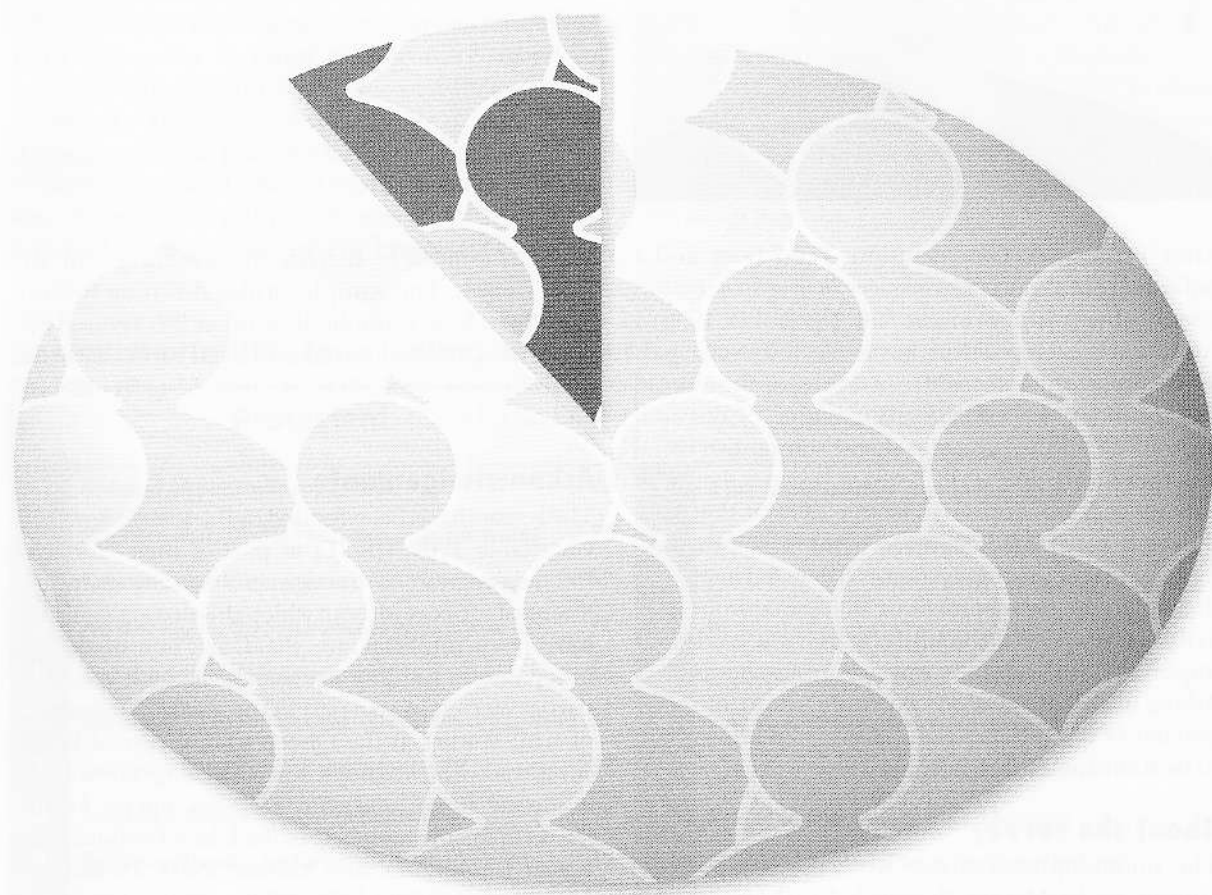


The Search for a Settlement

The People's Choice



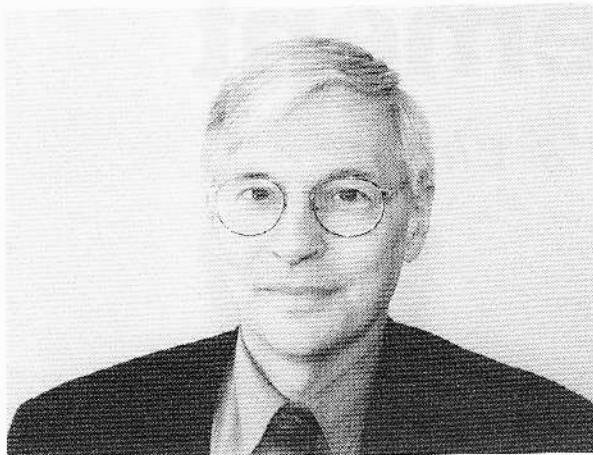
Colin Irwin

Edited by Chris Moffat

A Queen's University/Rowntree Survey Report
Produced by Fortnight Educational Trust

Free with Fortnight 368

About the Research



After Professors Tom Hadden, Fred Boal and I published our report *'Separation or Sharing? The People's Choice'* (free with *Fortnight* 356, December 1996) I contacted the ten political parties elected to take part in the Stormont Talks and asked them if they would like to undertake a similar programme of research focused on all the procedural and substantive issues that they had to deal with. Perhaps because they were making very little progress in the Talks at that time they were very pleased to do so. Thus began what was for me a year of very interesting and detailed interviews that led to the development of all the questions used in this survey. This qualitative research was as critically important as the public opinion polls themselves. Asking the 'right questions' is certainly more than fifty percent of finding the 'right answers', if answers are to be found at all.

About the survey

The public opinion survey work for this poll was conducted by Market Research Northern Ireland (MRNI) between December 4th and December 22nd 1997 to produce 1002 completed questionnaires that represented a cross section of the adult population of Northern Ireland in terms of age, gender, social class, religious affiliation and geographical area. The design of the methodology was developed by myself and Alan Leitch of MRNI and involved establishing a quota sample through household 'face to face' interviews. If the individual fitted into the sample and was willing to participate in the research they could fill out a self completion questionnaire themselves, or if they

wished, complete it with the assistance of the interviewer. The sample broke down as follows: Protestant 50%, Catholic 40%, other 2%, refused 8%; male 49%, female 51%; age 18 to 24 - 16%, 25 to 34 - 21%, 35 to 44 - 18%, 45 to 54 - 15%, 55 to 64 - 12%, 65 and over, 18%.

Acknowledgements

The research has been funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) as part of their Northern Ireland programme. I am grateful for their continued financial support without which this project could not have been undertaken. JRCT are one of the few independent funding agencies acceptable to all the parties elected to take part in the Talks. The Institute of Irish Studies at the Queen's University of Belfast should also be thanked for providing me with an academic 'home' and office facilities. Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Ulster Unionist Party, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, UK Unionist Party, Popular Unionist Party, Ulster Democratic Party, Northern Ireland Woman's Coalition Party and Labour Party of Northern Ireland for their co-operation over the past year. Some of them took a great deal of time out of their busy schedules to patiently explain sometimes quite complex legal and political issues to me. If this report is of any value to them then they must take much of the credit. If this report fails in meeting their expectations then that failure is mine alone.

Colin Irwin

Steps to a lasting peace

People from different communities often hold very different views about the causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Additionally, perhaps the two governments who set up the Stormont Talks and the politicians elected to take part, are not focusing on the issues that are of the greatest importance to their respective constituencies.

What are the steps that have to be taken in an effort to secure a lasting peace in Northern Ireland? With this point in mind people were asked to indicate which options they considered to be 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable', 'Tolerable' or 'Unacceptable' as part of a lasting settlement.

Catholics placed a Bill of Rights first (78% said it was 'Essential'), police reform second at 70%, followed by security issues. For Protestants security

issues were their first and second priorities at 70% followed by an end to the Republic's territorial claim at 62%. 'Integration of Northern Ireland into the UK' was the seventh choice of Protestants while Catholics ranked 'British withdrawal from Northern Ireland' as their ninth option. Both Catholics and Protestants placed, for example, 'A right to choose integrated education' (7th and 11th choice respectively) before 'Reformed and shared government' (12th and 14th choice respectively).

Clearly the Stormont Talks with their primary focus on the reform of the institutions of government have got it wrong or, at the very best, these reforms must be seen as a means to an end and not as an end in themselves.

Essential priorities for a lasting settlement

Protestant			Catholic		
		Essential %			Essential %
1	Disband all paramilitary groups	70	1	A Bill of Rights that guarantees equality for all	78
2	Stronger and effective anti-terrorist measures	70	2	Completely reform the police service	70
3	Republic ends their claim on Northern Ireland	62	3	Bill of Rights to protect each community's culture	67
4	A Bill of Rights that guarantees equality for all	37	4	Disband all paramilitary groups	67
5	End the Anglo-Irish Agreement	36	5	Return the Army to their barracks	61
6	Bill of Rights to protect each community's culture	36	6	Politics without a sectarian division	59
7	Integrate Northern Ireland into the UK	35	7	A right to choose integrated education	53
8	A right to choose integrated education	35	8	A right to choose integrated housing	51
9	Politics without a sectarian division	32	9	British withdrawal from Northern Ireland	46
10	Separate politics and religion in N. Ireland	31	10	Open government & Freedom of Information Act	46
11	A right to choose integrated housing	30	11	Stronger and effective anti-terrorist measures	40
12	Separate politics and religion in the Republic	30	12	Reformed and shared government	32
13	Open government & Freedom of Information Act	24	13	Separate politics and religion in N. Ireland	20
14	Reformed and shared government	12	14	Separate politics and religion in the Republic	15
15	Return the Army to their barracks	8	15	End the Anglo-Irish Agreement	10
16	Completely reform the police service	7	16	The Republic ends their claim on N. Ireland	7
17	British withdrawal from Northern Ireland	1	17	Integrate Northern Ireland into the UK	4

Priorities for agreement

The next problem that has to be tackled is searching out the areas of policy and reform where agreement can be found. At the Stormont Talks such agreement is based on the principle of 'sufficient consent' which requires a simple majority (more than 50%) from each of the two main traditions. If this same principle is applied to the results of the public opinion poll then it is possible to say what parts of a settlement are 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable' or 'Tolerable' when total responses pass the 50% mark for a majority in both communities.

'Disband all paramilitary groups' receives the highest consensus with a majority in both communities considering this option to be 'Essential'. Similarly, 'Desirable' options include: open government and Freedom of Information Act; a Bill of Rights that guarantees equality for all; a right to choose integrated

education; a right to choose integrated housing; a Bill of Rights that protects the culture of each community; politics without a sectarian division; and, stronger and effective anti-terrorist measures.

