

Deliberating across Deep Divides¹

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Deeply divided societies, like those of Bosnia, Lebanon, or Northern Ireland, would seem infertile ground for inclusive mass deliberation. It may not even be possible to get people on opposing sides in the same room, and if they do meet they may not really deliberate. They may not trust one another. They may not listen with an open mind. They may regard the other side's arguments as insincere cover for sectional interests. They may have an all too vivid sense of what the other side wants but not see how it could reasonably want it (Cohen 1997). In Rawlsian terms, the members of opposing sides may have trouble viewing each other as reasonable people engaging in reasonable disagreements (Rawls 1996: 54-58). As O'Leary (2005, p. 10) puts it, "those who embrace a politics of deliberative democracy as the prescription for conflict need reminding that deliberation takes place in languages, dialects, accents and ethnically toned voices and that it is not possible to create 'ideal speech situations.'" There may, to be sure, be "enclave deliberation," among people on the same side. But enclave deliberation, apart from not spanning the society, is only likely to deepen the lines of division (as Sunstein's (2009) work on polarization suggests).

The most common prescriptions for deeply divided societies have therefore centred instead on political *elites* and the institutions structuring their interactions. Electoral systems may also be engineered to incentivize compromise across group lines (e.g., Horowitz 1991, Reilly 2001). In "consociational democracy" (Lijphart 1997, O'Leary 2005), opposing elites sharing power make pragmatic bargains and sell them to their supporters. These strategies can be expected to provide a measure of stability and to reduce violent conflict. Yet they neither address the underlying antagonisms nor contribute to public will-formation for the whole society, the missing ingredients in the current approaches to democracy in deeply divided societies.

But perhaps we have dismissed the possibility of inclusive mass deliberation too hastily. If political leaders, who also speak in "languages, dialects, accents and ethnically toned voices," can negotiate within appropriately structured institutions, why can't ordinary citizens deliberate, also within appropriately structured institutions? Surely the possibility of such mass-level institutions is worth considering. If feasible, they might enhance elite-level attempts to reduce conflict and make decisions in the whole society's interest.

This article examines a Deliberative Poll (DP) in the Omagh District Council area of Northern Ireland, a society only recently emerged from protracted, systemic violence reflecting and reinforcing the deep divide between Catholics and Protestants.² A random sample were interviewed, then invited to gather together to discuss policy issues, under conditions facilitating a free and civil exchange of views. (See Fishkin and Luskin, 2005,

for an overview of the general design, its motivations and aspirations, and some typical features of the results). The topic, in this case, was the future of local schools—a topic heavily impinged by the Catholic-Protestant divide. We were interested in seeing whether a representative sample, including both Catholics and Protestants, could deliberate constructively and how the experience might change both their policy attitudes and their opinions of one another.

The questions we examine include the following: can a representative sample of ordinary citizens from opposing sides in a deeply divided society be assembled to deliberate policy issues? Once assembled, will they actually engage in meaningful deliberation? Will they emerge better informed about the policies under discussion? Will their opinions change as a result of their participation? Will some of the opinion changes plausibly serve the interests of the entire community and not just the interests of one side or another? Will the conflicting communities acquire greater mutual respect and/or trust in each other?

Our hopes and expectations, sketched further below, are that ordinary citizens are capable of meaningful deliberation, even in deeply divided societies, under the right conditions, and that doing so will produce more considered policy attitudes and soften attitudes toward the other community and toward inter-community relations. But let us describe this study in greater detail, then see what the data have to say.

The Issues

The schools in Northern Ireland are of four main types: state controlled schools (48%), Catholic maintained schools (43%), integrated schools (4%) and schools under other forms of management (including special needs and Irish medium schools) (5%).³

There has been no explicit government policy promoting mixed enrollments, beyond requiring schools which receive state funding to deliver the same education curriculum. Rather than consult directly with parents, “segmental autonomy” (a term used by Lijphart (1977) to describe the idea of different groups or communities exercising control over their own internal affairs) has simply been taken as a given. Thus, as matters stand, few schools have any significant mix of Catholics and Protestants. In 2007, 89.9% of all pupils were nominally designated as either “Protestant” or “Catholic,” but only 4.9% of those attending state-controlled schools were Catholic, and only 1 % of those attending Catholic-maintained schools were Protestant.⁴

The school curriculum, however, is changing. Post-primary schools are now required by law to provide the new “entitlement framework,” the aims of which are to provide a more joined-up and holistic approach to education, to place greater emphasis on real work-skills, and to provide greater flexibility to enable pupils to access the wider range of educational opportunities. This means providing pupils with a wider range of learning opportunities. Pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 must be able to choose from 24 subjects, whereas those between the ages of 16 and 19 must be able to choose from 27

subjects. At least one third of those subjects must be academic, and at least one third technical or vocational. The remaining third is left to the discretion of the school.⁵

At the time of the Omagh DP, there was a growing realization, at least in government and among policy elites, that falling enrollments, combined with the “entitlement framework,” would necessitate some greater coordination or consolidation in the educational system. Noting that Northern Ireland’s schools do not presently communicate with one another, much less share resources, in any meaningful sense, the government-commissioned an “Independent Strategic Review of Education” which recommended making “collaborative approaches to the sharing of facilities and resources ... standard practice, while ensuring that the particular identity or ethos of an individual school is preserved wherever possible” (DENI, 2007, p. 116).

The Review argued that schools should be measured against three key standards:

1. Educational. Schools should provide access for pupils to the full range of the curriculum, to high quality teaching, and to modern facilities;
2. Social. Schools should enhance societal well-being by promoting a culture of tolerance, mutual understanding, and interrelationship through significant, purposeful and regular engagement and interaction in learning;
3. Economic. Schools should be cost-effective, providing good value for money.

To help decide how to meet these goals, the Review urged both the creation of planning groups representative of all educational interests, including those directly responsible for managing schools on a day to day basis, and broader, mass-level consultations, aimed at gauging the preferences of the ordinary people whose children stood to be directly affected by any reform. This broader process, the Strategic Review stipulated, would need to be free from manipulation, exploitation, and “politicking.” The design of Deliberative Polling made it a natural resort.

The Omagh Deliberative Poll

The Omagh DP was held on January 27, 2007. We chose to focus on a local community in the hope that it would help parents see education as a local issue and hence have a better chance of disentangling it from the Northern Ireland conflict more generally. We settled on Omagh, a district council area of nearly 48,000 inhabitants in County Tyrone, for several reasons.⁶ It has a mixed population of Catholics and Protestants. Its primary and post-primary schools represent all the major school types (state controlled, Catholic maintained, integrated, and other managed) and range in size from large to small (the post-primary schools range in size from 200 to almost 1,000 pupils). Some have mainly Catholic pupils, some have mainly Protestant pupils, and a few have pupils more evenly split between the two communities. In addition, Omagh shares Northern Ireland’s demographic downturn, with a declining birthrate and thus a dwindling school-age population. Finally, a shared campus was a real possibility in

Omagh. A large and valuable piece of public land, formally used as a British Army barracks, had recently become available, and there had been some public discussion about the possibility of using this site for education, in particular for a shared campus (DofE, 2007).

The design was the usual Deliberative Polling design (Fishkin, 1997; Luskin, Fishkin & Jowell, 2002). A random sample of parents were interviewed, then invited to gather together to discuss the future of the local schools. Those agreeing to attend were sent balanced briefing documents conveying relevant factual information, outlining the various options for delivering education, and sketching the arguments for and against each. The discussion took place in randomly-assigned small groups (of about ten participants each) led by trained, neutral moderators. The combination of random assignment and random sampling meant that the participants found themselves talking to others of widely varying backgrounds and views (from the other community but also from other walks of life). The small group sessions alternated with plenary sessions providing the participants with the opportunity of questioning panels of competing policy experts and policy makers. At the end, the participants completed an augmented version of the same questionnaire as on first contact.

