

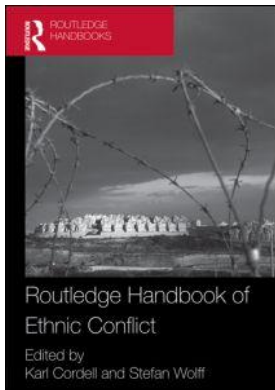
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On: 08 Dec 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



## **Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict**

Karl Cordell, Stefan Wolff

### **Debating partition**

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203845493.ch12>

Brendan O'Leary

**Published online on: 12 Oct 2010**

**How to cite :-** Brendan O'Leary. 12 Oct 2010, *Debating partition from*: Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict Routledge

Accessed on: 08 Dec 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203845493.ch12>

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## 12 Debating partition

### Evaluating the standard justifications

*Brendan O'Leary*

Political partition may usefully be defined as a *fresh* political border cut through at least one community's national homeland with the goal of resolving conflict (see Talbot and Singh 2009; applying the approach suggested in O'Leary 2007). Political partition is therefore distinct from adjacent phenomena, such as *secessions*, which are attempted within existing recognized units (O'Leary 2001: 54, 2005, 2007; the latter article defends this definition), or from *border adjustments*, such as those that occur after a shift in the course of a river bed, or from a shift in maritime boundaries following the immersion of an island, i.e., where the placements of people are not at stake.

Explanations of partitions, both in particular and in general, are recurrent in political science and history (e.g. Fraser 1984; Hasan 1993, 2002; Mansergh 1997), but this chapter focuses on the arguments used to justify them, drawing mostly from the twentieth-century cases of Ireland, India, Palestine and Cyprus. Just as no one is a relentless advocate of divorce at the slightest hint of disagreement between couples, so there are no relentless advocates of partition at the slightest hint of national or ethnic conflict. Partitionists, however, are obliged to use rhetoric. This phrasing is not disparaging. Long ago the Stagirite taught the world that rhetorical argument must be advanced when we are uncertain of our premises but must nevertheless persuade ourselves of the best choice of policy (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*). The most powerful arguments for resolving antagonisms through partition may be labeled, in order, as "historicist," "last resort," "net benefit," "better tomorrow," and "realist rigor."

#### Partitionist arguments

*The historicist argument.* Historicists assume that history is necessarily evolving in a given direction (Popper 1976/1957), and conclude that we should aid the inevitable by giving it a nudge. Some insist that once nationalist, ethnic, or communal conflicts pass a certain threshold they will end in partition (e.g. Galbraith 2006; Kaufmann 1998). They may detect such tendencies in residential, educational, and employment segregation, in the formation of nationalist, ethnic, or communal parties, or in the overheating of political systems with the demands of what W. H. Auden's poem "Partition" satirizes as "peoples fanatically at odds, With their different diets and incompatible gods" (Auden 1976).

Historicism may shape policy because it is seen as both informed and realistic. That partition is inevitable, or is already happening, that facts have already been established "on the ground," are assumptions that may persuade policy makers that the process should be sped up to reduce the pain. In 1993 advocates of the partition of Bosnia and

Herzegovina and of “population transfers” John J. Mearsheimer and Robert A. Pape maintained, “transfer is already occurring. ... The only question is whether it will be organized, as envisioned by partition, or left to the murderous methods of the ethnic cleansers” (Mearsheimer and Pape 1993). Another partitionist argues that “ethnic wars always separate the warring communities,” so it is not a question of “whether the groups will be separated but how” (Kaufmann 1998: 123). It is a tempting argument when extensive expulsions are afoot by militias, paramilitaries, or police, but there is no confirmed social science law that *all* segregation – voluntary or forced – leads inevitably to the breakup of states. Not only has no one identified clear thresholds of violence (absolute or proportional to population) beyond which partition (or separation more broadly) becomes inevitable, but also simple comparative evaluations of recent conflicts show that there can be peace without separation (Carment and Rowlands 2004: 369 ff.).

*The “last resort” argument.* This argument acknowledges that alternative strategies exist to manage or resolve national, ethnic or communal conflicts, such as federalism, consociation, arbitration, or integration, and accepts that these alternatives should be attempted before partition is considered. But, if these options fail, so the argument goes, partition should be chosen to avoid genocide or large-scale ethnic expulsions (universally acknowledged to be the worst possible outcomes). Partition, in short, should be pursued as public “triage.” Exponents of this argument often invoke the “security dilemma” (Jervis 1968; Kaufmann 1996b, a, 1998; Posen 1993; Johnson 2008). The claim is that in conditions of emergent anarchy, e.g. when an empire or a regime is collapsing, the relations among ethnic groups become akin to that of individuals in a Hobbesian state of nature. One distrustful community will seek to enhance its security, which will enhance the insecurity of the other communities, creating a vicious and escalating cycle of insecurity. Ethnic groups with strong and durable identities will be mobilized for war in conditions of insecurity, and will attack ethnic islands of the other community, or protect their own by expelling others. Partition is justified, in these conditions, because it ends the imperatives to cleanse and rescue, and renders war unnecessary to achieve mutual security. In Auden’s poem the partitionist lawyer, Radcliffe, is told, “It’s too late/For mutual reconciliation or rational debate/The only solution now lies in partition” (Auden 1976). The logic and the modeling and the poetic satire are neat, but critics rightly suspect the underlying psychology and sociology.