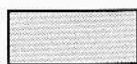
As both Catholics and Protestants consider a Bill of Rights to be 'Desirable' making progress on this issue, which is the number one priority for most Nationalists, should not be a problem at the Talks. On the other hand complete reform of the police service, the second priority for Nationalists, is not acceptable to a majority of Protestants. But complete reform doesn't mean no reform. What reforms, then, are acceptable? To explore this question, and many others, all the issues dealt with here must now be examined in greater detail.

About the questions

For each question reviewed in this report informants were asked to indicate which options they considered to be 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable', 'Tolerable' or 'Unacceptable' as part of a lasting settlement. These terms could be used as many times as the informant wished in each question and for the purposes of the poll these terms had the following meaning:



'Essential' - You believe this option is a necessary part of a lasting settlement and should be implemented under any circumstances.



'Desirable' - This option is not what you would consider to be 'Essential', but you think this option, or something very similar to it, is a good idea and should be put into practice.



'Acceptable' - This option is not what you would consider to be 'Desirable', if you were given a choice, but you could certainly 'live with it'.



'Tolerable' - This option is not what you want. But, as part of a lasting settlement for Northern Ireland, you would be willing to put up with it.

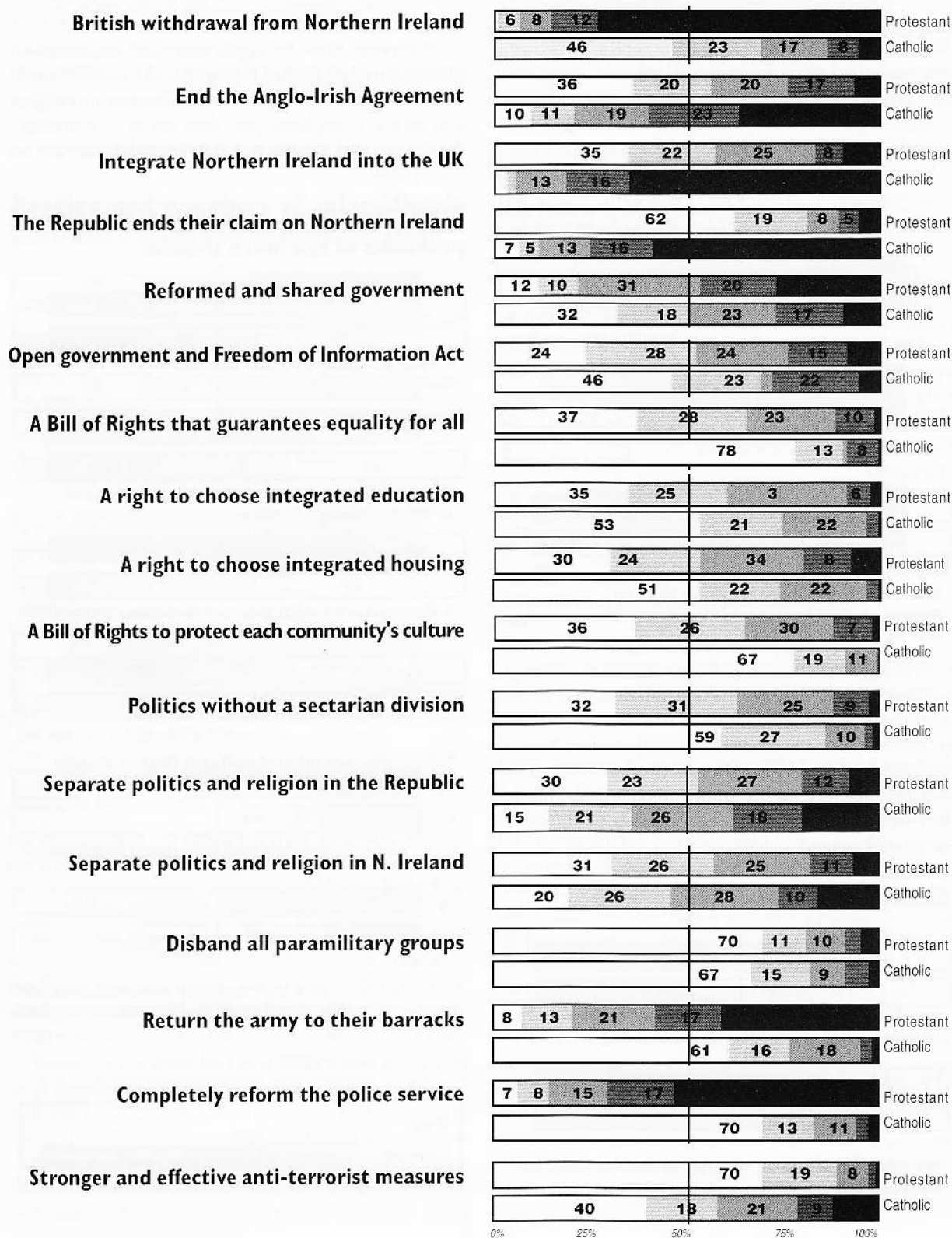


'Unacceptable' - This option is completely unacceptable under any circumstances. You would not accept it, even as part of a lasting settlement.

With a sample size of 1000 the accuracy of the responses to the questions reviewed in this report is approximately +/- 2%, providing everyone answers all the questions. Although some of the questions were quite complex, significant levels of refusal or non-response only occurred when sensitive personal issues were being dealt with. For example the 'political preference' question recorded a 13% refusal rate, 'religion' 8% refusal and 'identity' 4% non-response. Levels of non-response for all the questions of substance averaged 1% and never rose above 2% so the analysis of these issues can be relied upon within acceptable margins of error.

Note: In the text the percentages quoted are generally the cumulative values; in the charts the disaggregated values are given, except where these are less than 5%.

Cross community support for a lasting settlement

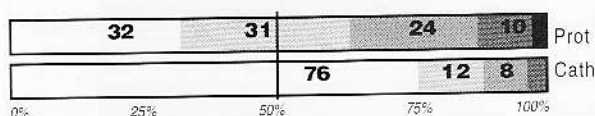


Human Rights and justice

The European Convention on Human Rights protects individuals by guaranteeing each person the right:

to life; not to be tortured or subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment; to protection from slavery or forced work; not to be unlawfully arrested or detained; to a fair trial; to freedom of belief and expression; to free association; to privacy and family life; not to be discriminated against; and to a remedy for breaches of human rights.

The Labour Government has already introduced legislation to incorporate this Convention into the domestic law of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This will allow any complaints regarding failures to meet these minimum standards to be heard by courts in the UK and Northern Ireland. A clear majority of both Protestants (63%) and Catholics (88%) consider this decision to be 'Desirable'.



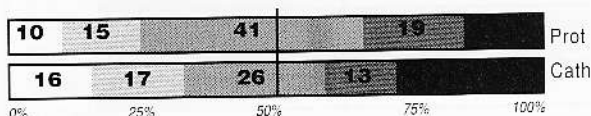
The European Convention on Human Rights should be part of the domestic law of Northern Ireland

Some recently negotiated settlements, for example in South Africa, have included a Bill of Rights to deal with many of the special political, social and cultural problems that lay at the heart of their conflict. Similar majorities of both Catholics (83%) and Protestants (58%) considered it 'Desirable' to have an additional Bill of Rights to address the special problems of Northern Ireland.

Additional protections



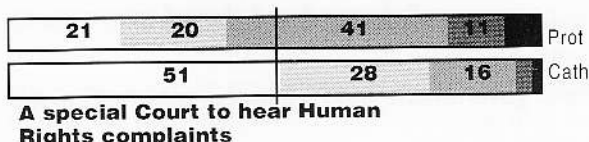
An additional Bill of Rights to address the special problems of Northern Ireland



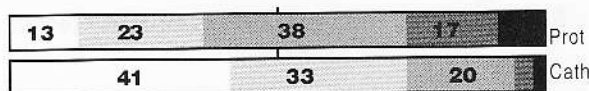
No additional Bill of Rights, just new laws to address the special problems of N. Ireland

With regard to the application and enforcement of human rights, Catholics consider the establishment of a commission with powers to monitor, investigate and bring complaints to court to be 'Desirable'. Protestants considered these options to be 'Acceptable'.

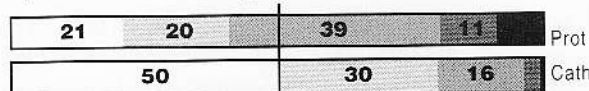
Other measures to address the special problems of Northern Ireland



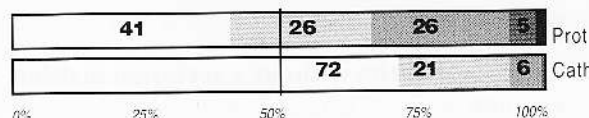
A special Court to hear Human Rights complaints



A Commission to monitor, investigate and promote Human Rights



A Commission with powers to bring Human Rights complaints to court



Economic, social and cultural Rights should be part of a Northern Ireland Bill

In addition to the European Convention on Human Rights other international conventions include the right to:

food; clothing and shelter; health; education; work; safe and fair conditions of work; social security; and cultural expression..

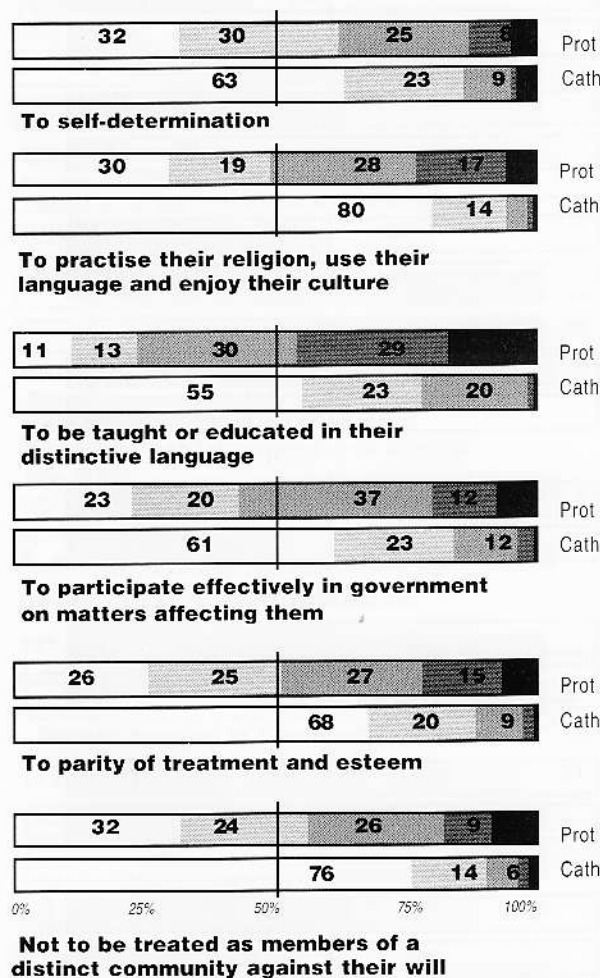
Including these economic, social and cultural rights in a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights is also thought to be 'Desirable' by a majority in both communities (67% of Protestants and 93% of Catholics).

