

**ANALYSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIPARTISANSHIP  
IN THE DÁIL: THE INTERACTION OF FINE GAEL AND  
FIANNA FÁIL PARTY POLITICS ON THE IRISH  
GOVERNMENT POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND**

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## ABSTRACT

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This paper analyses the relationship between the two main parties in the Irish party system when dealing with the Northern Ireland question. Taking the Sunningdale Communiqué as a starting point, the paper argues that while aspirations for bipartisanship in the Dáil on this issue existed within the leadership of both parties at various times during the conflict, that the difference in approach and fundamental difference in ideology of party leaders meant that bipartisanship was not achieved until consensus on key issues was reached in the mid-1990s. This paper argues that analysing whether bipartisanship existed at various points in the conflict relates to the understanding of the role of the Irish party politics on the British-Irish relationship and the development of the peace process. This paper was written as part of the *Breaking the patterns of conflict* project being undertaken in the Institute for British-Irish Studies, UCD. The study of Irish party politics and the role of bipartisanship aims to fit into this wider project, which examines the determinants on the changing British-Irish relationship.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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# **ANALYSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIPARTISANSHIP IN THE DAIL: THE INTERACTION OF FINE GAEL AND FIANNA FAIL PARTY POLITICS ON THE IRISH GOVERNMENT POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Susan McDermott**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper will explore the changing role of bipartisanship in the Dáil, during the conflict, from the early 1970s through to 1998. One of the major reasons why a peace process developed in Northern Ireland and why the Belfast Agreement ultimately became a stable mode of conflict resolution was the developing British-Irish relationship. What has been described as “the British-Irish process”, developed in the years preceding the Anglo Irish Agreement, clearly set about finding a stable mean of regulating contention between the parties in Northern Ireland. However, in this paper I will go further back to analyse the relationship (or contention) between the two main Irish political parties from the 1970s and how their interaction on Northern Ireland may or may not have affected the development of this British-Irish process. This paper will not only focus on bipartisanship in the Dáil but on the reactionary relationship between the two main parties in Ireland with each other regarding Northern Ireland policy, during the ‘70s and ‘80s, a period of volatile politics and frequent alternations between Fianna Fáil government and Fine Gael led coalition government.<sup>1</sup>

For the purpose of this paper Irish government policy is divided into five policy stages: 1. The negotiations and failure of the Sunningdale Communiqué and its aftermath, 2. The development of the British-Irish process and the New Ireland Forum, culminating in the Anglo Irish Agreement, 3. The development of a pan-nationalist process alongside the British Irish process, in other words, a North-South and East-West approach, 4. The Downing Street declaration and Framework documents, 5. 1995—Good Friday Agreement, 1998. This paper argues that the Irish party differences in approach and ideology had an impact on the five policy stages as outlined above. Through tracing these five periods, the paper analyses various governments and implies that Irish party politics was an important part of the intergovernmental relations because the composition of government and opposition throughout the conflict had a direct impact on the development of Irish government policy.

O’Donnell (2009: 208) argues, that the creation of consensus is a key implication of the peace process, this paper asks whether the divisions or issues of contention

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1969 and 1997 there were 10 general elections and 11 changes of government. The 1980s was the decade of the greatest political instability with five general elections over the course of 10 years.

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between the two main parties in Ireland had a consequence for the development of the process or even in earlier years on the establishment of the process? It then traces some notable examples of partisan tactics, particularly in the Dáil, and finally draws conclusions on the importance of the achieved consensus on the strength of the Irish negotiating position in 1998.

### **EXPLAINING PARTY DIFFERENCES IN IRELAND**

While looking at the relevance of bipartisanship within Irish government policy or the British-Irish process it is worth briefly comparing with the UK during the same period. It is well noted that the leadership of the Conservative and Labour parties in the United Kingdom were concerned to keep the Northern Ireland issue out of, and above, party politics. This is not to say that there were not factions within both of these parties committed to ideological positions in support of one or other of the two communities in Northern Ireland, but these factions did not become politically important enough to affect policy.

