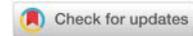


# THE BORDER ISSUE AND IRELAN- NORTHERN IRELAND RELATIONS

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**Abstract:** When Ireland was partitioned in 1920, it was a long time before geography and geopolitics took an interest in it. It was only with the peace process in the 1990s that a real scholarly debate emerged on the politico-territorial aspects of the Northern Ireland problem. However, the partition that was supposed to solve the Irish question actually created an even more complex Northern Irish problem, perhaps. Among the multiple dimensions of this problem (social, economic, religious, cultural), the territorial dimension has a central place. Since the 1920s, border antagonisms have played a major role in political tensions in Northern Ireland, but also between Dublin and Belfast, and between Dublin and London. Borders and divisions were also important factors in the forced displacement of Northern Ireland from 1969. However, this border issue should not be reduced to a simple binary opposition between nationalism, anti-partisanship, on the one hand, and unionism, partisanship, on the other. If the border question was so serious and complex in Ireland, it is because, identity is fatefully connected and determined in relation to the territory. Hence the importance of questioning the scope of the political compromise reached in 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement. Although this agreement appeased Northern Ireland, many doubted that a definitive final solution had actually been found. Some analysts call this period the post-national effect? With BREXIT, this process risked being jeopardized, but as time passes, no more dramatic changes are visible, except for infection. It seems that the EU, the United Kingdom and Ireland have managed to find an effective multilateral agreement on the future of Northern Ireland.

**Keywords:** Border, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Troubles, Peace Process,

**Field:** Social Sciences and Humanities

## 1. INTRODUCTION:THE BORDER ISSUES

Relations between the two Ireland, the border issue and the failure of partition (1920-1985) Since the partition, the border issue has poisoned the political and socio-economic relations between the two Irish administrations, as well as the relations between London and Dublin. The Irish Government Act of 1920, passed by the British Parliament, created two self-governing administrations. The Irish Free State, in twenty-six southern counties, had to satisfy the nationalist-Republican community represented by Sinn Fein. Northern Ireland, meanwhile, covered the remaining six counties and had to satisfy the Ulster union community, even if it covered only part of that province. If the rest of the Irish unionist community withdrew from this division, much of the irredentist nationalist community would never accept it. Under the 1921 Treaty of London, which amended the terms of the 1920 Act, the Dublin government was able to take over, and the Border Commission was tasked with reviewing the border road. But the project failed in 1925, especially under pressure from Belfast, and the three governments finally agreed to retain the original route. The 1925 agreement also repealed the Council of Ireland, which, in a 1920 law, was supposed to allow socio-economic cooperation between the two entities and could also allow for a possible unification process. The Treaty of London of 1921 deeply divided Sinn Fein, part of which, a minority but important, refused to participate in the institutions that emerged from it. (I.Smithson, 2018, 34p.) This was the cause of a civil war that lasted almost two years ... But the failure of the Border Commission in 1925 and its discrediting of the current government in Dublin allowed the parties to the treaties to integrate these institutions as they fought them. In April 1926, Eamonn de Valera, head of Sinn Fein, created Fiana Fiel. The aims of this new parliamentary party: to reunite Ireland and make it a fully independent state from London, both economically and politically. The coming to power of Fiana Phil in 1932 was to mark a major milestone in the development of the border issue and relations between the three governments of the British Isles. (T. Bowman, J. McBride, I. Montgomery 2021, 34-56,p.) With Amon De Valera, Dublin's Northern Ireland strategy has been reduced to two basic, inseparable and intangible principles: first, the Belfast government has no legitimacy and is therefore not an interlocutor. Unification will be achieved in London, not Belfast. Second, while unification is a priority, it should not prevent the Irish state from fully exercising sovereignty over its territory. Dublin's full exercise of its sovereignty over its legal territory is in no way a recognition of the division. 8 In 1937, he adopted a new constitution that gave Dublin quasi-independence. Articles 2 and 3 of this new Constitution reinforced their own conceptions of the Northern Ireland issue by giving value to the basic law (L. Rodríguez-Davis, 2023,4 p,) "Article 2: The national territory consists of the whole... In fact, in essence, these articles have changed nothing.

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Northern Ireland's status has not changed and there has been no progress towards reunification. But that was not without consequences. The claim to the land they contained exacerbated the already unfavorable relationship with the majority unionists in Northern Ireland. In addition, by declaring any other Northern Ireland policy unconstitutional for Dublin governments, they have banned any initiative for negotiations.