The initial interview sample (T1) consisted of 568 parents of school age children in the Omagh area, interviewed in early January 2007.⁷ All were then invited to attend the deliberations, and 127 eventually participated, of whom 121 completed the post-deliberation questionnaire (T2).⁸ The fieldwork (the interviewing and then the recruitment of the interviewees to attend the event) occupied a shorter than usual period, which may have had some effect on the participant sample, as we speculate below.

Conducting interviews in a deeply divided society brings special challenges. What ordinary people think about a specific policy issue such as education will tend to be bound up with or become attached to questions of ethnicity and hence may be seen as part of the larger struggle for the state (Dryzek, 2005, p. 226; cf. O'Flynn, 2007, p. 741). Consequently, people may find it very hard to disentangle different types of issue or to make some space between them. During the period in which we were generating our initial sample, the issue of whether Sinn Féin would sign up to the new policing arrangements for Northern Ireland loomed large. Media coverage was extensive.⁹ For many nationalists, affirming those arrangements would mean recognising the legitimacy of a reformed police service, something which had previously been denied. For some, it might even have signalled a further legitimizing of the British state in Northern Ireland. That decision was to be taken at a special Sinn Féin *Árd Fheis* (or party convention) on 28 January, 2007, one day after the discussions at Omagh.¹⁰

In order to discover whether or to what extent our (T2-T1) results had been affected (positively or negatively) by this larger issue, we conducted a further set of telephone interviews (T3) in the weeks following the Omagh discussions. For this purpose, we used a shortened version of the post-deliberation questionnaire. From our initial sample of 586 parents, we re-interviewed 93 parents who completed the post-deliberation questionnaire. In the same period, we also interviewed a fresh sample of 150

parents as a post-test only control group. These interviews took place about one month following the event.

The briefing materials were drafted in consultation with representatives of all the organizations responsible for managing Omagh's schools, namely the Department of Education, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the Western Education and Library Board (the local schools authority), Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta (council for Irish language schools), the Trustees of the Christian Brothers, the Trustees of Loreto Convent, and the Community Relations Council. The expert panel was comprised of representatives from the same management interests.

Portions of the proceedings were recorded and broadcast by BBC Northern Ireland as a way of exposing the broader public to the discussion and inducing public officials to heed the results. The event was also covered by the local, national, and international press.

Representativeness

A preliminary question is the extent to which the participants can reasonably be taken to represent the population from which they were drawn, the parents of school-age children in the Omagh area. Two main sorts of comparison are possible: (1) of the participants directly with the population, where census data are available, as they are for many sociodemographic characteristics, and (2) of the participants with the “non-participants” (the interviewees who took the questionnaire but did not attend the discussions), where census data are unavailable, as they are for some sociodemographic and all attitudinal variables. Here we summarize these comparisons, relegating further details and discussion to the Appendix.

Sociodemographically, the participant sample departs from the population in several respects. Too many of the participants (75.8%, versus 49.9% in the population) were women. Too few had a full-time job, and too many were unemployed and looking after the home¹¹—probably a corollary of the overrepresentation of women. On average, they were too well educated (with 19.5%, versus 14.4% of the population, at the degree level or higher; and 22.0%, versus 44.2% of the population, having no formal qualification).

Some of the education difference may be artifactual. The population from which we sampled (parents of school-aged children) is in fact better educated than the one to which the census data refer (“household reference persons” aged 16 to 74). The other differences, as the Appendix shows, are imperfections of the interview sample, rather than any bias in the self-subsetting of interviewees into participants. The biggest and most general reason, we suspect, lies in the relatively compressed fieldwork, which limited the number and spacing of callbacks and thus made it even more difficult than usual to reach and interview those needing more persistence to reach and interview, a description that fits the categories less well represented—men, those employed outside

the home, and the less well educated.¹² Another reason, in the case of gender (and thus perhaps employment status) may lie in women's greater role in child care and choosing schools. The women who were called may simply have been more interested in being interviewed about school policy than the men, which seems likely given that Northern Irish society remains traditional in these respects.

These few biases, though regrettable, are not, in our view, grounds for excessive concern. The education bias is typical, and the gender bias appears to be relatively inconsequential. All surveys based on random samples (Brehm, 1993), and especially all deliberative fora (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006), wind up over-representing the better educated, and the result, in a deliberative forum, is generally to reduce the amount of policy attitude change (because the policy attitudes of the better educated tend to be better developed and thus less likely to change much). In the case of gender, we have examined our results for men and women separately, and there were only minor differences in the way men and women changed on the 33 policy items (see Appendix Table A3).

In all other sociodemographic respects, moreover, the participants differed only insignificantly from the population (where the NINIS data are available) or the non-participants (where the NINIS data are unavailable). Thus the sample was representative with respect to age, marital status, spouse's employment status, and the number of children in the household.

Still more reassuringly, the sample was highly representative with respect to religious background and national identification. Protestants constituted a slightly larger share (33.9%), and Catholics a slightly smaller one (62.8%) of the participants than of the population (29.5% and 68.2%, respectively), but these differences (which came not from the interview sample but from the interviewees' decisions to attend the event) were statistically insignificant. National identification is not asked in the NINIS, but the participants differ from the non-participants scarcely at all in that respect. Among the participants, 28.1%, considered themselves to be nationalist, 15.7% considered themselves to be unionist, and 56.2% said they were "neither." The corresponding percentages for the non-participants were 28.9%, considered themselves to be nationalist, 10.7%, considered themselves to be unionist, and 60.6% said they were "neither."¹³ Clearly, many unionist and nationalists were effectively declining to answer by saying "neither," a sign of the sensitivity of this question (for general discussions of this phenomenon, see Boyle and Hadden, 1994, p. 33; Taylor, 2001, p. 43). But the important point for present purposes is that the distribution of responses, including the "neither's," was essentially the same for those interviewees who attended the event and those who did not.

Finally, the participant sample was highly representative attitudinally (at least of the whole interview sample). The questionnaire contained 23 items gauging attitudes toward the policy choices facing Northern Ireland's schools and another 11 items gauging attitudes toward the Protestant and Catholic communities and their relations with one another. Here the only comparisons possible, since these precise variables are specific to

our questionnaire, are those between the participants and the non-participants. Only 4 of the 34 attitude items (3 of the 23 policy attitude items and 1 of the 11 community attitude items) show a statistically significant difference. In percentage terms, that is roughly 12% of the policy attitude items, roughly 9% of the community attitude items, and roughly 12% of all the attitude items—not too much above the 5% expectable by chance.

Questions and Expectations

The evidence from past DPs suggests that mass deliberation frequently changes policy attitudes, both at the individual level (“gross change”) and in the aggregate (“net change”); induces considerable learning, often been linked to the policy attitude changes; and fosters “better citizenship”: more participatory attitudes and behaviors, greater acceptance of political differences, and the like (see Luskin, Fishkin & Jowell 2002; Luskin, Fishkin & Hahn 2007b; Luskin & Fishkin 2002).

But these studies were not in deeply divided societies, where mutual trust and understanding run low, and mass deliberation is often thought to be impossible or impracticable. Does deliberation in deeply divided societies also produce learning and change policy attitudes? Even on issues related to the lines of division? Can deliberation across deep divisions induce some greater appreciation of the other side and its point of view? Can it (whatever in this vein it may require) create greater mutual trust and understanding?