The comparison between the UK and Ireland is striking. It has been noted in Ireland that the nature of public opinion on the Northern Ireland question is significantly different to public opinion in the UK. In the UK public opinion is broadly apathetic on the major issues and broadly uncommitted to the Ulster Unionist cause. In Ireland, public opinion is strong on major questions and is sympathetic to the Nationalist cause. The nature of public opinion is only part of the story, however. We need to know how public opinion is transmitted to the political elites and how elites use such information. Various election studies and public opinion surveys have shown that Northern Ireland was not dominant electoral issue in Ireland, in relation to unemployment, economic, social and local issues.<sup>2</sup> With that in mind, we need to examine when and how the Irish parties used Northern Ireland policy for political advantage?

We should not be surprised that bipartisanship has not existed in the Dáil on “national” issues, as the differences between the two main parties have been largely defined on such issues. The two main parties in the Irish party system were born out of the civil war, creating a long lasting emotional divide that carried with it romantic affiliations to the foundation of the State and the partition of the island; the legacy of their foundation affected how the parties were perceived for the next fifty years. This basis of conception of the parties might imply that there is a major difference between the party’s stances on Northern Ireland but prior to 1969 there was no prominent difference and it was only with the outbreak of the conflict that the parties were forced to form a practical position on Northern Ireland. Before 1969, the objective of a united Ireland defined both party’s nationalist policy. As Northern Ireland became a proxy for Irish nationalism post-1969, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael remained true to this ideology and rhetoric on “nationalism”, but now had to react to the fast pace of the conflict. As Ivory (1998 : 3) describes, “the political

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<sup>2</sup> Details available in, Marsh et al (2008), *The Irish voter*

realities of Northern Ireland provided a constant reminder to all politicians in the Republic of Ireland of the need for, and the importance of, their soul-searching.” They had to expand their understanding of republican and nationalist theory within the context of a violent conflict, an important political and economic dependence on Britain and the usual constraints of internal party politics and electoral considerations. With a new found reality of the challenge and role the Irish government faced, the parties learned pragmatism but could not distance themselves from ideology. The legacy of the civil war was an inherent part of party identity and self-image. Neither could fully abandon the irredentist objective of a united Ireland in the early years.

Drawing on material from interviews undertaken as part of the Breaking the patterns of conflict project, I will briefly explore the party’s self image, in an attempt to contextualize how their policies may differ and how this image may create constraints or explain reasons for either party’s ideological stance. The quotes cannot be attributed to individuals, as the archiving of this material is still in progress.

A Fine Gael backbench TD when asked about recent Irish government policy on Northern Ireland describes the prevalence of the widespread desire for unification:

It’s a sacred goal to unite the country so every political party will want to be in on the act. And the danger is, particularly with Fianna Fail who claim to be the Republican Party, the danger is that they will rush their fences too soon...I hope it will come to a natural fusion, but I think that if it’s rushed it will be put it in danger and it will put it back.

This TD has alluded to one of the main differentiating features that were held in popular perception, i.e.—that Fianna Fáil’s ambition for a United Ireland was more immediate and less considerate of circumstances and attitudes within Northern Ireland. Fine Gael on the other hand, saw unity within the longer term, as one Fine Gael TD describes, “only as an opportunity, if conditions presented”. A former Fine Gael minister describes the historical relevance to the party’s self-image:

I think we rather looked at ourselves as a more moderate force, not as green. Also, to some extent prisoners of our own history because we both evolved from the same Sinn Fein tree and part of that Sinn Fein tree was a united Ireland and the Sinn Fein opposition to the Home Rule Bill was what shot that down. So, we couldn't get rid of that entirely and it would be there, certainly there would be a few people in the party who would be quite firmly of that point of view but not to the same extent as in Fianna Fail.

How do Fianna Fáil regard their party image and ideology and do they agree that this ultimate ambition of a united Ireland differentiates them from Fine Gael?

One Fianna Fáil TD describes his own ideology:



As regards Republicanism I would have always defended my own Republicanism I would consider myself as good a Republican as anybody in Sinn Fein or elsewhere. In fact I would question the validity of SF and the IRA to see themselves as the legitimate successors

This mirrors a comment made by Lynch in a TV interview in 1978, in which he stated his objectives were the same as those of the Provisional IRA but he denounced their methods. (NA/FCO87/699) When challenged on what the key parts of this republicanism are, this TD responded that:

Well obviously a united Ireland would be a very important one but an agreed Ireland...I want to see a united Ireland where the majority of people across the community in Northern Ireland would be comfortable in a new agreed Ireland, a united Ireland.

