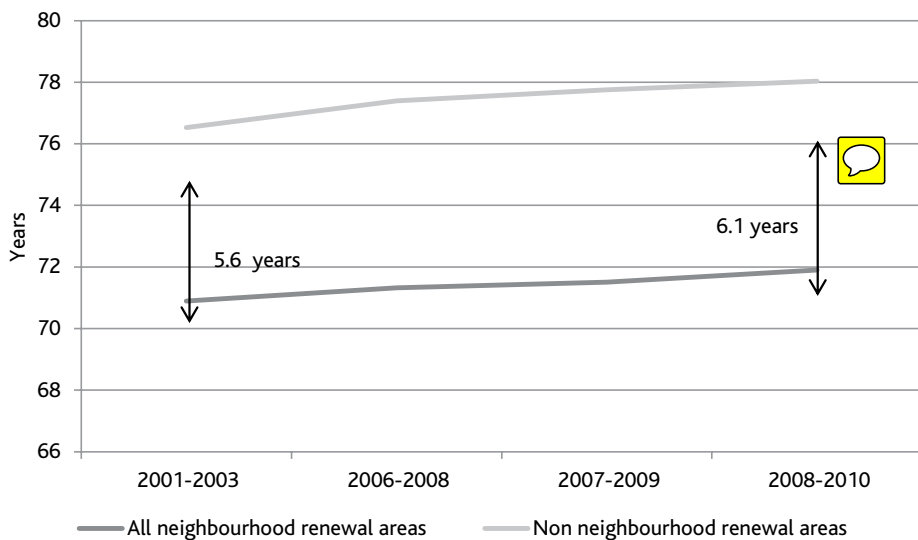


Mental health

We attempt to capture mental health through the indicator: suicides in respective areas, accepting that the causes of suicides can be multiple and complex, not least unemployment and poor access to public services which could help vulnerable people. Specifically in Northern Ireland, however, the legacy of the conflict could play an important part in suicides and the impact of systemic deprivation. Belfast Consultant psychiatrist, Philip McGarry, contends that because paramilitary violence remains a feature of working-class communities 'long after' the Belfast (Good Friday) agreement was signed, and the fact that so many young men in those areas have mental health problems as a result, is no coincidence (O'Hara, 2011, 3). An independent-samples

t-test compared suicide rates in both areas. There is a significant difference in the number of suicides for neighbourhood renewal areas ($M = 24.05$, $SD = 5.64$) and non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have added in opening parenthesis – OK?]]**) ($M = 11.39$, $SD = 2.06$); $t(6) = 4.2$, $p = 0.006$ two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 12.66, 95% CI: 5.32 to 20.01) is very large ($\eta^2 = 0.75$). Therefore 75% of the variance in suicide is explained by location whether one lives in a neighbourhood renewal area or not. The data show a sharp increase in the number of suicides in neighbourhood renewal areas and an expanding mental health gap from 7.7 to 15.9 suicides per 100,000 persons over time (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Suicide rates per 100,000 persons