*The net benefit argument.* A third line of argument need not presume the empirical existence of an ethnic security dilemma, or justify partition only when it is absolutely necessary to prevent genocide or large-scale expulsions. Instead, it suggests that partition should be chosen when, on balance, it offers a better prospect of conflict reduction than maintaining the existing borders. The suggestion is that partition is desirable in its own right as a preventative strategy; it need not be the option of last resort. The net benefit argument was maintained in the last years of British imperial rule by the leading politicians of minorities who opposed independence within existing colonial borders – by Ulster unionists in Ireland, who were prepared to abandon their fellow unionists elsewhere in Ireland; by Zionists in Israel who then thought some sovereign Israeli land was better than hoping for Eretz Israel; and by the Muslim League in India, which decided that southern Muslims would have to fend for themselves. Here it was argued that partition was justified to prevent a loss of freedom – it was not then maintained that genocide and ethnic expulsions were going to be carried out by Irish, Indian, or Palestinian nationalists. Some consider partition an appropriate and prudent preemptive policy choice simply where there are ethnically

intermixed populations which are capable of sustained pogroms, massacres, expulsions, and genocide. The argument, of course, tends to license too many partitions: after all, of which groups could it be said that they are incapable of genocide? Organized extermination has occurred in every continent, in all periods of human history, within every major religious civilization, and in all political systems (though under some more than others) (Chirot and McCauley 2006).

*The "better tomorrow" argument.* The historicists, the triagists, and the utilitarian calculators jointly maintain that after partition there will be a reduction in violence and conflict recurrence. New more homogenized polities will have better prospects of stable democratization, of political development, and of better relations in general. The analogy is with divorce. After the trauma is over, the former partners will conduct themselves better because their interests will not interfere so intimately with one another's identity, pride, and emotions. This argument predicts a better tomorrow based on key counterfactual assumptions, namely, that without partition there will be more conflict and conflict recurrence; and that more heterogeneous polities have poorer prospects of democratization, political development, and intergroup relations. One author even claims that the evidence from Ireland, India, Palestine, and Cyprus confirms that partitions reduce violence and conflict recurrence, and that the post-partitioned entities were no less democratic or culturally exclusive than their precursors (Kaufmann 1998)!

*The "realist rigor" argument.* The tough-minded partitionist maintains that any possible difficulties with partition flow from irresolution – a thoroughgoing revision of borders, which fully separates the relevant antagonistic communities, is what is required. Good fences make good neighbors; bad fences provoke disputes. Policy makers must devise borders – and provide incentives for controlled population movements – that will create sufficient homogeneity so that the incentives for national, ethnic, religious, and communal violence are radically reduced. Another and better cut will be advocated to rectify the surgery if it was botched the first time.

For it to work, the rigorous realists maintain, that partition must lead to radical demographic restructuring, reducing the military and political significance of the new minorities. Mearsheimer and Pape and subsequently Mearsheimer and Steven van Evera argued for the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "shrinking it to save it," as they put it (Mearsheimer and Van Evera 1995). They deemed unworkable the alternative federal formula developed under the plan proposed by former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and former UK Foreign Secretary David Owen, and criticized the 1995 Dayton settlement, negotiated and effectively dictated by US diplomats, as "an unfinished peace," precisely because it did not arrange a three-way partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, but just an incomplete two-way split between the recently constructed Muslim-Croat federation and Republika Srpska.

These five standard arguments for partition are political and moral. They are not on their face simple apologies, or excuses for land-grabbing, or indeed for dereliction, though, of course, they may provide cover for such actions. Indeed I have carefully avoided selecting propartitionist arguments which are obviously racist, sectarian, or civilizationist in order to present partitionism in its best light.

These five arguments are only partially testable. One accepts historicist philosophies, or approaches, or one does not – Popper's critique (1957) of historicism is convincing to

this author even though Popper's history of ideas is not always accurate. The leap from demographic trends to assumptions of future political behavior by pro-partitionists is not scientific; the same trends may be compatible with a range of political relationships – from genocide to federal or consociational coexistence. The “realistic rigor” thesis is probably not testable at all, because confronted by the evidence of catastrophe partitionists will claim that the tragedies lie in the imperfection of the attempted project rather than the idea itself. Though there is now an interesting literature which tests partitionist claims (Sambanis and Schullhofer-Wohl 2009; Sambanis 2000; Chapman and Roeder 2007), not all of the above arguments are testable, and, at least on my definition of partition, the number of twentieth-century cases that were not rapidly reversed is pretty small, making large- $n$  testing problematic (the existing literature usually conflates partitions and secessions in order to get a larger  $n$ ). Many partitionists' claims, however, are at least implicitly empirical. Partitionists implicitly predict either a linear or an exponential relationship between the degree of national and ethnic heterogeneity of a place and the security dilemmas that provoke violence (false). They insist “restoring civil politics in multiethnic states shattered by war is impossible because the war itself destroys the possibilities for ethnic cooperation.” They insist that the “stable resolution of ethnic civil wars is only possible when opposing groups are demographically separated into defensible enclaves” (Kaufmann 1996b: 137). These arguments suggest that it is foolish to insist on maintaining unviable multinational polities.

### **The modalities of partitionists**

The above partitionist arguments do not tell us who should execute the deed, or how they should go about their work. Partitionists who are not mere annexationists come in two general types – proceduralists and paternalists – though they may come in fusions. Proceduralists favor justice and agreement, while paternalists favor imposition in others' interests – they put order before justice.

*Proceduralists* advocate consultation with the “affected parties,” to achieve as much reciprocal consent on the new border as possible, and try to establish rules to which reasonable partitions should conform. They see roles for commissions, and particularly judges and technical experts, in determining appropriate boundaries. The British Empire was a procedural partitionist. It set up boundary commissions in twentieth-century Ireland, Palestine, and India. The United Nations attempted to be proceduralist in Palestine in 1947.