Another Fianna Fáil TD, thinks that this ultimate ambition within the base of the Fianna Fáil party is what differentiates it from Fine Gael:

So it's [Fianna Fáil] a very different Party, much more Nationalistic, much more Republican and to that extent that's why in a sense setting up in the north of Ireland would be difficult for us because a lot of our activist base would be closer to Sinn Fein than to the SDLP and that's the bottom line. When you scratch away at our activist base they would almost have a greater affinity to Sinn Fein type Republicanism than to the SDLP Social Democratic type structure of party....So if you are asking me what is the difference [between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael] I would say obviously Fine Gael are inclined more to the SDLP and we are sort of a hybrid between the SDLP and Sinn Fein.

These examples show that party self-image is quite different between the two parties and the person deciding Northern Ireland policy within the parties (usually the leader) had to consider a range of opinions amongst the party base when deciding Northern Ireland policy. This ideology or image could be both prohibitive and progressive for the parties at various times of the conflict. For example, Fianna Fáil's ideology was prohibitive in that it was difficult for them to welcome the British-Irish relationship in the 1970s. Under the moderate nationalism of Jack Lynch, the base of the party still called for British withdrawal and upset the relationship many times through erratic statements from minister and deputies.<sup>3</sup> In the 1980s, the party still strongly believed in the Irish claim over the territory of Northern Ireland as legitimized through articles two and three of the Irish constitution and they made no efforts in the first two decades of the conflict to develop relations with or gain any understanding of unionists. On the other hand, the Fianna Fáil background and ideology explains why Fianna Fáil had a greater affinity for the republican movement. This affinity was a driving force, without which, Fianna Fáil may not have sought to form a strategic relationship with Sinn Féin from the late 1980s; a

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<sup>3</sup> In his autobiography (*All in a Life*, 1993: 380-81) FitzGerald outlines his efforts to improve his relationship with Thatcher, particularly as she felt bruised by how Haughey had used the 1980 Anglo-Irish summit.

relationship that most commentators admit created crucial momentum in the peace process. However, in Fine Gael's case, party history meant that they were already perceived as being more anglophile, or even "West Brit", and therefore had to maintain a level of staunch nationalist principle, so as not to alienate their own nationalist vote base. Fine Gael were also not as restricted by the wider party ideology and were willing to attempt to construct relationships with unionists in the early phase of the conflict.

### **FIANNA FAIL/FINE GAEL: GOVERNMENT/OPPOSITION**

As mentioned already, timing of party involvement in government had an impact on the progression of Irish policy on Northern Ireland throughout the conflict. Starting in the early 1970s, I will briefly trace the relevance of party involvement throughout the five main policy stages mentioned at the beginning.

1. The Sunningdale Communique was broadly supported by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, as both parties had a level of involvement in the negotiation of the agreement in 1973, as Fianna Fáil exited government and Fine Gael entered with Labour. O'Donnell argues that bipartisanship was not tested in the aftermath of Sunningdale because a divisive Dáil vote was averted due to the collapse of the agreement. O'Donnell (IBIS working paper, no.81, 2007) argues however, that "had Sunningdale progressed to the next stage of an agreement to be put before the Dáil, it would have been very difficult for Lynch to unite his party behind the agreement". From analysing Fianna Fáil speeches and excerpts from the Dáil at that time, O'Donnell believes that it would have been unlikely that Fianna Fáil could have resisted the opportunity to gain politically from its republican constituency on the issue. During this period of Fianna Fáil opposition, bipartisanship on this issue could only be described as an aspiration rather than a reality.

Evidence suggests that beyond the usual political posturing<sup>4</sup> initially undertaken by Fianna Fáil on their return to office in 1977, that Jack Lynch's government made attempts to secure all party support for Northern Ireland policy. Fine Gael under Garret FitzGerald, realised during this period that Fianna Fáil's extremism on certain issues, irredentist claims etc., were closer to the mood of the country than the moderate policies upheld by the Fine Gael-Labour coalition. I would argue, therefore, that bipartisanship was not possible at this time as FitzGerald and Fine Gael had to try take ownership of certain popular issues. Fine Gael during this period tried to further the "power sharing" agenda and the Sunningdale policy of SDLP involvement in government to its limits. Fianna Fáil, however, eclipsed them on these issues and during the 1977-81 government adopted a policy of determined ambiguity.

