

VOLUME 63 NO.2

APRIL-JUNE 1992

The

POLITICO

Quarterly

Austin Mitchell
NATIONHOOD: THE END OF THE AFFAIR?

Brendan O'Leary
PUBLIC OPINION AND NORTHERN IRISH FUTURES

Mark Wickham-Jones
MONETARISM AND ITS CRITICS

Quentin L. Quade
DON'T FIX IT - TOO MUCH

Stuart Weir
PUBLIC OPINION AND ELECTORAL REFORM

Reports and Surveys
from
Patricia Greer, Sam Cameron and David Golby,
and Geoffrey Debnam

PUBLIC OPINION AND NORTHERN IRISH FUTURES

BRENDAN O'LEARY*

The European Community's single market is supposed to be fully developed by the end of this year. By then political violence in and from Northern Ireland will be well advanced into its third decade. Seasoned sceptics appear to have solid grounds for believing that neither greater European integration nor a prospective change of British government will have any impact upon resolving Northern Ireland. However, there are some reasons for suggesting that perceptions of the most desirable and feasible ways of resolving the conflict are changing throughout the islands of the British and Irish archipelago.

The JRRT/Gallup polls on 'The Future of Northern Ireland' were conducted in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in July 1991, in the immediate wake of the collapse of the initiative of Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. They produced fascinating snapshots of public opinion.¹ They suggest there is widespread support throughout the archipelago for re-opening talks on a grand constitutional settlement for Northern Ireland, changing Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, and introducing Bills of Rights based on the European Convention throughout these islands. The polls demonstrate that public opinion in Great Britain and the Republic strongly favours a major role for the Irish government in the future of Northern Ireland, but, not surprisingly, opinion within Northern Ireland remains sharply polarised over the region's British and Irish dimensions.

In all three jurisdictions there is overwhelming backing for the renewal of talks between the constitutional parties in the region: 87 per cent in the Republic, 79 per cent in Great Britain, and 73 per cent in Northern Ireland support this proposition. In both parts of Ireland the majority think it 'very important' that talks should resume in the near future (72 per

* Brendan O'Leary is Senior Lecturer in Political Science and Public Administration at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He acknowledges the helpful comments of Paul Arthur, John McGarry, David McKitterick, Paul Power, Trevor Smith and *The Political Quarterly's* referee, and is grateful to others for confidential interviews, and the Nuffield Foundation for a travel grant.

¹ The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (JRRT) commissioned polls to be carried out in all three jurisdictions. The surveys were carried out between 2 July and 8 July 1991 by the relevant affiliates of the Gallup International Research Institutes (Gallup UK, Irish Marketing Surveys (IMS) and Ulster Marketing Surveys (UMS)). The base of the Gallup poll was 959, that of the IMS poll was 1057, and that of the UMS poll was 802. All the polls are subject to a margin of error of plus or minus 3 per cent. Dr O'Leary thanks the JRRT for making the full data-set available.

unable to support them and the standards they are addicted to. Such processes of adjustment will be painful. A powerful centralised, elective, dictatorship which has failed, has neither function nor future. The centralised system will crumble. Scotland must seek salvation in handing its own begging bowl to the EC. The North and Wales will follow in a spirit of *se saune qui peut*. The rest of England will cave in in an imploding South East. Britain will regionalise but too late. Regions can no more escape a common fate than the different decks on a sinking ship. We subsidise into relegation together. Britain itself must function and pay its way as a nation but with the powers and incompleteness of a region.

Britain has lost an empire, failed at industrial nationhood, found no alternative. It can neither subsidise into a Sunset Boulevard home for retired imperialists nor into a European retirement home for those who can no longer contribute. It cannot sustain independence or contribute to wider unities. It is, therefore, irrelevant. Because economic processes compound that fate won't be easy. Unemployment high, wage levels lower. They are the only factor free to change. Poverty will grow, so wealth will build barriers as ghettos overflow. The British do not particularly like each other and in decline disapproval must turn to division and blame. A. J. P. Taylor's verdict on the post-war era was that few now sung 'England Arise' yet England had risen nonetheless. Decline sours. The song changes to a No-one can anticipate surprises or reprises, though Britain's only one present trends points to an end to national nationhood as we have known it. Only those who compete and produce successfully can play the game of nationhood. Those who cannot recede into irrelevance, and are relegated to regions. For practical purposes the undermining of the base is the death of the nation as an independent entity capable of managing its fate of making its choices, and providing for its own people by generating the wealth to satisfy their aspirations. Our industrial base is becoming too narrow to be viable, too weak to carry to support cannot be a nation. Hugh Gaitskell's prophecy that the EC would mean the end of a thousand years of British history is being realised. Not for the reasons he anticipated. Just through failure. The world's first industrial nation is becoming the first industrial society to undevelop, the first nation to give up.

cent in the Republic and 61 per cent in Northern Ireland). However, in all three jurisdictions these beliefs are tempered by intelligent pessimism: 66 per cent in Great Britain, 60 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 54 per cent of those in the Republic rate the chances of success for future talks at 'less than 50:50'.

In the Republic, Unionist politicians were perceived as most responsible for the breakdown of cross-party talks on 3 July 1991, with a clear majority (57 per cent) holding this view (see Figure 1). In Great Britain nearly a third of the sample (29 per cent) did not know who to blame, but twice as many (21 per cent) blamed Unionist politicians as blamed either the British or Irish governments (who were each held culpable by 10 per cent of the sample). In Northern Ireland nearly a third (32 per cent) spread the blame equally across all parties, but Unionist politicians were held responsible more than any other agent: 26 per cent of those polled blamed them, compared with the 16 per cent who pointed the finger at the Irish government. In all three jurisdictions, including *Northern Ireland*, nationalist politicians (i.e. Mr Hume and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)) almost escaped any censure whatsoever. Remarkably, a mere 7 per cent of Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) voters and a mere 6 per cent of Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) voters held nationalist politicians or Hume most responsible for the breakdown in July. Unionist voters were far more inclined to blame the Irish government or all parties combined.

Respondents in all three jurisdictions were asked their personal first- and second-preference solutions for Northern Ireland, and they were also asked which solution in their opinion was most likely to win widespread support within Northern Ireland. They were permitted seven options: full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK; a Northern Ireland state independent of both the UK and the Republic of Ireland; a power-sharing devolved government in the UK; full integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic; Northern Ireland with a devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments (a democratised condominium); and the re-partition of the island of Ireland with a smaller Northern Ireland integrated into the UK.

The design of the questions in this part of the polls was defective in at least two respects.² First, it did not separate desirable from feasible options. Thus an independent Northern Ireland, full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK, and re-partition, are not feasible options, because they are not on the agenda given the known policy-preferences and commitments of the British and Irish states.³ These options should therefore have been posed separately from the more feasible options, or not posed at all. After all, respondents were not given the option of supporting majority-rule devolu-

² See Professor Paul Power, 'Wrong Questions', *Forinight*, 301: 23.
³ See Brendan O'Leary and John McGarry, *The Politics of Antagonism: Understanding Northern Ireland*, Athlone, London, 1992, chapter 8.