Honest proceduralists reject any partition proposal that does not meet fairness and feasibility requirements. Some proceduralists are less honest, and claim that it is not they or their governments who partition. Mountbatten declared in his radio broadcast of March 3, 1947, which announced the plan to partition India, that “I felt it was essential that the people of India themselves should decide this question of partition” (Ahmed 1999: 119). He ordered the legislative assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab (excluding European members) each to meet in two parts, one representing the “Muslim majority” districts, the other the rest of the relevant province. The districts were to be defined, not by the past votes for the members, but by reference to the 1941 census. A simple majority in either part would be sufficient to trigger partition of the relevant region. (In the Punjab the new West section of the assembly voted against partition by ninety-nine votes to twenty-seven, while the new East voted in favor by fifty votes to twenty-two (Ahmed 1999: 121). Punjab therefore had one hundred and twenty-one

assembly members' votes against and sixty-seven for, but under Mountbatten's rule the partition process continued.)

Arend Lijphart has specified the requirements of a fair partition (Lijphart 1984). A partition can be acceptable where it is negotiated by all the affected groups rather than imposed; when it involves a fair division of land and resources; and where it results in homogeneous, or at least substantially less plural, independent states. The major difficulty with this reasonable conception of a principled partition is the sheer unlikelihood of the first requirement: nonimposition. The affected parties – politicians and their publics – are not likely to agree unanimously, and even if representative politicians did concur, it is unlikely that all the adversely affected people will agree, even if offered significant compensation. Partitions involving the movement of people or of their sovereign territory are simply not likely to proceed with technical agreement and political consensus.

Lijphart's other criteria offer feasible benchmarks against which to evaluate the fairness of partitions of binational or multinational polities. The Radcliffe "Award" in Bengal in 1947 almost perfectly met Lijphart's second and third criteria. West Bengal, an area of 28,000 square miles, was to contain a population estimated at 21.19 million people, of whom 29 per cent were Muslims. East Bengal, to become East Pakistan, an area of 49,000 square miles, contained a population of 39.11 million, of which 29.1 per cent were Hindus (Chatterji 1999: 191). West Bengal was to get 36.6 per cent of the land to accommodate some 35.1 per cent of the Bengal population, while East Bengal was to get 63.6 of the land to accommodate 64.8 per cent of the population. The ratio of the majority to the minority populations was almost identical, and the resulting entities more homogeneous than their predecessor, partitioning a polity with a Muslim:Hindu ratio of 56:44 into two with 70:30 majority:minority ratios. But we might equally conclude that Radcliffe created two large Northern Irelands out of Bengal, and very few regard the bloody Indian partition as a success story.

Jan and Birgitta Tullberg have also proposed procedural criteria for a fair partition (Tullberg and Tullberg 1997). They conflate partition with secession, but then so too do most of their critics (e.g. Rothchild 1997). The Tullbergs believe that borders should be drawn to leave as few people as possible in the "wrong" state, advocating that an equal number of people from each group should be wrongly placed after a partition. The partitioning border also ought to be as "natural" as possible. They also propose rules for "transfers": in a binary partition each state should be responsible for accepting people of its own nationality; each individual may emigrate to the "right" state; and each state should be entitled to evict members of the other group. The Tullbergs' critics have little difficulty in picking out the difficulties with these proposals (e.g. Lustick 1997; McGarry and Moore 1997; Ryan 1997). Why should an equal number of "wrongly" placed people be regarded as a fair outcome, as opposed to an equal ratio of "wrongly" to "rightly" placed people in each jurisdiction? Surely fairness should include proportionality, not just absolute numbers? The notion of "natural" borders is highly problematic – even if common among politicians and mass publics. Lastly, the proposed transfer rules are appalling – and illegal under international law. They license ethnic expulsions, and incentivize them. The proposals also give insufficient recognition to the importance of the integrity of the territorial homeland in the eyes of at least one community: for whom it is not the rules of partition with which they disagree, but the very idea, which is equivalent to a discussion of the modalities under which they are to be executed.

*Paternalists*, by contrast, assume that the local parties or communities are incapable of reaching a reasonable agreement, except perhaps after protracted wars that end in stalemate. They propose that a sufficiently powerful outsider should determine a partition, one that will be durable, and reduce conflict as much as possible – and quickly. A settlement that addresses security imperatives is more important than meeting participation requirements or considerations that might flow from abstract social justice. Paternalists usually advise or lobby great or regional powers. “Better rough justice than none” is their outlook. For contemporary Kosova, Mearsheimer argued that partition is the only viable strategy for anything that resembles peace in the long term – the best, as he put it, of a handful of really lousy alternatives. His premise was that multiethnic states do not (or cannot?) survive, especially, he claims, in Europe. Interventions to hold multiethnic states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina together will not work “unless we [the United States] stay there forever” (Mearsheimer 1999a, b). American realists are not against multinational or multiethnic states in principle, but believe, correctly, that there is a general American tendency to underestimate the power of nationalism, and a dogmatic American faith that other multiethnic societies can integrate themselves as America’s immigrants have (Mearsheimer and van Evera, 1995: 21).

### **Anti-partitionist arguments**

Let us now consider the most powerful rebuttals of partitionist arguments. Anti-partitionists include nationalists and multinationalists. Nationalists reject the rupturing of their national territories; multinationalists reject the historicist assumptions of homogenizers and their negative assessments of the prospects for coexistence. They share common appraisals of how partitions are perverse, of how they jeopardize existing relationships, and of the impossibility of achieving fair partitions. Their arguments include (1) the rejection of the rupturing of national unity, (2) advocacy of the possibilities of constructive bi- and multinationalism, (3) the practical impossibility of just partitions, (4) the high likelihood of worsening violence, (5) the elusive mirage of homogenization without expulsions, (6) the damage to the successor states, and (7) the failure to make a clean or elegant cut, all of which jointly render the surgical and the triage claims highly suspect.

