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AND A POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

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ABSTRACT

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The challenge of dealing with diversity within democracy and of creating a new political culture in a divided society is the starting point of this paper. Using theories of recognition, these questions are examined in relation to the Northern Ireland Civic Forum. The main question posed is to what extent the Civic Forum has contributed to a new political culture that accepts diversity, but also a common interest beyond diversity, or whether it has become a new arena within which the conflict plays itself out. The paper concludes that in its approach and composition the Forum represents something other than a new arena of conflict, but has yet to play a central role in creating a new political culture. It is an institution that may be able to deal with diversity in a less antagonistic way, creating a space where issues of common interest and diversity can be explored. In time it could play a part in improving the horizontal relationships in Northern Ireland.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the 1990s it became clear that Western liberal democracies had neither met nor overcome the challenges posed by ethno-cultural diversity. These challenges have in recent years moved to the forefront of political theory (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000: 3). Kymlicka points out that while the ideal of democracy is widely accepted, "most contemporary theory simply takes for granted that the boundaries and powers of a political community have already been settled" (Kymlicka, 1995: 2). This is in fact not the case for a lot of areas, like Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has long struggled with issues of diversity. The region has been the centre of a conflict that is "the product of a system of relationships which constitutes two communities with radically conflicting interests, aspirations and identities" (Ruane and Todd, 1996: 14). This paper will focus on the attempt to deal with diversity in Northern Ireland through the Good Friday Agreement.[1] The focus will be on one aspect of the Agreement, the setting up of the Northern Ireland Civic Forum. To what extent has its establishment contributed to an improvement of horizontal relationships, the relationships between the communities? The Civic Forum can be said to be one of the most innovative elements of the Agreement in terms of recognition. The main question is whether the Civic Forum can be seen to have contributed to a new political culture or whether it became a new arena for the conflict to play itself out on. A new political culture will in this context mean a culture that accepts diversity, but also a common interest beyond diversity (Aughey, 1999: 123). To examine this there is a need for a framework that goes beyond a purely rights-based discourse on recognition. Honohan has outlined a more nuanced approach that includes three dimensions of recognition: acknowledging specificity, authorizing viewpoints and endorsing practices. This will provide a framework for the examination undertaken here.

There are several reasons for examining the Civic Forum. Its establishment was an innovative way to include a wider range of groups and an attempt at providing room for a new way of dealing with diversity in Northern Ireland, but little has been done to examine how it has operated and what the effect of its work has been. There is also a need to explore different ways of providing recognition by examining actual situations and institutions that have tried to deal with these issues. Many debates on

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[1] The official name is the Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations. It has been called different names; I will use "the Good Friday Agreement", and mainly refer to it as the Agreement.

recognition have focused on the vertical relationship between the government and the communities. This is an important aspect, but it is also essential to put an emphasis on how to improve the horizontal relationships. This dimension will be the main focus here. The question is not just whether there is a need for recognition or not but also what kind of recognition is needed. At the time of writing the devolved institutions, including the Civic Forum, have been suspended for more than a year.[2] The research for this article was completed about a month before the institutions were suspended. It gives an insight the Forum's experiences while the institutions were up and running and what the views of its members were a short time before suspension.

THE DEBATE ON RECOGNITION

Dealing with diversity within democracy is a challenge for a lot of societies, but is especially demanding in a divided society like Northern Ireland, where the legitimacy of the borders are being questioned and the political situation is dominated by two communities with different identities, allegiances and cultures.

One concept that often comes up in the debate on recognition is the term "pluralism". The term can be applied quite passively as just recognising that society consists of different groups or to imply public endorsement of different cultures and practices. While there seems to be a growing agreement that cultural diversity should be accommodated and tolerated in a democratic society, there are sharply diverging views on what it means to accommodate these (Kymlicka, 1995: 9). It is therefore important to try to get hold of what is meant in the different contexts as a first step towards dealing with these issues. In modern societies two concepts have had a lot of influence on the debate concerning democracy and diversity. The first focuses on the importance of universal rights and equal treatment. The other focuses on identity formation and how dialogical confirmation of identity is essential to human flourishing (Taylor, 1992: 32).

The norms of universal rights and equality have had a strong influence on procedural liberalism. According to this theory, a just approach is neutral and does not favour any one conception of the good or any particular form of life. This form of liberalism has been much influenced by John Rawls (O'Neill, 1996: 85). The focus is on promoting equal rights for individuals and ensuring that nobody is discriminated against. Another school of thought challenges this approach, arguing that seeking justice by promoting equal rights takes insufficient account of the importance of cultural membership. This challenge comes both from within and outside the liberal tradition. These theories argue for the importance of public recognition of cultural identities and the injustice in failing to grant this. The state and the public sphere are not neutral as they reflect the values and norms of the dominant group (Taylor, 1992: 43). The "neutral" approach of equal rights ends up

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[2] The institutions have been suspended since 14 October 2002.

favouring the majority. In order to achieve real equality, one sometimes has to be open to different treatment.

The debate on recognition is multifaceted and wide-ranging. This paper is not an attempt to give an account of the whole debate, but to focus on some of the issues and dilemmas that have arisen. Kymlicka is amongst the prominent advocates of a politics of recognition. He sees it as legitimate for minorities to demand special rights to protect themselves against the larger community, such as exemptions, positive discrimination or different degrees of self-government. These demands will differ depending on the group or situation.[3] The debate on recognition often gets framed in the context of minority rights discourse, focused on what rights minorities have or should have within society and the effects of granting or not granting such rights. A major focus is thus what provisions the government can make with regard to minorities and relates directly to the vertical relationship between the government and different groups. This is important, but is not the only aspect of a politics of recognition. Another important aspect is the horizontal relationship between communities (Thompson, 2001). A lot of the critics of a politics of recognition focus on this relationship. There is a fear that providing recognition and special rights to minorities will lead to a disintegration of society (Kukathas, 1993: 27). According to this view, celebrating or accommodating diversity can lead to conflict as the politics of recognition diminishes the room for compromise. What becomes essential for an identity cannot easily be compromised (Auer, 2000: 75). Advocates of a politics of recognition will answer this criticism by stating that, in addition to being unjust, denying recognition can lead to increased tension and disintegration as minorities will feel excluded and will feel that they have no role to play in this society. In addition, this critique is based on assumptions that qualities like a common identity and a sense of community already exist in a society even though this is commonly not the case, as in Northern Ireland.