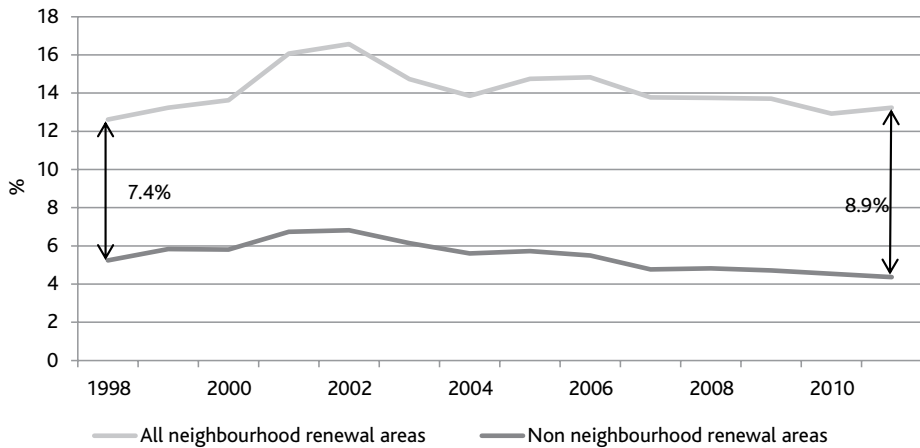


Health

Because health status is a multi-dimensional concept, average lifespan is used as an indicator of the average number of years a person can expect to live, if in the future they experience the current age-specific mortality rates in the population. An independent-samples t-test compared male life expectancy in both areas. There is a significant difference in life expectancy between neighbourhood renewal areas ($M = 71.4$, $SD = 0.42$) and non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have added in opening parenthesis – OK?]]**) ($M = 77.42$, $SD = 0.65$); $t(6) = -15.53$, $p = 0.000$ two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = -6.02, 95% CI: -6.95 to -5.07) is very large ($\eta^2 = 0.97$). Therefore 97% of variance in male life expectancy is explained by location, whether one lives in a neighbourhood renewal area or not. The data show that there has been an overall increase in life expectancy by 1 year and 1.5 years for males living in neighbourhood renewal areas and non-neighbourhood renewal areas respectively. Overall, however,

1 males living in neighbourhood renewal areas live six years less than their equivalent
 2 in non-neighbourhood renewal areas (see Figure 6).
 3

4 **Figure 6: Male life expectancy in years**

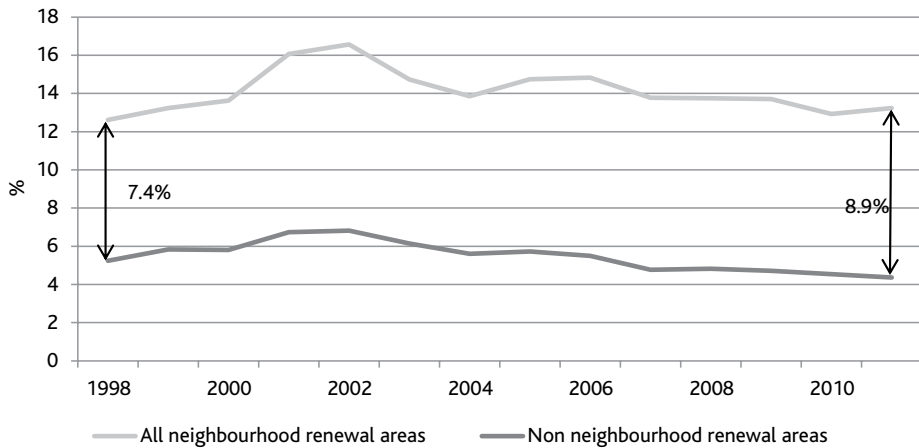


22 *Crime*

24 Recorded crime (offences) data according to the Police Service of Northern Ireland
 25 (PSNI) are based on an aggregated count of each crime within the notifiable offence
 26 list. Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury
 27 (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually
 28 be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely related offences, such as assault
 29 without injury. Recorded crime figures are used widely within PSNI for management
 30 information, to monitor performance on crime and detection rate targets against
 31 the Policing Plan, to inform PSNI policy and to provide information in support
 32 of operational research identifying appropriate allocation of police resource (PSNI,
 33 2012). An independent-samples t-test compared recorded crimes in both areas. There
 34 is a significant difference in the number of recorded crimes between neighbourhood
 35 renewal areas ($M = 14.12, SD = 1.15$) and non-neighbourhood renewal areas (**[[have
 36 added in opening parenthesis – OK?]]** ($M = 5.47, SD = 0.78$); $t(26) = 23.39, p$
 37 $= 0.000$ two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference
 38 $= 8.65, 95\% \text{ CI: } 7.89 \text{ to } 9.41$) was very large ($\eta^2 = 0.95$). Therefore 95%
 39 of the variance in recorded crime is explained by location, whether one lives in a
 40 neighbourhood renewal area or not. The data show a marginal increase in recorded
 41 crimes in neighbourhood renewal areas over the period 1998–2011 (+0.61) and
 42 decrease in non-neighbourhood renewal areas (-0.87). What is important, however,
 43 is that the gap between recorded crimes in these areas has widened over this period
 44 (see Figure 7).