*The rupturing of national territorial unity* is protested by those who hold that partition is a violation of the right to self-determination, of the right to territorial integrity of the entity that is being partitioned. This complaint is usually accompanied by the claim that partition is being proposed or executed in the interests of privileged minorities, and that it is especially brutal in its impact on what will now become border communities. In all cases the nationalists observe that “border communities” which were previously not “border” communities may suffer most – the Sikhs of the Punjab; the Irish nationalists of south Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry city and Newry; and the peoples among divided cities, for example those of Jerusalem (between 1948 and 1967) and Nicosia.

In the twentieth century partitions were rejected by most of the majority nationalists whose national homelands were freshly cut. Irish, Indian, Palestinian, and Cypriot nationalists argued that partition was a violation of national self-determination and directly contravened the expressed preferences of the relevant majorities in their national territories. Bosniaks made the same claim – though ethnic Bosniaks were just a plurality in the former Yugoslav republic. Indian nationalists, for example, argued

that their nation had a long past, had been treated as an entity by the British Empire, prepared for self-government as such, and that India as a whole was the appropriate unit for self-determination (Nehru 1989). The Muslim League's claim that there were two nations and not one on the subcontinent was treated as false, proved by Congress's own Muslim voters and politicians, and dismissed as being made very late in the day – in the vested interests of privileged elites regrettably manipulating communal passions. Until the end, many Congress leaders regarded Jinnah's endorsement of the two-nation thesis as a bargaining posture. Cypriot nationalists likewise insist that the partition of Cyprus, and the proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, violated Cyprus's integrity and its right to self-determination and sovereign independence – entrenched in treaties between the UK, Turkish, Greek, and Cypriot governments. They complain that the United Kingdom's resistance to Greek demands for decolonization and *enosis* (union) with Greece led the imperial power in the 1950s to mobilize the Turkish minority in their support, especially within the police and the army, and that this encouraged Turkish Cypriots to demand *taksim*, the partition of Cyprus between Greece and Turkey (Anderson 2008). Cypriot nationalists see the “counternationalism” of the Turkish minority as manipulated or rooted in past privilege, believing that the British had played Greek and Turkish Cypriots against one another (Hitchens 1997; Kyle 1984).

*Advocacy of binationalism or multinationalism.* Only disputing their premises plausibly rebuts nationalist anti-partition arguments. That involves either insisting that within the pre-partitioned entities there was more than one nation with a right to self-determination, or rejecting national self-determination arguments completely (an intellectual move not evaluated here because partitionists do not reject the idea of nation-states).

The binational or multinational case is that plurinational arrangements must be properly exhausted before partition is considered genuinely as a last resort. Multinationals maintain that if one were to accept that there were two nations in Ireland, India, Palestine, and Cyprus, or three in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no automatic case for partition followed. Instead they observe that partitionists must insist on the undesirability, infeasibility, or insecurity of binational, federal, consociational, or confederal arrangements. It is just assumed by partitionists that such options are or were impossible, and often this claim obscures more creative modes of coexistence. In three British imperial cases most of the relevant minority – Ulster Unionists, the Muslim League, and Zionists – appeared unwilling to propose or experiment with such formulas. Their veto of alternative formulas, backed by force, was rendered more effective by the declarations of the imperial power that they would not coerce the relevant minorities. These minorities' leaders sought partition either before, or coterminous with, the withdrawal of the imperial power, and refused or blocked all other options. That partition was “a last resort,” or a regrettable choice “when all else had failed,” therefore usually rings hollow. In Cyprus, by contrast, before independence a generous constitutional arrangement was negotiated for Turkish Cypriots, but arguably one that was so generous in its overrepresentation of the minority that it was bound to provoke Greek Cypriot resentment.

*The impossibility of just partition.* Anti-partitionists argue that, even if partition should be an option of last resort when clashing nationalities have rejected binational or multinational forms of shared rule and self-rule, that does not justify any partitions, but only fair or just partition. The latter, however, demands the wisdom of Solomon,



which by definition is rare. They require not just wisdom but a great or regional power that is well governed if they are to be procedurally proper (all of which seems an unlikely combination).

International procedures, including World Court jurisprudence, have peaceably addressed some border disputes between states. Typically, however, these arise from ambiguities in historic treaties or legislative documents (for example, disputes between the Netherlands and Belgium, Burkina Faso and Mali, Honduras and El Salvador, and over the Aouzou desert strip – at issue between Chad and Libya). Or they involve maritime jurisdictions (for example, the negotiations over the Timor Gap, disputes between Norway and Great Britain, and between the United States and Canada in the Gulf of Maine). Or, they are occasioned by natural geographical changes in terrain and river beds (e.g. through “avulsion”) (Prescott 1996). Legal procedures are not, however, appropriate for what is at stake in political partitions. From 1945 until 2009 only two disputes where homelands were arguably at stake, both involving marginal islands, have been settled by the International Court of Justice, one being the Minquiers and Ecrehos islands located between the English-speaking Channel Islands and French Normandy. It remains to be seen whether the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague has successfully determined the borders of Abyei, which will be at issue between Northern and Southern Sudan – whether the South opts for secession or unity in the referendum scheduled for 2011 (Arbitral Tribunal 2009).