## 2. A BORDER CAMPAIGNE OF IRA IN 1956

With Amon de Valera, Dublin's Northern Ireland strategy has been reduced to two basic, inseparable and intangible principles: first, the Belfast government has no legitimacy and is therefore not an interlocutor. Unification will be achieved in London, not Belfast. Second, while unification is a priority, it should not prevent the Irish state from fully exercising sovereignty over its territory. Dublin's full exercise of its sovereignty over its legal territory is in no way a recognition of the division. In 1937, he adopted a new constitution that gave Dublin quasi-independence. Articles 2 and 3 of this new Constitution reinforced their own conceptions of the Northern Ireland issue by giving value to the basic law (L. Rodríguez-Davis, (2023,4 p.)"Article 2: The national territory consists of the whole... In fact, in essence, these articles have changed nothing. Northern Ireland's status has not changed and there has been no progress towards reunification. But that was not without consequences. The claim to the land they contained exacerbated the already unfavorable relationship with the majority unionists in Northern Ireland. In addition, by declaring any other Northern Ireland policy unconstitutional for Dublin governments, they have banned any negotiation initiative between Dublin and Belfast. Together with this frontal irredentist anti-partisanship, Dublin made an equally radical choice between economic protectionism and nationalism. For all its political and symbolic specificity, the Northern Ireland border was one of the instruments for implementing this program. While claiming the unity of Irish island territory, Dublin increasingly closed the Northern Ireland border for economic exchanges. Also, the rejection and constitutional impossibility of recognizing Belfast put an end to almost all forms of cross-border cooperation, even the most local and informal ones. There was also no question of cooperation with the enemy on the part of the Northern Irish authorities. Until the late 1950s, nothing warmed relations between governments. Even London's promise to act for post-war unification in exchange for Dublin military cooperation did not persuade Eamonn Valera to give up neutrality. The war period also widened the gap between the two economies, which also became increasingly impermeable to each other. Then, when, in 1948, Fianna Fáil lost her parliamentary majority, the ruling coalition could not change anything. On the contrary. With the official proclamation of the Republic of Ireland, they increased tensions. Under pressure from Belfast, London passed the Irish Law of 1949, which, although recognizing the Republic of Ireland, reasserted Northern Ireland absolute ownership of the Crown. The action on the violent edges of nationalism did not help. In 1956, the IRA launched a border campaign: the aim was to attack, from the Republic of Ireland, the sovereign symbols of the British state (border checkpoints, police stations, customs, etc.) located in Northern Ireland along the border. The whole socio-economic relationship between the two Irish territories suffers from these tensions, especially in the areas adjacent to the border. (M. Solly, 2021) In general, co-operation between the two Irelands has remained ... organized by Sinn Féin from 1920 to 1922 has already weakened the economic exchange between the two spaces (Bw.Redaction, 2023,13-19). From the time Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932 to 1938, the customs war between London and Dublin also had profound effects. The value of cross-border trade fell from *милиони* 17 million in 1924 to 5 million in 1937 [Barrington, 1958, p. 20]. A town like Derry, located on the border, was seen being brutally cut off from almost all of its catchment area located across the border. The development of traffic on cross-border railways has revealed the seriousness of the situation. In addition, they closed one by one after the result. The evolution of cross-border migration also reveals. In 1926, 63,919 Irish-born people lived in Northern Ireland. In 1971, they were only 35,604. (P. Buckland, (1981,18,p.) Census in Ireland, Dublin, Office Supplies Office. But in the face of this influx, Belfast introduced several legal and administrative measures to curb immigration that were considered a political threat, as it strengthened the nationalist vote in Northern Ireland (Ibid. P. Buckland, 1981, p. 61). The economy of the Northern Ireland border regions, where most of the nationalist minority was concentrated, was also deliberately neglected by Belfast.