Key

Essential Desirable Acceptable Tolerable Unacceptable

Some international conventions also include collective rights of peoples and members of minorities. A clear majority of both communities consider the right to self-determination, parity of esteem and not to be treated as a member of a community against their will to be 'Desirable'. Similarly, religious, language, cultural, educational and democratic group rights are all 'Acceptable' as part of a Bill of Rights to be introduced into Northern Ireland law.

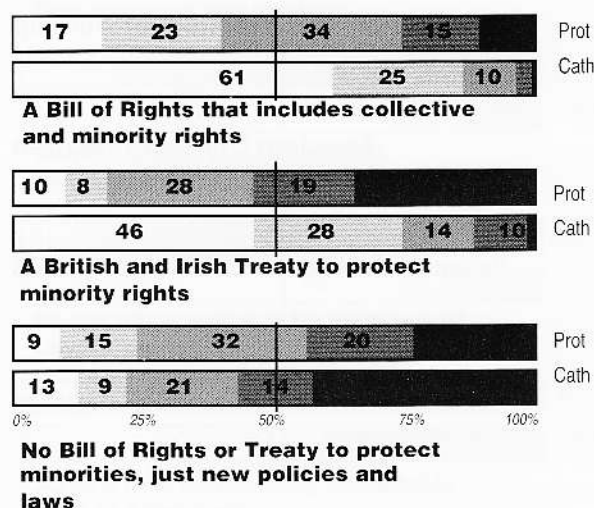
Peoples and members of minorities in Northern Ireland should have the right:



It may also be necessary to include some rights that deal specifically with some of the political, social and cultural problems that are distinctive features of the Northern Ireland conflict. A majority of both communities consider it 'Essential' to protect the right to: peaceful demonstrations and parades; freedom of worship and religious expression; freedom from

intimidation or incitement to hatred; and, 'Desirable' to protect freedom of political expression. The right to choose integrated or single religion housing is 'Acceptable', as is the right to choose Catholic, Protestant or integrated education. Catholics consider the right to use and be educated in the Irish language to be 'Essential' and a majority of Protestants are willing to tolerate these rights as part of a lasting settlement.

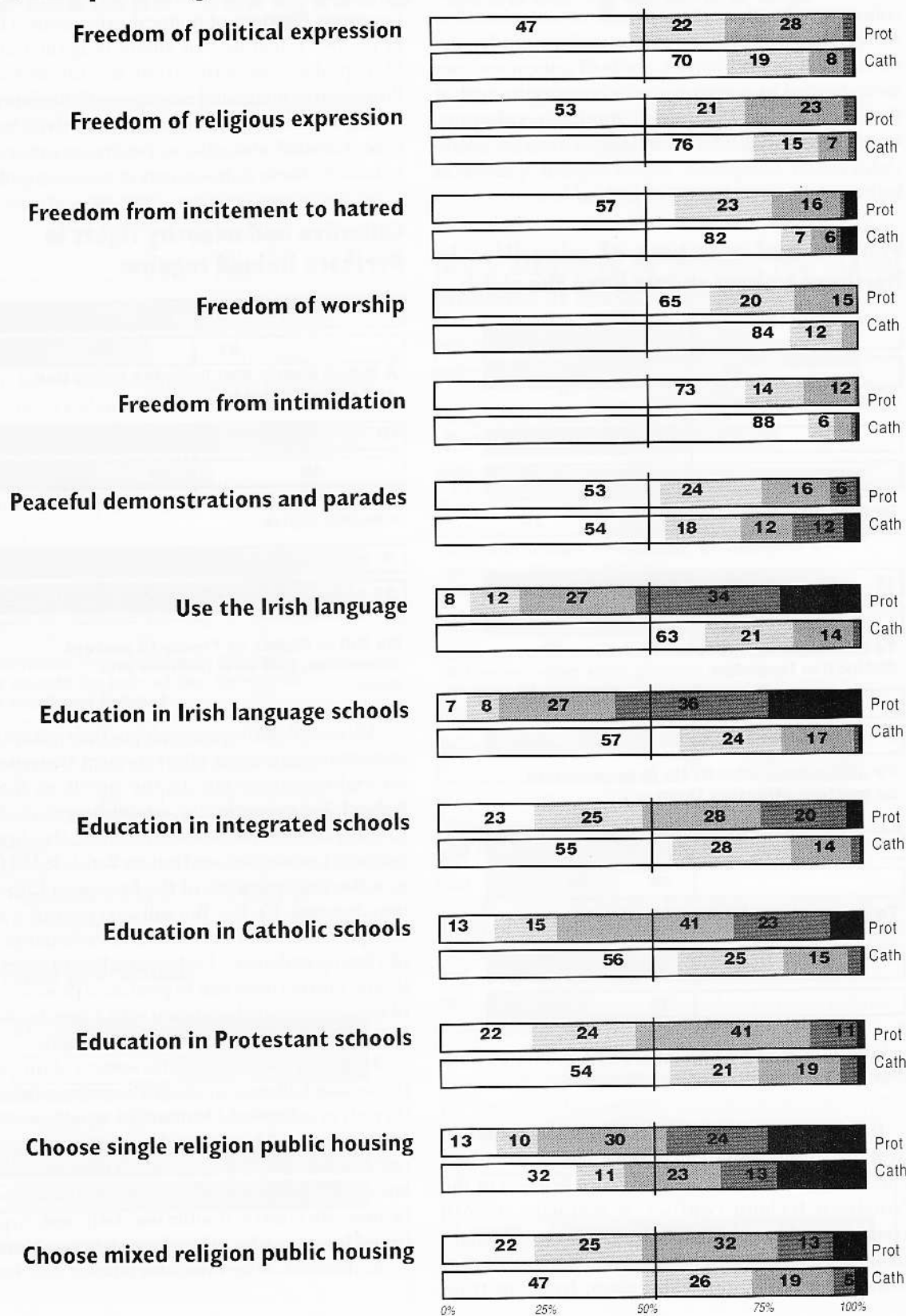
Collective and minority rights in Northern Ireland require:



Various British governments have taken several important steps in an effort to meet these demands for rights appropriate to the needs of Northern Ireland: for example, the establishment of the Fair Employment Commission (FEC), the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) and now the incorporation of the European Convention into domestic UK law. But still a very great deal more is required, by both Catholics and Protestants, as part of a lasting settlement. Perhaps the British government should instruct their staff to produce a provisional draft of the appropriate legislation with a view to placing it before the parties for their consideration.

However, the results of this section of the poll also present a challenge to the Irish government. If they do wish to satisfy local Nationalist aspirations in these matters they will have to make an effort to meet these reforms, measure for measure, in their own domestic law. Additionally, any failure in these matters may well be met with cries of 'double standard' and 'hypocrisy' from Unionists who value these rights and want both communities to enjoy their benefits in the North.

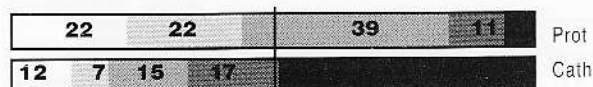
Additional special rights for Northern Ireland that should be protected :



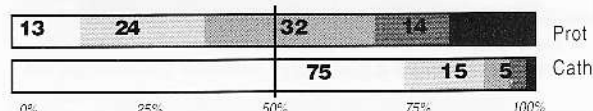
Police reform

In a report commissioned by the government Dr. Maurice Hayes has recommended the establishment of a completely independent agency to deal with all aspects of investigations into complaints against the RUC. A majority of both communities consider this proposal to be 'quite 'Acceptable'.

The police complaints procedure should be reformed to:

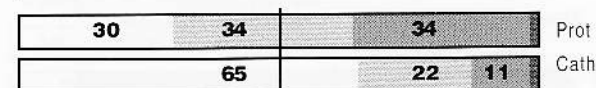


Give the existing commission more scope to initiate and supervise complaints but maintain the role of the RUC in the investigation

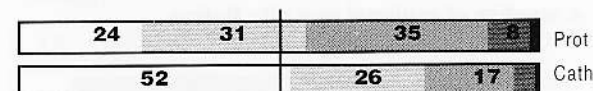


Establish a completely independent agency to deal with all aspects of investigations into complaints against the RUC

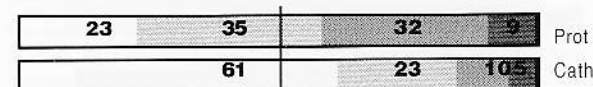
A more widely acceptable reformed police service should include:



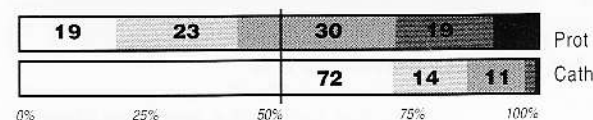
Special training in community relations and human rights



A policing charter to set duties and responsibilities in law



Monitor policing standards and publish reports



Recruit more Catholics



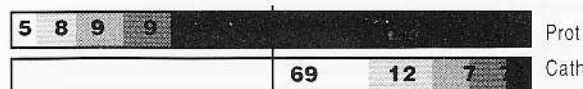
A new name for the RUC



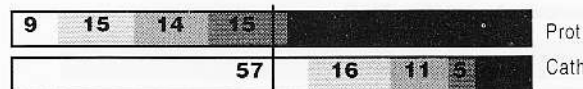
New emblems and symbols



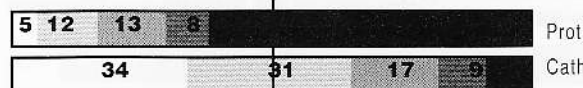
Require police to declare their membership of Loyal Orders



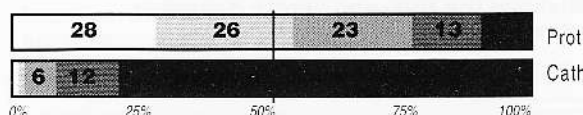
Do not allow police to be members of Loyal Orders



Make a new more widely acceptable Oath of Allegiance



The police should not normally be armed



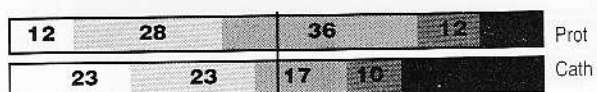
Leave the police service as it is

With regard to the police force, the recruitment of more Catholics, special training in community relations and human rights, the rigorous monitoring of policing standards and the establishment of a policing charter are all considered to be 'Desirable' by a majority in both communities.

