The Economies on the Island of Ireland
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In 1992 the late Sir George Quigley coined the phrase "The Island Economy" to capture the opportunity, within the newly-created Single Market, for both economies on the island to develop positive economic synergies. His argument was that these economic synergies would be possible irrespective of the politics on the island. The extent to which these synergies could be realised was reinforced by moves toward peace in the 1990s, culminating in the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement in 1998.

The 2019 Symposium of the Statistical & Social Inquiry Society of Ireland looks at three aspects of the island economies at a point where the final outturn of Brexit is still unclear, but where any form of Brexit will likely have an impact on how the two economies operate side by side.

The first paper, by Richard Johnston, Frances Ruane and Laura Heery, looks at competitiveness factors in both economies, drawing on competitiveness indicators for both compiled by the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre for the *Economic Advisory Group* in Northern Ireland. These are the only indicators that allow direct comparison of competitiveness factors across the two economies within a wider European context. Key factors compared are education, research & development, infrastructure and the business environment.

The second paper, by John FitzGerald, looks directly at how investment in education in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the post-War years developed using different models and following different trajectories. The result has been a very different impact on economic growth: increasing human capital made a major contribution to growth in Ireland since 1960 while, in Northern Ireland, the failure to make adequate investment in education is reflected in a continuing poor economic performance.

The third paper, by Martina Lawless, explores firms and trade on the island of Ireland. It documents the broad patterns of firm sales and participation in trade for Northern Ireland and Ireland. Looking across sectors and firm size groups, it examines the distribution of cross-border trade with a particular focus on the degree of integration of supply chains. Using both aggregate and firm-level data, this paper aims to give as comprehensive a picture as possible of the international activities of firms in both economies.