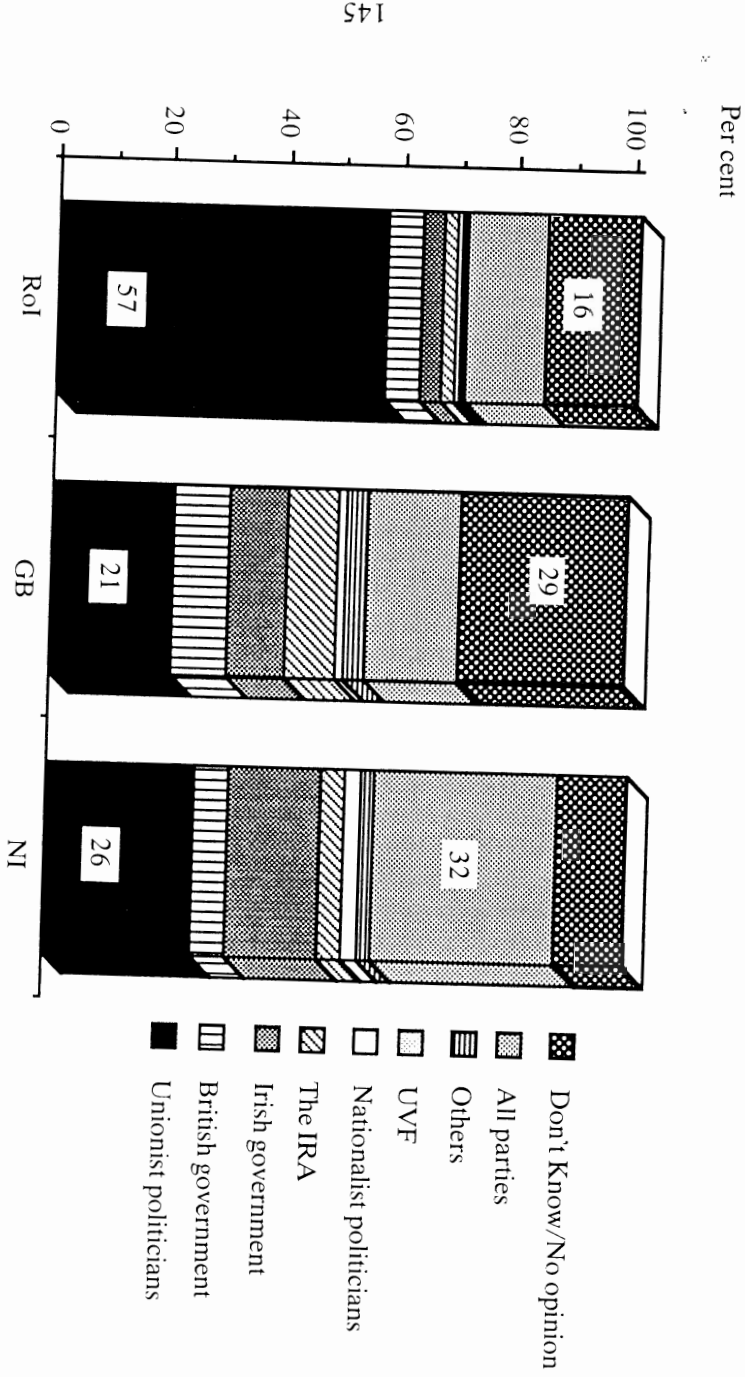


FIGURE 1 Agents held most responsible for the breakdown of talks

tion within the UK, arguably an option which would win very high levels of support amongst Unionists. Presumably this option was excluded because British government and the text of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.⁴ Secondly, the question-design presented respondents with an unbalanced mix of options: that is to say they could choose a variety of options which involved the maintenance of exclusive UK sovereignty over Northern Ireland as well as unelaborated options which meant the ending of exclusive British sovereignty over Northern Ireland. It would have been better to have presented respondents with a clear choice between British sovereignty, Irish sovereignty, Northern Irish sovereignty, and joint sovereignty options; and then to have presented them with various possibilities within their chosen mode of sovereignty.

The first-preference responses to the array of solutions actually offered to respondents are displayed in Figure 2. Integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland is the most favoured first-preference of the citizens of the Republic (41 per cent) and those of Great Britain (21 per cent), whereas integration of Northern Ireland into the UK is the most favoured first-preference of citizens of Northern Ireland (39 per cent). If British and Irish policy-makers were to count equally the first-preferences of people across the three jurisdictions then a united and independent Irish state would be the most favoured option in these islands, although this option does not command majority first-preference support in any of the three jurisdictions.⁵

In Great Britain first-preference support for an independent Northern Ireland (20 per cent) comes just behind support for a united Ireland (21 per cent), suggesting widespread British enthusiasm to be rid of Northern Ireland, but indifference as to the means or the consequences. A Unionist option of full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK. The second most favoured option in the Republic is a democratised condominium, whereas in Northern Ireland the second most favoured option is that of a power-sharing devolved government within the UK (19 per cent).

⁴ See *inter alia* Tom Hadden and Kevin Boyle, *The Anglo-Irish Agreement, Commentary, Text and Official Review*, Sweet and Maxwell, London, 1989; John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (eds.), *The Future of Northern Ireland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, Appendices 1 and 2, and Brendan O'Leary and John McGarry, *The Politics of Antagonism, op. cit.*, chapter 6.

⁵ The proposition that integrating Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland is the most favoured solution in the British and Irish archipelago holds true whether we weight the preferences in the three jurisdictions by population or not, and whether we use what political scientists call the Borda or Condorcet methods of counting preferences. Needless to say, the polls do not measure preference-intensities. However, we can assume that preferences are held most intensely in Northern Ireland, where the majority opposes Irish unity, less intensely in the Republic of Ireland, where a large plurality favours Irish unity, and least intensely in Great Britain where a large plurality favours relinquishing British sovereignty over Northern Ireland.

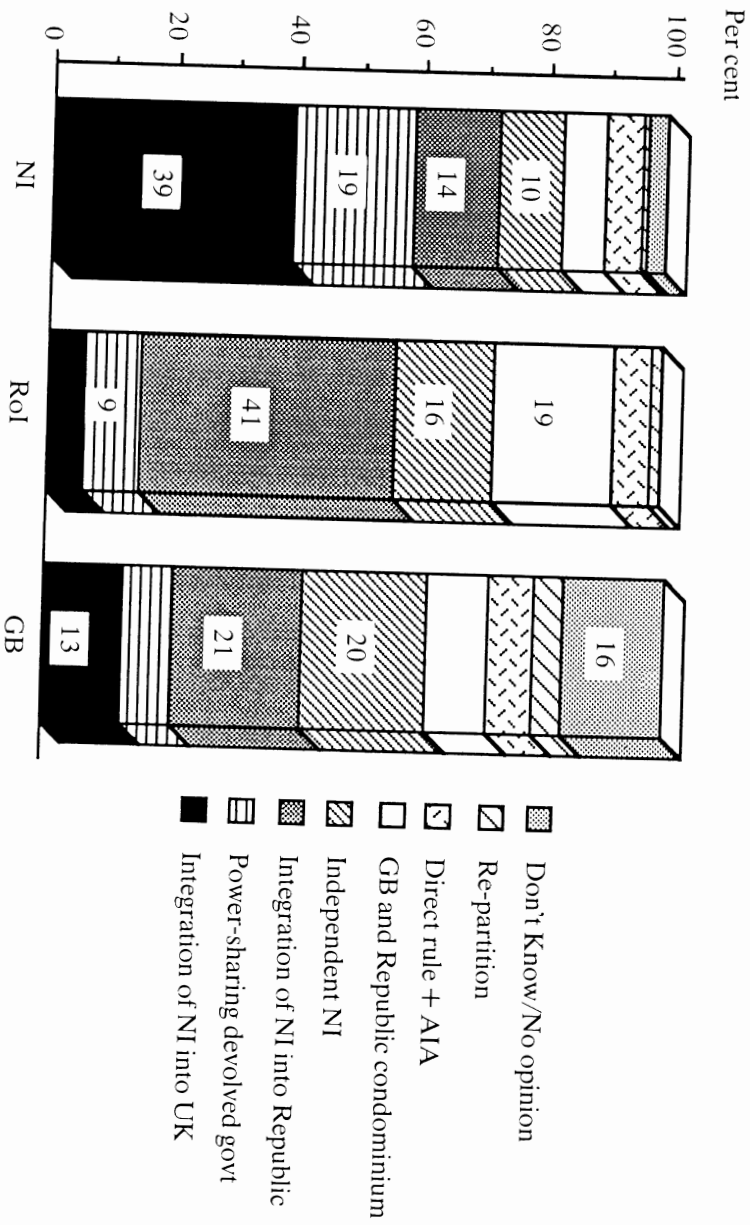


FIGURE 2 First-preference solutions in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain

However, despite this visible evidence of conflicting public preferences across the three jurisdictions, there is some widespread agreement: thus there is little first-preference support for re-partition or indeed for the *status quo* (direct rule tempered by the Anglo-Irish Agreement). The status quo, it has to be said, is a solution of sorts, in so far as regulated war can be considered a solution to ethnic conflict.