45 In summary, we can conclude that aside from educational performance, the quality
 46 of life of those living in neighbourhood renewal areas is declining relative to non-
 47 neighbourhood renewal areas as judged by the above indicators. In terms of educational
 48 performance there has been a marginal improvement since 2007/08 in both NRAs

Figure 7: Recorded crime (offences) as % of population in respective areas



and non-NRAs but less than 1% reduction in the performance gap over that period. Disability living allowance recipients has grown in both areas since 1998 and the gap in the number of recipients has widened. Those receiving job seekers allowance have increased in both areas but the gap has widened by almost 1%. The largest difference in NRAs and non-NRAs since 1999 is the number of suicides recorded in the former. The difference in life expectancy for males living in NRAs relative to non-NRAs continues to increase, some 6.1 years more for those living in the latter. Although there has been a decreasing trend in recorded crime (offences) since 1998, the performance gap between areas has increased. In short, there has been no peace dividend for those living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland, in fact their quality of life appears to be marginally declining further vis-à-vis their non-NRAs neighbours. It is of course true to say that a more comprehensive basket of indicators would help to inform this analysis and some of the data (for example, education performance) have not been collated in the presented format over a sufficiently long period of time.

Departmental analysis

The Department for Social Development (DSD), the lead department in government, which co-ordinated neighbourhood renewal completed an internal mid-term review of its *People and Place Strategy* which monitored progress up until 2008/09 – effectively an interim evaluation of the policy to that point (DSD, 2011). The evaluation noted that the main aim of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme was to reduce the gap between the most deprived neighbourhood and the rest of the country and flagged the importance of being ‘realistic about what the programme has or might have achieved’ (DSD, 2011, 3). The report concluded with a number of key findings which included:

- 1 • While there has been some narrowing of the gap between the neighbourhood
2 renewal areas and the rest of Northern Ireland on a range of outcome indicators,
3 the areas remain some way behind in both relative and absolute terms.
- 4 • The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy has laid the foundations necessary for
5 future action.
- 6 • Given the scale of the problems still remaining in the most deprived areas, the
7 regeneration programmes will not be enough on their own to achieve significant
8 change (DSD, 2011, 6–7).

9
10 The tone and substance of these conclusions suggest that the internal (Department
11 for Social Development) evaluators were dampening expectations of narrowing the
12 gap between NRAs and non-NRAs. The empirical section in this paper which
13 considers the most recent outcome indicators suggests that such pessimism is well
14 founded. The internal evaluators expressed concerns about their ‘ability to assess the
15 impact of the programme’ more specifically they argued:

16
17 There is generally a lack of solid evidence of the overall impact of
18 geographically targeted programmes on multiple deprivation. Such evidence
19 as there is suggest that the gap between the most deprived areas in Northern
20 Ireland and the rest has not closed in any substantial way (and it is likely that
21 the most deprived areas are particularly affected by economic downturn). It
22 has been suggested that without targeted programmes the gap would have
23 widened further. There is a need to understand the impact of programmes
24 and to improve understanding of what works. (DSD, 2011, 138)

25
26 To be more explicit about what officials imply. The neighbourhood renewal
27 programme did not have adequate baseline information, outcome indicators emerged
28 or were refined over time and data had to be gathered accordingly, and there is no
29 way of attributing positive movement in reducing the gap between the most deprived
30 neighbourhoods and the rest of Northern Ireland to the neighbourhood renewal
31 programme intervention. What is more difficult to explain is the fact that the original
32 paper prepared by the Northern Ireland Assembly, Research and Library Service (Love,
33 2011) which tracked some of these indicators has been withdrawn from the official
34 website. Could politicians or officials be fearful of what these data would reveal and
35 their political sensitivity?

36 In addition, there were ongoing implementation problems. Some statutory
37 organisations did not fully commit to engaging in delivering change through
38 neighbourhood renewal. Too much money was expended in supporting the core
39 costs of organisations rather than on delivering services and not enough emphasis on
40 changing the economic fundamentals of areas as one key way to address deprivation
41 is to encourage and support people into employment. There were weaknesses in
42 relation to the ability and willingness of some neighbourhood renewal partnerships
43 to create radical and deliverable plans, and variation across neighbourhood renewal
44 areas in the quality and content of their plans. The Minister for Social Development
45 argued that there is ‘patchy participation by some key statutory organisations in some
46 local areas; a need to improve the alignment in some areas with other initiatives that
47 have an impact on poor health, educational attainment, worklessness and economic
48 vitality; and a lack of broad, local political engagement’ (McCausland, 2011). The

1 Department for Social Development has committed, by the end of 2014/15, to
2 introduce a successor programme for neighbourhood renewal to tackle deprivation
3 and regenerate the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (DSD, 2012, 10).