According to the Book of Kings, Solomon did not partition the famously disputed baby but adopted a procedure, the threat of partition, to establish its true mother. No such procedure is likely to work well amid mass ethno-nationalist politics. The credible threat of partition will likely provoke preemptive action, in the form of ethnic expulsions, to establish “facts on the ground.” These repercussions are more likely than the disputing parties coming to their senses. Kaufmann and partitionists therefore get the causality wrong: it is partitionists who generate a self-fulfilling security dilemma. The credible threat of partition flows from decisions of a state or imperial authority – or of known plans by paramilitaries that have state support. It is they who occasion the “security dilemma,” not the mere presence of heterogeneous populations. It was partition which occasioned extensive violence in Northern Ireland between 1920 and 1922, and “it was the *escalating possibility* of partition, and the tensions that unleashed, which caused the August 1946 violence in Calcutta and the subsequent ‘security dilemma’ [of the] Hindus and Muslims of Bengal” (Bose 2002: 179).

Partitionists usually come from among the self-appointed, as with most paternalists, and are unlikely to be impartial. The Peel Commission, which first proposed the partition of Palestine, exceeded its terms of reference, at the prompting of Professor Coupland, who became the chief enthusiast and crafted the text. The outgoing imperial power determined the procedures for partition in Ireland and India, and handed over some established groundwork for the UN partition plan for Palestine. In Ireland partition was executed unilaterally in 1920 before the United Kingdom negotiated with Ireland’s elected Sinn Féin government. An invading Turkish army in 1974 determined the fresh cut in Cyprus, stopping at a line that the Turkish government had proposed in 1965 and which had been rejected by the UN mediator Galo Plaza (Kliot and Mansfield 1997: 503).

Anti-partitionists observe that boundary commissions usually give the pivotal power to the relevant big power. Thus the Irish Boundary Commission of 1924–25, and the 1947 Radcliffe Commissions in Punjab and Bengal, had British appointees as the

decisive chairs. With some exceptions, the local appointees acted as partisan champions of the ethno-national or religious communities that they were appointed to represent – though they were constrained to make their arguments persuasive, and to make their proposals as consistent as possible with the commissions' terms of reference. If the local nominees to boundary commissions are bound to act to some degree as ethno-national champions, that places the burden of decision upon the organizers and chairs of such commissions: in Auden's words, Radcliffe was told, "We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu/To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you" (Auden 1976). The key difficulty for such chairs is what we might call Solomon's agenda. That can be defined by the following questions.

- *Which should be the units around which new boundaries should be drawn?* One cannot have elections to determine who should be among the electorates that have the final say. The Irish Free State thought that a plebiscite should be conducted in all the Poor Law jurisdictions in Northern Ireland – excepting in Belfast and County Antrim – whereas unionists insisted that the six counties of the north-east be treated as a bloc. Relatedly:
- *Should there be subunit opt-outs?* If unit A opts to be with one state, but B, a concentrated minority within A, wants to go with another, may it opt out?
- *How should units' preferences be determined?* If there is agreement on the units of determination, then how should the new boundary respect popular preferences? Should this be done through local plebiscites, or through determining people's presumed preferences through their ascriptive identities as recorded in census data (that may be unreliable)? If there are to be plebiscites, what rule should be adopted for determining whether a given unit goes to one jurisdiction or another: a simple majority of those voting, an absolute majority of registered voters, a weighted majority? And, if working from census data, who should count: adults, or adults and children?
- *Should local popular preferences be considered just one criterion to be balanced among others?* How important should be matters such as the maintenance of *contiguity* (at issue in the formation of Pakistan, and in the redistricting of West Bengal); *preserving a cultural heartland* (at issue in the division of Sikh sacred sites in the Punjab, in the placement of Jerusalem, and at issue in proposals to partition Kosova); *retaining a unit within an economic, geographical hinterland or infrastructure* (at issue in the location of Derry and Newry in Ireland, and in the waterways and canals of the Punjab); or *ensuring militarily secure borders* (at issue in every partition)?
- If nonpreferential factors are to be considered in designing new borders, *should local popular preferences be subordinated* to these other considerations, and, if so, which ones – and who should make that determination?
- *Should there be constitutional amendments* to ratify the commission's proposals or referendums, and should there be provisions to enable their subsequent revision?

Given the difficulties in Solomon's agenda it is not surprising that Radcliffe, the man who drew the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, refused to be interviewed on his work for the rest of his life (Ahmed 1999; Chatterji 1994, 1999): "Return he would not/Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot" (Auden 1976). Radcliffe's commission worked fast, and it mattered; its resolutions were implemented. The commission chaired by Richard Feetham in 1924 to consider adjustments in the light of Article 12 of the

Anglo-Irish Treaty did not work in a hurry, and eventually made no difference to the line of partition in Ireland. But Feetham's judgement of his terms of reference shaped the commission's outcome: "the Commission is not to reconstitute the two territories, but to settle the boundary between them. Northern Ireland must, when the boundaries have been determined, still be recognizable as the same provincial entity" (Hand 1969; O'Callaghan 2000). In south Down, the location of a *new* reservoir to supply Belfast, not yet finished, incredibly became an argument for maintaining the existing border because Feetham maintained that, whenever there was a clash, economic and geographic factors had to trump local popular wishes. This case, of a failed commission, vividly demonstrates the procedural conundrums attached to boundary commissions, and the unpredictable consequences of giving judges vague terms of reference. It is difficult to imagine impartiality in the appointment and management of a boundary commission – an empire or regional power has its own interests, and their officials will take great care over appointments to such bodies.

*The likelihood of disorder and violence.* Anti-partitionists turn the tables on the subject of violence. They maintain that partitions encourage ethnic expulsions; trigger partially chaotic breakdowns in order, leading to flight, opportunist killing, rapes, and looting; lead to more violence than that which preceded them; have domino effects; contribute to post-partition wars, and insecurities; and set precedents that lead to demands for repartitions. Their case is that partitions are perverse: they achieve the exact opposite of what they nominally intend.