Figure 3 displays the combined tally of those who named any of the seven options as either their first or their second preference. In Great Britain, at the level of combined first and second preferences, integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic and an independent Northern Ireland are both supported by the same percentage of respondents (33 per cent). A democratised condominium is the next most favoured option in the UK (26 per cent), outranking both full integration with the UK and a devolved government with power-sharing (21 per cent). The three most favoured options in Great Britain entail public willingness either to accept the complete termination of British sovereignty over Northern Ireland or to share sovereignty equally with the Republic.

In the Republic, at the level of combined first and second preferences, integrating Northern Ireland into the Republic wins most support (55 per cent), followed by high support for a condominium (44 per cent) and for an independent Northern Ireland (35 per cent). The three most favoured options in the Republic entail a public desire either to terminate British sovereignty over Northern Ireland or for both the British and Irish governments to share authority on an entirely equal basis.

These results therefore suggest considerable convergence of opinion across Great Britain and the Republic. The convergence is also widespread across the supporters of the different parties in Great Britain and the Republic (see Table 1). In Great Britain Labour supporters are marginally more likely to support integrating Northern Ireland into the Irish Republic, but Conservative supporters are as eager as Labour's to relinquish British sovereignty over Northern Ireland, either through creating an independent Northern Ireland or supporting Irish unification. Indeed Conservative supporters are less in favour of fully integrating Northern Ireland into the UK than Liberal Democrat supporters (see Table 1(a)). In the Irish Republic Fianna Fail supporters are more nationalist than those of the other parties. However, the supporters of the other parties, including the Progressive Democrats, are equally keen on removing or reducing British sovereignty over Northern Ireland (see Table 1(b)).

Since creating a condominium with a devolved government is much less of a departure from the status quo than either a united Ireland or an independent Northern Ireland, it is a more likely option to be considered by future British and Irish governments. Unionist politicians should pause to consider the evidence from these polls before any new bout of intransigence during any renewed negotiations. The polls suggest that the British and Irish governments would face no obstacles from their

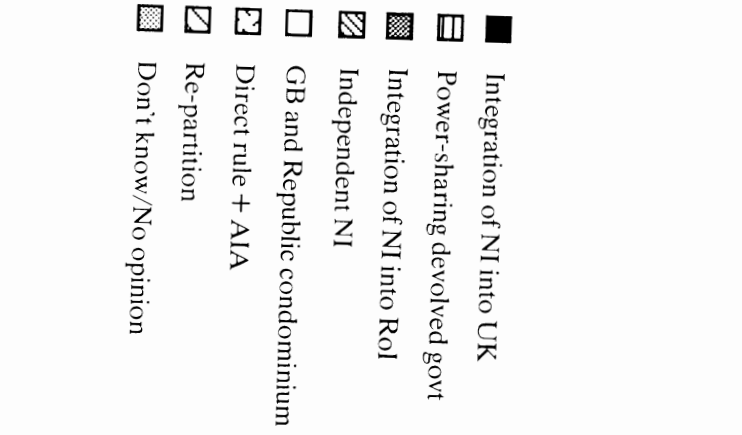


FIGURE 3 First and second-preference solutions combined

TABLE 1 FIRST PREFERENCE SOLUTION BY VOTING INTENTION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

(a) Great Britain					
Solution	Conservatives (%) N = 318	Labour (%) N = 329	Liberal Democrats (%) N = 180	Other (%) N = 43	
Full integration of NI into the UK	15	11	17	4	
NI state independent of UK and RoI	20	17	26	22	
Power-sharing devolved government in the UK	7	8	12	5	
Continuation of direct rule with the Anglo-Irish Agreement	9	4	7	7	
Integration of NI with the RoI	20	24	14	38	
NI devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments	11	11	11	1	
Re-partition of the island of Ireland, with a smaller NI integrated into the UK	5	6	3	6	
Don't know/No opinion	13	19	10	16	
	100	100	100	100*	

Source: Gallup. N = 959. Margin of error + or - 3%.

Note * = does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.

(b) Republic of Ireland							
Solution	Fianna Fail (%) N = 398	Fine Gael (%) N = 210	Labour (%) N = 131	Progressive Democrats (%) N = 58	Workers Party (%) N = 43	Green Party (%) N = 39	
Full integration of NI into the UK	7	5	8	3	5	5	
NI state independent of UK and RoI	13	20	12	21	19	24	
Power-sharing devolved government in the UK	8	11	8	12	5	8	
Continuation of direct rule with the Anglo-Irish Agreement	6	7	6	3	12	8	
Full integration of NI into the RoI	46	36	37	34	44	32	
NI devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments	17	18	26	22	7	21	
Re-partition of island, with a smaller NI integrated into the UK	1	3	3	3	9	3	
Don't know/No opinion	1	1	0	0	0	0	
	100*	100*	100	100*	100	100*	

Source: IMS. N = 1057. Margin of error + or - 3%.

Note * = does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.

devolved government within the UK, 26 per cent favour an independent Northern Ireland, 13 per cent favour the status quo, 7 per cent favour a condominium, 6 per cent favour a repartition and a miscible 3 per cent favour the integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic. Amongst Roman Catholics, at the level of combined first and second preferences, 43 per cent favour a power-sharing devolved government within the UK, 42 per cent favour integrating Northern Ireland into the Republic, 35 per cent favour a condominium, 26 per cent favour an independent Northern Ireland, 25 per cent favour the status quo (which incorporates the Anglo-Irish Agreement), and 4 per cent support repartition.

The level of support registered amongst Protestants and Catholics—and amongst 'others' and those who refused to state their religious denomination—for a devolved power-sharing government is only mildly heartening for Mr Brooke, who has been seeking to re-commence his initiative since the autumn of 1991. With the first-preference support of 19 per cent of the electorate, and 48 per cent support at the level of combined first and second preferences, the figures suggest that there is little immediate prospect of any power-sharing government being voluntarily negotiated. Even if it did come into existence it would require very strong support from the British government (and the Irish government) to keep it stable, especially in light of the widespread dissensus within Northern Ireland.