However the recent changes to the oath of allegiance is only 'Tolerable' for Protestants while other reforms targeted at the culture and character of the police force, such as a change of name and uniform, are not acceptable to a majority of Protestants although Catholics consider these reforms to be 'Essential'.

At the present time the Royal Ulster Constabulary is a single force that has responsibility for providing all policing duties throughout the whole of Northern Ireland. Between the options of disbanding the RUC and creating a new force on the one hand, and no change on the other, the most acceptable reform for both Catholics and Protestants is the creation of a two tier service that includes new community policing units. Perhaps this new service could benefit from a change of name and uniform as well as being disarmed so that their community role and duties can be seen to be very different from the established force.

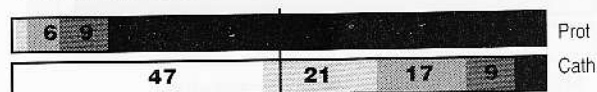
Options for new policing structures:



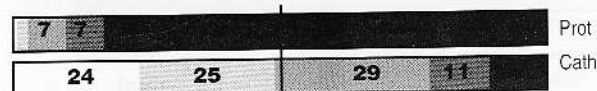
Create new community policing units as part of the RUC



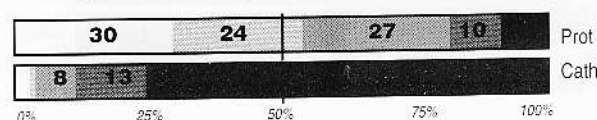
Create new community policing units separate to the RUC



Disband the RUC and create a new single police force



Disband the RUC and create a number of regional and city forces



Leave current policing structures as they are

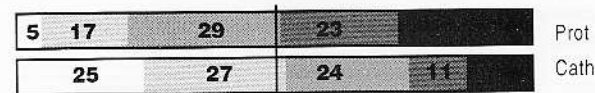
Present responsibility for policing in Northern Ireland is divided between the Secretary of State, the Chief Constable and the Police Authority of Northern Ireland. Community Police Liaison Committees, established by District Councils, also have a consultation role. Reform of these responsibilities could include giving more powers to any of these bodies or persons. However, the option that has the greatest cross community support is for a new Department of Justice in a new Regional Assembly to manage the provision of all policing services in Northern Ireland.

The drafting of a policing charter and the appropriate legislation needed for the implementation of these reforms would be welcomed by Nationalists and provide an acceptable basis for discussion by Unionists. Clearly, setting up a Department of Justice cannot proceed in the absence of an overall settlement, but perhaps some of the proposals reviewed here could be implemented as confidence building measures before the coming marching season.

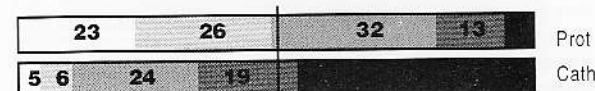
Improve accountability of policing services by giving more responsibility for the management of the police services to:



The Secretary of State



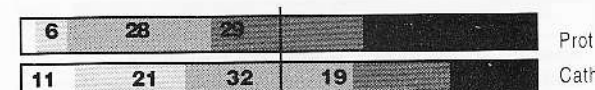
A new Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Assembly



The Chief Constable



The Police Authority of Northern Ireland



A number of regional and city Police Authorities



Community Liaison Committees



Or no change - leave the responsibility for the police service as it is

Strand 1: Devolved Institutions

The Stormont Talks have been divided into three parts called Strands. Strand One covers relationships in Northern Ireland and deals with questions of regional government. At the present time Northern Ireland is governed under Direct Rule from Westminster with many important decisions being made by the Northern Ireland Office. Most of these decisions could be made by a democratically elected assembly.

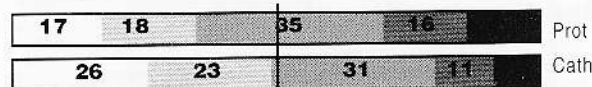
Establish a Northern Ireland regional assembly with:



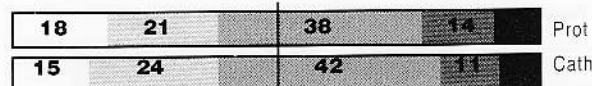
An elected assembly



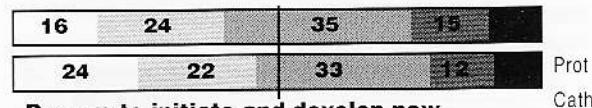
An appointed second chamber or senate



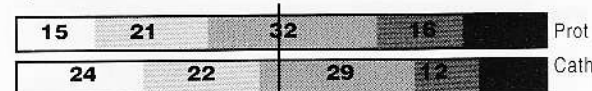
Committees that shadow and monitor the departments of the N. Ireland Office



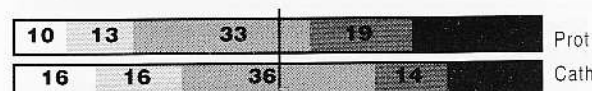
Powers of administration



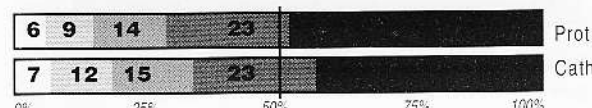
Powers to initiate and develop new policies



Powers to make new laws



Powers to alter taxes

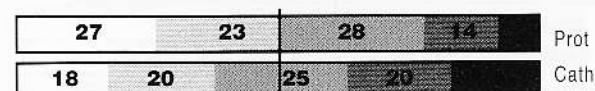


Or no assembly – Northern Ireland should not have a regional assembly

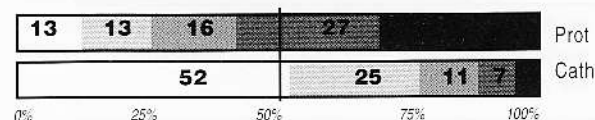
Approximately half of both Catholics (50%) and Protestants (48%) consider the option of an elected assembly to be 'Desirable'. An appointed second chamber; powers to administer, initiate and develop new policies; powers to make new laws and alter taxes; and, the establishment of committees that shadow and monitor the departments of the Northern Ireland Office, are all 'Acceptable' to a majority of both communities. But how can an assembly be structured so that these powers will be used for the benefit of everyone and avoid the dangers of majoritarianism, or what Nationalists call 'A return to Stormont'?

On the one hand, Catholics considered it 'Desirable' for the appointments in an assembly to be assigned equally between the two main traditions and desirable for voting to be by weighted majority or 'Sufficient Consensus' (which requires a majority from both of the main traditions). On the other hand, Protestants considered it 'Desirable' for appointments to be made in proportion to the representation of each party in the assembly and for voting to be by simple majority.

Chairpersons and members of assembly committees should be assigned:



In proportion to the representation of each party in the assembly



Equally between the two main traditions

The clear compromise on these points for both traditions is for appointments to the executive, the chairs and membership of committees to be proportional to the representation of each party in the assembly and for voting to be by weighted majority or 'Sufficient Consensus'.

Additionally, a majority of both Protestants (82%) and Catholics (55%) considered it 'Desirable' that the members of the executive should only come from parties committed to principles of democracy and non-violence. And 75% of Catholics and 80% of Protestants considered it acceptable that the executive should be voted in by the members of the assembly.

With regards to leadership in an assembly, a majority of both Catholics (86%) and Protestants (64%) find it quite 'Acceptable' that there should be a leader and deputy leader representing the two main traditions, and they also consider it 'Desirable' to be able to directly vote for these leaders.

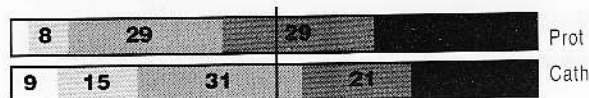
Voting in an assembly should be by:



Simple majority for all business



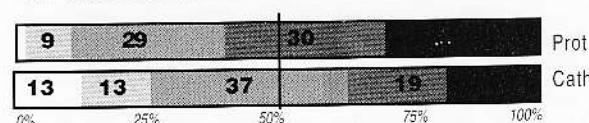
'Weighted' majority to ensure the support of both of the main traditions for all business



'Weighted' majority for contentious business only



'Sufficient Consensus' which requires a majority from both of the main traditions for all business



'Sufficient Consensus' for contentious business only

Key

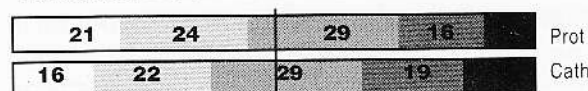
Essential Desirable Acceptable Tolerable Unacceptable

The Executive

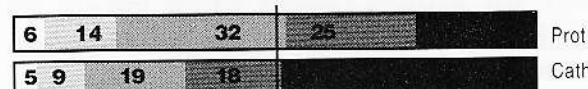
Executive members should be appointed:



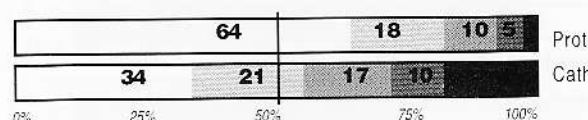
Equally between the two main traditions



In proportion to the representation of each party in the assembly



From the party or coalition that can form a majority

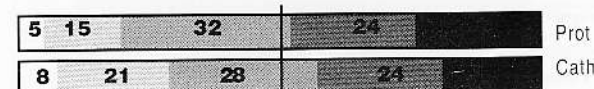


Only from parties committed to principles of democracy and non-violence

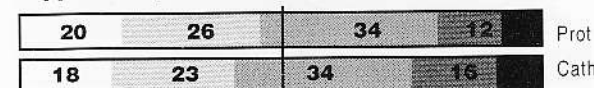
And the executive should be:



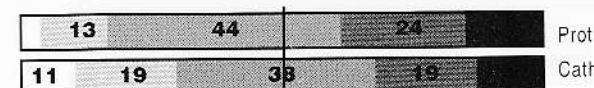
Appointed by the Secretary of State



Nominated by the Secretary of State for approval by the assembly



Voted in by members of the assembly



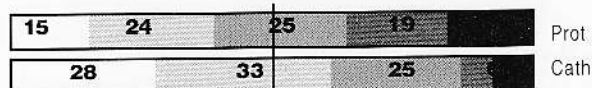
Made up from the Chairpersons of each committee in the assembly



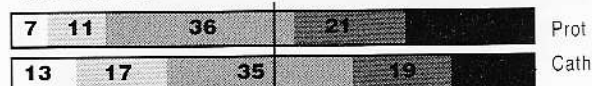
Or no executive - all the business of government is conducted by the various committees

Leadership

The assembly should have:



A leader and deputy leader representing the two main traditions



A 'Panel' of three prominent politicians sharing power

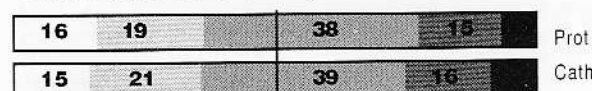
And they should be:



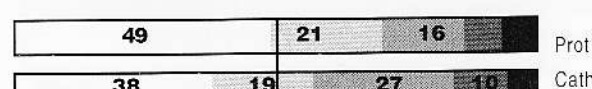
Appointed by the Secretary of State



Nominated by the Secretary of State for approval by the assembly

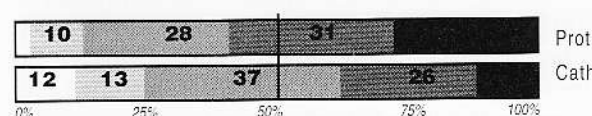


Voted in by members of the assembly



Voted for directly by the people of Northern Ireland

Or no leader, deputy leader or 'panel':



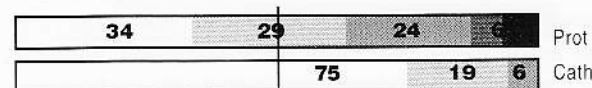
All the business of government is conducted by the executive and/or committees

When it comes to local government reform a large majority of both Catholics (78%) and Protestants (79%) find such a prospect quite 'Acceptable' and would be willing to have a new assembly decide how this should be done. For example there could be fewer councils with more powers.

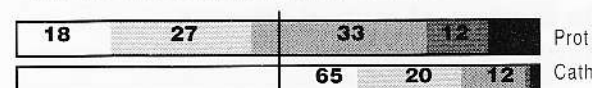
But reforms could go further. A majority from both communities considered it 'Desirable' to have new laws to ensure that the views of representatives from the whole community are taken into account, that power cannot be abused by one group over another, and that independent committees or courts of arbitrators are established to resolve problems that become intractable. A majority of both communities also considered it acceptable to have laws which ensured that political and administrative responsibilities are shared.

Safeguards

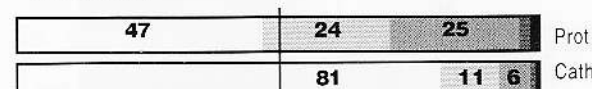
All levels of government in Northern Ireland should be protected by laws that ensure:



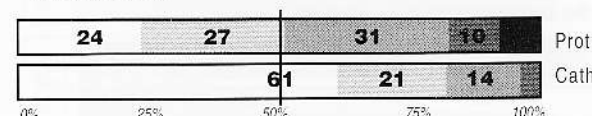
The views of representatives from the whole community are taken into account



Political and administrative responsibilities are shared



Power can not be abused by one group over another



And independent committees or courts of arbitrators should be established to resolve problems that become intractable

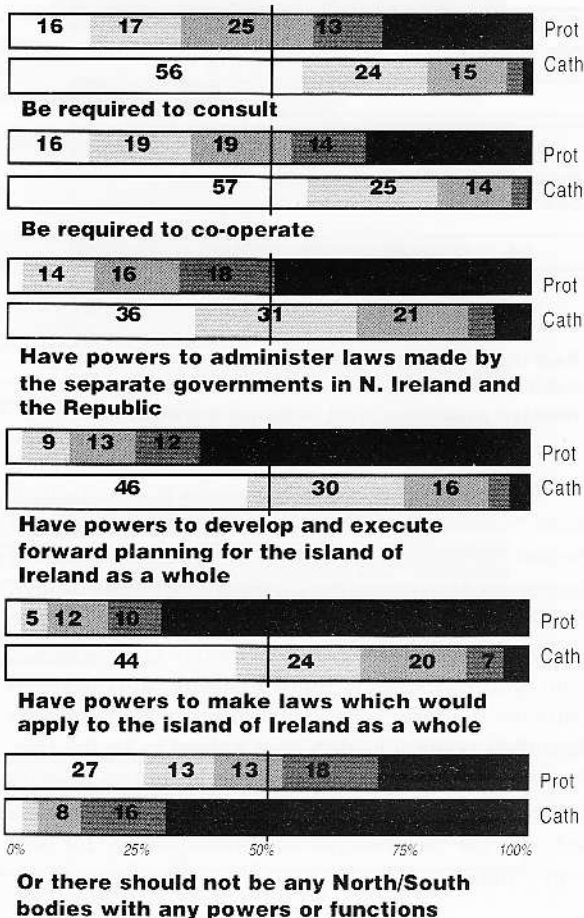
Given the reservations Nationalist politicians have about 'A return to Stormont' and the strong desire on the part of Unionist politicians for a new regional assembly the results of this part of the survey are slightly surprising. Perhaps Protestants are not as enthusiastic about the prospects of establishing another layer of government as their political leaders seem to think; and perhaps Catholics' desire for accountable government is stronger than their political leaders have judged to be the case. Providing adequate safeguards can be put in place to prevent abuse of power then an assembly could be a welcome part of an overall settlement package for both communities.

Strand 2 : North/South bodies

Strand Two of the Stormont Talks covers relationships within the island of Ireland and deals with North/South bodies. A long standing example is the Foyle Fisheries Commission which was established as a 'North/South Body' between the former Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont and the Republic of Ireland to jointly manage the waters of the Foyle estuary. Similar bodies, or a single body, could be established to deal with other matters of mutual concern.

These bodies could be set up to deal with various aspects of government policy with different powers or functions. Responsibilities to consult and co-operate on matters of mutual interest are 'Acceptable' to a majority of both Catholics and Protestants and powers to administer laws made by the separate governments

On matters of mutual interest North/South bodies should:



in the North and the South of Ireland are 'Tolerable'. But stronger powers to develop plans and laws for the island of Ireland as a whole are not acceptable to Protestants.

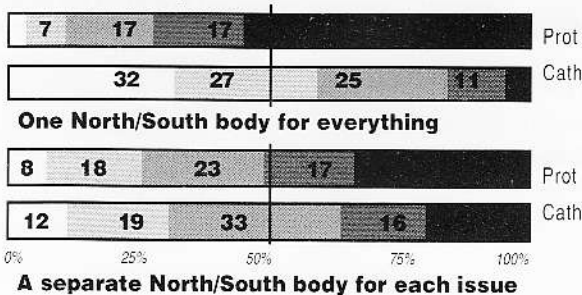
When asked to specify which of twenty areas of government policy should be dealt with by North/South bodies, Catholics considered it 'Essential' or 'Desirable' for them all to be included. But a clear majority of Protestants considered it 'Unacceptable' for such bodies to deal with taxation, local government and planning, policing and security, defence and foreign policy.

However a majority of both communities considered it 'Acceptable' to have North/South bodies for ten of the areas covered in the survey. These were the environment, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, medical care and research, roads and public transport, water gas and electricity, communications, trade and culture and sports.