We expect our data to answer in the affirmative. At least under the sort of safe, fair, and facilitative conditions provided by a DP, we expect to find that ordinary people—in the present context, Catholics and Protestants—can engage in meaningful deliberation, even in a deeply divided society. This much is admittedly a matter of faith (no pun intended) more than reasoned expectation (although we obviously know the answer as we write).

But given that much, deliberation should both inform and often change opinions—in a deeply divided society just as much as elsewhere. In the real world, ordinary people are rarely well informed about policy issues. Usually they are ignorant; sometimes they are misinformed. But participating in a process that exposes them to a large quantity of factual information and makes it hard to avoid confronting uncongenial facts should increase their knowledge and correct many of their misapprehensions, as it routinely has in previous DPs (see, e.g., Luskin, Fishkin & Jowell, 2002; Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Fishkin 2009). The learning, coupled with thinking, and exposure to other points of view in face to face discussion should also frequently produce policy attitude change, both at the individual level and in the aggregate, just as in DPs elsewhere (see Luskin, Fishkin & Hahn, 2007b, Luskin, Fishkin & Hahn, 2007a).

What is less certain is the nature of any policy attitude change, especially as it varies between groups. Will participants from opposing sides, Catholics and Protestants, change in the same direction, and will the gap between them shrink or widen (will they

converge or diverge)? Will they wind up on the same side of the issue, and how far apart? We shall see.

Finally, it is reasonable to hope—again given meaningful deliberation—that the members of different groups or communities will come to understand, trust, and respect one another more. Talking with others in a safe public space about issues that, in principle, do not have to be reduced to issues of ethnicity, nationalism or religion may create a sense that those on the other side are open to reason and trustworthy. Other DPs have in fact produced effects of this sort (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005. Luskin & Fishkin, 2007), although deep divides may make them more difficult to obtain.

Post-Deliberation Attitudes and Attitude Change

We examine two broad sorts of questions about both policy and community attitudes: (1) whether and how they changed as a result of deliberation and where they wound up post-deliberation and (2) did Catholics and Protestants change similarly or differently, converge or diverge, and wind up at similar or different points. We address (1) in two steps, first examining the raw T2 – T1 change, then examining the T3 – T2 change and comparing the participants and control group at T3 in an effort to verify that (Tables 1 and 2 about here)

the T2 – T1 change was actually due to deliberation rather than external political events unfolding over this period, particularly, as noted above, the policing issue. The results of the first analysis appear in Table 1, those of the second in Table 2.

The Omagh DP's school policy issues fell into three main clusters.

Types and Age-Groupings of Schools. The first, and conceivably the easiest for parents to disentangle from the Catholic-Protestant divide, concerned the types and age-groupings of schools. Specifically, we asked about the policies of retaining all the existing school types in the Omagh area and of keeping the traditional pattern of having mostly ages 11-18 schools, with some ages 11-16 schools. As Table 1 shows, the participants' support for these status quo arrangements started high, above .7, significantly diminished, but still ended fairly high, at a bit over .6. (Note that all our attitude items are scored so that 0 represents the strongest opposition, 1 the strongest support, and .5 neutrality.)

Collaboration between Schools. The second cluster, which may have been harder for parents to disentangle, concerned the ways in which existing schools might actually collaborate. We asked about the possibilities that schools might share facilities like technology labs or sixth forms, that they might share a campus while retaining distinct identities, that children might travel to neighboring schools to be taught subjects unavailable at their own, and that teachers might travel to neighboring schools to teach subjects unavailable there.

Table 1 shows that here, too, support started and remained fairly high (above roughly .6). The only statistically (or substantively) significant change was a moderate

decrease in support for “schools sharing a campus while retaining distinct identities,” which fell from .675 to .597 (still on the supportive side of the scale). We are not sure why. Our guess, though it is only a guess, is that this particular alternative struck some of the participants as ineffective. Proponents of integration expressed the view in the plenary that if one were interested in integration, physically separate schooling on the same campus would achieve little.

Mixed Religious Schools. The third cluster concerned the possibility of mixed religious schools, where Protestant and Catholic pupils are educated together. We asked about attitudes toward the following four proposals: that schools that need to partner to deliver the curriculum should be required to partner with their closest neighboring school, even if it is not of the same religious composition; that children should attend schools with a balanced enrollment of Protestants and Catholics versus only with children of their own religion; that schools that are not mixed should be required to partner with a school with children of a different religion; and that the number of formal Integrated schools, in which all the school sectors, including the Churches and the Education and Library Board, have a right to play a role, should be increased.

Table 1 shows that here yet again these proposals all began and ended with a very high level of support (in the .65 to .75 range). There was only one significant change. Support for the first proposal—that schools that need to partner to deliver the curriculum should be required to partner with their closest neighboring school, even if it is not of the same religious composition—increased from .655 to .725.

These high and stable levels of support for all these mixing proposals are actually consistent with the results from other surveys, which have routinely shown majorities wishing to send their children to mixed schools and wanting to see the number of mixed schools increase (Taylor, 2001, p. 43; Hadden & Boyle 1994, p. 33). So why don't more people already send their children to mixed schools, and why aren't there already more of them? It may partly be a supply problem: there aren't enough mixed schools to go around (O'Flynn, 2009, p. 277; but see McGarry & O'Leary, 2009, 68). Beyond that, we can only speculate. On the one hand, parents may hesitate in practice to send their children to mixed schools for fear of losing standing within their community (see Barry, 2001, p. 207). They may also worry about sending their children to schools that may be insufficiently mixed, preponderantly reflecting the other community's way of life.

Catholic versus Protestant Attitudes and Attitude Change

The data suggest that Catholics and Protestants see these policies more similarly than might have been expected, even before deliberating. Of these 11 items, only one shows a pre-deliberation difference that approaches statistical significance (school collaboration for “pupils travelling to nearby schools for subjects unavailable at their own” ($p=.09$)). As shown in Table 3, Catholics and Protestants generally changed in the same direction. In every case, where either Protestants or Catholics changed significantly, the other community also changed in the same direction. For example, Catholics

decreased their support for “schools sharing a campus while maintaining a distinct identity” ($p=.05$) and Protestants changed the same way. Protestants changed (Table 3 about here)

significantly in lowering support for “retaining all school types currently in the Omagh area” ($p=.01$) and Catholics changed in the same direction. Protestants changed significantly for “Keeping the traditional pattern of schools for ages 11-18 and ages 11-16” and Catholics changed in the same direction ($p=.01$). Other questions where one group or another changed nearly significantly showed the same pattern. In general the two groups started relatively close and made any significant moves in the same direction.

Knowledge

One way of justifying the claim that these policy attitude changes were the fruit of meaningful deliberation, as opposed to merely being a response to important political developments in the wider society, is to show that there was substantial learning about these issues. The Omagh questionnaire contained seven factual knowledge questions relating to education in Northern Ireland generally and in Omagh specifically. These asked about the percentage of schools having a majority of one religion but at least 10% of the other in their enrollment (5-10%); the percentage change over the past five years in the number of children entering Omagh schools (a 10% decrease); the minimum number of subjects 14-year-old pupils must have the opportunity of choosing under the new entitlement framework (24); the proportion of the subjects offered that must be applied under the entitlement framework (1/3); the proportion of grammar-school pupils going on to university (roughly 3/4); the relationship between age and funding (greater for older pupils); and the official employer for voluntary grammar school teachers (the school’s Board of Governors).