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<sup>4</sup> Lynch suggested that the coalition government had not advanced Northern Ireland policy at all between 1973-77: "I was surprised and disappointed, when we returned to office and discovered how little progress had been made in the whole area of practical north/south cooperation over the past four years". Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, February 1978. NA/ FCO/87/598

Being careful not to upset public opinion too much, unlike CCOB, Fine Gael and FitzGerald were critical of Fianna Fáil at every juncture, one particular example was in early 1978, following an interview Jack Lynch gave to RTE, which created much greater controversy than most could imagine. Popular opinion in the republic was broadly supportive of Lynch's extreme statements on power-sharing, amnesty for prisoners and the need for a British declaration of intent. The interview brought about deterioration in relations with Britain as the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Prime Minister tried to decipher the ambiguity of Fianna Fáil's position (NA/FCO87/699). This example shows how Fianna Fáil's extremism forced Fine Gael to curtail its own pragmatic approach in order to appeal to public opinion. FitzGerald spoke about how inappropriate the Taoiseach's statements on amnesty were, but was careful to upset neither the British nor the Irish electorate.

2. Following two years of major political instability in 1981-2, a Fine Gael —Labour government was elected that lasted five years. The conflict had turned a corner following the Hunger Strikes and the Thatcher government were eager to improve their working relationship with the Irish government. Intelligence files from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, indicate that in the late 1970s the British administration trusted Fine Gael and Garret FitzGerald's knowledge of Northern Ireland more than that of Fianna Fáil (NA/FCO87/699)<sup>5</sup>, who they had lost patience with many times during the Fianna Fáil government from 1977. On top of that FitzGerald had made progress on improving his personal relationship with Margaret Thatcher. From the early 1980s the British-Irish process was in place and many meetings between civil servants and the government leaders paved the way to the Anglo Irish Agreement, 1985. This paper argues the timing and sequence of this is fundamentally important and that Fine Gael's influence in government at the time is central to Irish government progress. The success of the New Ireland Forum, during which Fine Gael incorporated some of the extreme nationalism of Fianna Fáil in a broad attempt to represent the true nature of Irish nationalism. The New Ireland Forum implies that a new period of bipartisanship on these issues would emerge in the Republic surely any intergovernmental agreement could expect the support of those involved with the Forum?

Fianna Fáil's response to the Anglo Irish Agreement not only highlights the main differences between the parties but also the unwillingness of Fianna Fáil to put the possibility of progress through a working intergovernmental agreement ahead of their ideology and internal party politics. In their critical response to the Anglo Irish Agreement the key issues for Fianna Fáil relate to unity, consent and self-determination and what is striking about Haughey's reaction is the prevalence of the traditional concept of unity as a primary aim. Fianna Fáil prioritised traditional irredentist constitutional claims and used such constitutional arguments to undermine the Agreement.

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<sup>5</sup> "It is worth bearing in mind that Mr. Lynch and his ministerial colleagues have no real feeling for Northern Ireland unlike Dr FitzGerald, they do not visit the province regularly nor do they have any direct contact with unionists" NA/FCO87/699.

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If Dáil Éireann were to accept and approve this agreement, they would, by doing so, derogate from the concept of Irish unity by seeking to confer legitimacy on an administration and a political entity the existence of which is a denial of that concept of unity...What is proposed is that the Irish Government, by becoming involved in the existing British administration there, however tenuously, will afford that administration an acceptance, an endorsement and an approval, which constitutionally, they cannot and should not do... What the Government are putting through the Dáil this week undermines the very basis of constitutional nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

This Fianna Fáil reaction forced Fine Gael on to the defensive and made the agreement harder to sell to Irish public opinion. It is an example of how Fine Gael had to hide behind the republicanism of Fianna Fáil, even though they did not have the faction within their own party. Fianna Fáil's extreme views held Fine Gael from moving too fast for the Irish public on certain issues, in this case articles two and three. Fine Gael appear to have held back in the 1980s from pushing the Irish public too soon. As one former minister puts it:

So, I think in Fine Gael we were always conscious that the Articles 2 and 3 were sort of pie in the sky and an irritant to the north an obstacle to good relations...Of course we were proved right...Of course we'd be afraid to attack Articles 2 and 3 very overtly anyway. Because you would immediately be labelled as being a West Brit. Are you against the united Ireland? You may as well be against God.