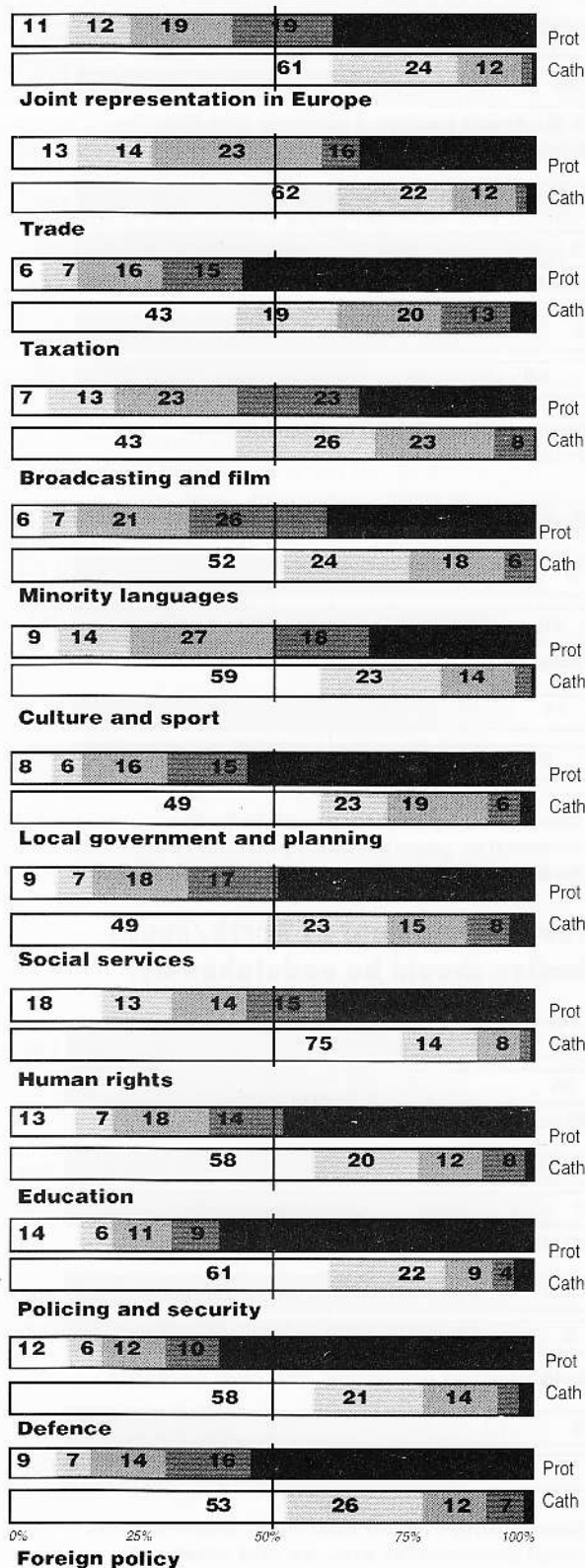
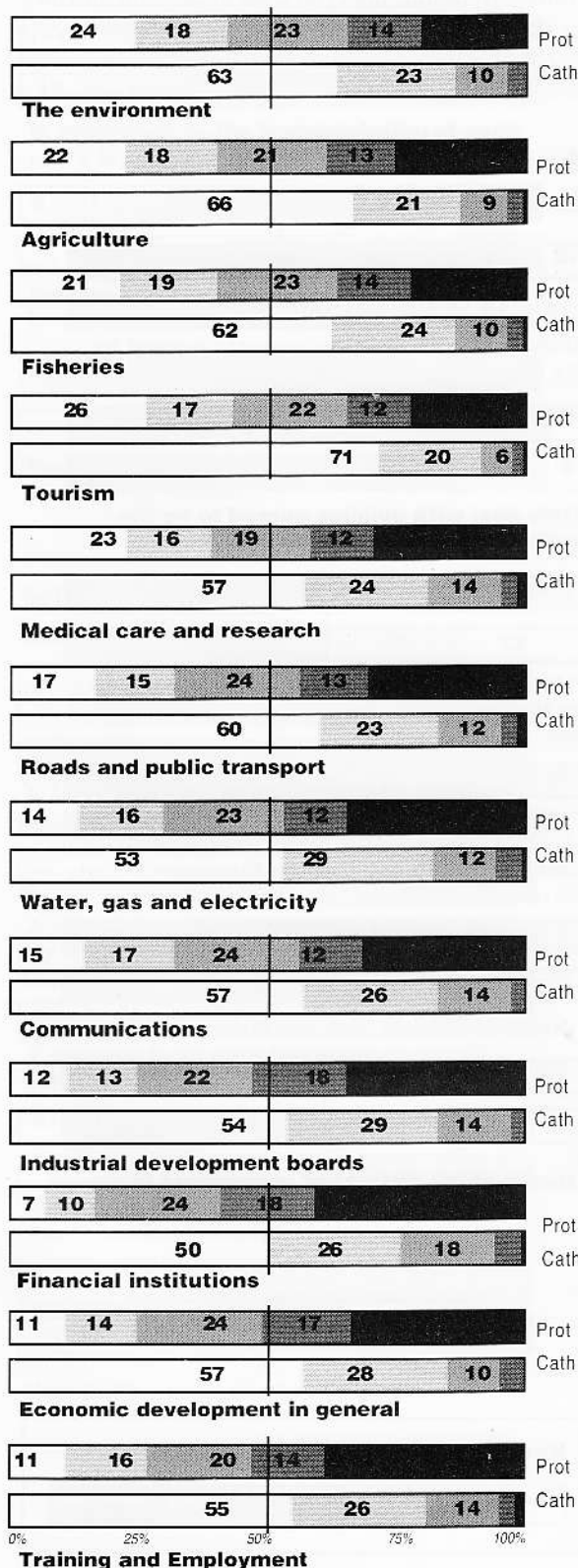
A majority of both communities also considered it to be 'Tolerable' to have such bodies for industrial development boards, the regulation of financial institutions, economic development in general, training and employment, joint representation in Europe, broadcasting and film, minority languages, social services, human rights and education.

Just as many Catholics do not want a regional assembly to be 'A return to Stormont' and majoritarian politics, most Protestants, do not want North/South bodies to be a 'backdoor' to an all Ireland government. With this point in mind no one should be surprised to discover that more Protestants would prefer a North/South body for each issue and for these bodies to be established (or dissolved) and controlled by elected politicians from the Northern Ireland Assembly, Dublin and Westminster.

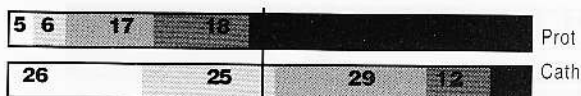
Matters of mutual interest should be dealt with by:



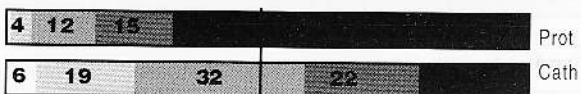
Areas of government policy North/South bodies should deal with:



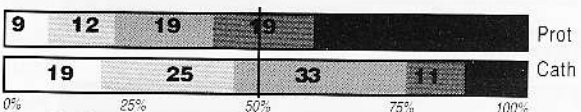
Powers to establish and dissolve North/South bodies should be given to:



A Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Dail (Parliament)

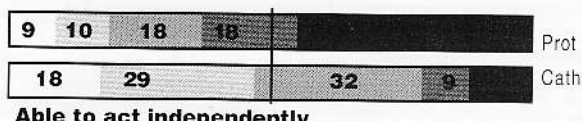


Westminster and Dublin

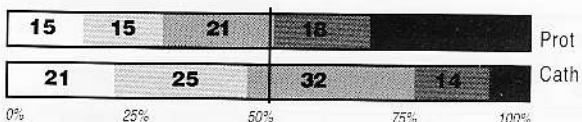


Westminster, Dublin and a Northern Ireland Assembly

North/South bodies should be:

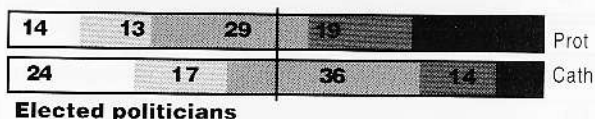


Able to act independently



Controlled by and responsible to the respective governments, parliamentary bodies and NI Assembly who establish them

The management of North/South bodies should be undertaken by:



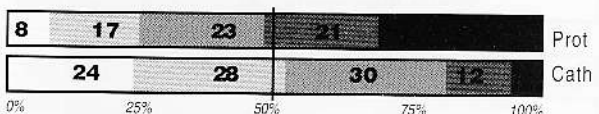
Elected politicians



Civil servants



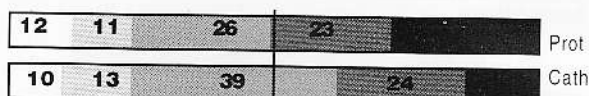
Both elected politicians and civil servants



Representatives of business, trade unions, local government etc., as and when required

Additionally, while dealing with all aspects of government business is just 'Tolerable' for a majority from both communities (50% for Protestants and 96% for Catholics) Protestants are more willing to accept specific projects and policies selected for action by their politicians.

The remit of North/South bodies - they should:



Only deal with specific projects agreed to by the politicians who set up the bodies



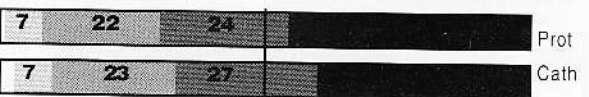
Only deal with policies agreed to by the politicians who set up the bodies



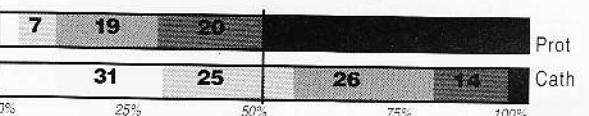
'Harmonise' their actions, policies and laws in the areas of policy they are responsible for



Only deal with policies the European Union is responsible for



Only do business with the European Union

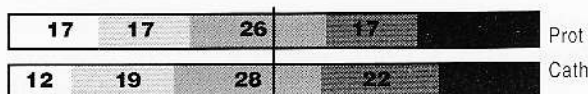


Deal with all aspects of government business

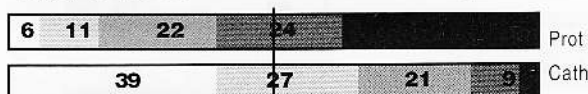
Key

Essential Desirable Acceptable Tolerable Unacceptable

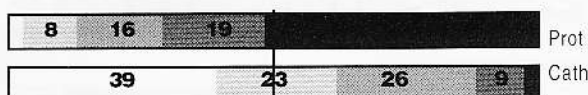
Appointments to a North/South body should be made:



In proportion to the representation of each party in the Northern Ireland Assembly



Equally between the two main traditions in the North

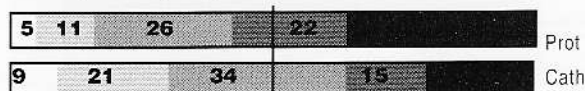


Equally between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

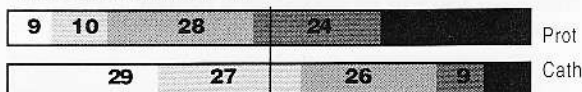
Voting on business in a North/South body requires:



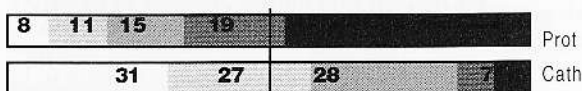
A simple majority only



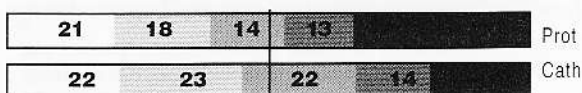
A weighted majority



A majority from both the main traditions in the North



A majority from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Unanimity - everyone has to agree

But a clear majority of both Catholics (59%) and Protestants (60%) considered it 'Acceptable' for appointments to North/South bodies to be made in proportion to the representation of each party in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