This paper is based on the assumption that this criticism is not enough of a basis to reject a politics of recognition, but acknowledges at the same time that it points to a major challenge. This is to create a society that respects and accommodates diversity, but that also sees a common interest beyond diversity. For this there is a need to deal with both the horizontal and vertical aspects of recognition. In the context of Northern Ireland Thompson has developed a framework that deals with the relationship between these dimensions. There has been a strong focus in Northern Ireland on how the government can provide equal recognition to the two communities. This vertical relationship has been termed parity of esteem. Thompson contrasts this with "due recognition", which relates to the relationship between the citizens and the communities. The term acknowledges that it is not very likely for two deeply divided communities to form a solidaristic relationship, but implies a hope that they will do more than just tolerate each other. Both concepts

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[3] Kymlicka has categorised different minority groups. His main focus is on the difference between immigrants and national minorities. Whilst immigrants often seek to renegotiate the terms of integration, national minorities will often seek forms of self-government and autonomy.

play an important part of recognition, as does the relationship between them and how they interact. This aspect has not always been very clear in theories on recognition, and the horizontal aspect has often not been very developed. It is important to focus on the relationship between citizens and how to develop these, instead of purely focusing on a rights-based approach. Providing legal and institutional equality is important, but the importance of recognition also requires a deepening of relations of respect between citizens (Honohan, 2002: 250) and the fostering of a sense of interdependence. People living in the same area might not have chosen each other, but still might share some common concerns and need to find a way to govern together. Honohan argues that full recognition is granted when one is recognised as a member of a collective self-governing community (Honohan, 2002: 258).[4] The aim is not just that people are going to be treated as legal and political equals, but that the value of their projects, actions and identities are confirmed by others in the political realm.

Honohan has outlined three different dimensions implicit within a lot of theories on recognition. These are acknowledging specificity, authorizing viewpoints and endorsing practices. Acknowledging specificity involves recognising that there is a difference that may affect the equality of some citizens in participating in society and taking measures to correct this. Authorizing viewpoints includes provisions for giving public space for citizens to voice their deepest concerns and to be given a serious hearing. The third approach is endorsing practices. This might involve constitutional or legal embodiment, symbolic or material support (Honohan, 2002: 260-6). By clarifying these three dimensions and seeing how they relate to each other it is possible to get a fuller picture of the different aspects of and dynamics in the recognition process, and this is why they will be used in examining the operation of the Civic Forum.

One of the difficult questions that arises is who should get recognition and what is being recognised. This paper takes the view that it is not possible or desirable to grant equal recognition to all groups. Cultural practices are linked to moral choices, and there is a need to make a decision in regards to what is going to be endorsed. Cultural claims can be irreconcilable and opposing, and it might be impossible to recognise them all equally (Honohan, 2002: 255). This point is also linked to the importance of not treating cultures as wholes and non-negotiable. Cultural claims have to be the subject of debate and deliberation. In implementing policies of recognition it is important to try to develop procedures for how to deal with contentious issues.

What form of recognition is needed in each case has to be worked out in relation to the context. Dialogical deliberation and involving relevant parties in working out

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[4] In relation to this point different theorists will have different view in relation to what theoretical view they take. Kymlicka, who writes about recognition from a liberal perspective, has not as much of a focus on the relationship between the different groups and how this is going to be fostered. Honohan writes from a civic republican perspective that has a stronger focus on the fact that people are interdependent and share common concerns.

exactly how to deal with diversity in a specific context is important. Another point that will be discussed further in relation to the situation in Northern Ireland is that one cannot really talk about minorities and minority rights without taking the majority into account. The relationship between the minority and the majority may not always be as straightforward as it may seem initially and the debate may be more complex than the general theories suggest. What is often emphasised is that it is impossible to make any sweeping generalisations (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000: 40). One has to look at a specific situation to be able to judge what form of recognition is most suitable, and what effects such policies will have.

THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT AND THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION

Most people, if asked to define the chief symptoms of the Northern Ireland troubles, would say it is that the two communities cannot live together. The very essence of the Ulster question, however, is that they do live together and have done for centuries. They share the same homeland and, like it or not, the two diametrically opposed political wills must coexist on the same narrow ground (ATQ Stewart, cited in Darby, 1995: 10).

The Northern Irish context

The reality for a lot of areas is that even if there are great divisions and one cannot agree on the boundaries and powers of a political community there is still a need to find a way to co-exist together. Secession and rights for self-government are solutions that often arise in debates on recognition, but that would not solve the conflict in Northern Ireland. The population is mixed, although divided. "Members of both religious groups are represented to some degree in almost every town, village and locality, creating a mosaic of intermingled relationships with greatly varying levels of social, economic and residential segregation and integration. This is one of the defining characteristics of the NI conflict" (Darby, 1995: 10).

There are also some other characteristics that it is important to be aware of when discussing recognition in relation to Northern Ireland. One of these is the relationship between the majority and the minority. As it has been described, "while the Irish nationalists have lived as a minority marginalized from the circulation of power within the Northern jurisdiction set up by partition of Ireland in 1921, unionists who identify themselves as British have always been conscious of the fact that they remain a minority on the island of Ireland" (O'Neill, 2000: 27).

The situation in Northern Ireland is different from many cases dealt with in the general debate on recognition and minority rights. Northern Ireland is not in a situation where a small minority is fighting for its survival as a culture. Nationalists do not see themselves as a minority within Northern Ireland, but as part of a wider Irish nation that transcends the border (Democratic Dialogue, 1997: 9). Another aspect is that this is not a situation where there is a self-assured majority and a

small minority; it is a case of two communities that are becoming closer and closer in size, and where it is not certain who is going to be in a majority in the future.[5] Whether Catholics or Protestants form a majority in 50 years time, neither community will be sufficiently large to be able to exercise effective dominance over the other (Darby, 1995: 31). One has to find a solution based on other principles than dominance—which is neither acceptable nor workable. Pointing out the particularities of the Northern Ireland situation does not mean that the debate concerning recognition is not relevant to Northern Ireland, but more that one has to be aware of the specific situation that one is relating this debate to.

The provisions of the Agreement

To examine the Civic Forum a brief outline of the Good Friday Agreement is useful. The peace process in Northern Ireland was not simply a truce or a temporary settlement, but an attempt to try to come to an end of a long conflict (Ruane, 1999: 145). This is expressed in the first article of the Agreement which states that what has been achieved is a historic opportunity for a new beginning.[6]

The collapse of the Stormont regime brought with it a recognition by the British government that whilst Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom as long as a majority wanted it, there was a need to create institutions that would have cross-community support. This would mean some form of power sharing and an Irish North-South dimension. After 20 years an agreement was reached in the face of continued division, and has been seen as an example of how it is possible to forge an agreement against all odds (Ruane and Todd, 1999: 3). It was endorsed in two referendums on 22 May 1998 by 71 per cent of the population in the North and 94 per cent of the population in the South. This level of support gave the Agreement a degree of legitimacy that previous structures have not had.