In raw numbers of dead and forcibly displaced, the critics are correct across the cases of India, Palestine, Ireland, and Cyprus. The partition of India was accompanied by a death toll, variously credibly estimated at between 200,000 (Moon 1998) and 500,000 (Khosla 1989; Kumar 1997). (Figures of up to 2 million are also cited.) Involuntary and expelled cross-border refugees and displaced persons may have approached 15 million. The scale and intensity of the brutal coercion, rape, abduction of women, looting, family fragmentation, and resettlement pains were individually and collectively appalling. The partition of Palestine and the war that accompanied Israel's declaration of independence led to the deaths of approximately 6,000 Israeli Jews and over 10,000 Arabs, and to the expulsion and flight of over 750,000 Palestinians, who became homeless refugees, whom Israel refused to allow to return, and whom the Arab states refused to integrate. As a byproduct of the partition, and of Israel's war of independence, over half a million Jews were expelled from surrounding Arab states. In the Turkish invasion and partition of Cyprus 6,000 Greek Cypriots were killed and 2,000 reported missing, and some 1,500 Turks and Turkish Cypriots were killed. After the partition more than 10,000 Greek Cypriots were pressurized into leaving Northern Cyprus, on top of the nearly 160,000 who had already fled before the invading Turkish army. The partition of Ireland was accompanied by the least violence amid twentieth-century partitions, in raw numbers and taking into account the scale of the population. But the deaths accompanying the formation of Northern Ireland between 1920 and 1922 have been estimated at between 232 and 544 (O'Leary and McGarry 1996: 21) and either figure is much higher than the death toll in Ulster before the partition. Moreover, thousands of Catholics were expelled from their jobs and their homes in Belfast and fled south; thousands of Protestants also emigrated from independent Ireland. It therefore beggars belief that Kaufmann (1998) argues that in all these cases partition successfully reduced violence! He compares post-partition internal violence in the new units with the violence that accompanied the partition – which begs the appropriate evaluative

question because it discounts the conflict immediately caused by the partition itself. In Cyprus significant intercommunal killings between 1960 and 1974 preceded the partition (Loizos 1988) but Kaufmann's argument is made convincing only by failing to count the costs of the partition itself.

At bottom, claims such as Kaufmann's are counterfactual, not factual: his claim is that without partition the conflicts would have been worse. In three of the cases – Ireland, India, and Palestine – Kaufmann maintains that it was independence from Britain, and the collapse of its military and policing authority, rather than partition, that caused large-scale violence. This is simply unconvincing. Had the imperial authority transferred power to a single central authority then the security dilemma would surely have had less resonance than one accompanying partition and the formation of two new governments. Partitionists inevitably have to defend the historical record of partitions through counterfactual propositions: partition was not the problem per se, but rather the particular partition was defective in key respects. Kaufmann, for example, regards the leaving of intermixed populations as potential triggers of future insecurity. The reason the Cypriot partition, according to his criteria, was “better” than any of the others was because of the planned and implemented ethnic expulsion that accompanied it. Kaufmann's argument shows it is easy to slip from a defense of partition as a last resort to tacit support for ethnic expulsions, or “population transfers” in the standard euphemism.

Partitions are especially perverse when they have domino effects – triggering post-partition wars. Security dilemmas now take an interstate rather than merely intercommunal form. The Arab–Israeli wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973, and the Israeli–Lebanese wars, show that the partition of Palestine was not the end of conflict in the region. India and Pakistan have fought three wars, in 1948, 1965, and 1971, triggered by two regions troubled by the repercussions of the 1947 partition: Kashmir in the first two, and East Bengal in the third. Radcliffe did not partition Jammu and Kashmir. Instead, the United Kingdom left it to its princely head, as with all other princely states, to determine its future. Princely self-determination was Great Britain's last contribution to the theory of partition management. Under coercive pressure from Pakistan, its Hindu ruler took his majority Muslim province into the Indian Union. Bose (2002: 183–89) documents Kaufmann's errors in understanding what happened in Kashmir. War was triggered, leaving Kashmir divided by a line of control and with a UN presence. India and Pakistan still confront one another over what Pakistanis are inclined to call the “unfinished business” of partition, but now with each state in possession of nuclear arms. A thousand miles divided the Pakistan that resulted from partition – a security nightmare for any armed forces. Its internal divisions proved deeper than geographical noncontiguity: East Pakistan's Bengalis experienced discrimination and domination at the hands of West Pakistan's power elite, and when the latter refused to allow authentic federalism or authentic democratization, and engaged in genocide, the secession of Bangladesh was fought for, and won, in 1971, with the aid of a decisive Indian intervention. Conflict in and over Northern Ireland, though it never took the form of interstate war, was not resolved before 1998, or 2007, depending upon your point of view (Taylor 2009). The partition of Cyprus is maintained by the presence of the Turkish army, and by UN peacekeeping forces in buffer zones. It threatens war between Turkey and Greece, two NATO “allies,” while the nonrecognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus affected the complex diplomacy attached to the accession to the European Union of Cyprus (as a whole). Official Cyprus is now within the

European Union and has the ability to help veto Turkey's accession. These post-partition interstate tensions (Cyprus and Ireland) and interstate wars (in the Middle East and South Asia) hardly inspire confidence that partition offers a "realistic" settlement of security dilemmas.