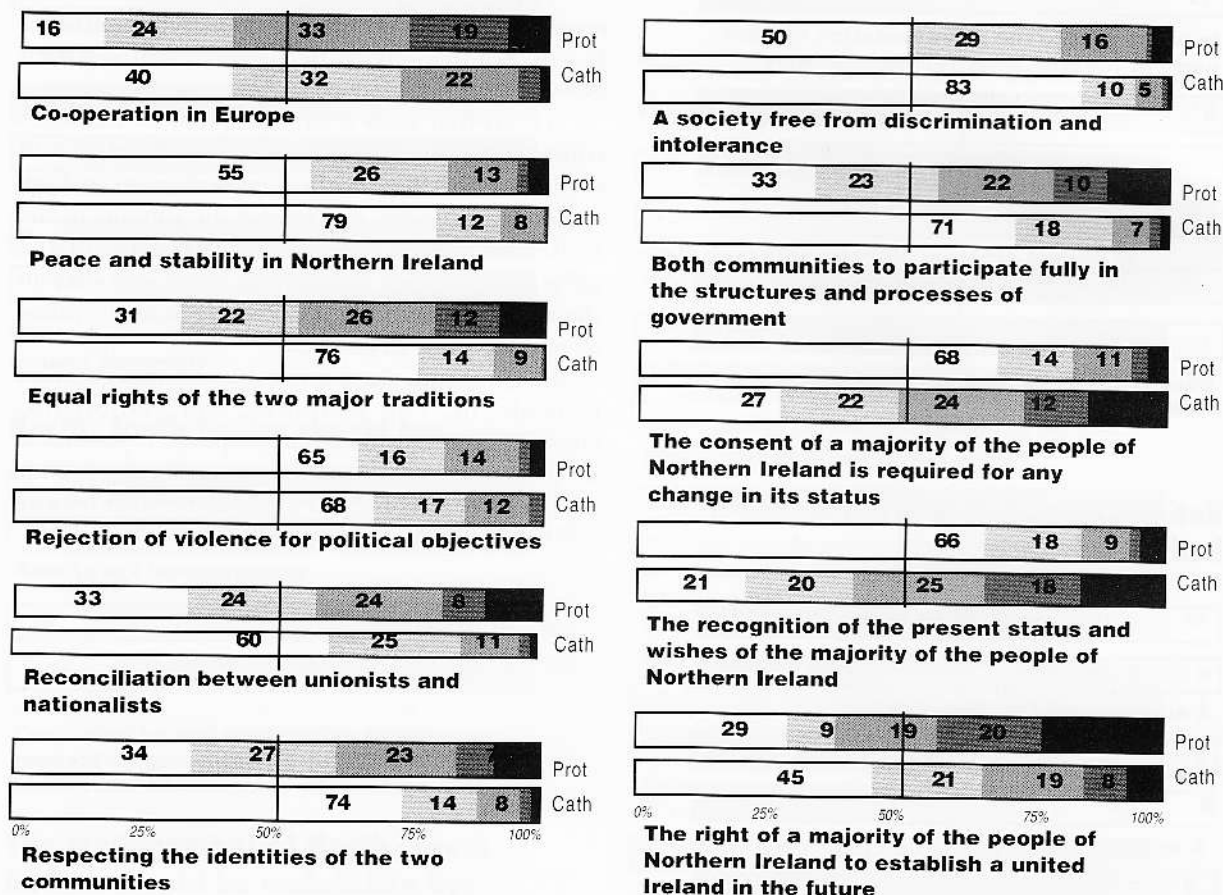
Finally a majority of both communities also considered it 'Acceptable' to require business in a North/South body to be passed unanimously - everyone has to agree.

Given that such a large majority of Catholics considered it desirable to have effective North/South bodies it is difficult to see how any settlement package without such bodies can receive the support of the Nationalist community. However, with all the safeguards proposed here in place Unionist politicians should have little to fear in accepting them providing all of this is done in good faith.

But good faith alone is not the stuff that good law is made of. For Unionists and Nationalists constitutional reform and an acceptable replacement for the Anglo-Irish Agreement are required to provide the bedrock and context in which all the other reforms can be seen to be, and are made, safe.

Strand 3 : British/Irish relations

Support for principles of Anglo-Irish cooperation:



In Strand Three of the Stormont Talks the British and Irish governments have committed themselves to negotiating a new treaty to replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement. But like most international treaties the Anglo-Irish Agreement is based on a number of principles. Which of these principles, if any, could be a basis for a new treaty?

With this question in mind people were asked to indicate which principles already included in the Agreement they considered to be 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable', 'Tolerable' or 'Unacceptable' as part of a lasting settlement. All of the principles, ranging from the promotion of peace, stability and equality in Northern Ireland to a recognition of its constitutional status were considered 'Acceptable', 'Desirable' or 'Essential' by a majority from both communities.

In contrast to the principles that underpin the workings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the institutions of government that it created, the Anglo-Irish Secretariat and their offices in Belfast, did not fare so well. Although most Catholics considered them to be 'Acceptable' or even 'Desirable', most Protestants only found them 'Tolerable' and even a proposal to extend these facilities to include London and Dublin did not receive any better support.

Key

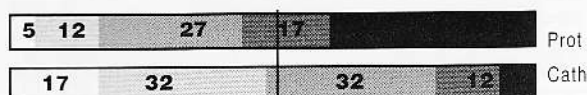
Essential Desirable Acceptable Tolerable Unacceptable

Fortunately one new proposal was 'Acceptable' to a majority from both communities. The establishment of a regional 'Council of The Islands' that would facilitate co-operation between Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was acceptable to 52% of Protestants and 72% of Catholics.

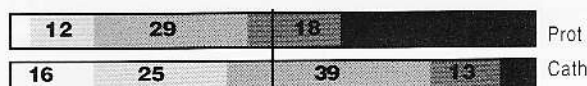
This proposal could not have even been given serious consideration under the previous Conservative government since it opposed devolution. It is a clear break with the Framework Document and it is only

with the creation of a Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly by the Labour Government that such an option can come into play. It is imaginative and bold. It could mark the beginning of a new relationship for everyone on these islands, British and Irish, into the next millennium a relationship built on consent as a region in Europe that attempts to put aside the past failures of borders, partition and competing nation states. The 'ball' is now clearly in the courts of the London and Dublin governments.

As part of a new treaty that replaces the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the British and Irish governments should establish:



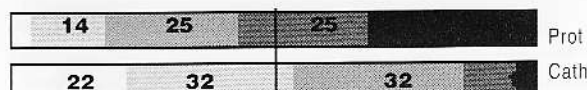
A special organisation for consultation between the two governments on Northern Ireland issues only



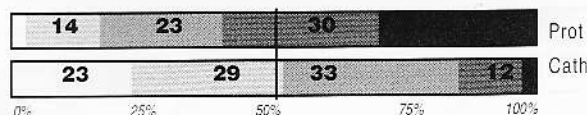
Offices in Belfast for consultation between the two governments on Northern Ireland issues only



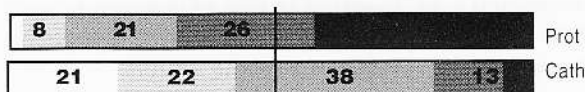
A special organisation for consultation between the two governments on any issues of mutual interest



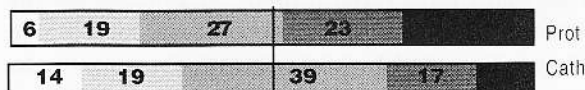
Offices in London, Dublin and Belfast for consultation between the two governments on any issues of mutual interest



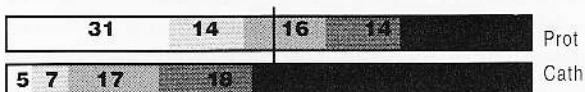
An inter-parliamentary body to promote good relations between Dublin and Westminster



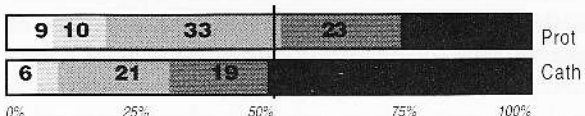
An inter-parliamentary body responsible for all agreements made between London and Dublin



A regional 'Council of The Islands' that facilitates co-operation between Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland



Or, the Anglo-Irish Agreement should be brought to an end and should not be replaced



However, the Republic of Ireland should rejoin the Commonwealth

Constitutional issues

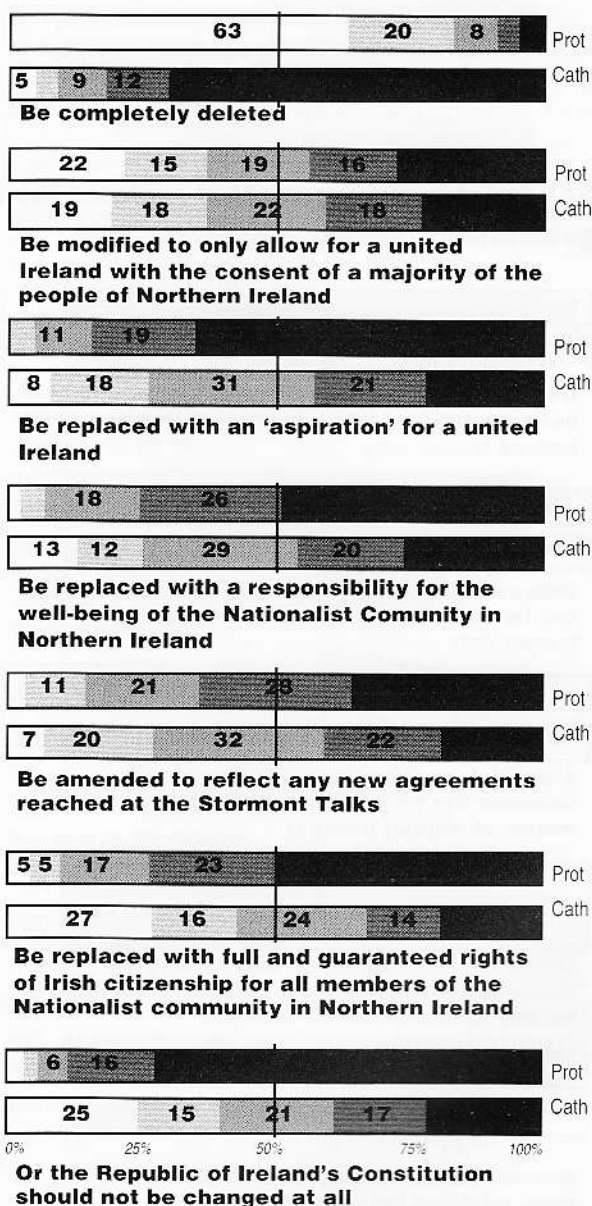
In an effort to meet the concerns of the different communities in Northern Ireland several possibilities are available for the modification of the constitutional relationships that exist between the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom. This can be done by modifying the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland and the various Acts of Parliament in Westminster that establish the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

The complete deletion of the Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim over Northern Ireland is considered to be 'Essential' by 63% of Protestants while 70% of Catholics consider such a deletion to be 'Unacceptable' as part of a lasting settlement. Is this where the Stormont Talks founder or can a compromise be found?