To be able to come to this compromise and to secure a majority vote in the referenda, it was important to make sure that both nationalists and unionists especially, but also other parties, would have some of their demands met and interests looked after. The Agreement aimed at authorizing the legitimacy of being both nationalist and unionist and creating institutions and procedures for these groups to work together, and even procedures for changing the constitutional situation. The communities were to be protected whether they were majorities or minorities and whether sovereignty over the territory rested with the UK or the Republic (O'Leary, 1999: 58). By a range of provisions one hoped to create a public sphere where both communities felt recognised and a public culture that reflected two national communities whose identities and aspirations were legitimate. Whilst not solely trying to provide for the nationalist and unionist communities, the

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[5] The 1991 census showed that 38.4% of the population regarded themselves as Catholic and 50.6% of the population as Protestant (BBC News, 2002).

[6] "We, the participants of the multiparty negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning" Article 1, The Agreement.

Agreement was clearly influenced by the need for these two to accept the Agreement to make it work. It was seen as important to establish a parity of esteem, an equal recognition between the two traditions. Critics have argued that this may lead to a reproduction of the conflict. Groups that do not conform to any of the two categories get squeezed out of the political arena and this will hinder the development of a new political culture. The designers of the Agreement saw the focus on the two groups as necessary; they were also aware of some of the problems and dilemmas connected to this approach.

The Agreement focused on creating workable institutions internally as well as dealing with the links with the two states. An attempt was made to deal with three sets of relationships, between the communities in Northern Ireland (Strand 1), the two jurisdictions on the island (Strand 2), and between the two islands (Strand 3). It was agreed that there was going to be an assembly largely based on consociational principles. This is one way of dealing with government in a divided society. The arrangements are based on a grand coalition, an executive constituted by proportional representation, government based on inter-group consensus and a certain degree of group autonomy (Horowitz, 1999: 89). A lot of provisions were trying to secure a way for two antagonistic communities to be able to govern together, but there were also provisions that took other groups into account. There was a strong focus on human rights and reconciliation and a support for groups working with this.

The most substantive measure was the inclusion of the provisions for a civic forum in Strand 1. It was intended to have a consultative role in relation to social, cultural and economic issues and have representatives from business, trade unions, voluntary sector and possibly other sectors.[7] This provision was the clearest acknowledgement that although the main focus of the Agreement had been to provide for institutions that were acceptable to nationalists and unionists, there were also other groups within Northern Ireland that had a role to play. The provision of a Civic Forum was an acknowledgement of a wider diversity and an institutionalisation of their input. The Forum has often been presented as one of the mechanisms that has the potential to break down divisions and help create a new political culture as a part of an agreement that was hoped to bring change within the society in many areas.

Provisions for a Civic Forum

The provisions for the Forum constitute an implicit acknowledgement that the Assembly will be comprised of parties that are still arranged antagonistically over the differences that the Agreement seeks to deal with. The Forum represents a new type of arena where the members were appointed in virtue of their involvement in a certain sector, and not because of a particular stance in relation to the conflict (Bell,

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[7] The First and Deputy First Minister were authorized to decide whether there were other sectors that should be included.

2002: 10). It can be seen as an attempt to tap into a wider range of resources in society and a way of acknowledging the specificity of the Northern Irish situation. Whilst it is necessary to focus on creating a parity of esteem between the two communities, this does not deal with all the issues concerning diversity. There is a need to go beyond just providing recognition for the two communities, and also to focus on the horizontal relationships.

The Civic Forum gives an institutionalised space for civil society,[8] a forum for debate where issues can be dealt with in a diverse setting. Cochrane argues that civil society has played an important part in the peace process by having an indirect and gradual effect "on the terms of political debate and … [having] … introduced the inclusivist NGO philosophy into the political arena" (Cochrane, 2001: 152). Through its mandate to consult the Assembly on social, economic and cultural issues, there was a hope to strengthen this aspect within the new institutions. It might be conceived as one of the most innovative and far reaching of the institutions established in the Agreement. It has the potential to provide new and innovative solutions that have the backing from a wide spectrum of Northern Irish society. Working together provided a possibility to build relationships across the divisions in society. It had the potential to show a different way of dealing with political issues in Northern Ireland, being more willing to compromise and contribute with new and innovative proposals. These aspects make the Forum an important and interesting institution to explore in relation to trying to improve horizontal relationships. This is not because of its formal powers, but because of its potential as a newly formed public space.

One of the hopes expressed by the politicians was that it would debate and suggest possible ways to deal with some of the sensitive issues that they are struggling with, such as how to handle the parades (Civic Forum, 2002a: 16). This was based both on the diverse representation and the fact that the members did not have the party-political baggage that existed in the Assembly. It was hoped that the Forum would come with input concerning the governments relationship to the different communities (the vertical relationship) and have the potential to improve the horizontal relationship, that is, the respect and understanding between the communities. This potential was seen both in the chance people had to work together in the Forum and to debate and try to work out solutions, but also in activities and policies that the Forum could suggest or initiate to improve community relationships. It was hoped that a political culture might develop where one would see a common interest beyond the diversity.

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[8] Civil society is a very loose term that can mean different things; I will not go in to the whole debate, but relate to the choices that were made in relation to who was going to be included in the Civic Forum.

THE OPERATION OF THE CIVIC FORUM

The establishment of the Forum had to be formalised through a motion before the Assembly before it could start operating.[9] The Forum was going to offer its views on matters agreed between the First Minister, deputy First Minister and the Chair, and matters requested by the Assembly. This was not meant to limit the Civic Forum in taking independent initiatives subject to resource considerations.[10]

The Forum was to be comprised of a wide range of people from different areas of civil society. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) had to determine which groups were to be included. They decided on different sectors and identified key organisations or networks to cooperate on the nomination process within their sector.[11] In addition, the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister nominated three members each and appointed the chair.[12] In the selection process there were guidelines aimed at ensuring a balance on gender, age, community background and geographical spread. Also taking part in the Forum were members who opposed the Agreement. It was composed of 60 members appointed for three years to work on a voluntary basis with the support of a secretariat. The Forum was especially designed to represent a part of society not caught up in the party political system.

The Forum had some guidelines as to how it was going to operate, but also had to develop a lot of the procedures itself. It has been argued that there was a lack of clear articulation from the OFMDFM with regards to the role of the Forum (Democratic Dialogue, 1999: 6). This is a feeling that is mirrored in interviews with its members (interviews 2, 3 and 6). The combination of being a diverse group and not having detailed guidelines meant that the Forum spent a lot of time working these questions out (interviews 3 and 5). The process was long and complex and was still ongoing at the time of the second suspension.

The Forum had to develop its structures, but some indications were given at the time of nominations.[13] The members decided that providing advice to government and responding to consultation papers were key activities. A significant part of the

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[9] Due to problems in the implementation process and the time it took for the Assembly to get on its feet the Forum got a late start. The members met for the first time on 9 October 2000, and the Assembly agreed on its mandate on 6 February 2001.

[10] Northern Ireland Assembly, *Official report (Hansard),* vol. 9, 6 February 2001.

