

ECONOMIC AID, PEACEBUILDING AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND: REASONS TO BE HOPEFUL?

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is to explore the role of external funding in the peacebuilding and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland. We employ non-linear regression analysis to examine the impact of religious affiliation and other demographic factors in shaping perceptions towards the role of international financial assistance in bringing about peaceable relations and reconciliation, reducing violence and sectarianism, as well as promoting a culture of tolerance. The findings indicate variations in respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of the international funding on peacebuilding and reconciliation across gender, economic class, religious affiliation, region and age. In particular, religious affiliation is found to be the main variable that shapes the respondents' perceptions about the role of external funding in the overall peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland. The implications of the findings for peacebuilding and reconciliation in Northern Ireland are further discussed in this study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The peacebuilding and reconciliation process in societies coming out of violence is a long and arduous journey. The cessation of a violent ethnic conflict with the signing of a peace agreement does not necessarily translate into peaceful

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