

Impact Case Study

UoA 21: Politics and International Studies

Building a Shared Future in a Divided Society – Northern Ireland

Summary of the impact

During the conflict, community relations work had low strategic importance. Morrow et al (1997) demonstrated that the absence of an overarching conceptual framework stifled government policy and so subsequently developed a ground breaking model of community relations engagement to be mainstreamed into government policy (around equity, diversity and interdependence). Following two major government reviews of community relations in 2002 and 2003-5, these research findings were adopted as central to public policy and resource allocation, and reconfigured as 'A Shared Future'.

Since 2008, the core concepts of Morrow et al's work have been explicitly integrated into the vision and values of many policies and practices around reconciliation, community relations and a shared future demonstrating a continuing, cascading impact at local, regional, national, European and international levels.

Underpinning research

The underpinning research for this case study took place 1997-2012 by Duncan Morrow who was employed by the University of Ulster at that time and continues to be in employment now. Morrow acted as a key member of a University of Ulster research team along with Eyben (1995-2003) and Wilson (1974-2013) that produced influential and ground breaking work on community relations between 1997 and 2003. Morrow was then seconded to the Northern Ireland Community Relation Council as their CEO (2003-2012) to apply the methodologies developed by the original research team. Between 2008 and 2012, Morrow published further research in the area that fused the real world knowledge gained on secondment with the academic expertise in the subject area. He returned to the University of Ulster in January 2012 to continue to develop practical applications of the research and to act as a conduit between academia and the community in his new role as Director of Community Engagement at the University of Ulster. This research (1997-2012) has focused specifically on the nature, impact and contribution of cross community activity undertaken in the context of sectarian division arguing that mainstreaming community relations activity into government policy is imperative for political and social progress. Specifically, the research developed the principles and frameworks to translate often piecemeal and ad-hoc community relations work (usually undertaken by women's groups, youth organisations and the unemployed at the time) into public and social institutions. Section 4 of this case study demonstrates where and how such activity has been mainstreamed as a consequence of this programme of research.

Initial research funding from the Northern Ireland Office's Central Community Relations Unit (Grant 1234-R-0014), led to the publication of a report titled [A Worthwhile Venture? Investing in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence](#) (1997). This landmark report found that low levels of community relations activity across a range of sectors were compounded by the absence of a conceptual framework to effectively guide community relations work. In response to this weakness, the researchers developed a set of foundational principles that prepared the ground for the development of a value-led and practical model defined as equity, the accommodation and expression of diversity and interdependence. These came to

be known as the EDI principles, applied across the field, extending in reach to the trade unions, public and voluntary sectors including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, a range of district councils, the Health Trusts and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland. Further funding from the Northern Ireland Office in 2003 led to research outputs which have advanced the intellectual arguments and practical toolkits for the adoption of the EDI principles as cited in section 3. More recently, Morrow developed, designed and managed a Peace Monitoring project that considered the various manifestations of the EDI principles in current community relations practice. This research was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and was published in 2012 as the Northern Ireland Peace Monitor.

References to the research

Morrow's work was completed as part of a series of funded grants from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Leverhulme, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Atlantic Philanthropies. It resulted in publications and reports translating core findings for both academic and audiences and practitioners including:

1. Eyben, K., Morrow, D. & Wilson, D., 1997. *A Worthwhile Venture?: Investing in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence*, Coleraine: University of Ulster. (£58,165 (1994), ERDF/NIO) (This was the original core text which first developed the EDI principles). Excerpts of chapters available at: <http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/12601/1/venture.htm>
2. Eyben, K., Morrow, D. & Wilson, D., 2003. *Investing in Trust Building and Good Relations in a Public Sector Organisation*. Coleraine: University of Ulster. (£60,000 NIO/ERDF 2002) (Leading to changed practice for specific groups). Report available at: http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/3973/1/investing_in_trust_report.pdf
3. Morrow, D., 2008. *Devolution Monitoring Project*, University College London Constitution Unit, 1999-2008, Northern Ireland reports. (Report informing public and political debate). Available at www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/devolution/devo-monitoring-programme.
4. Morrow D., 2008. *Sustaining the Peace?*, Belfast: Community Relations Council/European Union PEACE II, Belfast, pp.103-120 (Report informing and stimulating policy debate with key policy-makers). Available online at: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/sustainable-peace.pdf>
5. Morrow, D., 2011. *After Antagonism? The British-Irish Ethnic Frontier after the Agreement*, *Irish Political Studies*, 26 (3), pp.201-312, September (Academic output contributing to a public understanding of social issues). DOI:10.1080/07907184.2011.593735.
6. Morrow, D., 2012. 'The rocky road from enmity' in McGrattan C. and Meehan E. eds., 'Everyday Life after the Conflict', Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Academic output contributing to a public understanding of peace building and reconciliation). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719087288.003.0002>