Table 4 shows that the participants learned a lot. On six of these seven items, there was a statistically significant knowledge gain. In some cases, the change was night-and-day. The percentage correctly identifying the provision of all 14-year-old pupils with (Table 4 about here)

a choice of at least 24 subjects as one of the requirements of the new entitlement framework rose from only 21% at T1 to 75% at T2. The percentage knowing that schools receive more funding for older than for younger pupils rose from only 23% at T1 to 79% at T2. Across the seven items, the knowledge gain ranged from 22.2% to 50.0%, averaging 27.8% (statistically significant off-the-table).

The picture is generally similar for both Protestants and Catholics. As shown in the table in the Appendix, both Protestants and Catholics had large knowledge gains overall. Catholics increased their knowledge scores on the index of seven questions by 29 points, Protestants by 26 points. In a few cases, one group or the other gained significantly more. Protestants gained 39 points and Catholics 24 points on the question about the decreased enrollment in Omagh schools. Catholics gained 38 points and Protestants 27 points for the question about requirements of the new entitlement

curriculum. Overall, Catholics and Protestants ended up with similarly high levels of knowledge, answering 51% and 49% correct, respectively, at the end of the process.

Community-Related Attitudes

As hoped for and expected, the participants acquired much more positive views of the other community and of inter-community relations. On the first score, whether most Catholics and most Protestants were open to reason; and, on the second, whether most Catholics and most Protestants were trustworthy.

Table 6 shows the Catholic participants' beliefs and attitudes about Protestants and the Protestant participants' beliefs and attitudes about Catholics. These opinions too start off on the positive side of the 0-1 scale. The Catholic participants say they feel a bit

(Table 6 about here)

more favorably about Protestants than the Protestant participants do about Catholics, but each community views the other as about equally trustworthy and open to reason. The favorability ratings do not change much in either group, but the Catholic participants came to see Protestants as trustworthier and more open to reason, while the Protestant participants also came to see Catholics as trustworthier (but not more open to reason).

There were also two items about empirical premises related to community relations shown in Table 7. The first asked whether the educational system can benefit

(Table 7 about here)

both communities equally or can only benefit one community at the other's expense. The second asked whether better relations between the communities would result from more mixing or more separation.

Support for the second premise began very high, at .724. Perhaps because it was already near a soft ceiling, it only inched insignificantly higher following deliberation. Support for the first premise began somewhat lower, at .575, but increased insignificantly, to .648.

Comparisons to Control Group

About a month after the deliberations, participants were re-interviewed by telephone with an abbreviated version of the same questionnaire. Considering T1 as the initial survey and T2 the end of the weekend, we designate T3 the time of these reinterviews. At T3, a post-test only control group was also interviewed with the same abbreviated questionnaire.

Only five of the eleven school policy attitudes in Table 2 were asked of the control group. While three of these five show significant differences with the control group at T3, the picture is ambiguous about how much of this contrast was due to the deliberations. In two of these cases, there was also substantial change post deliberation: "Sharing a lab or sixth form" and "children attending schools with balanced religious enrollment" (support for which actually dropped slightly from T1 to T2). In the third case, the T1 level for participants was significantly higher than the control at T3 ("pupils travelling to nearby schools for subjects unavailable at their own"). Since we only have a

T3 data for the control we have no way of knowing what the contrast would have been for the control at T1.

However, the picture is clearer for the bulk of the control group questions, which focused on beliefs and attitudes about the two communities as well as knowledge. Here there is clear evidence that the deliberations had an effect, indeed a remarkable one for a single day of deliberation in such a context of long-standing conflict.

When Catholics were asked whether Protestants were “open to reason” there was an increase from a mean of .54 to .696 (on a 0 to 1 scale with agreement the higher number). In the month after deliberation this deteriorated only slightly to .689. This T3 belief contrasted markedly with the view of Catholics in the control group at .596 ($p=.03$). Similarly when Catholics were asked whether Protestants were “trustworthy” there was an increase from .658 to .723 by the end of the deliberations ($p=.065$) and a continuing increase by T3 to .796. This contrasted with the control group at T3 which had a mean of .692. The contrast between treatment and control group was again significant ($p=.01$). In the latter case, the movement toward believing Protestants were open to reason continued during the month after, so effects in the great world may have contributed, or arguably, the combined effects of deliberation and the broader environment produced the contrast with the control.

When Protestants were asked the same questions about Catholics, the movements were similar. Protestants moved from a mean of .580 to .616 in believing Catholics were open to reason and this continued to rise so that by T3 it had reached .672. This result contrasted with the control group at .554 at T3 ($p=.04$ for the contrast between treatment and control at T3). When Protestants were asked whether Catholics were “trustworthy” their mean response rose from .637 to .763 from T1 to T2. By T3 this had fallen back a bit to .693 producing a contrast with the control group at .615. This contrast ($p=.15$) was not significant given the low n for the number of Protestants, but the magnitude of the difference is suggestive and fits the pattern of the other answers.

Participants were also asked whether or not “changes in the educational system can equally benefit both communities.” For participants overall, the increase was significant ($p=.05$). For the smaller number who took the T3 questionnaire the T1 to T2 change was marginally significant ($p=.06$). The participants increased from .582 at T1 to .663 at T2 and continued to increase to .717 at T3. The contrast at T3 with the control group (which had a mean of .529) was significant at .00 level.

Participants were also asked whether more mixing or more separation would produce better community relations. Here the increase in the direction of more mixing was not significant on the weekend, but the increase continued in the month afterwards (moving from .737 to .820 at T3). The control group had a mean of .724 producing a significant contrast ($p=.01$). On this question some of the key movement came in the follow up period, perhaps participants were activated by the deliberations and became sensitive to the hopeful moves clear from the media environment (including the BBC broadcast mentioned above). On both these questions, Catholics and Protestants changed

in the same direction with the gap between them narrower after the organized day of deliberation than it was before.

As noted earlier, there were massive knowledge gains. As shown in Table 5, the overall gain in knowledge for the participants who answered all three waves was 29 points from T1 to T2. In the month following there was a decrease of 8 points from the earlier gain. But this still offered a difference of 18 points when compared to the control group at T3 ($p=.00$ for the difference between participants at T3 who had a mean knowledge level of .43 and the control group which had a mean knowledge level of .25).

In general the control group demonstrated that after only a day of face to face deliberation there could be significant change in levels of knowledge as well as mutual respect, perceptions of trustworthiness and perceptions of whether or not mutually beneficial changes were possible. Face to face civil discussion was clearly a novelty between these two groups, who initially avoided eye contact and had to develop the ongoing capacity to discuss these issues together. These results, in such a long standing place of conflict, suggest that mass deliberation, carefully organized, can create its own pre-conditions for more easily enabling future deliberations at the mass level.

Discussion

Mass deliberation in deeply divided societies has often been dismissed as impossible or, if possible, undesirable. The assumption is that ordinary people deliberating across deep divides would either fail to deliberate or deliberate but divide further. Even if they “express tolerant preferences,” the realities of life in deeply divided societies are (claimed to be) such that they will inevitably “practice suspicion” (McGarry & O’Leary, 2009, p. 68).

The Omagh DP clearly suggests otherwise. No doubt some minimum levels of trust, respect, and understanding are necessary for ordinary people to deliberate at all, and to some degree the Omagh DP participants might have selected themselves (from the random interview sample) on that basis. They may represent the portion of Omagh society already meeting that threshold. Or, alternatively, it may be that the threshold—just to start talking—is not actually that high. At any rate, we did succeed in gathering together a more or less representative sample of Omagh, itself something of a microcosm of Northern Ireland, to discuss education reform.

The discussion, moreover, was a real deliberation. The participants learned about the issues. They came to see the other side as more trustworthy and open to reason even on a crucial issue like education.