A simple coding of the Dáil debates following the Anglo Irish Agreement, shows another reason for Fianna Fáil's partisan tactics while in opposition, Haughey's personal anglophobia and discomfort with the evolving Anglo-Irish relationship. When coding the debate, we used the tag "cause of conflict British", to identify any reference to traditional rhetoric blaming the British for the cause of the conflict. In Haughey's speech alone, ten lengthy sections of the speech were coded with this tag. Haughey's anglophobia arises again and again in an attempt to disagree with the concepts put forward in this Agreement. This approach to criticising the Agreement opens a new argument for such partisan tactics that is reminiscent of the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921, that it is not only the threat of conceding to unity by consent that has annoyed Fianna Fáil, but it is the nature of a joint governmental agreement with the British government, with no Fianna Fáil involvement in the negotiation process.

3. When Fianna Fáil took office in 1987, Haughey began to work under the British-Irish process and set about making the concepts of the Anglo-Irish Agreement acceptable to his party. Fianna Fáil aimed to transcend the Agreement by finding a formula that republicans could accept through reconciling self-determination and consent (O'Donnell, 2007b : 75). O'Donnell (2007b) and Ivory (1999) have described the Hume-Adams dialogue as a turning point for Fianna Fáil policy on

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<sup>6</sup> Dáil debate on Anglo Irish Agreement, 19 November 1985. Volume 31: 2582/3

Northern Ireland. In 1986/7 the possibility of the Irish political parties achieving bipartisanship on Northern Ireland seemed a distant possibility. However, during Haughey's government, 1987-92, the Irish government moved towards a policy of pan nationalism, entering a dialogue with not only the SDLP but with Sinn Fein. The Hume-Adams meetings paved a way for this but the Irish involvement marks a significant turning point in the Irish role in peace process. The post-Anglo Irish Agreement reasons for criticism soon appeared to be partisan tactics rather than representing ideological standpoints, as Haughey entered into a strong relationship with the British and did not upset

4. By 1993 the next intergovernmental initiative was in progress. The "Downing Street Declaration: Joint declaration on Peace", was announced on 15 December 1993, and while constitutionally resembled much of the Irish govt policy put forward in the 1980s; consent was enshrined, the Downing Street Declaration was in many ways an easier pill for Fianna Fáil to swallow. The re-definition of self-determination and the statement that both government's have no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland, removed any potential for anglophobia as represented in Fianna Fáil's response to the Anglo Irish Agreement. Greater Fianna Fáil involvement in the negotiation and the inclusion of the views of the newly constructed pan-nationalist dialogue, ensured that this agreement was more closely in line with Irish public opinion, which was something that Fine Gael appeared not to have a strong instinct for, on this issue.

Through coding the Dáil debate following the Downing Street Declaration, we tested to see how often Fine Gael attacked Fianna Fáil or vice versa. The results show only eight examples of criticism from Fine Gael, stemming from four out of their seven TDs that spoke. The compares with 15 examples in which the code "initiative support" was used in the same debate, this time spanning six of the seven Fine Gael TDs. The code initiative opposition was not applied to any of the TD's speeches.

Reynolds post DSD speech shows the complete turn around Fianna Fáil had through being involved in the intergovernmental process :

I believe there is hardly anyone in Ireland today who believes that unity is or should be on the immediate political agenda...and I cannot accept for one moment the notion that the mere aspiration for a united Ireland represents coercion...From the Irish Government's point of view, support for a united Ireland and support for the Union, are equally legitimate political objectives, and both may be regarded as having value from different points of view.<sup>7</sup>

As a former Fine Gael minister describes the party's view in December 1993, and the positive acceptance of the Downing Street Declaration:

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<sup>7</sup> Dáil debate on Downing St. Declaration, December 1993. Volume 437 : 1233

It's the curse of FG—always seeing the other fellas point of view. I mean it really is. And when you think of the way FF behaved at that time [AIA], it was a disgrace and we couldn't do that.

