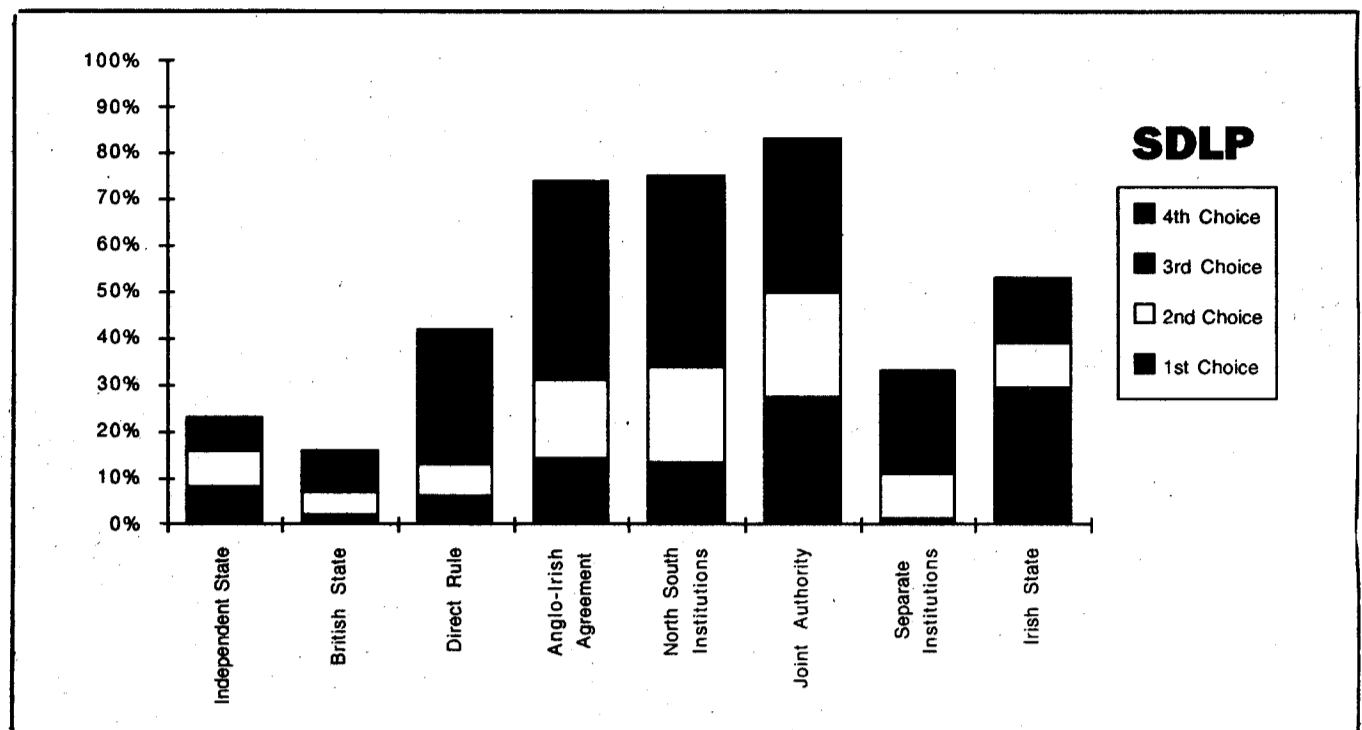