## 3. THE IRA'S DEFEAT IN ITS BOREDR CAMAPIGNE

The late 1950s marked a turning point, especially within nationalism. The IRA's defeat in its border campaign has prompted nationalist and Republican movements to seek new avenues for action. A new generation of nationalists arrived, fed by new values, especially in the north. Benefiting from the establishment of the welfare state after the war, a growing part of the Catholic community was now also

interested in its social and economic status, its civil rights under the Northern Ireland regime, and no longer just the issue of reunification. 12 In the South, the end of Imon De Valera's career allowed other personalities to emerge and, above all, to take a step back from what had been done before, whether economic or political. Influenced by historians, cultural critics, and various politicians, the whole nationalist and republican ideology began to be the subject of a wide-ranging revisionist movement. In 1957, a Whitaker report condemning protectionism called for a brutal shift in economic policy. When, a few months later, Sean Lemas took over the leadership of the majority Fianna Phil and became head of government, he immediately implemented the recommendations of Whitaker and Barrington. Dublin abandoned protectionism and opted for free trade. In 1965, in anticipation of future EEC membership, Dublin and London even created a free trade area. That same year, he met with Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of the Government of Northern Ireland. It was the first time since the split that the heads of government of the two Irish administrations have talked directly to each other and considered possible cross-border economic, social and cultural co-operation. In 1966, Sean Lemas set up a parliamentary committee to work on constitutional reform, including a reformulation of Article 3. It was not a question of abandoning unification, but of finding other means to achieve this, especially by allowing negotiations with Belfast. The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland is finally opening. Relations between governments have calmed down. The numerous reforms undertaken by the Lemas government have had a profound and rapid impact in twenty-six counties, especially at the economic level. A huge process of modernization had begun, which visibly transformed the social and economic reality of the country. But between Belfast and Dublin, despite efforts for economic co-operation, things really did not have time to change in depth, as the political upheavals that intervened destabilized the union majority in Northern Ireland, the most radical and compromising part. 14 Despite all the precautions O'Neill took, his rapprochement with the Dublin government and the very small concessions he agreed to make to the nationalist community in Northern Ireland were considered treason. Within its majority, hardline unionism (also known as loyalty), representing mainly the urban constituencies in eastern Northern Ireland around Belfast, opposed any sharing of power and wealth with Catholics. (S.Paseta, 2006, 23,p.)

#### 4. FAILURE OF THE BORDER CAMPAIG

In 1968, the first violence broke out in Northern Ireland, between, on the one hand, the civil rights movement, animated mainly by Catholics seeking greater civil and socio-economic equality, and, on the other, the unionists. Protestants, who rejected any idea of political or socio-economic reform in favor of the Catholic minority. The local police, mostly Protestants, were out of control. In 1969, as the violence escalated, London accepted Belfast's request and sent troops to Northern Ireland to restore law and order. sent troops to Northern Ireland to restore law and order. Violence and an Impossible Political Solution to the Border Issue (1969-1985) Even if the border issue has only a second place in the explosion of violence. (C. McNaughton, 2023) The civil rights movement as a whole called for ..., it was very fast aggravating factor and pronounced political instability. After the failure of the border campaign, the IRA abandoned the armed struggle to commit itself to the socio-political action. In Northern Ireland, the Sunningdale Declaration was greeted with outrage among Unionists. (S. Knispel 2021) In vain. The most radical, who formed a new association (Ulster Workers' Council), launched a general strike, which lasted fourteen days despite the intervention of the British army. The new Northern Ireland government fell on January 28, 1974, ending the Sunningdale compromise de facto. At the same time in the Republic, the Sunningdale Declaration was sued for unconstitutionality. The verdict, passed in January 1974, did not retain its unconstitutionality, but only procedural reasons: Sunningdale, since it is only a statement of intent, it cannot be unconstitutional. Implicitly, this meant that it could not become law because it would be incompatible with Articles 2 and 3. Sunningdale's failure marks the inability to find a political and institutional solution to the border issue, which leaves much room for violence: 1976 was the deadliest with 314 deaths, almost a tenth of the 3,601 deaths registered between 1969 and 1998. 20 Years later, the same reasons gave the same effects. The British government hoped to find a purely internal solution to the Northern Ireland crisis, but it was very clear that it could not do without the Irish dimension, ie a political solution to the issue of the outcome. Popular support for violent republican language grew in the early 1980s. (Ibid. S. Knispel 2021, 2.p) It was imperative to revitalize. This is why the Dublin ruling coalition formed the New Ireland Forum: the aim was to debate to reformulate the nationalist ideal in the interests of the unionists. In 1985, with Fianna Fáil in opposition, the Dublin government signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty with London (Johnsson, 1981), more or less reiterated the Sunningdale Terms and Conditions and proposals made by the New Ireland Forum. Yet, although it was infinitely less violent, much of Northern Ireland's unionism rejected the treaty for the same reasons as in 1974 (Ulster says no!). In fact, in the elections that followed, the unionist