This impression is confirmed when we break down the data by voting intention. Party-political voting intention and personal first-preference solution within Northern Ireland by political affiliation is shown in Table 3. DUP, UUP and Sinn Féin (SF) supporters are mostly hardline supporters of their preferred form of integration. Northern Ireland's responsibility to the British and Irish governments Continuation of direct rule through a Secretary of State and with the Anglo-Irish Agreement Re-partition of the island of Ireland with a smaller NI fully integrated with the UK Don't Know/No opinion

TABLE 2 FIRST PREFERENCE SOLUTION BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

Solution	Protestant (%)	Roman Catholic (%)	Other (%)	Refused (%)
Full integration of NI into the UK	61	8	19	50
Power-sharing devolved government in UK	17	23	24	0
Full integration of NI into ROI	2	33	14	0
NI state independent of both UK and ROI	8	12	10	50
NI with a devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments	2	14	19	0
Continuation of direct rule through a Secretary of State and with the Anglo-Irish Agreement	4	9	10	0
Re-partition of the island of Ireland with a smaller NI fully integrated with the UK	2	0	5	0
Don't Know/No opinion	4	2	0	100
	N = 461	N = 318	N = 21	N = 2

electorates if they decided to negotiate a new agreement which established a condominium or a system of joint authority.⁶ Within Northern Ireland, at the level of combined first and second preferences, full integration of the region into the UK is the most favoured option (52 per cent), just beating a power-sharing devolved government within the UK (48 per cent), but well ahead of an independent Northern Ireland (26 per cent) and full integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic (19 per cent). Predictably, religious denomination is an excellent guide to people's first-preferences (see Table 2). When we combine first and second preferences 79 per cent of Protestants favour Northern Ireland's integration into the UK, 50 per cent favour a power-sharing

Source: UMS, N = 802. Margin of error + or - 3%. Note * = does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.

⁶ For various proposals in favour of joint authority or a democratised condominium see *inter alia* Brendan O'Leary and John McGarry, *The Politics of Antagonism*, op. cit., chapter 8; Anthony Kenny, Joint Authority in John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (eds.), *The Future of Northern Ireland*, op. cit., pp. 219-41; Bernard Crick, 'The Sovereignty of Parliament and the Irish Question' in Desmond Rea (ed.), *Political Co-operation in Divided Societies*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1982, pp. 229-54; Frank Wright, 'Northern Ireland and the British-Irish Relationship', *Studies*, 1989, 78, 151-162; Martin Dettl, 'The Feasibility of Shared Sovereignty (and Shared Authority)' in Charles Townshend (ed.), *Consensus in Ireland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 128-156; and the *New Ireland Forum Report*, Government Stationery Office, Dublin, 1984.

If we combine first and second preferences by voting intention (not shown in tabular form here) there are four features of the data worth highlighting. First, UUP supporters (55 per cent) are more willing than DUP supporters (36 per cent) to name a power-sharing devolved government as either their first or second preference. Secondly, and perhaps surpris-

TABLE 3 FIRST PREFERENCE SOLUTION BY VOTING INTENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Solution	UUP (%) N = 165	DUP (%) N = 122	Other/ Ind Unionists (%) N = 8	NI Con (%) N = 41	APNI (%) N = 71	WP (%) N = 10	SDLP (%) N = 152	SF (%) N = 44
Full integration of NI into the UK	66	73	75	49	34	20	5	0
Power-sharing devolved government in the UK	19	11	13	15	39	20	24	2
Full integration of NI into RoI	1	2	13	12	7	0	28	68
NI state independent of both UK and RoI	8	8	0	5	3	40	14	11
NI with a devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments	0	1	0	5	4	10	18	11
Continuation of direct rule through a Secretary of State and with the Anglo-Irish Agreement	3	0	0	10	10	10	9	5
Re-partition of the island of Ireland with a smaller NI fully integrated with the UK	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	2
Don't Know/No opinion	1	5	0	2	1	0	2	2
	100*	100*	100*	100	100*	100	100*	100*

BRENDAN O'LEARY

154

Source: UMS. N = 802. Margin of error + or - 3%.

Note * = does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.

TABLE 4 SECOND-PREFERENCE SOLUTION BY VOTING INTENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Solution	UUP (%) N = 165	DUP (%) N = 122	Other/ Ind Unionists (%) N = 8	NI Con (%) N = 41	APNI (%) N = 71	WP (%) N = 10	SDLP (%) N = 152	SF (%) N = 44
Full integration of NI into the UK	19	16	13	17	15	10	3	0
Power-sharing devolved government in UK	36	25	13	46	28	20	22	18
Full integration of NI into RoI	0	0	0	0	6	10	11	7
NI state independent of both UK and RoI	19	25	25	7	10	20	10	32
NI with a devolved government jointly guaranteed by and responsible to the British and Irish governments	3	5	25	7	18	20	25	20
Continuation of direct rule through a Secretary of State and with the Anglo-Irish Agreement	8	6	13	12	13	10	22	5
Re-partition of the island of Ireland with a smaller NI fully integrated into the UK	5	6	13	7	1	0	2	9
Don't Know/No opinion	9	17	0	2	8	10	6	9
	100*	100	100*	100*	100*	100	100*	100

PUBLIC OPINION AND NORTHERN IRISH FUTURES

Source: UMS. N = 802. Margin of error + or - 3%.

Note * = does not add exactly to 100 because of rounding.

155

The JIRT/Gallup polls therefore provide little comfort for policymakers trying to promote fundamental internal compromises along the pattern of consociational democratic theory.⁸ Firmer evidence for this inference can be found through evaluating respondents' answers to another question which asked them which option they felt would gain the *widest support* amongst the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. Within Northern Ireland the spread of answers was remarkably similar to people's personal first-preferences, perhaps suggesting little willingness to think beyond their own preferences: 35 per cent thought that full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK would be most likely accepted, followed by 26 per cent who believed that to be true of a power-sharing devolved government within the UK. However, the question was ambiguous: 'Which solution do you feel would gain the widest support amongst the population of Northern Ireland as a whole?' may be legitimately interpreted as questioning which option would enjoy highest numerical support *or* which option would attract most cross-community or cross-denominational support.

Future talks and possible roles for governments and inter-governmental organisations

Respondents in the three jurisdictions were addressed with additional questions about speculative future scenarios. They were asked whether they favoured or opposed Sinn Féin entering talks if the IRA renounced the use of violence. In Great Britain 38 per cent opposed SF's participation but 43 per cent did not, and in the Republic 61 per cent favoured SF's participation under the stipulated conditions, whereas 25 per cent were opposed. By contrast, in Northern Ireland the majority (54 per cent) opposed SF entering talks if the IRA renounced the use of violence, although nearly a third (31 per cent) thought otherwise. Unsurprisingly this question polarised the Northern Ireland sample on sectarian lines: whereas 57 per cent of Catholics favoured SF's participation under the stipulated conditions only 14 per cent of Protestants agreed; while 72 per cent of Protestants expressed outright opposition to SF's participation, supported by 27 per cent of Catholics.

A question was also asked to tap public opinion in Ireland on John Hume's idea that any future negotiated constitutional settlement be put to dual referenda in the two jurisdictions on the island. In the Republic 78 per cent agreed that there should be such a referendum in Northern Ireland, and 62 per cent agreed that there should be one in the Republic. However, voters in Northern Ireland were less keen on any idea that resembles an all-Ireland referendum: whereas 79 per cent supported a

ingly, at the level of combined first and second preferences it is difficult to distinguish APNI supporters from Northern Ireland Conservative party supporters—which suggests the recently organised Conservatives may pose a small electoral threat to the Alliance party as well as the UUP in the British general election. The major differences are that Northern Ireland Conservatives are more Protestant, more enthusiastic than APNI supporters about full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK, and more willing to consider repartitioning the island. These differences suggest the 'north Down syndrome': an area of Northern Ireland which is very middle-class, very Protestant, and very unlikely to be the subject of any proposed partition. Thirdly, amongst SDLP supporters combined first and second preferences suggest that the options of a united Ireland (44 per cent), a condominium (43 per cent), and a power-sharing devolved government (41 per cent) are equally attractive. This evidence suggests that the SDLP leadership have very flexible supporters, or that the SDLP have to be very careful in any negotiations to avoid treading upon the diverse sensibilities of their constituents—and it may suggest that both propositions are true. Finally, at the level of combined first and second preferences SF supporters strongly prefer a united Ireland (75 per cent), but not as much as UUP and DUP voters prefer the full integration of Northern Ireland into the UK. A high proportion of them would accept a solution with an Irish and British dimension: 31 per cent favour a condominium as their first or second preference.