[11] The following sectors got allocated places on the Forum: agriculture and fisheries, business, churches, culture, trade unions, voluntary and community sectors, arts and sport, community relations, education and victims. For a full list of members, see appendix.

[12] There is one member of the Forum who has been appointed as a party political representative: Gary McMichael, former leader of the now defunct Ulster Democratic Party, who was appointed by David Trimble.

[13] It was suggested that the membership would involve attending four to six plenary meetings a year and that there would be project teams and ad hoc working groups (Arts Council, 2000: 3).

work was to consult widely with civil society and key sectoral groups and interests (Civic Forum, 2001c: 17-18). Plenary meetings were to be held six times a year; half of the meetings were planned to be in Belfast and the other half in different places in Northern Ireland. This was an attempt to connect with the different communities around Northern Ireland, and to give people a chance to attend to the plenaries. The Forum also initiated meetings with local councils.

Three internal committees were established: a general-purpose committee, a communications committee and a key issues committee. In addition to a group working on the Programme for Government, three project groups were established, focusing on an anti-poverty strategy, lifelong learning and peace building through citizenship and culture.[14] The Forum later established a group focusing on sustainable development (Civic Forum, 2001: Minutes from plenary meeting 6 December). From the focus of the groups one can read an attempt to both cover areas that are relevant to government work but that might not have gotten enough attention in the past, and attempts to deal with issues of diversity. This work came in addition to responding to different programs and documents for consultation.

The members decided to try to avoid voting on issues, but instead to debate and aim to reach a consensus. If this was not reached the Forum would conclude that this was a matter where there was no agreement, and try to decide how to relate to it. After some trying and failing it was decided that the plenaries should be largely theme-based as these were the occasions where most of the members met and when the public could attend.[15] The aim was not always to come to a solution, but to be an opportunity to create attention around a topic, to learn more about it and use the meeting as a chance to air views (interview 5). The organisational issues have to a larger extent been delegated to the internal committees to work out in dialogue with the other members.

The two projects on the Lifelong Learning and Anti-Poverty Strategy had help from researchers to assist them. The approach chosen was to look at existing debates and work, but also to consult and debate with different relevant actors. In the case of Lifelong Learning, for instance, both interviews and open meetings were conducted. A conscious effort was made to reach a variety of people who had experienced educational disadvantage. When it was discovered, for instance, that there was a lack of input from men from disadvantaged rural backgrounds the group decided to arrange a meeting with some members of this group to discuss these topics over a couple of pints in a local pub (Civic Forum, 2001b: 13). This was an attempt to meet people in their own arenas and create settings where they feel comfortable sharing their experiences. These consultations have also shown some of the unique roles

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[14] These groups would meet about once a month, more often if they found it necessary. The Peace Building Group later changed its name to Towards a Plural Society (TaPS) (Civic Forum, 2000: 3).

[15] There had been a tendency that a lot of time was spent dealing with administrative issues. This was changed so that the meetings often would be based on one of the topics the different groups had worked with.

the Forum can play in a divided society. For instance, in meetings with people from a Protestant community, the argument was expressed that the Civic Forum could play a role in presenting their views to the Minister of Education, as he was from Sinn Féin and would not be welcome in the area (Civic Forum, 2001d: 10).

The project groups worked continuously since they were established. All the work that was done was subject to debate within the Forum. The reports would contain recommendations but emphasise that they are to be considered as discussion papers, as the members have not been asked to endorse everything in them.

VIEWS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FORUM

This paper aims at integrating theories on recognition with empirical research on the Civic Forum. As part of this research I undertook several journeys to Northern Ireland in the summer and autumn of 2002. Information was gathered through talking to members of the secretariat and I obtained information such as minutes of meetings, reports, press clippings and other information. In addition I interviewed six members of the Forum. The aim of the interviews was to get an impression of how the members felt that the Forum worked. The interviews were confidential and conducted on a semi-structured basis. In selecting the interview candidates the aim was to get a diversity of backgrounds, gender, and age and also to get people from different sectors. The fact that most of the interviews took place during the summer meant there was also the question of availability. I interviewed two women and four men. There were two Protestants, two Catholics and two unknown.[16] There were two unionists, two nationalists and two unknown.[17] The interviewees came from a range of sectors, both representing voluntary sector, trade union, business, culture, and churches. A plenary meeting was also attended.[18]

Internal workings of the Forum

The members saw the Forum as a new and interesting opportunity, but knew little about it at the time when they joined. People still seemed to have had quite high ambitions and expectations as to how it was going to develop and entered the Forum with quite different expectations. Some members thought it would operate as a shadow to the Assembly, where they would contribute on issues relevant to their sectors (interview 1). Others saw the Forum working more independently (interview 6). Some had expectations of it "being the big thing … where it was going to be

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[16] As this question was not posed in the interview, I have made these categorisations on the basis of what information people volunteered, but also on my interpretation after the interview. In the case of dividing into Catholic and Protestant, the two Protestants openly stated this, whilst the two Catholic interviewees are categorized on my interpretation.

[17] Here one nationalist and one unionist stated that this is what they identified as, the other two are based on my interpretation.

[18] This was the last meeting before the institutions were suspended.

happening" (interview 5), in other words the centre for new and creative debate in Northern Ireland. The interviews were conducted as the Forum had completed half its term. The members indicated that it had been a quite demanding time, and that they had gone through a steep learning curve with a lot of trying and failing.[19] Talking about the Forum, the members referred a lot to its potential and to the distance it still had to go to fulfil this.

Most of the interviewees indicated that it was the chance of working in a diverse setting and getting involved in politics on a different basis that attracted them to the Forum. When talking about their experience all of them could refer to debates or work that they had found interesting and useful. The general feeling was that most of the members were making determined efforts to be constructive and not offend or break down relationships between the members in debates. Most referred to positive experiences of working with people from different backgrounds, and several referred specifically to conversations with people that they would generally disagree strongly with (interviews 4 and 6). One member stated "I have been able to sit there with people with a different political agenda and perspective on both sides and have been heard and also want to hear what they say. They accept that I am genuinely interested and listening. There is something positive there" (interview 6). Some were concerned that there was too much politeness and people holding back and that there was a need for more open debate (interview 3). Certain members expressed doubt about the extent to which the divisions between the Forum members were bridged. One member stated that he wasn't sure they had achieved this or if "we have become good at pretending" (interview 5). There was a feeling that the Forum had a way to go until they were able to find a way to properly deal with sensitive issues.

Most of the members felt that when the groups had come as far as producing reports, like on the Lifelong Learning and the Anti-Poverty strategy, the work that had been done was good and interesting. Criticism mainly related to concerns about whether the reports were too academic to reach out to people, or focused on uncertainty about whether they would be taken into account. Some also expressed a wish that the Forum could have delved deeper into specific areas.[20] The main frustration was that they had not come further in their work.