Details of the impact from 2008-2013

Morrow's research has been extensively disseminated through multiple interviews on local, national and international broadcasts and through the publication of op-ed pieces in local and national newspapers (BBC TV and Radio, AP/Reuters, Guardian, Irish Times, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, Newsletter (source 10)). Through the active dissemination of the research and using the media as impact generating interfaces, Morrow's work has impacted on the tone, language and framing of debates around sectarianism, political division, peace building and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Impacts on Public Policy: The issue of a shared future is now central to the concerns of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive. Commitments to a shared and better future have been integrated into the Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2008-11) and into the current Programme for Government (2011-2014). More specifically, in 2008 the Department of Education in Northern Ireland appointed Duncan Morrow to an advisory group to review current practice and to advise government on its new policy for Community Relations, Education and Diversity (CRED). In order to articulate more effectively the wider scope of the new policy, from existing community relation policy in education, the new policy drew heavily from the original EDI principles and is now premised on the interdependence between equality, good relations and human rights, including UNCRC and commitments in the Good Friday, St Andrews and Hillsborough Agreements while acknowledging the greater diversity of our community. This policy has now been adopted and implemented across all schools in Northern Ireland. Thanks to these policy interventions, Duncan Morrow has also been an expert advisor to the US Government, the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and local government on community relation issues. The Chief Executive Officer of Belfast City Council noted that: 'For over a decade we have relied directly and repeatedly on the academic research, policy relevance and practical advice of Duncan Morrow in a wide variety of areas'. Extending from this and 'in light of his research, practical experience and independence' he was appointed by the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs to drive forward the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (source 2). An example of his impact at an international level was referenced in the recent correspondence from the White House in relation to advice given to the US Government on Policy in Northern Ireland. The US Consulate General noted recently that he believed Morrow's work and discussions with senior White House officials in Washington in the Spring of 2013 had played a part in the 'issuance and tone' of two statements released by both President Barak Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington in April 2013, just prior to the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, on the US policy position.

Impacts on Local and International Funding Streams: The Morrow et al. principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence have been established as core principles of the Community Relations Council since 2000 and applied to all of its work. This commitment was confirmed through the new CRC Strategic Plan (2011-2014). Since 2008, the principles have been applied to funding schemes of an estimated £20m per annum operated by or through the Community Relations Council (source 4). The European Union PEACE III programme (2007-2013) with a value of 333m Euros also incorporated the principles of EDI into its core objectives to allocate its funding and sought to promote 'A normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence' (source 5).

Impact on Culture and Society: The research has enhanced the cultural understandings on particularly sensitive issues in Northern Ireland, such as parading and dealing with the past through commemorative activities. The EDI principles were fed through into the Ashdown Commission on Parading in Northern Ireland appointed by the Northern Ireland Office when Duncan Morrow was tasked as a political advisor to the group. The interim report of the Commission in 2008 provided an outline basis for the Executive proposals for legislation in 2010 (source 6). It has also been influential within the Irish Football Association's (IFA) 'Football for All' project which uses football as a conduit to promote peace and reconciliation, develop partnerships and build capacity within clubs, fans and communities. Founded originally in 2000, the project involves 850 clubs, 1,000 coaches, 600 referees, 15,000 players, 6,000 people with special needs, 15,000 women and girls and 8,000 schoolchildren each year. Morrow was appointed as a member of the Football for All Advisory Panel in 2000 to help the group embed the EDI principles in their work. A hugely successful initiative, the IFA were invited by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) in 2012 to present on their community relations activities at the European governing body's inaugural corporate social responsibility workshop in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was highly commended for significance and impact beyond Northern Ireland: "Over the last ten years, the Football For All Project has transformed the atmosphere at Northern Ireland international football games creating a fun, safe and family friendly environment," said the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy. "Bringing together key partners from both the private and public sectors, the project has played a central role to get real progress in community relations in football ...Not only has Football For All made a meaningful difference locally, but we also see it as a model which other countries around Europe can learn from and aspire to" (source 7).