*The receding goal of homogenization.* Critics of partition maintain that the only thing they "are unlikely to produce is ethnically homogeneous ... states" (Horowitz 1985: 589). This argument may seem compelling. Post-partition India and Pakistan were both vast, populous, and multiethnic, and remained multireligious; and West Pakistan experienced a fresh infusion of linguistically differentiated refugees. Post-partition Israel was left with a significant Palestinian Arab minority, and soon had waves of new Jewish refugees of diverse ethnic formation. Its subsequent settler colonial infusion policies in the West Bank and Gaza hardly aided the homogenization of the occupied territories. Northern Ireland was left with a unionist and cultural Protestant/nationalist and cultural Catholic ratio of 67:33 that has since shifted to 60:40, and may have moved past 55:45 toward parity. Horowitz's argument, however, needs to be qualified by considering religious, not ethnic, homogenizing. Pakistan is certainly proportionally more Islamic than India, even though India had, and still has, the largest minority Muslim population in the world. (The secession of Bangladesh led to an irony: Muslims in India separately outnumber those in Bangladesh and Pakistan.) In Ireland, ethnicity and religion were fused in many people's identities, but the Irish Free State was more Catholic than pre-partition Ireland, and Northern Ireland was more Protestant than historic Ulster. Israel was more Jewish, and the West Bank and Gaza more Muslim and Christian, than pre-partition Palestine. The units of post-partition Cyprus are very ethnically, linguistically, and religiously homogenized by comparison with pre-1974 Cyprus.

Critics of partition establish their point more effectively when they say that partition *alone* is unlikely to generate the presumably desired homogenization. The rigorous realists rely on a tacit assumption: the necessity of expulsions. Consider just twentieth-century European ethno-national and ethno-religious history. None of the new European states created after 1919 – after the collapse of the Czarist, Hohenzollern, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires – came close to being mononational because of the Versailles settlement, or the settlements at other chateaux in the Paris region, or because of other subsequent border adjustments before 1939. Of the seven that survived in some form after the Second World War their proportion of national minorities fell from 25 per cent in the 1930s to 7.2 per cent in the 1970s, a radical homogenization. But only a small proportion of this change was the consequence of border adjustments. The rest has to be accounted for by genocide, expulsion, and assimilation (Coakley 1992b, a; Horak 1985: 4). The dark nights of Nazism, the Second World War, and Stalinism – not partitions – "tidied up" Europe's states.

Partitions are never enough for rigorous homogenizers. They must pursue voluntary or quasi-voluntary "transfers," and are driven to condone or organize expulsions, while post-partition states may pursue policies of control that encourage potentially or actively disloyal minorities to emigrate while encouraging inward immigration of the "right" people to ensure the demographic advantage of the *Staatsvolk*. Partitions without comprehensive expulsions generate two kinds of orphaned minorities: former prospective majorities, and formerly dominant minorities. The former are often double losers – they may have never shared in the self-government of their community as part of a majority, and now they are in another jurisdiction. Former prospective majorities

and formerly dominant minorities may both become part of irredentist movements, or campaign for a further partition.

*Damage to successor states.* Anti-partitionists maintain that partitions generate new security crises of an interstate form, but also cause significant economic disruption, and not just because they may be accompanied by communal conflict and warfare, and sudden flows of refugees. They disturb established monetary and exchange networks, increase transactions costs, enhance the likelihood of protectionism, and provide incentives for smuggling and other border-related criminal activity. They have led to the depreciation of significant capital investments in transport, as roads, railways and canals, and ports and airports, have their original functions terminated or significantly damaged, and to losses that may flow from failure to cooperate in agriculture, water management, and energy production and distribution (Moriarty 1994). The new post-partition entities have common functional and infrastructural interests flowing from their shared pasts. So they usually end up, ironically, by considering post-partition cross-border functional cooperation, or confederal arrangements – which put in question part of the necessity of partition in the first place. Great Britain accompanied the partition of Ireland with a proposed Council of Ireland, intended to link the Belfast and Dublin parliaments, and it insisted that the Irish Free State share a common crown and membership of the “British Commonwealth of Nations.”

Of the cases considered here the Irish Free State has had, in the long run, the most successful post-partition experience in state-building, development, and democratization. But its early years were deeply affected by the civil war that accompanied its inception – and that might have been avoided had there been no partition. Ireland’s comparative homogenization, through its integration and assimilation of its formerly dominant minority, the Anglo-Irish, suggests it was a beneficiary of the partition it opposed. But this perspective neglects the costs of partition for Irish state-building, especially in economic development. The new state began life without the industrial base of Belfast, and with a larger Protestant minority the long cultural sway of the Catholic Church over public policy in Ireland might have been less, and terminated earlier. Northern Ireland, by contrast, has been persistently unstable. Between the 1920s and the 1960s it was operated under a control system. Since the 1960s its conflict made the United Kingdom the most internally politically violent established European democracy (O’Leary and McGarry 1996: ch. 3; and 1). Post-partition Pakistan is acknowledged as a developmental disaster. The story of post-partition Palestine is known to the world. The unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has an unenviable reputation for corruption. There is a pattern here: one entity (Ireland; India; Israel; and Greek Cyprus) has done better than the other. Triage has certainly not been equally good for all. In the separation of Siamese twins the record appears to show that at least one of the twins has been badly lamed.