Members also pointed out that the focus of the Forum was influenced by its composition. A big proportion of the representatives were from the voluntary sector, and this was reflected in the focus of the work. Some members from other sectors feel that the Forum's work, although valuable, did not have as much relevance to

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[19] The members are currently participating in a review of the Forum, to see what has worked well and what needs improvement. As the review is an internal process and not completed, I will not be able to go into the details. It is still quite reasonable to assume that a lot of the points that people made in the interviews reflect some of the concerns that will come up in the review as well.

[20] One member expressed, for instance, a wish to have seen a stronger emphasis on integrated schools in the Lifelong Learning report (interview 4).

them and their situation (interview 1). There was also a feeling that the Forum has tried do to too much at the same time in the first period, and that there was a need to focus on fewer things and make sure that the members were involved in the areas the Forum chose to focus on (interview 5 and 6).

External relations

There was uncertainty and disillusion among some members as to the extent to which their work was being taken into account by the politicians. The members were aware that there were differences in how they were viewed by the different parties, and some worried that some of the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were just "giving them lip-service" (interview 1) because they were a part of the Agreement and not because they believe in the concept of a Civic Forum (Bell, 2002: 21).[21] Members reported that they felt they had not been able to establish a proper working relationship with the Assembly, and that it was mainly the Forum that had initiated contact and not the other way around. Some of the members said they wished that they had more structured contact with the MLAs in the beginning (interview 6).

There was an underlying tension within the Forum in regards to its role and how dependent it was on the Assembly and the OFMDFM. Quite a few seemed frustrated that the Forum was set up with a secretariat that is ultimately accountable to the civil service/OFMDFM and not the Forum. Many members also felt that the chair should be accountable to the Forum (Bell, 2002: 21).[22] There was also some tension over the agenda. Some wanted to see the Forum more independent but felt that there was pressure to conform and fit in with the governmental structures (interviews 1, 2, 4, and 6). A difference of opinion existed in relation to the balance between responding to the work the government is doing, or focusing on developing its own work. There was a concern that the Civic Forum was too caught up in a bureaucratic structure, and had a way of working that is foreign to some of the members. Some expressed a need for more flexibility (interview 6).

The members were divided on what should be the aim of the work in the Forum. Quite a few seemed concerned about the extent to which people on the ground knew anything about the Forum and what they do. There was a great frustration that there had not been a proper communications strategy in place[23], and it was hard to reach out to the public through the media. The members wished that they were better known, and initiated activities to get in contact with people. What was experienced as very positive was the dialogue with different people through the

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[21] Bell has also noted this frustration in her research on the Forum "members feel frustrated by a sense that the Assembly is not receiving their work, and that the sponsoring department (OFMDFM) is unable or unwilling to promote their work".

[22] As it stands he is appointed by OFMDFM and reports to the department.

[23] This is an issue that the communications committee is working on.

work of the project groups. Including the voices that have experienced educational disadvantage and holding public meetings were positive experiences for the members, as was meeting and cooperating with people that the members would not have had a chance to cooperate with otherwise (interview 5 and 6). One of the members said that they believed that the people they had worked with and reached out to felt that they were a useful body, but that there was only a small percentage that they have had the chance to meet (interview 3).

The Forum has also been influenced by the political context. One of the events that influenced the Forum was the first suspension of the Assembly, on 11 February 2000, which halted the Forum's work in one way, but also had a uniting effect on its members (interviews 2, 3, 5 and 6). There was uncertainty about what would happen to them if the Assembly was suspended, and this resulted in a lively debate within the Forum about its role and function. Several of the members refer to how the situation made people realise that what they were doing was important. Members felt they represented something new because it was the politicians who were having a crisis, and not them. They had just started working on areas they found important. There was a feeling among many that this work was just as important, whatever happened to the Assembly, but there were different opinions on whether the Forum should continue its work or not.[24] What is interesting is that there seemed to be a genuine wish to be able to work together, although there were different opinions as to whether it was right to do so in the context of the process. The second suspension resulted in the current situation. The way the Forum has been set up has made it very vulnerable to the political play in Northern Ireland. It makes it hard to create continuity in its work and to maintain motivation within its membership.

Another issue that influenced the Forum is the way it, to a certain extent, has been exposed to the party political power game. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has opposed the Civic Forum from the beginning and has regularly attacked the Forum in the media and at public meetings. Some of the members feel that these attacks are partly aimed at the Forum and also partly used to attack David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).[25] What has complicated the issue is that there are people with connections to the DUP and with similar kind of views within the Forum. This has made the members insecure, feeling that they have opponents both within the Forum as well outside it.

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[24] There were different arguments in this debate. Some argued that it would not be right to continue with this Civic Forum, as it was tied in with Strand 1, but that if the Agreement collapsed, there might be a room for a similar institution independent of the Agreement. Other members felt that it would be wrong to continue if the Assembly fell, as it would be seen as the Forum trying to fill the vacuum instead of the politicians, and that they would be against that.

[25] The DUP argue is that there is no need for an unelected body and often focus on the costs that are involved with the Forum.

THE CIVIC FORUM AND THE PRACTICE OF RECOGNITION

In analysing the operation of the Forum it is helpful to come back to the three levels of recognition, acknowledging diversity, authorizing viewpoints and endorsing practices, each of which is important to grasp the complexity of the Forum's work. This section will include an examination of the different forms of recognition and look at the Forum in relation to them. The development of the Towards a Plural Society (TaPS) group will be used as an example as this group relates most directly to issues of diversity.

Acknowledging specificity

The term acknowledging specificity involves recognising that there is a difference that might affect the equality of some citizens in participation and taking measures to correct this. In the Forum the TaPS group was established to try to approach the issues of diversity specifically. There was a lot of debate within the group about focus and framing of the work. The group found that there was a need to explore the plurality that exists within Northern Ireland, to map out the views and define the problems before starting to design strategies. A process was needed within the Forum as well as in society in general, and the Forum wanted to try to approach both. The group arranged a residential where members could explore "Dilemmas and possibilities of growing as a plural society". The seminar was participatory in its approach, allowing a lot of time for people to explore issues of plurality together. This was an experience that has been referred to as challenging, but very useful (interview 3 and 4), and members requested more work and debate within this area. The participants welcomed the chance to explore these issues in a diverse setting. The seminar focused more on opening debates and exploring issues than coming up with any direct outcomes. What was planned for 2002-03 was a series of seminars titled "Exploring our identities". The focus was to be on linguistic, cultural, political, religious and ethnic identities and each session would explore issues of plurality, culture and citizenship in relation to one of these themes.[26] The conferences were going to be aimed at Forum members, politicians and leaders from organised civic society (Civic Forum, 2002b). The Forum has in general been concerned with challenging the stereotypes and the assumptions being made about identity. For the Forum this did not mean arguing for ignoring difference or leaving it to the private sphere:

> The Civic Forum's diversity suggests that peaceful unity can be sought not by ignoring, but through a multiplication of difference; allowing more voices into a public arena in such a way as to point to the multifarious divisions in "the people" which the logic of the conflict attempted to polarise (Bell, 2002: 11).