Education poses a reasonably stiff test. In a deeply divided society, the shape of the educational system is important not just for its effects on the sorts of learning that affect individual and societal advancement, but as a main vehicle through which traditions are passed from one generation to the next. Thus, the issues of the Omagh DP

were intimately connected to the deep divide, which limited the potential for attitudes about them to change. Yet change they often did.

The findings of the Omagh DP clearly show that parents would support a system of good sustainable schools, with the option of some schools specializing in some particular subject; an education system that promotes meaningful school collaboration with a preference for sharing facilities such as a technology lab; schools that activity seek a balanced enrollment of Protestant and Catholic pupils, and in which schools that need to partner to deliver the curriculum do so with their closest neighboring school, regardless of its religious composition; a move away from the status quo in terms of the age-groupings of schools; and a reduction in the diversity of school types and a substantial increase in the percentage of schools that have formal integrated status. These results suggest the possibility of mass deliberation's playing a part in deeply divided societies' reaching decisions in the interest of the whole. This suggest that, although education matters to identity, ordinary people can to some extent disentangle education from other political issues.

These post-deliberation opinions provide a useful input to policymaking—one reflecting far greater knowledge and thought than the “top of the head,” often phantom opinions in ordinary polls, yet far more representative than the completely self-selected participants in conventional public fora.

These results are all the more impressive in light of the modesty of this intervention. The DP entailed just a few days to a few weeks of heightened learning and casual discussion in the interval between the initial interview and the deliberations, and just one day of organized deliberation in heterogeneous discussion groups—this in context marked by decades of tension and inter-group hostility, at times scarred by intense violence. In this light, the changes in policy attitudes related to inter-group relations and in attitudes toward the other group are striking.

DP's can play a part, insofar as political elites are willing to take notice of and act upon the views and opinions of ordinary people. They can help create a political environment in which it is easier for politicians from different sides of the divide to compromise and to arrive at decisions that are good for society as a whole, without constantly having to worry about losing out at the polls to hard-line rivals adept at decrying every compromise as a sellout (but see Barry, 1975, p. 505).

The Omagh DP was only one event, in only one district council area, on only one topic. Not every similar event may have the same success. But the results do suggest that the argument that, at the level of the ordinary citizen, deeply divided societies can sustain no more than enclave deliberation is a counsel not of realism but of despair. At least sometimes, on some issues, even in deeply divided societies, mass deliberation, structured in this fashion, is possible and useful. And seems to increase the prospects for future deliberation.

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Table 1
School Policy Attitudes, All Participants, T1 – T2

	T1	T2	T2 – T1	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
A. Changing the School System					
Retaining all school types currently in the Omagh area	.701	.605	-.096	.00	116
Keeping the traditional pattern of schools for ages 11-18 and ages 11-16	.734	.615	-.119	.00	111
B. School Collaboration					
Schools sharing facilities like a technology lab or a sixth form	.725	.758	.032	.33	114
Schools sharing a campus while retaining distinct identities	.675	.597	-.078	.02	113
Pupils traveling to nearby schools for subjects unavailable at their own	.614	.623	.009	.80	118
Teachers traveling to nearby schools to teach subjects unavailable there	.658	.643	-.015	.65	120
C. Mixed Education/Denominational Collaboration					
Requiring partnering with the closest neighboring school, regardless of religious composition	.655	.725	.070	.03	121
Children attending schools w/ balanced religious enrollment vs. only their own religion	.735	.739	.003	.90	117
Requiring unmixed schools to partner with a school with children of a different religion	.650	.622	-.028	.40	117
Increasing the number of formal Integrated schools	.745	.725	-.020	.48	114
Mixed education promotes mutual respect and understanding	.796	.794	-.002	.93	120

Table 2
School Policy Attitudes, All Participants and Control Group, T1 – T2 – T3

	T1	T2	T3	T3C	T2 – T1	<i>p</i>	T3-T2	<i>p</i>	T3-T3C	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
A. Changing the School System											
Retaining all school types currently in the Omagh area*	.667	.605	.647	-	-.062	.09	.043	.19	-	-	87
Keeping the traditional pattern of schools for ages 11-18 and ages 11-16*	.689	.628	.683	-	-.061	.15	.055	.20	-	-	83
B. School Collaboration											
Schools sharing facilities like a technology lab or a sixth form	.745	.750	.791	.741	.005	.90	.041	.17	.050	.01	86
Schools sharing a campus while retaining distinct identities	.684	.572	.626	.632	-.112	.00	.054	.12	-.006	.86	85
Pupils traveling to nearby schools for subjects unavailable at their own	.624	.649	.626	.535	.025	.54	-.023	.53	-.091	.04	88
Teachers traveling to nearby schools to teach subjects unavailable there	.661	.673	.676	.610	.012	.76	.002	.95	.066	.13	90
C. Mixed Education/Denominational Collaboration											
Requiring partnering with the closest neighboring school, regardless of religious composition*	.652	.719	.742	-	.067	.06	.022	.48	-	-	89
Children attending schools w/ balanced religious enrollment vs. only their own religion	.741	.723	.810	.701	-.017	.57	.087	.03	.109	.01	86
Requiring unmixed schools to partner with a school with children of a different religion	.648	.614	.668	-	-.034	.38	.054	.13	-	-	88
Increasing the number of formal Integrated schools*	.715	.706	.744	-	-.010	.78	.038	.24	-	-	84
Mixed education promotes mutual respect and understanding*	.807	.805	.828	-	-.003	.92	.023	.51	-	-	87

*The control group questionnaire did not include these questions. *N*'s for control group range from 146 to 150.

Table 3
School Policy Attitudes, Catholic versus Protestant Participants, T1 – T2

	T1				T2				T2 – T1					
	C	P	P-C	<i>p</i>	C	P	P-C	<i>p</i>	C	<i>p</i>	P	<i>p</i>	P-C	<i>p</i>
A. Changing the School System														
Retaining all school types currently in the Omagh area*	.694	.703	.009	.87	.658	.521	-.137	.02	-.047	.23	-.165	.01	-.118	.09
Keeping the traditional pattern of schools for ages 11-18 and ages 11-16*	.733	.728	-.005	.93	.644	.548	-.096	.16	-.084	.06	-.169	.01	-.085	.27
B. School Collaboration														
Schools sharing facilities like a technology lab or a sixth form	.726	.705	-.021	.72	.729	.768	.039	.43	.033	.44	.034	.53	.001	.99
Schools sharing a campus while retaining distinct identities	.688	.645	-.043	.44	.631	.614	-.017	.74	-.086	.05	-.051	.35	.035	.62
Pupils traveling to nearby schools for subjects unavailable at their own	.575	.688	.113	.09	.511	.570	.059	.37	.060	.22	-.082	.17	-.142	.07
Teachers traveling to nearby schools to teach subjects unavailable there	.631	.710	.079	.23	.608	.616	.008	.90	.017	.71	-.075	.13	-.767	.20
C. Mixed Education/Denominational Collaboration														
Requiring partnering with the closest neighboring school, regardless of religious composition	.661	.622	-.039	.51	.744	.673	-.071	.24	.082	.06	.066	.12	-.016	.81
Children attending schools w/ balanced religious enrollment vs. only their own religion	.712	.750	.038	.52	.724	.745	.021	.72	.005	.88	.005	.91	-.000	1.0
Requiring unmixed schools to partner with a school with children of a different religion	.649	.656	.007	.88	.618	.619	.001	.99	-.016	.69	-.039	.49	-.023	.75
Increasing the number of formal Integrated schools	.755	.705	-.050	.38	.717	.721	.004	.95	-.046	.24	.029	.45	.075	.22
Mixed education promotes mutual respect and understanding	.773	.823	.050	.28	.785	.788	.003	.97	.016	.57	-.038	.46	-.054	.32

Note: Tier A: *n*'s range from 68 to 78 for Catholics and from 37 to 40 for Protestants; Tier B: *n*'s range from 72 to 104 for Catholics and from 36 to 41 for Protestants; Tier C: *n*'s range from 74 to 79 for Catholics and from 38 to 41 for Protestants.