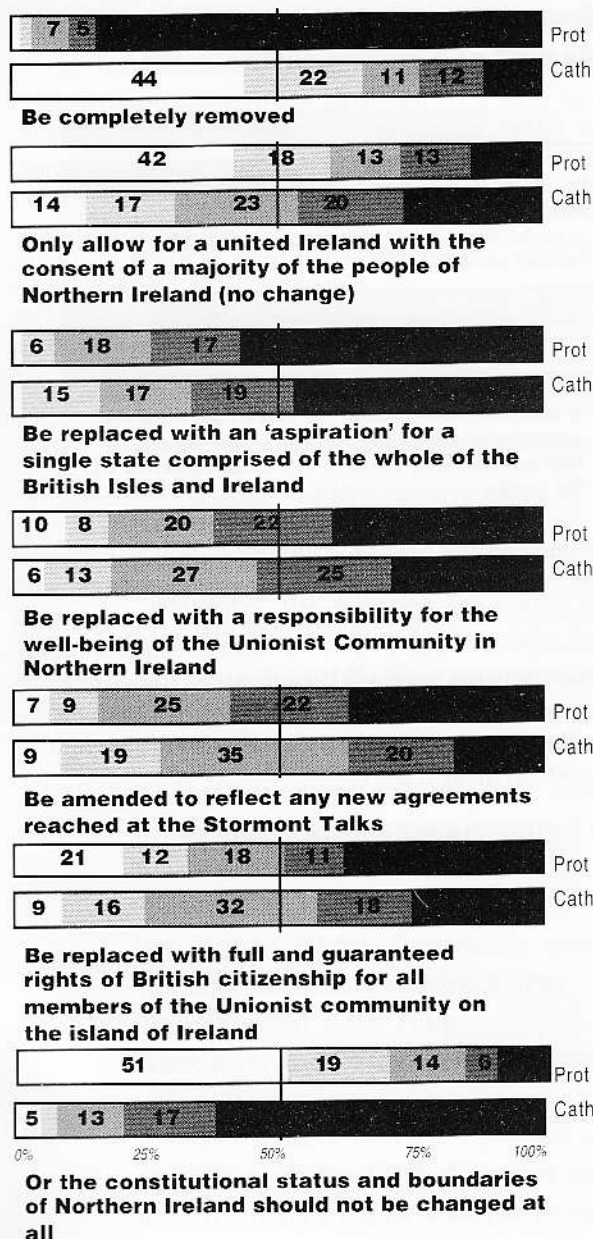
Fortunately a majority of both Catholics (59%) and Protestants (56%) find it quite 'Acceptable' for the Republic of Ireland's constitution to be modified to allow for a united Ireland only with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. Similarly a majority of both Protestants (73%) and Catholics (54%) said it was 'Acceptable' for the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom to be subject to the same principle of consent — which it presently is. And if this were not good news enough both the British and Irish governments jointly agreed to these principles of consent when they signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Additionally, as part of any balanced constitutional reform, it should also be noted that a majority of both Catholics and Protestants are willing to accept or tolerate both the British and Irish governments having a responsibility for the wellbeing of their citizens in both Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland as a whole and that all their rights of British or Irish citizenship should be guaranteed. Perhaps these rights should be extended to Irish citizens in England, Scotland and Wales — but this question was not asked.

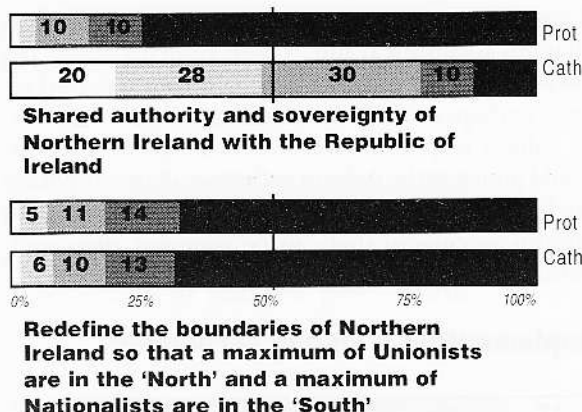
The Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim over Northern Ireland should:



The Constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom should:



Alternatively - both governments could provide for joint authority, or repartition:



Finally, although a majority of Catholics (78%) considered joint authority to be 'Acceptable' this option was 'Unacceptable' to a clear majority of Protestants (75%). And a large majority of both Protestants (68%) and Catholics (69%) consider repartition to be 'Unacceptable' as the way forward.

Many Nationalists and Unionists also find the language used in section 75 of the British 1920 Government of Ireland Act and the 1937 Constitution of the Republic of Ireland to be a little outdated. While introducing balanced reforms that fully embrace the principle of consent any other redrafted sections and articles should pay close attention to the use of modern phrases and terms that avoid giving offence. Many of the new agreements reached at the Stormont Talks will provide opportunities for this kind of legal 'housekeeping'. If the two governments can get it right then they will be able to cast the foundation upon which a lasting settlement can be built. Their citizens, both British and Irish, eagerly await the outcome of their constitutional labours.

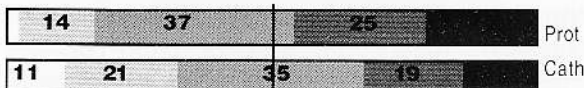
Implementing a settlement

A comprehensive settlement has to deal with many changes to political life. These reforms could be introduced all at once, or gradually over a period of time, perhaps as a final or interim agreement that may be subject to periodic review. Although Protestants would prefer the settlement to be final all these options are 'Acceptable' to them while Catholics consider an interim agreement that can be reviewed after a set period of time to be their most 'Acceptable' choice.

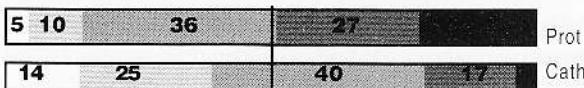
Implementing a lasting settlement:



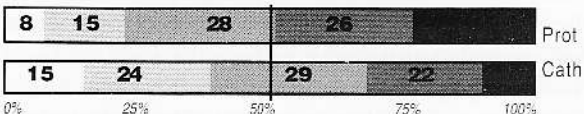
The settlement should be final with no more changes allowed



The settlement should be final but changes could be introduced over an agreed transitional period



Allow for an interim agreement that can be reviewed after a set period of time

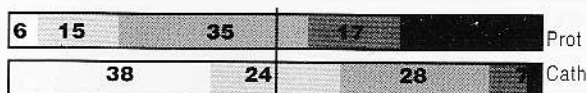


Introduce reforms slowly subject to periodic assessment and review

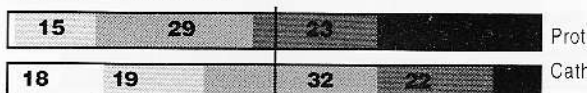
Even if an overall settlement can be agreed and does receive consent intractable disputes may arise or parts of the settlement may need to be radically reformed at some time in the future. Of the two proposed mechanisms that could be put into place to deal with such eventualities the establishment of an international court with the responsibility of ruling on disputes is 'Acceptable' to a majority from both communities while allowing voters to initiate a change after a minimum period of ten years is less 'Acceptable' to Catholics and only 'Tolerable' for Protestants.

Supervision

As part of a lasting settlement:



An international court should be established with the responsibility of ruling on disputes



A mechanism should be put in place that will allow voters to change the terms of the settlement after a minimum period of 10 years

Balancing the needs for future political stability and the very real fears of both communities faced with radical political change is not going to be easy. But a lasting settlement seems to be what is really important. Providing the parties at the Stormont Talks can reach an agreement then both communities appear to be willing to accept whatever arrangements have to be made to make it work.

A comprehensive settlement

In broad terms the results of this opinion poll seem to suggest that the major elements of a lasting settlement — which meet the requirements of 'sufficient consent' — can be summarised as follows:

- * A Regional Assembly made up from elected members who share responsibilities in proportion to their representation and employing a voting system with other checks and balances to ensure the fair participation of both communities in government and the prevention of abuse of power.
- * North/South bodies strictly controlled by the elected politicians who establish them to deal with a wide range of issues using various functions and powers appropriate to the areas of government policy being managed.
- * Replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement with a Council of the Islands to establish a new relationship between London, Dublin, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast appropriate to the needs of the region as a part of Europe.
- * Constitutional reform that embraces the principle of consent and other balanced changes required to implement the various agreements made at the Stormont Talks.
- * A Bill of Rights that deals specifically with the political, social and cultural problems that have aggravated the conflict and a Human Rights Commission with responsibilities and powers to educate, monitor standards and bring cases to court.
- * A reformed two tier police service restructured with a view to recruiting more Catholics and improving community relations under the authority of a new Department of Justice in a Regional Assembly.

Perhaps the parties and governments can improve on this 'package', particularly the detail. But any radical departure from these basic arrangements will require sound reasons if it is to be acceptable to a majority from both communities. Certainly these proposals should be more widely acceptable than the Frameworks Document.

Implementing a new system

It is important to ensure that the new system is implemented in a way that minimizes disruption to the business and maximizes the benefits of the new system.

The first step in implementing a new system is to conduct a thorough analysis of the current system and the requirements for the new system.

Once the analysis is complete, the next step is to develop a detailed implementation plan that outlines the scope, timeline, and resources required for the project.

The implementation plan should also include a risk management strategy to identify and mitigate potential risks throughout the project.

Once the implementation plan is approved, the next step is to communicate the plan to all stakeholders and ensure that they are aware of the project and their roles in the implementation process.

The final step in implementing a new system is to monitor the progress of the project and make adjustments as needed to ensure that the project is completed on time and within budget.

By following these steps, organizations can ensure that the implementation of a new system is a smooth and successful process.

Implementing a new system is a complex process that requires careful planning and execution. By following the steps outlined above, organizations can ensure that the implementation of a new system is a smooth and successful process.

The implementation of a new system is a critical project for any organization. It requires a clear understanding of the current system and the requirements for the new system, as well as a detailed implementation plan and a risk management strategy.

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