The establishment of the Forum in itself was a way of acknowledging the specific situation of groups in Northern Ireland and of taking measures to allow new groups

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[26] Because of the suspension these seminars have not taken place.

to participate and take part on the political arena. Looking at the strategies chosen by the Forum it has been important for the members to explore the specific situation for the different groups and make arrangements to reach groups who would not normally participate or give input. This meant choosing different strategies and taking measures to allow for a wider participation, like when members of the Forum went to a pub to meet men who had experienced educational disadvantage.

The second suspension meant that the seminar series never got beyond the planning stage, but they are included to show how the Forum chose to approach these issues. Members of the TaPS group believed that the work in the group had been challenging, but they managed to agree on a programme. The Forum has on different occasions emphasised the importance of being aware of the specificity of the situation for the different groups in Northern Ireland. This has been done both in relation to the Catholic and Protestant communities, but also in relation to other groups. The Forum has, for instance, in feedback on the Community Relations policy, highlighted the inadequacies of making direct correlations between the Protestant and Catholic communities, pointing out that they are very different in nature and have different communal infrastructures, and emphasised that this acknowledgement was a key to an efficient community relations policy (Civic Forum, 2001a: 6). The Forum has also on many occasions challenged the tendency to just focus on the two traditions and emphasised that although sectarianism is important and needs to be addressed, this is not the only important issue (Civic Forum, 2001a: 8). Through its work it seems to have given room for exploring how specific groups are affected by the political situation.

Authorising viewpoints

Authorising viewpoints means giving public space for citizens to voice their deepest concerns and gain a serious hearing. The Forum has a diverse membership and diverging opinions. It was important that it was seen as an arena where people were given space, were respected and got their viewpoints heard. By focusing on this within the Forum it was hoped they would be able to influence others. "[If] a diverse organisation like the Civic Forum could gain an appreciation and respect for the differences that existed within the membership and begin to have a more enlightened debate on issues then this could be held as an example and template for others to follow" (Civic Forum, 2001: Minutes of TaPS meeting 10 December). The importance of authorising viewpoints also influenced the working groups. There was a concern to get out and include voices of people outside the Forum through interviews or meetings to get views from a broader spectrum than what is present in the Forum. There was an acknowledgement that the membership of the Forum is mainly middle class, and that a forum of 60 people cannot represent the variety that exists within Northern Ireland.

The Forum faced dilemmas in trying to deal with diversity in a new way. Bell writes about some of the pressures to "perform peace" that the Forum was subjected to. There was an underlying expectation to show an example by being future oriented, and try to avoid "being pulled back" and replicate party political divisions, nor to

allow sectarian or religious differences disrupt its work (Bell, 2002: 13). Bell thinks that this created a situation whereby when party political or sectarian issues arise they have to be given space for expression, given the Civic Forum's explicit embrace and promotion of inclusivity.

> Thus the danger arises since by virtue of being a group drawn from a society with a legacy of conflict, the Civic Forum debates have the potential to simply rehearse the "obstacles to consensus" of falling back to endlessly to (sic) expose the wounds of the past (Bell, 2002: 13).

There was both a challenge and a priority that had to be made about when one should focus on giving a voice to as many as possible, and when to try to reach a decision. Another challenge arose in relation to what to do with issues raised by members. There are different views as to what extent the Forum succeeded in following these up. One member was concerned that people had raised issues, but that they have not been taken further (interview 2).

Some felt that there was a pressure to conform to a system (interview 4 and 6). This issue relates to the underlying tension about whether the Forum should be more independent in setting the agenda. One of the members that are against the Agreement was very concerned about this. Having been sceptical about taking a place on the Forum as it was a part of the Agreement, he/she decided that by doing this at least his/her voice could be heard. The person felt that there was a growing respect for diversity within the body of members on the Forum (although it was a slow process), but that the anti-Agreement voice was being marginalized in the output. The interviewee saw this as being linked to a wish and pressure to "downtail into a system" (interview 4). Several of the members stated that they welcomed the contribution of the anti-Agreement members, even if they disagreed with them and saw that their representation on the Forum was important (Bell, 2002: 18).

Endorsing practices

Endorsing practices is the most complicated of the measures for recognition. This might involve constitutional or legal embodiment, symbolic or material support. The choice about what to recognise or not is linked to moral choices and it is not possible or desirable for all to be recognised. There were expectations and hopes that the Civic Forum could deal with both cross-departmental issues and some of the difficult issues concerning recognition and diversity within the society. The Forum came quite far in approaching issues like educational disadvantage and poverty, and also started looking at sustainable development. When it came to endorsing practices in relation to recognition the Forum had not yet developed clear policies.[27]

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[27] Members reported that these were the issues that they often got asked about by politicians and different groups (interview 3).

Because of the expectation of "performing peace" and being future oriented, there was some nervousness about handling overtly political issues, especially when requests were made about the Forum commenting on or taking a stand in relation to these issues. One request that was made was, for instance, to make a statement in regards to the DUP exclusion from the Weston Park talks (Civic Forum, 2001: Minutes of Plenary Meeting, 29 September). This was dealt with in workshops in the morning and a plenary debate afterwards. No consensus was reached and members were wary about getting directly involved in these kinds of issues. The debate was still welcomed by many members. This was the first time the Forum had this kind of debate relating directly to the peace process. One member also felt that although it was useful having issues raised and starting a dialogue, the Forum could add extra value if it could move beyond having diversity expressed to a point where some agreement could be reached. The Forum has opened up some debates. If it is re-established it might be that it eventually will come closer to endorsing practices, but if one is to judge by the development of the work in the TaPS group the strategy seemed to be to explore and celebrate diversity by first opening for a variety of voices, and then taking the debates from there.

In this section I have explored some of the dynamics within the politics of recognition that the Civic Forum has related to through its work. The Forum has been concerned with exploring the plurality that exists within Northern Ireland and with encouraging a positive celebration of diversity. It has also done a lot of work to include different voices both outside and inside the Forum. What has been more problematic has been to get from authorizing viewpoints to developing debates that have led to some conclusions and to get to the stage of endorsing practices. It seems like the Forum has been struggling to conclude debates or create the time or setting to delve deeply into them.[28] This issue is also related to the Forum trying to find its role and get a common understanding of what it should be focused on. Whilst it is easy to understand the wish for the Forum to endorse practices and help "solve" some of the problems the politicians are struggling with, there is a question as to how effective such an institution can be in this respect. The membership is chosen on the basis of its diversity, and endorsing practices can mean the recognition of some and not others. In relation to the horizontal relationships it is important that the Forum has some freedom to develop and decide how to relate to different issues. This does not mean that the Forum should not try to come up with innovative solutions and explore if they are able to reach an agreement on this level, but one should not underestimate the challenge that lies in this. Honohan suggests that it may be possible to grant recognition through the first two levels. "[It] may be possible to confirm the value of a persons way of life in engaging with them, without adopting their policy proposals. Citizens can achieve solidarity through recognition as acknowledgement and authorization more often than endorsement" (Honohan, 2002: 265).