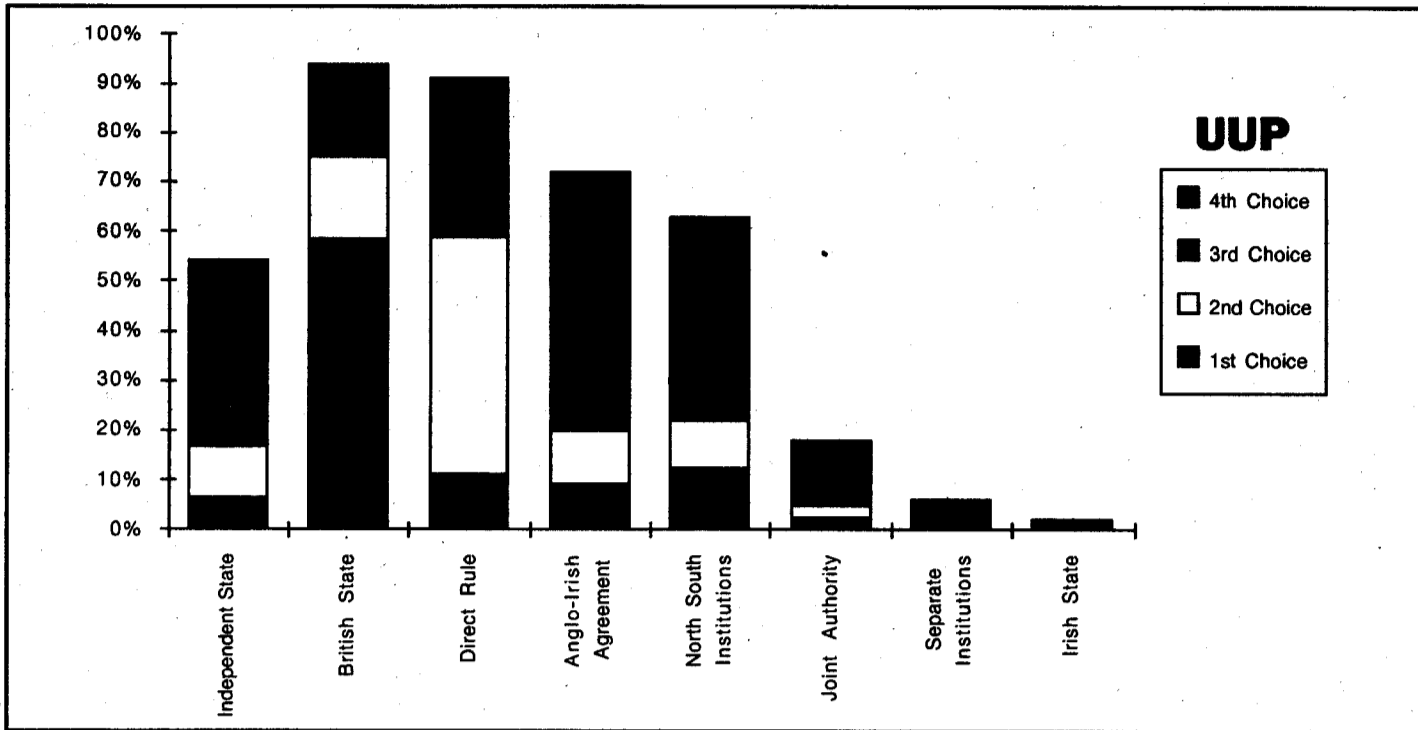