Several consistent features of polling-data from Northern Ireland need to be borne in mind when interpreting these figures. In Northern Ireland respondents systematically understate their extremism: DUP and SF supporters in particular are less willing to declare themselves to pollsters, and the polls persistently overstate support for the APNI by comparison with the actual votes won by the party in elections. Moreover, Catholics underestimate their nationalism because of insufficient trust in the confidentiality of polls, because being an avowed nationalist is to be identified as a potential subversive, and because of the sour grapes principle that 'something that cannot be had isn't worth having'. Hard-headed scepticism is therefore in order about any polling evidence which suggests that the two populations of Northern Ireland are more moderate in their respective forms of national extremism than their voting and militaristic behaviour suggests. As the late John Whyte remarked

In Northern Ireland people try to sound more moderate than they really feel in replying to interviewers. I... suspect... that the proportion of Protestants who hanker after majority rule, and of Catholics who want a united Ireland, is higher than the survey evidence indicates, and that the proportion of Catholics who would accept integration with Britain, or of both communities who would settle for power-sharing, is lower than the data suggest.⁷

⁷ John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 82–3.

⁸ See B. O'Leary, 'The Limits to Coercive Consociationalism in Northern Ireland', *Political Studies*, xxxvii, 4: 562–88.

ever, Unionist politicians, who are serious about future negotiations should note that there is room to bargain with the Irish government over Articles 2 and 3. In return for accepting the Anglo-Irish Agreement, a power-sharing devolved government, and certain commitments about public policy in Northern Ireland on the administration of justice and fair employment, Unionists could probably persuade constitutional nationalists to amend the relevant articles. That said it has to be observed that during the 'talks about talks' during 1990, and the brief talks which took place during June 1991, there were no signs that such a bargaining gambit was being considered by the principal Unionist parties.

Respondents' answers to possible roles for the British government, the Irish government, the European Community and the United Nations in any future grand settlement for Northern Ireland are displayed in Table 5.

TABLE 5. FUTURE ROLES IN A NEW NORTHERN IRELAND

Question: 'If constitutional talks do finally lead to a new constitutional settlement for Northern Ireland, what role in your opinion, if any, in the affairs of Northern Ireland, should that settlement give to . . . ?'

	GB (%)	ROI (%)	Protestants (%)	Catholics (%)	All (%)
The British Government	32	28	72	30	55
a major role	38	40	20	44	30
a minor role	16	24	3	20	9
no role at all	49	57	3	39	18
The Irish Government	25	31	26	48	36
a major role	11	6	61	5	38
no role at all	19	37	11	25	17
The European Community	34	37	46	52	49
a major role	27	15	26	11	20
no role at all	20	31	11	18	14
The United Nations	31	34	41	47	44
a major role	28	21	28	18	24
no role at all					

Source: Gallup, IMS and UMS.

Don't know/No opinion excluded. Margin of error + or - 3%.

Citizens of Great Britain are very willing to give the Irish government a major role in any new settlement (49 per cent), with only 11 per cent expressing the wish to exclude the Irish government completely. The Irish dimension is so strongly entrenched in the minds of the Great British public that more of them think the Irish government should have a major

referendum within Northern Ireland and only 33 per cent agreed that it should also be put to the Republic's voters, with 50 per cent opposed to this idea. Catholics (71 per cent) were less keen than Protestants on a referendum in Northern Ireland (85 per cent), but Protestants (64 per cent) were much more hostile than Catholics to a simultaneous referendum in the Republic (30 per cent). Hume's idea of dual referenda to delegitimise the Provisional IRA after a grand settlement has been agreed by the constitutional parties and the two governments may therefore be more problematic than people imagine. The referenda would have to be carefully worded and timed to avoid potential boycotts.

Another question was asked to establish opinion in Ireland on the desirability of amending the Irish Constitution:

Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Constitution assert a legal claim to the territory of Northern Ireland. It has been suggested that they should be amended to confirm acceptance that there will be no change to the existing status of Northern Ireland except by peaceful means and with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. If the Irish Constitution were to be amended in that way, do you think that would improve the chances of a political settlement, disimprove (sic) the chances of a political settlement or make no difference? And would you yourself favour or oppose such an amendment to the Irish Constitution?

Responses to both questions, in aggregate, were very similar in both Northern Ireland and the Republic: 46 per cent in Northern Ireland and 49 per cent in the Republic believed such a change would improve the chances of a settlement, whereas 38 per cent in Northern Ireland and 34 per cent in the Republic believed it would make no difference. Within Northern Ireland 53 per cent favoured such a change as did 61 per cent within the Republic, while 20 per cent opposed such a change in Northern Ireland as did 19 per cent in the Republic. Within Northern Ireland there was almost no major difference between Catholics and Protestants on these questions. However, SF supporters were most opposed (55 per cent) to changing Articles 2 and 3, with DUP supporters (28 per cent) being the next most opposed! APNI voters were most in favour of changing Articles 2 and 3.

It is clear that public opinion in the Republic, in the abstract, might favour changing Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution to make them unambiguously consistent with the Anglo-Irish Agreement. However, it would be a mistake to assume that Irish policy-makers are in a position to propose such a constitutional change irrespective of political context. The level of support for changing Articles 2 and 3 is less than the level of support which existed in polls for changing the constitutional prohibition of divorce before that became the subject of a referendum debate in 1986. Therefore no wise Irish government would embark upon changing Articles 2 and 3 without making that change dependent upon a broadly negotiated settlement for Northern Ireland which had the backing of the SDLP, and could command widespread consent in the Republic. How-

role in the affairs of Northern Ireland than think the same should apply to their own government. However, there is no special enthusiasm for EC or UN activism amongst Great Britain's citizens.

In the Republic there is widespread willingness to accept a 'British dimension' in any future settlement, with 40 per cent envisaging a minor role for the British government and 28 per cent a major role, compared with 24 per cent of nationalist diehards who see no function for the British to perform. There is naturally even stronger enthusiasm for an Irish dimension, with 57 per cent supporting a major role for their government and 31 per cent a minor role. The Republic's citizens are also far more willing to internationalise the Northern Ireland question than the other inhabitants of these islands. They are much warmer about possible roles for both the EC and the UN in the future affairs of Northern Ireland.

Within Northern Ireland opinion on these questions was predictably polarised over the possible roles of the British and Irish governments, but less so over the EC and the UN. Protestant opinion was more diehard than Catholic with regard to the other side's favoured government. Whereas 61 per cent of Protestants saw no future role for the Irish government only 20 per cent of Catholics reciprocated this attitude towards the British government; and while 30 per cent of Catholics envisaged a major role for the British government a mere 3 per cent of Protestants saw a major role for the Irish government. However, support for an Irish dimension amongst Catholics is very high: only 5 per cent of Catholics see no future role for the Irish government; and it is matched by Protestant support for a British dimension: only 3 per cent of Protestants imagine no future role for the British government. Protestants were cooler about prospective EC involvement than Catholics, but those who saw no role at all for the EC were overwhelmingly outnumbered in both communities. However, ambitious policy-makers in Brussels looking to create the EC's first colony would be better advised to consider Gibraltar before making their way to Northern Ireland.

Bill of Rights

Finally, respondents were asked their opinions on the merits of incorporating a Bill of Rights:

Neither the UK nor the Republic have as yet incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into their domestic law. Would you be in favour or opposed to the establishment of a Bill of Rights based on the European Convention for Northern Ireland? And for the UK as a whole? And for the Republic of Ireland?