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[28] The TaPS group's seminar series might provide an opportunity for this.

CONCLUSION

As one prominent observer commented, "if I have one criticism against multiculturalism it is that it makes dealing with plurality sound easy".[29] This paper has focused on how to deal with diversity and to try to develop a new political culture in a divided society like Northern Ireland. It does not seem that one can solve the challenges of diversity by leaving it to the private sphere. The focus has hence been more on what kind of recognition could have the chance of helping to develop a new political culture. This was examined in relation to one attempt at doing this, namely by setting up a Civic Forum. This paper focused on to what extent its establishment has improved horizontal relationships.

The Agreement tried to deal with both the existing division and also to have more transformative aspects within it. The setting up of the Forum was aimed at being one of the provisions where a wider form of recognition could take place. Looking at its operation, it becomes clear that there are a lot of issues of recognition that are not sorted out by the Agreement. This is not surprising as the Agreement in many ways had a more limited mandate. It was an attempt to create an opportunity for a new beginning by establishing parity of esteem between the two communities and create institutions that were acceptable to both.[30] Recognition cannot be solved by legal measures alone, as it embraces much more than that. The Forum was an attempt at institutionalising an opportunity for debate and cooperation in the context of a wider diversity and based on other lines of division than nationalist and unionist. Here representatives from different parts of civic society got a chance to work together, to know each other and explore issues. It was hoped that they could produce a distinct input and contribute to more respect between the communities. The way it worked to create an arena where a wider range of voices could be heard and trying to approach these issues together, can be seen as steps in working towards a culture that accepts diversity, but also a common interest beyond diversity.

The starting point of this paper was to examine whether the Civic Forum has managed to create a new political culture. It seems clear that it has not gotten that far yet. As one member stated, "I don't think it has acquired that kind of significance" (interview 5). Whilst this might be true, it is also true that it has shown a potential. It represents something other than just a new arena for conflict. Its work represents something new for Northern Ireland. This does not mean that the Civic Forum is not influenced by the political setting that it has been established in or by the turbulence

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[29] Dr Duncan Morrow, addressing the Forum, notes taken at Plenary Session Civic Forum, 28 August 2002. There are different terms used for different variations of politics of recognition. Kymlicka is amongst those who use the term multiculturalism.

[30] This means that even if the issue of recognition of, for instance, ethnic minorities is an important challenge for Northern Ireland, it does not mean that the Agreement is the right arena for sorting all these issues out. This does not mean that they should not be approached, but just that another setting might be more appropriate.

of the implementation process. It also does not mean that there are not conflicting views about a lot of issues, views that are reflected in the conflict outside Northern Ireland. It is different both because of its inclusion of such a broad range of interests and in its approach and willingness to try to identify issues that are important in society and deal with them together. When examining the Forum and the peace process it is important to bear in mind that changing a political culture is a long process. When asked about the Forum's role in this, one member stated:

> I think that is what our purpose was, and I think it will achieve it—if we have long enough. Real changes politically are going to be very slow. In ten years time we will have several hundred people who have been members of the Civic Forum, who have in some cases gone on to be members of government, who have reported back and who have a different way of doing things, an alternative to oppositional politics. Then we are contributing … We are modelling a more consensual, reasonable approach to issues (interview 2).

It seems as if there is a need for the type of public space that the Forum provides. A member argued "[T]he Forum represents something we need on a wider scale in Northern Ireland" (interview 3). An institution like the Civic Forum could play an important role within a politics of recognition and in improving relationships between the communities. Through the developments within the Forum one can at times see the start of a dialogue that is very much needed in Northern Ireland. It represents an approach of meeting and focusing on common concerns, but doing this by recognising and exploring the diversity that exists. The Forum tries to create a political culture through a multiplication of difference, and by allowing more voices into the public arena. This approach is not, as we have seen, without problems or dilemmas, but it is an important debate that is needed. By focusing on common concerns and celebrating diversity, I think that the Forum has made some steps towards a new political culture. As mentioned before all of the interviewees could refer to debates and work they had found useful and referred to positive experiences of working with people from different backgrounds.

When it comes to the operation of the forum in relation to the different dimensions of recognition it has come some way in acknowledging specificity and authorizing viewpoints but did not operate much on the level of endorsing practices. It is useful that the Forum challenges some of the conceptions and points to a need to reconceptualise the divisions within Northern Ireland, but if the Forum was re-established it is important that it gets to a stage where it focuses on making some priorities and deal with some of the dilemmas that arise.[31] Dealing with these issues is a process that will be more challenging, but for which there is a strong need. It might be that a re-established Forum decides that its role is more on the level of

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[31] The need for this type of debate and the expectation that the Forum relates to this was reflected in a comment from the audience at a plenary. This person stated that he saw the need for the Forum to take a more pragmatic approach. He asked if the Forum meant that one should cater for every single group and if this was the case, how it was going to be done. Notes taken at Plenary Session of Civic Forum, 28 August 2002.

opening debates and broadening understanding. This is also an important role to play in relation to recognition. There is a need to challenge conceptions and create a debate around identity, but even on the level of debate one needs to try to raise some of these dilemmas, even if one does not manage to come to an agreement. It would be very useful if a body like the Civic Forum delved into the concepts of pluralism and a plural society and try to get a common understanding of what it means. A good process on these issues could prove important in improving the horizontal relationships.

Stating this is not an attempt to diminish the importance of opening debates, authorizing viewpoints and acknowledging and providing for specificity. Not having their views respected is one of the grievances anti-Agreement unionists express in relation to the post-Agreement situation (interview 4). Research has shown a disillusion, especially among unionists and signs of deteriorating relationships between the communities (Gordon, 2002). These are signs that people feel disconnected from the process. There is a lack of trust and willingness to work together. The long suspension and all the problems in the implementation process is also a sign that whilst the Agreement has dealt with some of the challenges, there is still a long way to go until trust is built up between the communities.

For something like a Civic Forum to succeed, it needs to be taken seriously. Its incorporation into the Agreement was a formal recognition that other groups and sectors had an important role to play in the process of trying to create a new political culture in Northern Ireland. This also needs to get reflected in practice and here the politicians have an important role to play both by keeping an open dialogue with the Forum and by taking its contributions into account. The members are working on a voluntary basis, and are resourceful people that are active within many fields. If they do not feel that their work is being respected and taken into account, many will find other areas to contribute in.