4 In summary, there are three significant problems emerging from the experience
5 of the neighbourhood renewal programme. First, it has proved impossible to secure
6 cross-departmental buy-in to a policy which requires not only a commitment across
7 government but also a sustained relationship with the voluntary and community
8 sectors. Second, after almost 10 years of investment in a relatively stable political
9 environment, quality of life indicators have barely shifted or got worse between
10 disadvantaged areas and the rest of Northern Ireland. With such limited prospects,
11 young people living in these areas feel no sense of commitment or engagement and
12 hence are vulnerable to paramilitary influence. For them, there has been no peace
13 dividend. Young Protestant unemployed males, in particular, feel abandoned with
14 little prospects, and subject to perceived or real threats to their identity. Third, the
15 internal evaluators of the programme (officials within the Department for Social
16 Development) point out that 'there is no consistent output monitoring of activities
17 and, as a consequence, there is no evidence base of interventions to move from baseline
18 to outcomes' (DSD, 2011, 138). In other words, there is no way of robustly assessing
19 the impact of the programme.
20

21 A different approach

22
23 Given the experiences outlined above of trying to tackle social disadvantage, a new
24 initiative entitled *Delivering Social Change* was launched in March 2012 by the First
25 Minister. It seeks to address the lack of co-ordination in tackling cross-departmental
26 themes. As the evidence from the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme shows,
27 departments tend to operate within functional silos unsuited to public policy issues
28 which are multi-faceted in nature. Specifically *Delivering Social Change* is a delivery
29 framework located in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
30 (OFMDFM) and is designed to tackle multi-generational poverty and to improve
31 children's health, wellbeing, educational and life opportunities. *Delivering Social*
32 *Change* involves a small number of cross-cutting strategic themes which aim to
33 make a significant difference and is additional to existing work within government
34 departments.

35 At the launch of the £26m initiative the First Minister noted:

36
37 The reality is that we cannot continue to address the so-called intractable
38 problems of poverty and social inclusion using the methods employed in the
39 past. We have too many strategies, too many policies and too many action
40 plans, many of which refer to work already proposed or under way and do
41 not add real value. The difference with this new approach is that we are not
42 interested in producing vast and unwieldy documents for their own sake.
43 (Robinson, 2012, 2)
44

45 In making a commitment to deliver social change where it is most needed, Ministers
46 in OFMDFM identified a number of key challenges that are contributing to the
47 continuation of poverty and deprivation. These include: problems with literacy and
48 numeracy; the need for parenting support and early development intervention for

1 children; and, lack of employment opportunities coupled with local community
 2 dereliction. Addressing these severe long-term structural problems Ministers argued,
 3 required a partnership approach across society including people and communities,
 4 businesses and wider civic society. In short, *Delivering Social Change* is about moving
 5 away from action plans with long lists of existing activities towards smaller numbers
 6 of cross-cutting and strategic objectives that can make a significant difference and
 7 are additional to existing work across government.

8 The government announced (October 2012) six signature projects under this
 9 initiative (duration two years): additional literacy and numeracy measures; family
 10 support hubs; positive parenting programmes; social enterprise incubation hubs;
 11 support for young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs); and,
 12 nurture units.

13 Departments come together with strong and visible ministerial leadership to
 14 deliver these actions through the Delivering Social Change governance structures
 15 co-ordinated via the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. What is
 16 important is that there will be a particular focus on outcomes which will assess the
 17 extent to which projects under Delivering Social Change support the improvement
 18 of life chances. As the junior Minister in OFMDFM argued:

19
 20 Delivering Social Change is about delivering projects that are going to make
 21 a change in people's lives. Delivering those actions and projects to people on
 22 the ground will make a change in the quality of their life. (McCann, 2012, 9)

23
 24 Delivering Social Change is therefore a framework for cross-cutting work which
 25 is intended to have an impact on the quality of life of the most disadvantaged with
 26 a specific focus on breaking the long-term cycle of multi-generational poverty.
 27 What makes it different from the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme is the co-
 28 ordinating role played by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister,
 29 the strength of Ministerial leadership, and a determination to develop an outcomes-
 30 focused model which challenges departments to demonstrate quality of life and life
 31 chance improvements.