The answers are displayed in Table 6. Incorporating a Bill of Rights based on the European Convention,

TABLE 6 SUPPORT FOR A BILL OF RIGHTS

	Great Britain (%)		Republic of Ireland (%)		Northern Ireland (%)						
	UUP (%)	DUP (%)	NI Con (%)	APNI (%)	WP (%)	SDLP (%)	SF (%)	NI All (%)			
<i>A Bill of Rights for NI?</i>											
favour	62	76	62	55	56	77	90	81	75	66	
oppose	10	4	13	19	19	8	0	4	7	10	
don't know/no opinion	28	20	25	26	27	14	10	15	18	24	
<i>for all of the UK?</i>											
favour	63	72	59	50	54	77	90	77	68	63	
oppose	10	6	14	18	12	7	0	5	5	10	
don't know/no opinion	27	22	27	32	34	15	10	18	27	27	
<i>for the Republic of Ireland?</i>											
favour	59	76	37	30	44	75	60	78	73	52	
oppose	9	3	27	22	12	8	20	4	5	15	
don't know/no opinion	31	20	36	48	44	17	20	18	23	33	

Sources: Gallup, IMS, UMS. Figures are rounded. Margin of error is + or - 3%.

or simply inept.⁹ However, before long, he had managed to impress nationalists, unionists and the Irish government of his intelligence and his integrity and that it would not be in their interests to oppose his initiative which he announced formally in January 1990. Throughout 1990 and early 1991 doubts persisted over whether the internal political parties would agree on an agenda for talks, let alone conduct the discussions. The NIO team nevertheless persisted in its ambitions, even though Brooke's diplomatic manoeuvring sowed, possibly deliberately, considerable confusion.

In August 1990 one leading SDLP MP's political adviser posed a riddle to me. ¹⁰ *Question:* 'What do you get when you cross Peter Brooke with the Mafia?' *Answer:* 'An offer you cannot understand, but cannot refuse.' At least two inferences could be drawn from this joke: first, the leaders of Northern Ireland's constitutional political parties felt obliged to demonstrate their willingness to talk, and were endeavouring to avoid responsibility for the breakdown of any prospective talks; but, second, none of them believed that a new British-Irish Agreement would emerge and transcend the Anglo-Irish Agreement because none could be constructed which could command widespread assent.

Yet Brooke's talks about talks eventually delivered an agreement, which he announced in the House of Commons on 26 March 1991, to hold discussions starting on 30 April, with a 'gap' of ten weeks assured before the meeting of the next Inter-governmental Conference of the Anglo-Irish Agreement due on 16 July, and on the understanding that the Maryfield secretariat, which services the conference, would be run down during the talks. Brooke's officials sold Unionists the merits of working with John Hume's agenda, which declared that three relationships, between unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland, between unionists and the Republic of Ireland, and between Ireland and Great Britain needed to be negotiated and resolved. All parties to the prospective rounds of talks—the two governments and the four constitutional parties in Northern Ireland (the UUP, the DUP, the APNI and the SDLP)—agreed in general to the formula announced by Brooke in the House of Commons.

The agreed formula consisted of three strands of talks. The first was to involve cross-party talks in Northern Ireland about internal structures of government for the region. The second was to consist of all-Ireland discussions, and the third was to settle British-Irish relations. The second and third strands were to be launched 'within weeks' of the first. However,

⁹ Fergus Pyle, 'Chiselling away at unionist tablets', *The Irish Times*, 23 December 1989. In August 1989 when Brooke invoked a non-existent phrase in Article 29 of the Review of the Inter-governmental Conference to suggest the possibility that the two governments had agreed that the AIA could be transcended he was interpreted as either shrewd or stupid; and in November 1989 when he declared that he could never say that he or his successors would never talk with Sinn Féin his comments gave rise to similarly polarised interpretations.

assuming that the respondents know what it means, seems to enjoy very widespread majority support in any and all three jurisdictions. Cynics may legitimately question whether the question means 'Are you in favour of good (rights) and against evil (wrongs)?'. However, there are interesting cross-cultural variations in the poll-responses. The citizens of the Republic are the most keen on such Bills of Rights, but Great Britain's citizens and Northern Ireland's citizens are not far behind. Incorporating a Bill of Rights based on the European Convention for Northern Ireland enjoys majority support across supporters of all parties in Northern Ireland, with DUP supporters (55 per cent in favour) being the least enthusiastic. Catholics (75 per cent in favour, 5 per cent opposed) are warmer towards a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland than Protestants (61 per cent in favour, 13 per cent against), but the differences are small by comparison with other issues which divided Catholics and Protestants. Kevin McNamara, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, has advocated incorporating a Bill of Rights based on the European Convention for Northern Ireland, and it is clearly one issue on which he could expect to command cross-community support if there is a Labour government in 1992. The only deviant feature of Table 6 is that supporters of Unionist parties are more likely to express 'no opinion' on whether the Republic should also incorporate the European Convention. It is not possible to say whether this attitudinal inhibition has its roots in high-minded respect for the Republic's citizens' right to exercise their sovereignty as they see fit, or an unwillingness to agree to anything which looks like all-Ireland harmonisation, or to some other reason or combination of reasons.

The JRRT/Gallup polls, despite some evident limitations, show that public opinion in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland strongly favours a major role for the Irish government in the future of Northern Ireland. British and Irish policy-makers are therefore under no pressure from their respective electorates to abandon the Anglo-Irish Agreement; if anything, their respective publics would welcome the deepening and widening of the Agreement, and would happily countenance moving towards a British-Irish condominium for Northern Ireland.

The Brooke talks and after

When Peter Brooke was appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in July 1989 he dusted off papers submitted by Unionists in 1987-8, and began a series of interventions designed to create an atmosphere conducive to talks between the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland and the Irish government. Sinn Féin were to be excluded until they renounced their support for political violence. Initially it was unclear, in the words of Fergus Pyle, whether Brooke's style was 'oracular

their wares as predicted. The UUP held out for greater integration with the UK and weak 'administrative devolution'; the DUP wanted strong devolved government but did not declare themselves committed to executive power-sharing; the APNI wanted an internal settlement and some Irish dimension; and the SDLP declared that 'the abiding reality' recognised by the Anglo-Irish Agreement 'is the right of the Irish government to involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland'.¹³ The participating parties did not agree to sign provisional 'heads of agreement' before strands two and three could begin. Everything was to be left 'undecided' until all strands of discussion were completed, so as to prevent any side from breaking the negotiations at a favourable juncture for them.

Substantive issues did arise. One was whether an 'internal settlement'—involving an agreed devolved government for Northern Ireland—could be part of the overall settlement. But any 'internal settlement' was impossible to detach from any prospective 'external settlement'. The thorny external issues were the relationships between any Northern Ireland government and the institutions of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and Westminster and Whitehall; the constitutional status of Northern Ireland; and the stability of any devolved government without 'external guarantees' from the British and Irish governments. Unsurprisingly there was little evidence by the end of June that an internal agreement was likely to be negotiated by the parties, and that even if it were, that it would prove stable.

A joint UUP-DUP document on 'Administrative and legislative devolution' (first composed in 1987) formed the basis of Unionists' negotiating posture during the Brooke talks (and was leaked to former UUP politician Frank Millar, now the London editor of *The Irish Times*).¹⁴ It envisaged an executiveless assembly based upon strong committees, in which the elected parties would be proportionally represented according to the d'Hondt rule, and it also foresaw an assembly large enough to ensure that there would be no danger that Unionists lacked a permanent majority on every committee! Proportionality, yes; but power-sharing no is the way to decode this document. The SDLP refused to respond with detailed proposals for devolved government because they believed—correctly—that the UUP and the DUP were about to pull out of the talks.