In regard to what the examination of the Civic Forum as a part of the peace process in Northern Ireland has to contribute to theories of recognition, it has confirmed how the process of recognition is about much more than minority rights, and that one needs analytical tools that relate to this to be able to examine the process and its effects. Secondly, it shows that there are still major challenges in relation to developing ways to improve the horizontal relationships in divided societies. There is a need for further research in this area, and to explore institutions and policies that are established to provide this type of recognition so that one can learn from the experience what is working well, what is problematic and why. Stating that an institution exists is not enough to show that this aspect has been taken care of. Thirdly, this examination illustrates some of the complexities in dealing with diversity and developing a politics of recognition. In Northern Ireland one has attempted to create a more equal situation for the two national communities, but there is still a lot of tension and insecurity between the communities. There is also a challenge to be able to focus on how these policies relate to other minorities, so that one does not move from a situation dominated by one culture to a situation where the two communities dominate all other minorities. This does not mean that one has

to recognise all groups equally, but points to the need to take a wider perspective when making these choices to avoid creating new injustice. Even if the Forum has not reached its potential it has played an important role in exploring some of these issues, and has showed that there is an interest and a potential to bring this debate further. This is needed on a wider scale in Northern Ireland. Whenever the institutions are re-established it is important to use the experiences made from the work of the Civic Forum in deciding how to continue working with these issues. The most important aspect is not if the work is continued in this exact form or not, but these types of debates and institutionalised space can be important factors to succeed with a politics of recognition. A Civic Forum will not be able to create a new political culture on its own, but there is a need for this type of public space to make room for a wider diversity and include a wide range of groups in the process of recognition in Northern Ireland.

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APPENDIX: MEMBERS OF CIVIC FORUM

The following is a list of the people appointed to the Civic Forum in October 2000.

Sector	Nominations	Background
Agriculture & Fisheries	1. Alan McCulla	Chief Executive Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation
	2. Aidan McNamee JP	Member of Ulster Farmers Union Council
	3. To be appointed	
Arts and Sport	1. Elizabeth Bicker	Freelance musician; Chair of Belfast Music Society
	2. Gordon Woods	Until recently Course Director in Art and Design Education at UUC; Painter and Sculptor
	3. Dawson Stelfox	Architect with Consarc Design Group; Mountaineer
	4. Jim McKeever	Former Gaelic Footballer; retired Head of Physical Education at St Mary's College; member of Sports Council.
Business	1. Frank Bryan	Deputy President of Belfast Junior Chamber of Commerce; Managing Director of Bryan Powercom Ltd.
	2. Peter Donaldson	Managing Director of Kilco Group
	3. Clare Gibson	Former Managing Director of Abbey Training Services
	4. Bryan Johnston	Chairman of the NI Post Office Board
	5. Patrick Mahony	Board Director of BWD Rensburg
	6. Gwen Savage	Retired Managing Director of Gwen Savage and Company Ltd

	7. Colin Shillington CBE, JP	Partner in Solutions Together and Director General of NI Hotels Federation
Churches	1. Daphne Gilmour	Elder and Session Clerk of Presbyterian Church; principal examiner 'A' Level Religious Studies NICCEA
	2. George Glenn	Chief Executive of Churches in Co-operation
	3. Eileen Gallagher	Head of Religious Studies at St Michael's College, Enniskillen
	4. Louise Warde-Hunter	Director of Belfast Common Purpose
	5. Pastor David McConaghie	Elim Minister; founder member of Caleb Foundation
Community Relations	1. Roisin McGlone	Director of Springfield Inter Community Development Project
	2. David Porter	Director of Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland (ECONI)
Culture	1. Doug Elliot	Managing Director of 4 companies, including Ormeau Gasworks Limited; member of Ulster-Scots Heritage Council
	2. David White	Tutor and Trainer specialising in cultural diversity and race awareness
	3. Gordon Lucy	Director of the Ulster Society
	4. Donncha MacNiallais	Manager of An Gaeláras, Irish language resource centre
Education	1. Carmel McKinney	Principal of Vere Foster Primary School; member of Belfast Education and Library Board
	2. Jeannette Chapman	Education Adviser, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Trade Union	1. Pauline Buchanan	Chairperson of the NI Committee ICTU
	2. Inez McCormack	Regional Secretary of UNISON and President of ICTU
	3. Richard Jay	Senior Lecturer in Politics, QUB
	4. Keith Cradden	Past President of NIPSA; member of Derry District Partnership Board
	5. Susan Bustard	Active in Irish Bank Officials Association
	6. Kevin Cooper	Member of National Examination Council of the NUJ; freelance Press photographer
	7. Mick O'Reilly	Regional Secretary of ATGWU
Victims	1. Alan McBride	Youth Worker, WAVE Trauma Centre
	2. Patricia MacBride	Manager of the Bloody Sunday Centre
Voluntary & Community	1. Paddy Joe McClean	Member of Age Concern's Northern Ireland Executive and Chair of Western Forum
	2. Eamonn Keenan	Training and Research Officer in NIACRO
	3. Avril Watson	Board Member of Triangle Housing Association; Director of Law Centre NI
	4. Kevin McLaughlin	Regional Development Manager for Leonard Cheshire
	5. Patrick Yu	Executive Director of Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
	6. Kevin Daly	Chairman of Mid-Ulster Carers Group; member of NI Committee of the Carers National Association
	7. Avery Bowser	Child Witness Development Officer, NSPCC
	8. Brian Dougherty	Development Officer for Tullyally & District Development Group
	9. Ryan Williams	Development Co-ordinator, Irvinestown Community Partnership

	10. Eithne McNulty	Co-ordinator of Women's Education Programme for the Workers Educational Association
	11. James Orr	Employed by Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Castle Espie
	12. Duane Farrell	North South Officer with Youth Net and the National Youth Council of Ireland promoting rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people
	13. Annabel Weldon	Director of Money and Relationship Counselling (MARC)
	14. Brian Symington	Director of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf
	15. Janet Muller	Director of POBAL
	16. Josephine Whatmough	Recently retired adviser to National Trust on nature conservation
	17. Emma McDowell	Member of NI Committee of the Carers National Association and Secretary of Belfast branch
	18. Lynn Carvill	Co-ordinator of the Organisation of the Unemployed: Northern Ireland
First Minister	1. Gary McMichael	Leader of Ulster Democratic Party
	2. Betty McClurg	Chairperson of Southern Education & Library Board
	3. Richard Monteith	Solicitor; prominent member of Orange Institution
Deputy First Minister	1. Brian O'Reilly	Regional President of Society of St Vincent de Paul
	2. Sharon Haughey	Student at University of Ulster
	3. Hugh Frazer	Director of the Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin