Recent legislation has promoted the role of equality considerations in the administration of public programmes. The 1998 Northern Ireland Act and the 1998 Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order, for example, have established a strengthened Equality Commission and placed an obligation on public bodies to display due regard for the promotion of equality. The introduction in 1998 of the New TSN framework has also done much to focus attention on social deprivation and equality by seeking tighter targeting of resources on individuals, areas and groups in need.

Employment policy has reflected these developments and therefore has a significant social targeting dimension. The IDB Corporate Plan, 1998-2001 states as objectives, for instance, that 75% of all first-time locational visits to Northern Ireland should be to TSN areas and that 75% of all first-time inward investment projects ought to be located in or near TSN areas. This policy approach is based, at least in part, on the belief that geographical concentrations of unemployment are a result of local shortages of jobs. This viewpoint is also reflected in other aspects of employment-related TSN policy as implemented by the DED group of agencies.

The Significance of West Belfast

West Belfast is an interesting example to investigate the targeting of social need through job creation and inward investment. It is the largest designated area of social need in Northern Ireland, and it has a high concentration of unemployed people. It is also an area in which inward investment and job creation are critically scrutinised by a variety of organisations.

Following the 1994 Ceasefires, for example, there was much talk about a ‘Peace Dividend’ of which increased inward investment would be an important part. Prime Minister Major, for example, announced during the 1994 Investment Forum that Fujitsu would establish a plant at Springvale; and there were claims that West Belfast was becoming a centre for engineering (O’Hearn and Fisher 1999). Local politicians, echoing the analysis that unemployment in West Belfast is caused by a shortage of work in the area, and also attaching the same hopes to inward investment, argued for more job creation under IDB auspices and the development of specific sites such as the Springvale Industrial Estate and Conway Mill.

Despite this earlier optimism, there is now some evidence of local dissatisfaction with the strategy of job creation in the area. O’Hearn and Fisher (1999, 1) comment, for instance, that:

“There is a widespread feeling within the West Belfast community that the IDB has not created a fair share of employment opportunities for the area due to an attitude on the part of government agencies that one local newspaper, The Andersonstown News, calls the ‘Big Chill’ (June 20 1998). There is a feeling that most of the largest IDB-sponsored employers are not linked with the area in measurable ways such as employing local people...”

At the same time it is asserted that there is an unfair sectarian balance in the small numbers of jobs that have
actually been created by IDB-assisted companies in West Belfast, and that more jobs should be located in West Belfast because residents of the area find it difficult to travel to workplaces in other parts of Belfast as a result of fear arising from the ‘Chill Factor’ (Sheehan and Tomlinson 1996).

Because of this political and policy background, there is a clear need to examine job creation in West Belfast in a more detailed way, and to see how far perceptions of inward investment in the area are accurate. A broader requirement to examine the socio-spatial impact of employment on areas of social need in an innovative manner is also suggested by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) which comments (NIAO 1998, 16) that the existing method of “Assessment based on job promotion in designated areas is not without its shortcomings”. The reason for this is that the relationship between where jobs are located, and the take-up of these jobs by residents is not simple. In support of this contention, the NIAO points to the example of the Springbank Industrial Estate on the borders of West Belfast which it feels might be expected to have a positive impact on that area, although outside the designated zone. This indicates a potential for more finely-grained spatial analysis when looking at the impact of employment.

This article therefore considers the geographical extent, social background, and experience of recruitment at two new manufacturing sites in West Belfast to throw light on questions of who gets jobs and where they come from. This data will be used to assess the prospects for the employment dimension of TSN, to suggest how equality aspects of employment creation might be better monitored, to comment on how accurate local perceptions of inward investment appear to be, and to consider alternative responses to unemployment in West Belfast.

The Two Sites: Context, Spatial Patterns of Recruitment, and TSN

As a preliminary to our comments on the geography of recruiting and the TSN impact of the two companies, it is useful to begin by presenting some outline information on the local contexts in which they are located. To preserve anonymity, the companies are referred to as Sites 1 and 2.

Site Location
Site 1 is located in an area of high unemployment. In its immediate neighbourhood (within a 2km radius, our definition of local context) there are nearly 2,000 Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants. There are also large numbers of people (nearly 17,000 aged 16-65) who live near the site. These are divided in a ratio of about 70:30 between Catholics and Protestants. Interestingly, all areas within 2km are designated as TSN, which means that 100% of the nearby population are TSN resident.

Site 2 is also in a densely populated area (nearly 14,000 people aged 16-65 live nearby). These are divided in a ratio of 95:5 between Catholics and Protestants - a contrast with Site 1. There are fewer JSA claimants (about 1,100) than at Site 1 but there is a very high proportion of TSN residents (97%) who live close to the factory.

Spatial Patterns of Recruitment
Given the local population background for both sites, it might be expected that both companies would draw heavily on JSA claimants and TSN residents. The reasoning for this draws on the underlying rationale for targeting social need through job creation - that geographical pockets of unemployment and social deprivation exist because of a shortage of local jobs, and that it is therefore necessary to create or locate jobs in these areas to ameliorate social problems.

Maps 1 and 2 (dealing with Sites 1 and 2 respectively) begin to examine this assumption by looking at the degree to which recruitment at these companies is geographically localised.
When analysed these present implicitly different pictures of the spatial extent from which workers are drawn. Workers at Site 1 are drawn from all sections of West Belfast, from parts of East Belfast, and indeed from areas well outside the city. In contrast, workers at Site 2 are largely drawn from a spatially-restricted area of West Belfast. This impression is borne out when the data are presented in a slightly different way. Nearly 82% of workers in Standard Occupational Classifications (SOCs) 7-9 (Sales, Plant & Machine Operatives, and Other Occupations) at Site 2 live within 5km of the Site as compared with around 56% for Site 1. Both companies, however, have a high TSN impact - Site 1 drew nearly 83% of its workers from TSN areas as compared with 91% for Site 2. What is the significance of these maps and this spatial analysis in terms of the debates outlined earlier?

Firstly, they illustrate a need for careful spatial analysis in monitoring the effects of TSN employment policies. Locating a factory in an area does not always equate to bringing jobs to the immediate locality. In fact, spatial catchments vary markedly even for companies in approximately the same general geographical location as is shown by Maps 1 and 2. Although both employers have attracted residents of TSN areas, the local impact of Site 2 is far greater because of its spatially restricted catchment. This raises the question of whether it is sufficient for inward investment to target social need wherever it is located, or whether the aim is expressly to bring jobs to those localities immediately spatially adjacent to the sites of employment creation.

Secondly, and following on from this, the analysis contributes to wider debates about bringing employment to West Belfast. To some degree, there are reasons to support the opinion expressed by O’Hearn and Fisher (1999),
that many jobs in the area go to non-locals. Site 1, for example, draws workers widely from many areas of Belfast; and the higher-grade managerial and professional workers employed at both sites live outside West Belfast. But set against this is Site 2 which draws most of its employees from relatively nearby and which does seem to have brought employment to the local community. Of course, these findings must be tempered by the relatively low number of employees at each site when the data were collected - around 70 and 80 for Sites 1 and 2 respectively. This influences the interpretation of the results but also has a wider significance.

Targeting Social Need - Occupational Profiles and Previous Experiences

The geography of labour recruitment is important in assessing the policy of bringing jobs to West Belfast; but equally valuable is more understanding of the type of work which has been created at each of the sites, and the backgrounds of the people who have taken these jobs. This information is presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3; which deal respectively with occupations, previous economic status, and highest qualifications. The companies are similar in that the majority of their workers (around 82% and 74% at Sites 1 and 2 respectively) are employed in SOC 8 (Plant & Machine Operatives). They are also comparable as people who were previously unemployed are about 68% of the workforce for both employers. A substantial minority of workers (28% at Site 1 and 23% at Site 2), however, held jobs before they found work with their current employer. In terms of qualifications, the two sites are again similar since they do not have high proportions of graduate employees - but there are some interesting differences at the lower end of the educational scale. Site 1 has a concentration of employees with NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualifications but
the majority of workers at Site 2 have either no qualifications or qualifications below NVQ Level 2. Again, what is the wider significance of these observations?

Firstly, the occupational profiles of both sites are somewhat unbalanced; there is a preponderance of jobs in SOC 8 (Plant & Machine Operatives) at the sites. This suggests the possibility of restricted employment opportunities in TSN areas. Even though unemployed residents of these areas gain work it is probable, therefore, that most enter relatively low skill jobs. The numbers of workers at Sites 1 and 2 are low so this observation should be treated with caution. However, this assumption fits well with other evidence. Examining the types of jobs taken by TSN and non-TSN workers in the entire Large-Scale Recruitment Study, it is found that TSN-resident workers have lower qualifications and greater concentrations in SOC 8 than non-TSN employees. Furthermore, evidence from the 1991 Census of Population for Belfast (Shuttleworth et al 1999), indicates that those residents of deprived wards who are in work have a different occupational structure to those who live in non-deprived wards.

Secondly, the results show, in general, that workers from backgrounds of unemployment tend to live in TSN-designated wards, and that they have been attracted to these jobs which have been created in West Belfast. This general observation, however,
conceals the situation of the minority of workers (over a quarter) who were previously employed. This indicates that drawing workers from TSN areas is not necessarily the same as recruiting unemployed people. Indeed, as is discussed in our other article, some enterprises appear to recruit relatively affluent people who would not normally be assumed to be representative of TSN-designated areas. Furthermore, there is a potential mismatch between need as measured in TSN as residential deprivation and absolute unemployment numbers.

Conclusion: What Does Bringing Jobs to West Belfast Mean?

The results reported in the article indicate that when jobs are located in West Belfast local people can gain work. This challenges the view noted earlier that jobs created by inward investment did not go to West Belfast residents and also, more broadly, indicates that locating jobs in deprived areas can help unemployed residents of these areas to gain work in some circumstances.

Set against this is the counterbalancing factor that many of the jobs that are gained by West Belfast residents are likely to be relatively low skilled. A contributing factor is likely to be the higher proportion of locally resident unemployed who are in general less able to compete for higher skilled jobs (Power and Shuttleworth 1997). To maximise the local TSN impact of employment creation it might thus be tempting to locate a high proportion of lower skilled jobs in such areas. This, if unchecked, could lead to a process of ‘separate urban development’ (Downs 1994) in which residents of deprived areas work in poor-grade jobs in these areas, whilst the residents of more affluent suburbs move freely and gain access to better-paid and higher-skill employment. A longer term, generational solution would see a twin-track approach of co-ordinated employment and training/education opportunities whereby the local availability of higher skilled jobs would be expected to increase alongside an ongoing development in the range and type of locally available training, education and work experience.

Indeed, there would seem to be a strong case for supplementing any job creation in West Belfast with other initiatives - for example investment in education/training would allow TSN residents to compete for a wider occupational range of employment. Other strategies could aim to encourage

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Highest Qualification</th>
<th>Site 1. Non-TSN Resident</th>
<th>Site 1. TSN Resident</th>
<th>Site 1. All</th>
<th>Site 2. Non-TSN Resident</th>
<th>Site 2. TSN Resident</th>
<th>Site 2. All</th>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NVQ L2 or equivalent</td>
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<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>NVQ L3 or equiv, below Degree</td>
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worker mobility within Belfast, as advocated by Downs (1994), so that residents of TSN areas can gain access to a broader range of job opportunities in other parts of the city. However, the possibilities of these approaches are not without difficulty in Northern Ireland. The ‘chill factor’ and the reluctance of West Belfast residents to seek work in other parts of the Belfast Urban Area have been cited as reasons why it is necessary to locate jobs in the area (O’Hearn and Fisher 1999; Sheehan and Tomlinson 1996). This situation is likely to lead to complex policy trade-offs between the requirement to locate jobs in West Belfast which are open to West Belfast residents, the desire to increase the available occupational range of job opportunities for residents, and the delicate balance between encouraging the growth of a separate segregated West Belfast labour market and facilitating the integration of West Belfast residents with the wider Belfast labour market.

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