Table 4
Knowledge Gains, All Participants, T1 –T2

Item (identified by right answer)	T1	T2	T2-T1	<i>p</i>
5-10% of majority-Protestant or -Catholic schools have at least 10% of other religion	.24	.35	.11	.03
The number of children entering Omagh schools has decreased by 10%	.19	.48	.29	.00
The new entitlement framework requires that all 14-year-olds be provided a choice of at least 24 subjects	.21	.75	.54	.00
The new entitlement framework requires that 1/3 of all the subjects offered be applied	.29	.63	.34	.00
About 3/4 of grammar school pupils attend university after leaving school	.29	.44	.15	.00
School funding is currently greater for older pupils	.23	.79	.56	.00
The official employer for all teachers in voluntary grammar schools is the school's Board of Governors	.08	.09	.01	.78
Knowledge index (% Correct)	.22	.50	.29	.00

Note: $n = 124$.

Table 5
Knowledge Gains, All Participants and Control Group, T1 – T2 – T3

Item (identified by right answer)	T1	T2	T3	T3C	T2-T1	<i>p</i>	T3-T2	<i>p</i>	T3-T3C	<i>P</i>
5-10% of majority-Protestant or -Catholic schools have at least 10% of other religion	.24	.36	.30	.31	-.13	.02	-.06	.26	-.01	.84
The number of children entering Omagh schools has decreased by 10%	.18	.52	.39	.26	-.33	.00	-.13	.02	.13	.04
The new entitlement framework requires that all 14-year-olds be provided a choice of at least 24 subjects	.23	.76	.61	.21	-.54	.00	-.15	.01	.40	.00
The new entitlement framework requires that 1/3 of all the subjects offered be applied	.32	.61	.57	.19	-.29	.00	-.04	.44	.38	.00
About 3/4 of grammar school pupils attend university after leaving school	.32	.45	.53	.38	-.13	.02	.08	.21	.15	.02
School funding is currently greater for older pupils	.22	.80	.52	.26	-.51	.00	-.28	.00	.26	.00
The official employer for all teachers in voluntary grammar schools is the school's Board of Governors	.06	.08	.09	.11	-.01	.71	.01	.74	-.02	.60
Knowledge index (% Correct)	.22	.51	.43	.25	.29	.00	-.08	.00	.18	.00

Note: *n* = 93 for participants, 150 for control group.

Table 6
Beliefs and Attitudes about the Other Community

A. All Participants (Separately by Community), T1 – T2

	T1	T2	T2 – T1	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
Catholics toward Protestants					
Feeling: favorably vs. unfavorably	.768	.751	-.016	.56	74
How open to reason?	.543	.660	.118	.00	68
How trustworthy?	.621	.709	.087	.00	70
Protestants toward Catholics					
Feeling: favorably vs. unfavorably	.646	.700	.054	.09	37
How open to reason?	.558	.617	.058	.17	36
How trustworthy?	.646	.751	.105	.02	37

B. All Participants and Control Group (Separately by Community), T1 – T2 – T3

	T1	T2	T3	T3C	T2 – T1	<i>p</i>	T3-T2	<i>p</i>	T3-T3C	<i>p</i>
Catholics toward Protestants										
Feeling: favorably vs. unfavorably	.798	.770	.844	.800	-.028	.37	.074	.07	.044	.23
How open to reason?	.540	.696	.689	.596	.156	.00	-.007	.88	.093	.03
How trustworthy?	.658	.723	.796	.692	.065	.06	.073	.06	.104	.01
Protestants toward Catholics										
Feeling: favorably vs. unfavorably	.622	.663	.763	.756	.041	.27	.100	.01	.007	.90
How open to reason?	.580	.616	.672	.554	.036	.45	.056	.29	.118	.04
How trustworthy?	.637	.763	.693	.615	.126	.01	-.070	.12	.078	.15

Note: *n* = 45 to 54 for Catholic participants, 100 to 102 for Catholic control group members, 25 to 27 for Protestant participants, 34 to 36 for Protestant control group members.

Table 7
Beliefs about Inter-Community Relations

A. All Participants, T1 – T2

	T1	T2	T2 – T1	P	N
Changes in the education system can equally benefit children from both communities	.575	.648	.073	.05	107
More mixing vs. more separation will improve relations	.730	.743	.013	.62	120

B. All participants and Control Group, T1 – T2 – T3

	T1	T2	T3	T3C	T2 – T1	p	T2-T3	p	T3-T3C	p
Changes in the education system can equally benefit children from both communities	.582	.663	.717	.529	.081	.06	.054	.21	.188	.00
More mixing vs. more separation will improve relations	.737	.745	.820	.724	.008	.79	.075	.03	.096	.01

Note: *n* = 78-92 for participants, 144 – 150 for control group.

C. Catholic versus Protestant Participants, T1 – T2

	T1				T2				T2 - T1					
	C	P	C-P	p	C	P	C-P	p	C	p	P	p	C-P	p
Changes in the education system can equally benefit children from both communities	.554	.636	-.082	.19	.601	.656	-.055	.40	.082	.10	.043	.44	.039	.00
More mixing vs. more separation will improve relations	.696	.763	-.067	.22	.705	.780	-.092	.10	.007	.86	.028	.48	-.021	.00

Note: **T1:** *n* = 70-77 for Catholics, 39-41 for Protestants; **T2:** *n* = 74-78 for Catholics, 39-40 for Protestants; **T2-T1:** *n* = 67-76 for Catholics, *n* = 37-40 for Protestants

**Appendix
Representativeness**

Table A1: Sociodemographic Variables

	NINIS	MORI	NP	D	NS	A	P2	P3	CG	<i>p</i> (two-tailed)					
										NI-P2	A-D	P2-D	P2-NP	P2-CG	P3-CG
Gender (Female)	49.9	70.6	69.1	68.7	70.7	73.5	75.8	76.3	72.7	.000	.216	.137	.150	.557	.527
Age (in years)	40.4	40.2	40.0	40.3	39.2	40.0	40.7	41.6	40.0	.668	.705	.600	.397	.126	.082
Religion															
Catholic	71.1	68.1	69.4	72.5	58.6	61.4	63.7	63.4	70.0	.090	.006	.068	.233	.272	.291
Protestant	27.9	27.6	26.1	23.2	36.4	34.5	33.1	33.3	24.7	.223	.003	.031	.127	.126	.145
Marital Status															
Single	9.2	10.8	10.8	10.2	13.1	11.7	10.5	7.5	8.0	.639	.578	.923	.911	.479	.894
Married/Living as Married	77.7	76.7	77.2	81.1	63.6	70.0	75.0	78.5	79.3	.491	.002	.150	.609	.395	.877
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	13.1	12.5	12.0	8.7	23.2	18.4	14.5	14.0	12.7	.661	.001	.069	.449	.657	.770
Employment															
Full-time	76.3	41.7	42.6	44.9	34.3	36.8	38.7	43.0	47.3	.000	.054	.232	.442	.153	.513
Part-time/ On gov't training program	-	17.1	16.4	17.4	13.1	16.6	19.4	21.5	16.7	-	.805	.626	.447	.565	.347
Seeking work	4.1	2.6	2.9	1.7	7.1	4.0	1.6	1.1	2.7	.030	.096	.926	.420	.555	.398
Student	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.0	0.0	.141	.756	.450	.335	.272	-
Retired/Not working/Permanently sick or disabled	6.4	6.9	6.5	6.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	7.5	8.7	.490	.362	.448	.551	.859	.755
Looking after home/Caring for elderly or disabled person	8.2	29.8	29.3	27.5	35.4	33.2	31.5	26.9	21.3	.000	.151	.409	.641	.057	.323
Other	0.2	1.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.3	-	.292	.111	.110	.040	.076