Ivory (1999) argues that by 1995 all-party consensus had been reached on all issues relating to Northern Ireland. I would argue that from 1995 bipartisanship existed in the parliamentary arena but that consensus emerged in the years between 1995-98. 1994, of course, witnessed the change of government to a rainbow coalition, with Fine Gael's John Bruton at the helm. Bruton's views on the conflict were very different to those of Haughey and Reynolds, particularly his feelings towards republicans. However, just as the Fine Gael government in 1985 institutionalised the British-Irish framework of negotiations, the Fianna Fáil government under Reynolds successfully institutionalised the role of Sinn Féin within the peace process. The ceasefires of 1994 allowed the process to develop even further and the Framework documents of 1995 highlight that on the Irish side, Fine Gael had signed up to the progress that had been made since 1985. This was Fine Gael's first official acceptance of the republican role in the process, however uncomfortable many in the party were with such a role. Bipartisanship was achieved following the Downing Street Declaration in 1993 with the positive reaction from opposition benches to the initiative. I would argue that the first challenge to this bipartisanship was the aftermath of Framework document's, when Fianna Fáil may have challenged the content or politically attacked Fine Gael's role in the drafting. However, Fianna Fáil proved to be willing to uphold the important bipartisan tactics and fully supported the documents. This could be because from their period in government they managed to remove the aspects of the Anglo Irish Agreement that they found abhorrent, it could be an example of the leaps that the party made regarding Northern Ireland under the Reynolds administration.<sup>8</sup> The Framework documents were an important step within the peace process, an analysis of such importance has been covered elsewhere, but in this context the achievement of bipartisanship that was strengthened by the Framework Documents, is an important step in the Irish role.

5. Bipartisanship was particularly important for the Irish government in the run up to the Good Friday Agreement. It was achieved by the incremental inclusion of both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael ideology into government policy over the course of two decades, along with a great deal of pragmatism and some strong encouragement on the part of various British governments. Public opinion in Ireland was strongly behind the action of the Irish government from the early 1990s, this could be down to southern frustration with the violence, or to do with popular leaders such as Reynolds, Spring and Bruton taking a lead role. However, it is also

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<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell (2009: 116) argues that Reynolds determination to achieve peace in Northern Ireland furthered Fianna Fáil Northern Ireland policy dramatically: "In putting into practice the principles that underlined Fianna Fáil's approach to the Northern Ireland Troubles and bringing about the IRA ceasefire in 1994, Reynolds succeeded where his predecessors, Lynch and Haughey, failed."

arguable that such high levels of public support,<sup>9</sup> are due to the bipartisan approach that was adopted from the mid-90s. Bipartisanship and cross party prioritisation of peace and stability in Northern Ireland, was the first step in the achievement of an Irish government policy that not only gained cross party support, but from 1995-98 a definite consensus emerged between the two parties on the central issues pertaining to Northern Ireland. The two steps during this period that cemented a consensus were: firstly, when under John Bruton, Fine Gael accepted the inclusion of republicans and more importantly, for the “law and order” party the inclusion of possible former paramilitaries in the dialogue process.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, under Bertie Ahern, when Fianna Fáil finally let go of the “sacred cow” and put articles two and three on the table for debate and for the first time reached out to unionism to encourage all-party talks.

Consensus amongst the parties in the south was an important strength of the Irish role in the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement, as the diverse views of the Irish population were represented. Until bipartisanship was achieved in the Dáil, such consensus seemed a distant possibility. Bipartisanship came about before consensus was reached due to the reality that to achieve peace in Northern Ireland the parties in the Republic needed to put the issue above politics. By 1997, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael no longer needed to put it above politics, as both parties had developed very similar stances on the central issues included in Good Friday, nuance remains different and wider party ideology is fundamentally different but both parties had learned during the peace process to put their own historical grievances behind them.

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O'Donnell, Catherine

<sup>9</sup> The referendum on articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution was passed by 94% of the Irish electorate.

<sup>10</sup> O'Donnell (2009: 208) has argued that Fine Gael support for the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement has disguised the fact that the inclusion of Sinn Féin represents a significant policy departure for Sinn Féin.

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