Impact on Practitioners and Professional Services: In May 2013, two days of talks were held in Cardiff involving senior Northern Ireland police officers, politicians and representatives from loyalist and republican communities in Belfast. As a co-organiser and facilitator of these high level political negotiations on peace-building and policing, Morrow used the EDI principles as the underpinning framework for the negotiations and discussion. This was acknowledged by Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Assistant Chief Constable who said "Most importantly, he developed a process for engaging police with community and political leaders which culminated with important talks in Cardiff in May 2013". These talks then led to a joint declaration – the Cardiff Declaration – which set the agreed framework for subsequent dialogue between politicians and the police over contentious issues (source 8).

Impact on Conflict Transformation in Local Government: Belfast City Council Good Relations Plan: Belfast City Council has adopted the Morrow et al. principles of equity, diversity and interdependence into its good relations planning. The Belfast City Council Good Relations Plan (2007-2011) stated "We are committed to the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence and have agreed that these should be firmly anchored and integrated within our policies and programmes" and defines them in terms of the original definition developed in 1997. In 2011, the most recent Council plan states: "The principles of equity, diversity and interdependence should be mainstreamed into all of our activities, policies, structures and procedures, recognising that diverse groups are interdependent and basing relationships amongst them on agreed principles of fairness and equality" (source 9).

Reach: The reach of the research has extended far beyond policy makers and donors to the public sector as indicated above. A range of groups have integrated the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence (EDI) into their ethos and values documented through their operational plans and programmes of activities including: Youth Link - the inter-church youth service for Northern Ireland which

was established by the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1991 and exists to provide support and training for youth workers and community relations experiences for young people; Hazelwood Community Partnership (an interagency project to support the community in building good relations by delivering practical responses to all issues arising from community tensions in the greater Whitewell area in North Belfast); Lurgan Town Youth project (a town based approach aiming to build a shared agenda educationally, socially, politically, civically and economically); and the Rural Community Network (a regional voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality).

Significance: The overall significance of the development of the Morrow et al. equity, diversity and interdependence (EDI) principles lies in the substantial influence which it has had in shaping and framing the discourse on the specific of the processes of peace-building and reconciliation in a society emerging from conflict. The local-global impact and lessons from the implementation of the EDI principles have helped to set the agenda in public policy on issues of sharing and integration over separation and segregation in divided societies.

Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Letter from Chief Executive Officer, Chief Executive's Office, Belfast City Council 3 Sept 2013. Original copy held by Research Office, University of Ulster.
2. Letter from Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Scottish Government, 11 Sept 2013. Original copy held by Research Office, University of Ulster.
3. Letter from US. Consul General, 3 April 2013. Original copy held by Research Office, University of Ulster.
4. Community Relations Council (NI) Strategic Plan (2011-2014). Available online at: http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/strategic-plan/Draft_Strat_plan_2011-14_docx.pdf (see pages 4-6).
5. PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-13 in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland - Operational Plan. Available online at: http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE_III_Reports_Pubs/PEACE_III_Operational_Programme.sflb.as hx, (see p. 103).
6. Strategic Review of Parading in Northern Ireland, Interim Consultative Report. Available online at: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/parade/srp/srp290408interim.pdf> (See appendix E, p.59).
7. See UEFA Football First, 'IFA Promoting Football For All', 15 October 2012. Available online at: <http://www.uefa.org/footballfirst/footballdevelopment/knowledgesharing/news/newsid=1877019.html>
8. Letter from Assistant Chief Constable, Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2 September 2013. Original copy held by Research Office, University of Ulster.
9. Belfast City Council Good Relations Plan 2011 available at <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations/docs/GoodRelationsPlan2011.pdf> (see page 17, pt.7.2).

10. University of Ulster Media Report 2008-2013 – 270 plus print media reports
<http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/policy/profiles/dj.morrow/media.html>