Unionists wanted to tie any internal settlement to a fundamental modification or scrapping of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Molyneux and others in the UUP also wanted to marry a very weak form of devolution to 'integrationist' measures at Westminster, like the ending of Orders in Council and a beefed-up Northern Ireland parliamentary committee. The SDLP were not enthusiastic about these predictable Unionist riders and saw the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a minimum and irreversible base-line from which to negotiate. Unionists insisted on some clarification of the

¹³ From 'The SDLP Analysis of the Nature of the Problem', written in May 1991, and submitted to the plenary session of the talks. ¹⁴ *The Irish Times*, 3 July 1991.

after 30 April the talks were delayed by wrangling for seven weeks over the proposed agenda and standing orders, the venue for the proposed second strand of the negotiations, and finally over the choice of a chair for the subjects of the various proposed strands of discussion, and the order and location in which they would be processed. The debate over the venue(s) at one stage produced the remarkable outcome that the British and Irish governments, the SDLP and the APNI were agreed that the second phase of the talks should take place in Northern Ireland while the Unionists were holding out for a venue on the European continent. It was eventually accepted that the talks would centre in Belfast, but would also take place in London and Dublin. Since Unionists were not prepared to hold talks with the Republic's government in Dublin under the chairmanship of the Irish foreign minister, Brooke and Gerry Collins, the Irish foreign minister proposed that an independent chairman be appointed to preside over such talks.¹¹ However, their first proposal for the post, Lord Peter Carrington, produced an outraged response from Unionists who felt Carrington was anti-unionist, and complained bitterly that as British Foreign Secretary he had sold out Rhodessa in 1980.¹² An alternative chair for the second phase of the talks, in the person of the former Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, was finally agreed by all parties, and proper discussion began on 17 June 1991 about the possible replacement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Had the talks produced the basis for a new British-Irish Agreement then 'history' would have been made. However, prognoses that the latest consociational initiative would not succeed proved correct. The cherished assumptions of inexperienced journalists that Charles Haughey, James Molyneux and Ian Paisley wanted to establish more benign reputations with twenty-first century historians, that 'public opinion' was pushing the rival leaders to a political accommodation, and that 'young unionist Turks' of moderated dispositions were thrusting into view, all proved false. The procedure for managing the discussions was also open to criticism: it was impossible to disentangle the separate strands so perhaps one set of talks should have been organised; and some maintained that there are four not three relationships at stake (within Northern Ireland, across all of Ireland, Ireland and Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and between the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain), while others maintained that a European dimension should not be overlooked.

¹¹ The Irish government understandably was not prepared to discuss altering Articles 2 and 3 of its Constitution under the chairmanship of a British minister.

¹² They had ample evidence of unsympathetic statements by Carrington about Unionist leaders, especially Paisley. The NIO were apparently not aware of the reaction that posing Carrington would have on unionist politicians. The Unionists' complaint that Carrington had 'sold out' Rhodessa was not publicly analysed even though it suggested that Unionists empathised with a 'setler minority' 'betrayed' by the British metropolis.

talks would take place during a gap between meetings of the Inter-governmental Conference, commencing in January 1991 and continuing until the British general election campaign, whenever that takes place. Fourthly, the Unionist leaders would guarantee to continue the talks if and only if a Conservative government is returned to power. There were also rumours that Paisley was insisting that Sir Ninian Stephen be dropped as the prospective chair of the second strand of talks.

The first amendment was likely to be acceptable to the Irish government and the SDLP, provided it did not mean the acceptance of what Molyneux had earlier proposed.¹⁶ The second amendment was likely to be capable of resolution—neither the number ten nor three has any sacred status with the respective parties. The third amendment, that talks should continue until the next British general election, is also apparently acceptable to a sceptical Irish government and the SDLP—even though it might conceivably mean that the ‘gap’ could be even shorter than the ten weeks agreed last time. However, the fourth amendment is completely unacceptable to many of the parties with an interest at stake.

Kevin McNamara, Labour’s Northern Ireland spokesman, has publicly indicated to Peter Brooke that a new Labour government would be happy to pick up any talks where they are left by an outgoing Conservative government. Labour’s frontbench has consistently supported Brooke’s initiative. However, they consider any formula for talks which made them conditional upon the return of a Conservative government constitutionally improper. Moreover, any acceptance of this condition for talks by the Irish government is tantamount to illegitimate Irish interference in the affairs of the British electoral system. British governments do not agree to talks conditional on the outcome of Irish elections. Finally, the SDLP, which is Labour’s sister-party in the Socialist International, does not look kindly on a proposal to exclude a prospective Labour government from the terms of a new set of cross-party and inter-governmental talks.

At the time of writing, January 1991, Mr Brooke therefore has some diplomatic finessing to do if there is to be a further round of talks before the general election. He must also allay the suspicion that he is keeping the Unionists sweet in order for the Conservative party to have at least one party it can do business with in the event of a hung parliament. I strongly doubt whether that is his motivation, but there is reason to believe that Mr Molyneux’ favourite scenario for the future consists of a minority Conservative government dependent upon UUP support.¹⁷

¹⁶ The Unionist parties are apparently determined to sideline the APNI as an unwelcome distraction. To that end Molyneux proposed in the autumn of 1991 that Northern Ireland’s MPs (who include no APNI representatives) should have discussions at Westminster on relatively low level issues. This idea was rejected by the SDLP.

¹⁷ Northern Ireland returns 17 members to the Westminster parliament. In the 1992 election the SDLP are likely to win 3 or 4 of these seats and Sinn Féin are likely to retain Gerry Adams’ seat in West Belfast. There will therefore be 11 to 13 UUP and DUP MPs in the next parliament, with an outside chance of one Conservative MP being returned in North

status of Northern Ireland’s position within the UK as part and parcel of the negotiation of a devolved government, wanting Northern Ireland’s status as part of the UK to be stated unequivocally in any new agreement, whereas the SDLP wanted it to be compatible with future membership of an all-Ireland entity. The SDLP (and to an extent the APNI) wanted to tie down any new internal arrangement with ‘external guarantees’. The furthest the SDLP were prepared to go in negotiations was to accept the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a default-option, which would come back into full force in the event of a collapse of a negotiated devolved government.

Unionists were not prepared to consider the SDLP’s minimal requirement to stabilise an internal settlement, i.e. accept something like the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Unionists participated in the talks knowing that if they produced nothing then the default-option would be a return to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. However, accepting under protest the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a default for talks was very different, for them, from building in the entire Agreement as an agreed default-option for a settlement which Unionists would sign. Since such a deal would lock them into power-sharing with the SDLP—without being able to threaten their resignation from the government except at an unacceptable price—they considered such a default-option unacceptable.