Spouse's Employment															
Full-time	-	66.4	66.5	67.5	62.1	64.4	66.0	68.5	68.9	-	.506	.785	.925	.650	.952
Part-time/ On gov't training program	-	11.5	12.0	11.7	13.6	11.3	9.6	8.2	11.8	-	.897	.579	.508	.611	.438
Seeking work	-	3.2	3.2	2.5	6.1	4.4	3.2	2.7	0.8	-	.273	.708	.985	.211	.305
Student	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retired/Not working/Permanently sick or disabled	-	8.8	8.0	8.1	7.6	10.0	11.8	11.0	8.4	-	.505	.296	.265	.425	.558
Looking after the home/Caring for an elderly or disabled person	-	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.1	8.8	8.6	9.6	10.1	-	.878	.843	.844	.698	.912
Other	-	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.1	0.0	0.0	-	.856	.998	.947	.262	-
Education															
Degree level or higher	14.4	19.0	18.8	19.6	16.2	18.0	19.5	21.7	18.7	.158	.642	.985	.863	.860	.563
btec (higher), bec (higher), tec (higher), hnc, hnd	9.9	4.6	5.2	4.7	7.1	4.5	2.4	3.3	6.7	.000	.924	.283	.195	.103	.256
gce 'a' level including nvq level 3)	6.0	10.8	10.2	11.4	6.1	9.9	13.0	9.8	15.3	.000	.578	.637	.377	.587	.218
gcese (w/nvq level 2), gce 'o' level, btec (national), tec (nat'l), onc, ond	13.5	30.3	29.9	28.9	33.3	32.4	31.7	33.7	34.0	.000	.380	.567	.705	.690	.962
cse (other than grade 1)	22.0	5.9	6.1	5.6	8.1	6.3	4.9	4.4	1.3	.000	.711	.776	.604	.085	.144
no formal qualification	44.2	21.8	21.7	21.1	24.2	23.0	22.0	19.6	16.7	.000	.590	.835	.966	.270	.569
other answers	n/a	7.6	7.9	8.8	5.1	5.9	6.5	7.6	7.3	-	.203	.432	.597	.790	.937

No. of school age children	-	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.0	-	.222	.129	.145	.241	.568
<i>N</i>		568	444	345	99	223	124	93	150						

NOTE: Entries are percentages, except for the last row, giving sample sizes. NINIS = the Northern Ireland Neighborhood Information Service Census, confined to households with dependent children in Omagh and based on the "Household Reference Person." The employment and education data are for 16- to 74-year-olds. MORI = the whole MORI interview sample. NP = Non-participants. D = Decliners. NS = No- Shows. A = Accepters. P2 = T2 Participants. P3 = T3 Participants. CG = Control Group. Note that $NP = D \cup NS$, that $NP \cup P2 = A \cup D = MORI$, and that $A = NS \cup P2$ (where the union operator can be read roughly as addition)

Table A2: Policy Attitudes

VARIABLE	NP	D	NS	A	P	A-D	P-D	P-NP
Having both academic schools and technical/vocational schools	.788	.801	.742	.763	.781	.09	.43	.78
Having a system of specialist schools, each developing at least one area of expertise	.633	.627	.657	.649	.627	.61	.99	.84
Having a system of all-ability schools, all providing the same wide curriculum	.712	.716	.698	.714	.726	.92	.76	.66
Schools sharing facilities like a technology lab or a Sixth Form	.734	.740	.717	.721	.723	.46	.59	.71
Schools sharing a campus while retaining distinct identities	.649	.649	.648	.662	.675	.62	.44	.42
Children travelling to neighboring schools to be taught subjects unavailable at their own school	.591	.581	.624	.620	.618	.20	.32	.45
Teachers travelling to neighboring schools to teach subjects unavailable there	.628	.630	.621	.643	.660	.68	.41	.37
Own views: Importance for children to attend school with children of their own religion (0=own religion; 1=balanced enrolment)	.678	.664	.725	.728	.730	.02	.05	.11
Protestants' views: Importance for children to attend school with children of their own religion (0=own religion; 1=balanced enrolment)	.468	.459	.498	.465	.440	.81	.53	.34
Catholics' views: Importance for children to attend school with children of their own religion (0=own religion; 1=balanced enrolment)	.477	.480	.468	.481	.491	.95	.70	.64
Own views: Changes in education system can equally benefit children from both communities (0=benefit one community at the other's expense; 1=equally benefit both)	.581	.595	.534	.561	.583	.22	.75	.92
Protestants' views: Changes in education system can equally benefit children from both communities (0=benefit one community at the other's expense; 1=equally benefit both)	.529	.540	.492	.511	.526	.25	.63	.92
Catholics' views: Changes in education system can equally benefit children from both communities (0=benefit one community at the other's expense; 1=equally benefit both)	.543	.552	.509	.515	.518	.11	.23	.38
Schools that are not mixed required to partner with a school with children of a different religion	.585	.569	.639	.649	.657	.01	.01	.03
Schools that need to partner to deliver curriculum required to partner with closest neighbouring school, even if not of same religious composition	.638	.633	.652	.655	.658	.42	.45	.52
If schools of different religious composition enter partnerships, children from both schools should at least sometimes be taught in the same classroom	.437	.454	.384	.394	.402	.02	.11	.26

Retaining all types of schools currently in the Omagh area	.708	.708	.705	.702	.700	.80	.78	.79
Establishing jointly managed schools, with management shared between the Catholic Church and the Western Education and Library Board or Protestant church(es)	.608	.617	.577	.622	.659	.85	.22	.13
Increasing the number of formal Integrated schools, in which all the partners, including the Churches and the Education and Library Board, have a right to play a role	.643	.643	.645	.698	.741	.05	.00	.00
Keeping the traditional pattern of ages 11-18 and some ages 11-16 schools	.751	.756	.732	.732	.732	.31	.39	.50
Having most schools 11-16 and converting one or two schools into 16-18 Sixth Form Colleges	.628	.618	.663	.647	.635	.27	.60	.82
Switching to a system of junior high schools (11-14) and senior high schools (14-18)	.496	.489	.520	.550	.573	.04	.02	.03
Schools combining primary and post-primary pupils (for example, ages 7-14)	.364	.346	.430	.430	.430	.00	.02	.05
How favourably or unfavourably do you feel about Protestants	.749	.760	.713	.732	.748	.22	.66	.97
How favourably or unfavourably do you feel about Catholics	.761	.766	.743	.745	.746	.33	.45	.56
Own views: Better relations between Protestants and Catholics will only come about through more mixing of the two communities (0=more separation;1=more mixing)	.705	.723	.647	.691	.726	.22	.90	.49
Protestants' views: Better relations between Protestants and Catholics will only come about through more mixing of the two communities (0=more separation;1=more mixing)	.534	.541	.512	.506	.501	.12	.15	.21
Catholics' views: Better relations between Protestants and Catholics will only come about through more mixing of the two communities (0=more separation;1=more mixing)	.545	.555	.513	.516	.518	.08	.17	.30
Openness of most Protestants to reason	.581	.581	.583	.568	.555	.58	.36	.34
Openness of most Catholics to reason	.608	.607	.614	.596	.582	.59	.30	.28
Trustworthiness of most Protestants	.635	.644	.602	.622	.635	.30	.73	.98
Trustworthiness of most Catholics	.644	.651	.621	.630	.635	.30	.52	.70
Mixed education promotes mutual respect and understanding	.788	.785	.796	.795	.793	.66	.76	.83
Improvements in the educational system are necessary for economic growth	.761	.766	.743	.745	.746	.33	.45	.56