electorate overwhelmingly supported the opponents of the agreement. In Dublin, Fiana Phil refused to vote for ratification of the treaty, arguing that it was contrary to Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution and signaled a waiver of unification. As with Sunningdale, and although the Anglo-Irish Treaty was ratified by the parliaments of London and Dublin, negotiations were stalled on the border issue. Partition remained the main obstacle to the establishment of stable political institutions in Northern Ireland. Whether it was partisanship and anti-partisanship, or even in the two more divided camps, no political consensus was possible. No institutional architecture has harmonized the different political-territorial aspirations. Faced with this political incompetence, armed action remained the only option for many. • 1985-1998: Towards a post-national solution to the border issue?

If we compare the situation that arose from 1985 with that which arose from the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, it is clear that these thirteen years represent a significant development. If this global agreement, signed by all actors in the conflict, political and paramilitary, was ratified by referendum in the north and south. [16] [16] In Northern Ireland, 71.12% of the vote on the agreement. In F, bringing new political solutions to the border issue also raises questions about Ireland's future: should this be seen as the arrival of a post-national Ireland? New context 23 The novelty of the context is primarily socio-economic. Since joining the Common Market in 1973, the Republic of Ireland has definitely moved to free trade. Through various aspects of its regional policy (Interreg, ERDF, etc.), Europe has also imposed economic cooperation on Dublin and Belfast, particularly on the issue of border regions: in 1983, it published a study specifically on the issue of border regions. . The economy of these regions has clearly revealed their developmental backwardness compared to the rest of the island [ESCEC, 1983]. Therefore, the positions defended by De Valera necessarily became obsolete and the whole of the old nationalist conceptions of Northern Ireland fell apart. The unexpected financial money represented by Europe also benefited the entire economy of the Republic, which experienced a real economic revolution ("Celtic tiger") during the 1990s. This changed roles: while the South was long economically overtaken by the North Ireland.

## 5. GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

The issue of the border in the peace process and the 1998 Easter Agreement 27 In 1993, Dublin and London signed the Downing Street Declaration, formalizing their common desire to find a comprehensive solution, the Dublin government, yet Fiana Phil, even and publicly accepted the hypothesis of reform of Articles 2 and 3 of its Constitution. At the same time, the Clinton administration is inviting Gary Adams to persuade him to agree to a permanent truce before the talks. Although this ceasefire was subsequently terminated, the process was ongoing. Framework documents drafted by London and Dublin in 1995 served as the basis for negotiations by all actors, violent and nonviolent, to which US officials were added. The final negotiations ended on April 10, 1998, with all parties signing the Good Friday Agreement. (Ibid. Johnsson 1981) to be ratified in a second step by referendum in the North and South. This agreement, which repeals the 1920 law, addresses all issues of the conflict which it groups into three branches (three directions): the internal dimension of Northern Ireland (institutionalizing the division of power between the unionist majority and the nationalist minority), the east-west dimension (the relationship between the Irish governments and London) and the Irish dimension (the question of the border and relations between Ireland and Northern Ireland). The solution to the border issue lies in three interconnected points. First, reunification is no longer subject to the principle of consent, but to the principle of parallel consent. This means that it will be possible only if a favorable majority is expressed in both the North and the South, through two simultaneous and identical referendums. Under these conditions, London and Dublin will have to continue reunification. Second, cross-border cooperation is institutionalized through the creation of a North / South Council of Ministers, with executive powers in five main areas: agriculture, tourism, education, health, environment and transport. Implementing bodies specialize in these areas to implement the recommendations and decisions of the North / South Council of Ministers. The third, most delicate point in the negotiations is the reformulation of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution of the Republic. Their new version is significantly different from that of 1937: Article 2 It is the right and firstborn right of every person born on the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish nation. It is also the right of all persons otherwise qualified under the law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish descent living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage. Article 3 The strong will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, is to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions, recognizing that a united Ireland will be created only by peaceful means with the consent of the majority of people, democratically speaking, in both jurisdictions of the island. Until then, the laws adopted by the Assembly determined by this Constitution will have a similar area and degree of application as the