This division could not be glossed over by diplomacy, but was not highlighted as the talks broke over another issue: the refusal of Unionists to continue discussions given the fact that the British and Irish governments had committed themselves to going ahead with their scheduled Inter-governmental Conference on 16 July 1991. Paisley called for ‘injury time’ on the grounds that the seven weeks of delay after 30 April had prevented substantive talks. His critics pointed out that most of that delay was because of Unionist behaviour, and suspected that Unionists wanted to ‘wear down’ the institutions of the Anglo-Irish Agreement rather than engage in constructive negotiations. The SDLP offered the possibility of another ‘gap’ between meetings of the Inter-governmental Conference as the basis for further discussions, but Unionists considered it unacceptable to negotiate with the threat of continuous Inter-governmental Conferences. Brooke therefore brought the talks to an end on 3 July. By 12 July Paisley was renewing rhetorical war, describing Charles Haughey as the Saddam Hussein of Ireland.¹⁵

Nevertheless, by the end of 1991 Brooke had prepared a new formula for restarting talks. It is to consist of the previous formula—three strands, a gap in Inter-governmental Conferences and the running down of the Maryfield secretariat—with a series of amendments, all of which appeared to have been put forward by James Molyneux and the Ian Paisley. Strand one talks would take place in London, although later stages of the talks could take place elsewhere. Secondly, the number of people on each party’s negotiating team would be reduced from ten to three. Thirdly, the

ference would have to be that of the Republic of Ireland. In other words the SDLP and the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democratic government (or its successor) have to be offered something as good as, if not better, than the Anglo-Irish Agreement in return for modifying/terminating Articles 2 and 3. No leading unionists appear to want to make such an offer. Even if some of them do it is doubtful whether their inter-party and intra-party strains could survive such a bargaining posture. Unionists will say they have not come all this way to sign up to something they disagree with.

Let me star-gaze one light-year further. Imagine that strands one and two have brought into public view the outlines of a feasible settlement—a power-sharing devolved government, transformation of Articles 2 and 3 into aspirational articles, and two Irish dimensions, one being an Inter-governmental Conference which includes the Irish government, and the other being a mechanism to permit Irish unity by consent. What would then remain to be done, apart from putting the package to the peoples of Ireland in two referenda, and hoping thereby to delegitimise paramilitary violence through an all-Ireland vote which would show that Sinn Féin and the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries are completely isolated? The answer is that the relations between Great Britain and Ireland would remain to be 'sorted out' in strand three. What would be at stake here? Apart from the possible issue of Irish re-entry into the British Commonwealth I cannot think of anything likely to cause a major hiatus in this strand.

Standing back from this optimistic scenario obviously arise. If the two governments could outline the parameters of above—would it not be much easier to see whether or not Northern Ireland's parties could agree to them? Why go through the process of taking people over hurdles they show no particular enthusiasm to jump in order to bring them to consider the elements of a settlement broadly agreeable to the British and Irish governments? Are not the external governments once more leaving the parties in Northern Ireland to show the world that they cannot agree by leaving them the widest possible agendas to consider? One response to this line of criticism might be that if the British and Irish governments frame the basis for an agreed settlement then unionists will not be prepared to sign it. I would reply that, as with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it would be a matter of time before unionists came to negotiate its terms.

Conclusion

The experience of voluntary power-sharing or consociational initiatives in Northern Ireland is so far consistent in its message. From Whitelaw in 1972 to Brooke in the beginning of 1992 they have not worked. The collapse of talks in July of last year portended a renewal of deadlock. Another failure in constitutional politics, which is how we must see the Brooke initiative so far, encouraged the two sets of paramilitaries to renew

Let us imagine, for the sake of argument, that there could be provisional agreement about a devolved power-sharing internal settlement during strand one of a new round of talks, presided over by Mr Brooke and/or Mr McNamara on the British side, and that the parties shuffle towards Dublin or between Dublin and Belfast to develop strands two and three. What might happen then?

The fault-lines are predictable. The Unionists (in return for whatever internal concessions they are prepared to consider on the constitution of a devolved government, the administration of justice and fair employment) will want the teeth of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution to be drawn. Indeed at one stage during 1990-1 they declared they would enter talks only if the Irish government made a public commitment to alter Articles 2 and 3. It is not apparent whether Unionists are content to have Articles 2 and 3 minimally altered so that they are compatible both in letter and spirit with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, or whether they hold the maximalist position of agreeing to settle only if Articles 2 and 3 are deleted from the Irish Constitution, and the aspiration to Irish unity left without any constitutional expression in *Bunreacht na hÉireann*.

Since the Irish government (unlike the British government) cannot alter its Constitution simply with a bare parliamentary majority, changing Articles 2 and 3 requires unionist leaders to give Irish nationalists some-thing which could be sold by both Charles Haughey (or his successor) and John Hume in the referenda which would be held to endorse the settle-ment in both parts of Ireland. The minimum price unionists would have to pay would be two Irish dimensions. The first one unionists *might* be prepared to concede: a constitutional provision for Northern Ireland, like that in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which permits Irish unity at some future juncture if a majority in the region were to vote for it in a referendum, or if a devolved government were to agree to negotiate Irish unity. However, the second and more important Irish dimension would stick in their throats: a constitutionally entrenched Inter-governmental Conference with a policy-advisory and possibly policy-making role in Northern Ireland. The Inter-governmental Conference could consist of the Great British, Irish and Northern Irish governments; of the Northern Irish and Irish governments; or, of the Irish and Great British govern-ments, as at present. The agenda of the Inter-governmental Conference could be security, economic development and EC co-operation, and other matters of high politics. But whatever its inter-governmental character and agenda, one of the governments in any Inter-governmental Con-

Down. Since Adams does not attend Westminster, Molyneux is banking on the very long DUP are the only parties with sufficient incentives and votes to create a minimum-winning governmental coalition.

MONETARISM AND ITS CRITICS: THE UNIVERSITY ECONOMISTS' PROTEST OF 1981

MARK WICKHAM-JONES*

Just over ten years ago the UK economy was in the middle of the great monetarist experiment. For two years the Conservative government had persisted with policies of tight monetary control in order to reduce inflation.¹ While these measures had little success either in meeting the targets set or in controlling public expenditure, their overall effect was extreme deflation for the UK economy. Indeed, to many observers, Mrs Thatcher and her Chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe, seemed to be ignoring reality in sustaining these policies in defiance of their results. Far from leading to prosperity, unemployment rose while national and manufacturing output fell during 1979-81—at a rate unparalleled in modern UK history. At the same time inflation rose, and in early 1981 was still higher than when the government had come to office. For a government so committed to defeating inflation, the record suggested at the very least that the economic problems were much more severe than they had anticipated and that success would take some time to come—if at all.

This economic performance, and above all the unapologetic intensification of policy in the spring of 1981, provoked an outraged and unprecedented reaction from university economists. Two Cambridge professors organised a round robin which was signed by 364 UK economists as a direct challenge to Conservative economic policy. The statement attracted considerable media attention and served to further the doubts concerning the government's strategy. This paper examines the background to the economists' statement and the nature of the criticisms that they put forward in it. It provides an account of what happened and why. It analyses the impact that the statement had and considers, with the benefits of hindsight, whether the criticisms made were justified.

There is a wider aspect to the arguments developed here. The relationship between economic theory and public policy is a well established area

* Lecturer in Politics, University of Bristol. The author is very grateful to Vernon Hewitt and Julie Tarling for critical comments they made to an earlier draft. An abbreviated version of this article appeared in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 29 March 1991.

¹ Excellent general accounts are provided by William Keegan, *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1984; and David Smith, *The Rise and Fall of Monetarism*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1987.

BRENDAN O'LEARY

their campaigns. Loyalist paramilitaries, reinvigorated by a purge of their more corrupt leaders and of informants within their ranks, killed Catholics on a scale not seen since 1976, and successfully targeted republican activists in a way which suggested informed access to supposedly confidential security sources. They were motivated by frustration that unionist politicians had failed to negotiate the Anglo-Irish Agreement away, and by the fear that the British government's decision to merge the UDR with the Irish Rangers to create the Royal Irish Rangers might be the first step in 'disarming Protestants'. Republican paramilitaries also showed a new recklessness: seasoned observers speak of a 'third generation' taking the place of their predecessors. Ethnic antagonisms are presently being reformed rather than resolved, and disappear widespread that the cruel conflict will continue, apparently with no end in sight. Two centuries after the United Irishmen promised to 'abolish the memory of all past dissension' the statecraft required to break the manacles of the past has not yet materialised.