

# (Re)imagining the nation: the politics of abortion in Northern Ireland

Despite the once-predicted demise of nationalisms, nationalist parties and movements are now **potent political forces** across the globe. **Abortion is a key issue within many.** Think of how pro-life positions intersected with the nationalist discourses surrounding Donald Trump's re-election.

## 1. What do we know about women and nationalism?

The roles women are assigned within nationalist mobilizations fall into **two main categories:**



### Reproducers



- Women reproduce the nation **biologically** by giving birth to its new members (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989).
- Women reproduce the nation **ideologically** by raising children within a certain set of national, cultural norms (ibid.).



### Symbols



- Women serve as **metaphors** for the nation (McClintock 1995).
- Women also serve as metaphors for **national boundaries**. This way, they come to represent the moral and cultural purity of the nation (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989).

Despite the significance of women's bodies within nationalist agendas, women are not typically main actors within nationalist politics. They are **'supporting actors'** to men protagonists (Nagel 1998, 243).



- If women reproduce the nation biologically, how does a pro-choice position enter nationalisms?
- Does it signal a **different type of nationalism?**
- **A feminist nationalism?**

## 2. Why Northern Ireland?

- Northern Irish political institutions are founded on **ethnonational division** between British nationalists and Irish nationalists.
- From 2008, **abortion** has been politicised within this context.
- Both major nationalist parties were, in 2008, pro-life. By 2019, one had switched to pro-choice. This research is interested in the **shift.**

## 3. How will the research be carried out?

- Critical discourse analysis.
- Political discourse, news media and social media.

**Goal:** to reconstruct the **interpretative struggle** over the meaning of the nation and analyse how and why pro-choice positions become an **important part.**

### Contact info

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### References

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