9. Devolution in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has had a devolved legislature and government, off and on, since 1921. This chapter first examines the nature of the devolution arrangements in place between 1921 and 1972 and then explains what was done to keep Northern Ireland running during the periods of direct rule from Westminster and Whitehall between 1972 and 1999 and between 2002 and 2007. The third section looks at how devolution operated under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement from 1999 to 2002 and from 2007 to 2017. The chapter then considers the reasons for the failure since 2017 to get devolution re-established and concludes by canvassing what the future constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland might be. Taken in the round, Northern Ireland’s experience of devolution during the past 98 years has been very troubled. Brexit, alas, seems unlikely to make it less so in the years ahead.
9. Devolution in Northern Ireland

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