Appendix Table A3
Gender Differences in Attitude Change

qno	qtext	male T2-T1	female T2-T1	diff.of.d M - F	pvalue M - F
1	11a	-0.193	0.02	-0.21	0.01
2	11b	-0.12	0.027	-0.15	0.09
3	11c	-0.041	-0.053	0.01	0.86
4	11d	0.021	0.036	-0.01	0.83
5	11e	-0.054	-0.086	0.03	0.69
6	11f	0.028	0.003	0.02	0.78
7	11g	-0.621	-0.585	-0.04	0.60
8	12a	0.096	-0.023	0.12	0.14
9	12b	0.071	0.107	-0.04	0.61
10	12c	0	0.059	-0.06	0.41
11	13a	0.068	0.074	-0.01	0.95
12	13b	-0.085	-0.027	-0.06	0.55
13	13c	-0.1	-0.022	-0.08	0.44
14	14a	-0.009	-0.034	0.02	0.76
15	14b	0.08	0.067	0.01	0.84
16	14c	0.362	0.378	-0.02	0.87
17	15a	-0.144	-0.081	-0.06	0.40
18	15b	-0.1	-0.001	-0.10	0.26
19	15c	-0.043	-0.013	-0.03	0.69
20	15d	-0.193	-0.094	-0.10	0.25
21	15e	-0.207	-0.073	-0.13	0.12
22	15f	-0.011	0.069	-0.08	0.41
23	15g	-0.133	0.008	-0.14	0.13
24	16a	-0.039	0.001	-0.04	0.47
25	16b	-0.028	0.006	-0.03	0.56
26	17a	0.114	-0.019	0.13	0.05
27	17b	-0.088	0.008	-0.10	0.20
28	17c	-0.081	-0.047	-0.03	0.64
29	18a	0.104	0.087	0.02	0.77
30	18b	0.126	0.044	0.08	0.15
31	19a	0.007	0.095	-0.09	0.10
32	19b	0.037	0.107	-0.07	0.15
33	20a	0.026	-0.011	0.04	0.56

34	20b	Improvements in the educational system are necessary for economic growth	0.553	0.499	0.05	0.46
34	20b	Improvements in the educational system are necessary for economic growth	0.553	0.499	0.05	0.46

Appendix Table A4: Knowledge Gains: Protestants Versus Catholics

	<u>Cath</u> T1	<u>Prot</u> ¹⁴ T1	<u>Diff.</u> T1	<u>pDiff</u> T1	<u>Cath</u> T2	<u>Prot</u> T2	<u>Diff.</u> T2	<u>P Diff</u> T2	<u>Cath</u> T2-T1	<u>P Cath</u> T2-T1	<u>Prot</u> T2-T1	<u>P Prot</u> T2-T1
5-10% of majority-Protestant or -Catholic schools have at least 10% of other religion	0.23	0.22	0.01	0.92	0.33	0.37	-0.04	0.69	0.10	0.10	0.15	0.11
The number of children entering Omagh schools has decreased by 10%	0.16	0.22	-0.06	0.48	0.41	0.61	-0.20	0.03	0.24	0.00	0.39	0.00
The new entitlement framework requires that all 14-year-olds be provided a choice of at least 24 subjects	0.20	0.24	-0.04	0.61	0.80	0.66	0.14	0.12	0.59	0.00	0.41	0.00
The new entitlement framework requires that 1/3 of all the subjects offered be applied	0.27	0.34	-0.07	0.40	0.65	0.61	0.04	0.70	0.38	0.00	0.27	0.01
About 3/4 of grammar school pupils attend university after leaving school	0.33	0.20	0.13	0.11	0.48	0.34	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.01	0.15	0.08
School funding is currently greater for older pupils	0.22	0.27	-0.05	0.53	0.78	0.78	0.00	0.96	0.57	0.00	0.51	0.00
The official employer for all teachers in voluntary grammar schools is the school's Board of Governors	0.08	0.10	-0.02	0.70	0.10	0.07	0.03	0.60	0.03	0.48	-0.02	0.66
Knowledge index (% Correct)	0.21	0.23	-0.02	0.72	0.51	0.49	0.02	0.75	0.29	0.00	0.26	0.00

¹ Paper prepared for the 5th General Conference of the European Consortium of Political Research, Potsdam, September 2009. We wish to thank Jennifer McGady, Alice Siu and Gaurov Sood for their excellent and extensive help on this paper.

² Or, more precisely, between two national groups, British unionists and Irish nationalists. While most unionists are Protestant, and most nationalists Catholic, the conflict is primarily national rather than religious: it is, in effect, a border dispute about whether Northern Ireland should remain part of the United Kingdom or become part of a united Ireland. However, since the debates about education generally involve questions of religious ethos and roughly half of the schools define themselves in religious terms, we follow the popular shorthand labels of ‘Protestant’ and ‘Catholic.’

³ Department of Education Northern Ireland. Available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/10-types_of_school-nischools_pg.htm. Accessed March 2009.

⁴ Northern Ireland Schools Census, 2007, <http://www.deni.gov.uk>. Accessed March 2009.

⁵ Department of Northern Ireland. http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/22-new-arrangements/22-ppa-ka-cef_pg.htm. Accessed March 2009.

⁶ The district council area includes the town of Omagh and its surrounding hinterland. The most recent census was taken in 2001. See <http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme/report.asp?DESC=FromGeneral&CurrentLevel=DC&ID=YY&Name=Omagh#Demography>. Accessed March 2009.

⁷ Addresses were randomly sampled from a postal address file; within each household, the next-birthday method (an approximation to random selection) determined the parent to be interviewed.

⁸ Our approach was sensitive to the parental right of choice as recognized, among other places, in international law. See, for example, European Convention on Human Rights (1952) *Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, Protocol 1, Article 2; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 29.

⁹ For a useful “timeline”, see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/2952997.stm. Accessed 31 March 2009.

¹⁰ In principle, the policing issue had already been settled under the terms of the St. Andrew’s Agreement (effectively, a reform treaty amending the terms of the 1998 Belfast Agreement) which was signed on 13 October 2006. In signing up to that agreement, Sinn Féin agreed in principle to recognize the PSNI, just as the Democratic Unionist Party (the largest of the two main unionist political parties) agreed in principle to share power with Sinn Féin. Arguably, everything that followed was all about their selling these new arrangements to their respective supporters, culminating in the affirmative Sinn Féin vote on 28 January 2007 and hence the eventual restoration of devolved power to the local Assembly at Stormont on 8 May 2007.

¹¹ Some differences between the MORI and NINIS response categories make a precision comparison difficult but that much seems clear.

¹² We chose not to impose quotas, which would have yielded roughly the right proportions of women and any other group for which we established a quota but would have departed from randomness and likely been unrepresentative in countless other ways.

¹³ The remaining 2.5% of the participants and xx% of the non-participants gave some other response or declined to answer.

¹⁴ Number of Catholics = 79, Number of Protestants = 41, 4 dropped as they didn't report their religious status