laws adopted by the Assembly that existed immediately before the entry into force of this Constitution. Institutions with executive powers and functions divided between those jurisdictions may be established by their respective competent authorities for those purposes and may perform powers and functions in respect of all or any part of the island. (J. Hackley 2020) On Isle of Ireland is no longer defined as the territory of the Irish nation, but as the territory shared by the communities living there. Dublin also acknowledges that other institutions of its own may be legitimately sovereign in Northern Ireland, including cross-border institutions for Charles Henry Hackley longer the only constitutional solution • constitutional. Interpretation 1998: a post-national solution or a simple border standardization? Within the scientific community, many in this political solution on the Irish border questioned the realization of the dream of Jürgen Habermas or Jay Rugby, the emergence of a new, post-national Ireland, where national identities would be separated from the notions of territory, self-determination, sovereignty (D., G. Habermas 2024)). But what is it really? Twelve years after ratification, it is undeniable that the Easter Agreement has undoubtedly changed the game. For the first time after the partition in 1920, the institutional architecture set up on the island is no longer in dispute. And while it was necessary to temporarily suspend institutions in Northern Ireland, it was not because of the border issue. The vast majority of the population and political actors now accept the political framework established by this agreement. Given this, the emergence of a post-national Ireland is questionable, not only theoretically, but also because, in the case of Ireland, it tends to minimize or ignore the risks of a recurrence of the border issue. Theoretically, postnationalism is based on problematic assumptions. For example, many thinkers and researchers argue that, contrary to the post-national thesis, globalization and especially European integration can not be understood as a simple process of destruction of the nation-state. Huckley made it clear, for example, that the process of European integration meant more the strengthening of territorial identities than their interrogation. (J.Hackley,2019), On In other words, the evolutions that are taking place at the global and European level do not mean the disappearance, but the reconfiguration of national territorial identities. However, these reconfigurations are inherent in the national phenomenon that constantly builds, deconstructs and reconstructs its relation to the territory. The idea of post-national deterritorialization therefore deserves critical consideration. In addition, in Ireland, several elements confirm these theoretical questions. As we have seen, Ireland's economic boom facilitated rapprochement between Belfast and Dublin during the 1990s. Development in socio-economic conditions will not be without impact. If it lasts, the current financial crisis would therefore severely punish both Irish economies, which could further exacerbate tensions. The risk would also be the risk of a protectionist reflex, especially in Dublin, which would weaken cross-border economic coordination, which is still at the heart of the new Belfast-Dublin relationship. Therefore, the state and its territorial sovereignty remain central factors in the institutional and political balance of the island. Moreover, in Northern Ireland, even if political violence has almost disappeared, there can be no real reconciliation. Tensions between the two main communities are still palpable. Among the many reasons for this tension, there is the territorial issue.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Rejecting violence does not necessarily mean adhering to a post-national identity. An insignificant part of nationalism, as well as an insignificant part of the unionist community, still nurtures relations with the territory and space that remain irreconcilable. For this reason, despite the deterritorializing effects of globalization and European integration, it can be said that the island of Ireland as a whole has not yet entered the post-national era. In addition, with a parallel consent system that complicates any eventual reunification process, there is a threat of a recurrence of the problem. Because, on both sides of the political spectrum, today the heirs of the hard territorial line share power. Moreover, if Sinn Féin has won an election since 1998, it is because of his opposition to the SDPS 'post-nationalist rhetoric. The Post, June 6, 2001. In addition, the DUP faces competition from a very traditional non-extinct edge, represented for example by TUV (Traditional Trade Union Voice). In this context, the electoral weakening, consistently since 1998, of Northern Ireland's most moderate unionist and nationalist parties is a cause for concern. In 2003, the SDPL lost its majority nationalist seats in what happened, all this indicates that the agreement, obviously, allowed a big step to be taken towards the normalization of the border. Conclusion 36 Thus, the border issue played a central role in the failure of the Northern Ireland institutions created in 1920, but this border issue could not be reduced to a bipolar conflict between nationalist anti-partisanship on the one hand and unionist partisanship in the United States. else. Influenced by a number of antagonisms, he certainly opposed nationalism against unionism, from Dublin to Belfast, but he also divided nationalism and unionism and continues to do so. In this context, the 1998 agreement is not such a major break with the past. It is clear that even if divisions are no longer expressed in the same way and

no longer interfere with institutional functioning, they are still very much present.

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