VOTERS GIVE THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT



The battle for the middle ground

IN the recent Rowntree poll on 'Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland' a random sample of the population were asked to put eight options for the future political development of the province in their order of preference.

NORTHERN Ireland is arguably the 'graveyard' of political deals and compromises. Three members of Queen's University explore the constitutional question and ask if the parties represented at the Talks can reach agreement on the future governance of the province. **Colin Irwin** reports on the findings of their research.

Secondly, the elimination of political arrangements that are completely unacceptable to one community or the other — full incorporation into either the British or Irish State with no other political arrangements.

When the results from the 715 completed questionnaires are analysed for each of the five main political parties, Alliance voters, predictably, favour the middle ground compromises as their first choice.

SDLP and UUP, as they would be able to carry the majority of the Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist communities with them at a referendum. Such an agreement could also be expected to receive the support of the Alliance Party and probably some of the other smaller parties represented at the Talks.

But this summer's marching season has shaken everyone's confidence to the core. At this critical time in the peace process the results of the public opinion survey suggest several opportunities for significant advances to be made by focusing on what is possible.

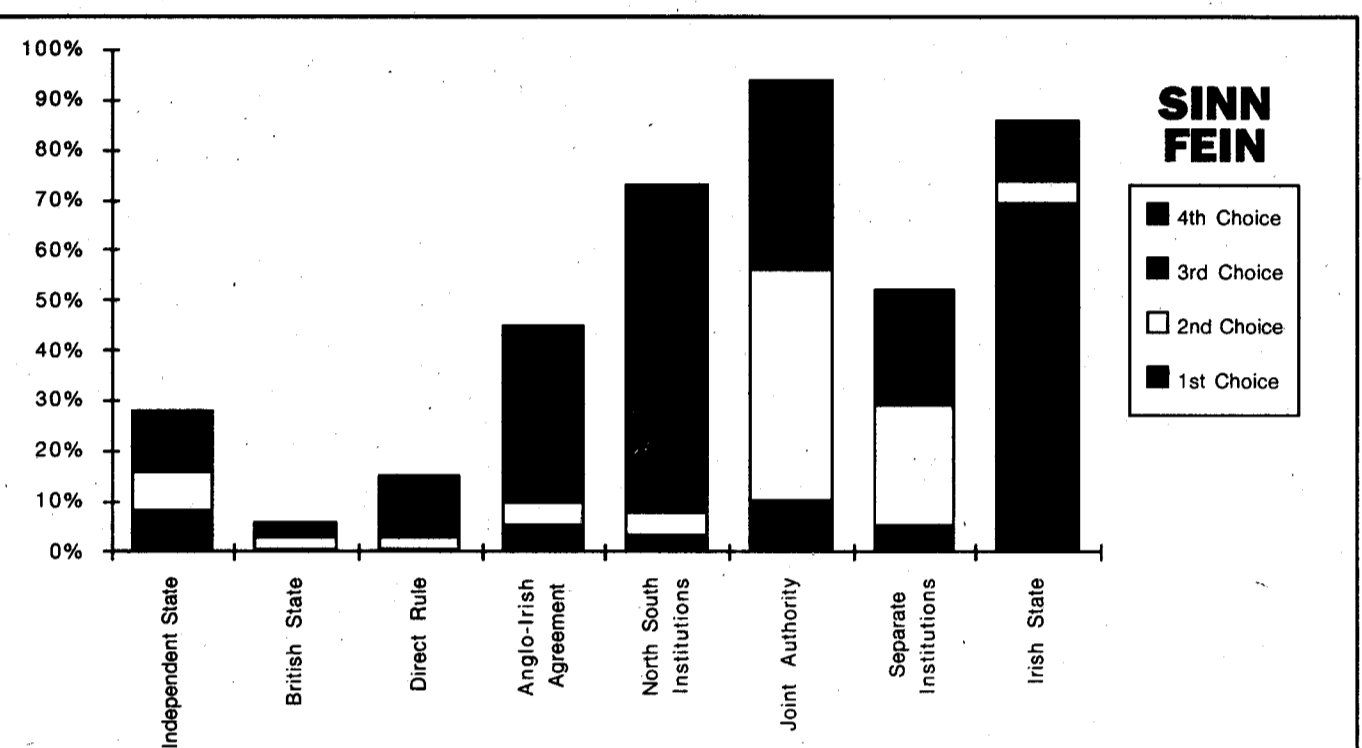
Finally, some DUP and Sinn Fein supporters will find it very difficult to reach the middle ground, others will find it easier, but the graphs clearly indicate a few are there already. These people require special consideration and every encouragement to be politically bold.

SDLP and UUP supporters reach this same point of agreement with their third choice while DUP and Sinn Fein voters find these proposals most difficult to accept reaching them only as a fourth preference.

The SDLP and UUP would appear to have an electoral mandate to shape the terms and conditions for the future governance of the province.

Firstly, the elimination of political arrangements unacceptable to all parties — an Independent State and Separate Institutions for the management of a segregated society.

Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland is a research project undertaken by Dr Colin Irwin of the Institute of Irish Studies, Professor Tom Hadden of the Law School and Professor Fred Boal of the Geography Department at Queen's University of Belfast. The work is being funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.



The decision is yours

You can try the question if you wish. It appeared in the questionnaire as follows:

the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and the establishment of a separate state within the European Union.

Direct Rule (no change)

OPTION E — Power sharing with north-south institutions but no joint authority

"Here are some alternative options for the future development of Northern Ireland. Please read them carefully and then tick them in your order of preference below".

OPTION B — full incorporation into the British state
Direct rule from Westminster and local government similar to the rest of the United Kingdom with no Northern Ireland Assembly or separate laws for Northern Ireland and no Anglo-Irish Agreement.

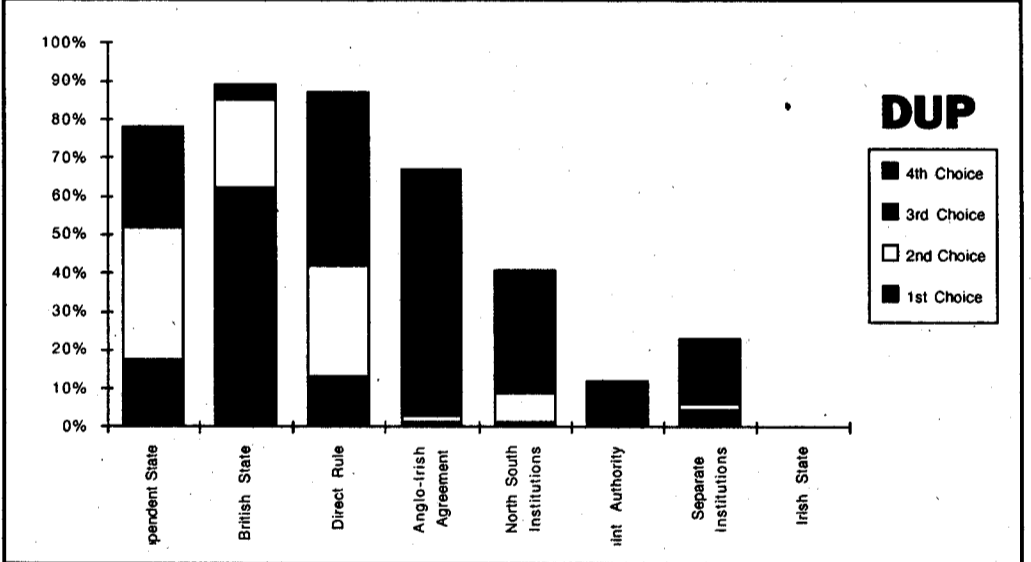
OPTION D — Power sharing with the Anglo-Irish Agreement
Government by a Northern Ireland Assembly and power sharing executive under the authority of the British Government but in consultation with the Irish Government under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

OPTION F — Joint authority and power sharing
Government by joint authority between the British and Irish Governments in association with an elected power sharing executive and assembly.

OPTION A — Separate Northern Irish state
THE complete separation of Northern Ireland from both

OPTION C — Continued

OPTION G — Separate institutions for the two main communities
Creation of separate structures for the government of each of the two main communities in Northern Ireland, subject to joint authority by the British and Irish Governments.



An American in an alien culture

TRAVELLING abroad, it is difficult to escape the power of the American media. A few years ago I visited Indonesia with a group of American women to produce a cross-cultural theatre project.

he gushed: "It must be brilliant! I wish I was there." When I asked him why, he looked at me strangely and pointed towards the movie posters. Last week a student excitedly told me he was leaving for Kansas State to earn a PhD. He couldn't wait to get to America where "things are really happening".

that America is egotistical. "It is because your country is so young," one man patiently told me in a pub. "It is still an adolescent."

around guns wherever we go," a shopkeeper told me. "But there's nothing further from the truth."

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