32 33 34 **Conclusions**






35 This paper has argued that political stability, a power-sharing devolved administration,
 36 and the significant decline in violence, have been hugely welcome developments in
 37 Northern Ireland. It must also be acknowledged that 'peace' and stability are still very
 38 fragile in a society which has emerged from over 30 years of violence. Dissident threats
 39 remain and seemingly innocuous decisions surrounding the flying of the Union flag
 40 over public buildings have the potential to trigger widespread street protests and an
 41 unwelcome return to violence. A dangerous undercurrent of republican violence
 42 still exists. A group calling itself 'the IRA', which is made up of the *Real IRA* and
 43 *Republican Action against Drugs*, joined forces and has claimed responsibility for
 44 murder and intimidation within their own community. The first political mandate
 45 following the restoration of devolution (2007–11) has demonstrated the capacity of
 46 political opponents to share power and work together in coalition, albeit one which
 47 is dominated by the two largest political parties (DUP and Sinn Féin) much to the
 48 chagrin of smaller parties who complain of exclusion from key decisions or a political

1 'carve-up'. Having established its political bona fides the devolved government is now
2 expected to tackle some of the most difficult legacy issues from the conflict period
3 of which the much vaunted 'peace dividend' is one. The evidence from this paper
4 suggests that the primary policy vehicle for addressing disadvantage (Neighbourhood
5 Renewal Strategy) has met with limited success; in fact, the performance gap on key
6 quality of life indicators is widening, not helped by a squeeze on public spending and
7 the wider global economic crisis. Notwithstanding these wider contextual pressures,
8 fragmented governance appears to have played a major part in the failure to tackle
9 cross-cutting issues which have most impact on disadvantaged communities. In an
10 effort to break this cycle of multi-generational poverty and social exclusion *Delivering*
11 *Social Change* has been devised as a framework for integrated service delivery. The
12 location of this initiative at the centre of the devolved administration (in OFMDFM)
13 and the strength of political leadership and endorsement by Ministers offer the
14 prospects for 'joined-up' government. Politicians feel the pressure from their electorate
15 to move beyond constitutional squabbling and the need to tackle issues which have
16 an impact on the quality of people's lives. *Delivering Social Change* is their proposed
17 way of demonstrating that there is a peace dividend for the most disadvantaged from
18 the peace process.

19 What lessons are there from the Northern Ireland experience in terms of 'state
20 building for peace' for other 'fragile' post-conflict societies? We return to the DFID's
21 'building peaceful states and societies' framework. Evidence from this study would
22 suggest that there is the potential to underestimate public expectations in the wake
23 of a peace process. Given the protracted nature of the Northern Ireland conflict, the
24 euphoria of declining violence and political stability quickly evaporated and heralded
25 the prospects of a better life for those most affected by violence. When this didn't
26 happen, disillusionment and a sense of helplessness set in among those who had most
27 to gain from peace – communities subjugated by paramilitaries and abandoned by
28 government departments, local authorities, health trusts and agencies which have
29 clearly failed to deliver key public services. External bodies which supported efforts to
30 reach an inclusive political settlement (International Fund for Ireland, European Union
31 and Atlantic Philanthropies) now witness a functioning locally elected legislative
32 power-sharing Assembly and are in danger of withdrawing – 'job done'. The DFID
33 framework for building strong state–society relations notes that 'in fragile contexts,
34 public goods may be delivered in a biased and selective manner that helps maintain an
35 exclusionary political settlement – addressing this is essential to improve confidence
36 in the state and to address grievances' (DFID, 2010, 32). Somewhat ironically, the
37 political structures put in place in Northern Ireland to ensure a consensus (power-
38 sharing devolved government) actually make it more difficult to respond effectively
39 to public expectations for better services and an improved quality of life. The plethora
40 of government departments needed to ensure five political parties have seats at the
41 Northern Ireland Executive table has resulted in highly fragmented public services
42 and a failure to tackle social disadvantage. Consociationalism, put in place to protect
43 against any one political group dominating the decision-making process or a reversion
44 to majoritarianism, has had public policy consequences through mutual veto exercised
45 by the DUP and Sinn Féin. The electorate, in turn, has confirmed the dominance
46 of these parties in government. In the last three Northern Ireland elections (2010
47 Westminster; 2011 Local Government; and 2011 NI Assembly) the combined voting
48 share of the DUP and Sinn Féin has been 50.5%, 52% and 57.7% respectively. This

provides a political mandate to maximise one community's leverage over the other. What the Northern Ireland experience shows is that the four elements of DFID's 'state building for peace' framework: address causes and effects of conflict and fragility; support inclusive political settlement; develop core state functions; and, respond to public expectations, need to be seen as strongly interconnected, rather than sequential which, in the round, strengthen state–society relations. In summary, a failure to respond positively to public expectations of peace has contributed significantly to the fragility of post-conflict Northern Ireland.

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