*On the failure to make a clean or elegant cut.* Partitionists do not have an easy time in creating new maps. Not only do their maps bleed, but also they do not look good – look at the shape of West Bengal, or the meandering border of Northern Ireland. One can argue that partitions worsen the “compactness” of the post-partition entities by contrast with their precursors. Compactness here refers to the physical solidity of a state – something that once was widely believed to have implications for its military security, and arguably still affects popular assumptions about the right shape of a state, however much academicians reject the thesis of “natural boundaries.” It was once argued that an ideal state is a circle, with a capital at its center, a form that has multiple

communications, control, and security advantages (Galnoor 1991; Galnoor 1995: 26 ff.). The most compact state, a perfect circle, would have an index score of 1; a square state would score well too, as would a pentagon or a hexagon. It is possible to think of partitions where the compactness scores of at least one entity have “improved.” Hungary, as it emerged from the partition of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, became fairly compact, with a score of 1.5, by comparison with its former shape. But, the Peel Commission (1.8) and the UN partition plans for Palestine (3.3) would both have worsened the compactness of the Jewish state by comparison with mandate Palestine (1.5), and the Israel that emerged from the 1949 armistice lines had a worsened index (2.1). Pakistan, of course, in two discontinuous entities, achieved no compactness. Northern Ireland’s new borders created adverse security and transport connections because its compactness was worse than that of Ireland as a whole. The potency of argument of this kind is questionable to those who think that globalization has abolished geography. Compactness may, however, have less salience for military security and communications than it once had. And compactness is far more complex to measure, assess, and use in evaluation than was once thought (Niemi et al. 1990).

## Conclusion

The partitionist and anti-partitionist arguments just considered are universal; they recur in response to, or in the aftermath of any proposed or actual partition. I have deliberately not biased the evaluation of either partitionists or anti-partitionists by attributing racist, chauvinist, or sectarian claims or motivations to their exponents – though these are part of the historical record, and no doubt part of the future. The claim is that these are typically the best arguments that accompany actual partitions as well as the best arguments that accompany the defeats of proposals to have partitions. The arguments themselves must enter any rounded historical explanations of why partitions do or do not occur. When partitions occur the arguments of partitionists have been compelling for at least one powerful agent, but they may not be sufficient to explain why they occur, especially given that the rebuttals of partitionist arguments seem more generally compelling – and are now internationally endorsed in international law.

Anti-partitionists, the foregoing evaluation suggests, have better arguments, judged by realistic, political, and moral criteria. When partition threatens, the appropriate slogan should not be John Lennon’s “Give peace a chance,” nor Edward Luttwak’s “Give war a chance” (Luttwak 1999), but rather “Give power sharing a chance.” Contemporary Northern Ireland suggests, and even Lebanon and Iraq may in future suggest, that complex power sharing settlements are possible even after protracted ethno-national wars (Kerr 2006; O’Leary 2009; Weller et al. 2008). They are at least as feasible as partitioning intermingled populations and less likely to risk mass deaths.

Partitions deserve their poor press. They have not generated better security environments. Most have been biased toward privileged or dominant minorities – pushing conflict downstream. Partition processes and post-partition arrangements have been worse than those predicted by supporters of partition for at least one successor unit. Partitionists are generally forced to argue that the pathologies of their preferred partition were the result of an imperfect design or of insufficient rigor, a response that is unfalsifiable and unconvincing. Prudence therefore mandates opposing partition as a tool of international public policy-making, and placing the burden of proof on its advocates.

For those of us who are not historicists there can be no certainty that there will be no further partitions – partitionist plans have been proposed in the last two decades for Quebec, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Burundi, and Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Iraq. (Galbraith's 2006 advocacy of the partition of Iraq may be usefully compared with my own reflections (O'Leary 2009, see especially 142–47).) Moreover, it cannot be known in advance that there will never be any case where partition truly is a better policy option for the affected peoples than the alternatives. But the standard for making that argument should be that partition is demonstrably the best way to prevent genocide, or large-scale ethnic expulsions, or their recurrence – after reflecting that proposing partition may enhance the risk of genocide and ethnic expulsions. Note carefully, the arguments surveyed here are not intended to hold any sway against the merits of peaceful negotiated secessions within recognized boundaries. (See Young 1997b, a for a good discussion of the commonalities of peaceful secessions.) There are good and bad secessions, but, by contrast, it is hard to find a good twentieth-century partition. What the argument here suggests is that the novelty of proposing and implementing a fresh sovereign border may destabilize existing intergroup relations in ways that may take generations to repair. By contrast, because secession takes place within a recognized border it may be easier to accomplish a soft landing to the crisis that promotes it.

This chapter has not discussed the reversibility of partitions (see O'Leary 2007: 905–6 for some speculations). It is sufficient to observe here that if the evidence suggests that one should generally oppose partitionist arguments that does not mean that one should necessarily support all efforts to reverse partitions; and even the practical feasibility of overturning a partition does not mean that that it is necessarily the best political option. The reunification of Ireland and of Cyprus under confederal and consociational formulas *may* be in the material and collective long-run interests of all the majorities of the affected peoples. By contrast, reunification in historic Palestine or South Asia are less obviously in the interests of the affected peoples. Nor has this chapter extensively discussed explanations of partitions (see O'Leary 2007), which are rooted in the competition between the nation-state form and its rivals and the forces which underpin nationalism in modernity (Gellner 1983). Nor has this chapter attempted to synthesize the results of the large-*n* literature with the detailed comparative case histories that have helped clarify the materials provisionally summarized here, partly because the author believes that much of these discussions is at cross-purposes, given the lack of scholarly clarity in coding what is to count as a partition – as opposed to a secession.

### **Acknowledgements**

This chapter is a revised portion of a keynote address to the conference “Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways,” Armagh, 19–20 January 2006, which revised a section of a long paper presented at the Keough conference on “Partition and Memory: Ireland, India and Palestine,” University of Notre Dame, December 6–9 2001. I am grateful to J. McGarry (as always), to participants at both conferences, and to K. Adeney, S. Bose, S. Deane, A. Goldstein, G. W. Jones, J. A. Hall, R. Kumar, N. Kasfir, A. Lijphart, I. Lustick, T. Mabry, M. Moore, J. Nagel, R. Smith and S. Wolff.



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