The Politics of Conflict and Transformation: Northern Ireland in Comparative Perspective, a conference celebrating the work of Prof Jennifer Todd

Panel I: The Dynamics of Conflict on the Island of Ireland, North and South (Chair, Karen Trew, QUB)

Is a Middle Force Emerging in Northern Ireland?: John Coakley, QUB

Analysis of the flow of demographic trends and the evolution of political forces in Northern Ireland has for long had a predominantly binary focus. There are numerous studies of the fall and rise of nationalism and of the rise and fall of unionism, based on a sometimes explicit but more often unspoken discourse of competition between two communities. This paper considers an issue in relation to which a much smaller literature has appeared: the steady growth of a kind of middle ground. This is made up variously of those who were born outside Northern Ireland, or who have exited from affiliation to the two dominant communities, or perhaps never belonged to either; of those who do not identify unambiguously as British or as Irish, but rather report a dual or alternative identity; of those who describe themselves as neither unionist nor nationalist; and of those who vote for neither of the two large communal blocs. Using census and survey data, the paper will seek to track the evolution of this expanding section of the population, and will seek to assess its implications for party support and for the future constitutional path of Northern Ireland.

The Politics of Multiple Majorities in Northern Ireland: Niall Ó Dochartaigh, NUI Galway

Northern Ireland now has multiple cross-cutting majorities rather than one dominant political majority for the first time since its foundation almost 100 years ago. There is still a pro-union majority but there is also a pro-EU majority, a non-unionist majority and a pro-reform majority. This paper outlines how the imperative of preserving Unionist majority control rigidly structured political competition in Northern Ireland after 1920, and how it had a persistent shaping power even after the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in 1972. This was most evident in the strictly limited Protestant electoral support for a left-wing alternative to the dominant unionist parties. It argues that the emergence in 2017 of a non-unionist majority in the electorate and the Northern Ireland Assembly, combined with the pro-remain and pro-reform majorities, is generating a fundamental long-term shift in the dynamics of political competition. The significance of this has been obscured by the suspension of the Executive and the Brexit crisis. The paper traces the emergence of these new majorities, outlines their contours and identifies the new political dynamics they generate. It concludes by considering the medium-term effects of these new dynamics on political competition in Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland.

Praying for Paisley: Religion, Identity and Forgiveness in the Life of Fr Gerry Reynolds: Gladys Ganiel, QUB

This paper explores the life of Fr Gerry Reynolds, a priest who was based in Belfast's Clonard Monastery during the Troubles (1983-2015). Using a biographical approach to

identity construction, it analyses how Irish Catholicism shaped Reynolds personal and social identities. It argues that the Rev Ian Paisley's sustained and strident protests against two major ecumenical events Reynolds organised during his first few years in Clonard were crucial in shaping Reynolds' ecumenical and peacebuilding work for the rest of his life. Drawing on Reynolds' personal journals, the paper describes how he reacted to Paisley's protests. Reynolds prayed for Paisley over many years, cultivating an attitude of forgiveness (towards Paisley as well as other Troubles protagonists such as the British Army) and attempting to pass that on to Catholics who attended Clonard. Reynolds also reflected on how Paisley's fear of Irish Catholicism motivated his protests, which inspired him to try and dispel those fears among the Protestants he met. The paper provides insight into how religion and its practices (especially prayer) operate at the micro-levels of identity construction, which can prompt personal change and a softening of attitudes towards the 'other'. In a context where Paisley was using religion to foment division, the importance of this alternative use of religious resources should not be underestimated.

The Role of Reconciliation in how Conflict Ends: Lessons from Religious Conflict in France and the Republic of Ireland: Joseph Ruane, UCD

How does conflict end and what role does reconciliation play in this? This paper looks at how religious conflict in France and ethno-religious conflict in the Republic of Ireland came to an end. It draws on ethnographic research in a particular region of each: the Gard and Co Cork. The argument is that conflict ended because the differences that produced the original conflict became less and less relevant, and then finally irrelevant. This happened because of wider structural and geo-political changes, not because the issues themselves were somehow resolved. Acts of reconciliation played at best a minor role in the process. Applying this to the much more difficult case of Northern Ireland leads to two conclusions. One is that an agreement that rests on and foregrounds the roots of division is not going to end conflict, no matter how necessary, fair and imaginative that agreement is. The second is that working at reconciliation may improve surface relations, but its ability to end conflict is very limited. The political goal must be to find some way of making the deeper roots of division less and less relevant and - one day perhaps - irrelevant.

Panel II: Constructions of Identity (Chair: Yvonne Galligan, QUB)

Identity Change and Ontological Security: The Challenges of Conflict Resolution: Bahar Rumelili, Koc University

Conflict resolution often brings with it an expectation of identity change, from enemy identities to more peaceful identities of rival or friend. While many scholars have assumed that identity change simply follows from the resolution of disputes, Jennifer Todd has provided us with a complex and nuanced theoretical framework of how identity change unfolds and systematic empirical analyses of how actors negotiate their old and new identities in the Northern Irish context and beyond. This paper builds on Todd's work on identity change and connects it with the literature on ontological security. I discuss how identities become ingrained in frameworks of ontological security at the individual, societal, and state levels, and thereby become integral to stability and continuity of the actors' sense of Being. Therefore, identity change is a process that is necessarily fraught with anxiety and ontological insecurity, which fosters attachment to established identities and resistance. However, identity change nevertheless occurs despite these ontological security concerns. I analyze

how ontological security concerns affect and shape the process of identity change: its form, pace, underlying mechanisms, and sustainability.

Bridge-Builder Feminism and Feminist Identity Politics in Northern Ireland: Theresa O'Keefe, UCC

While gender has been widely used as an analytical category to understand the dynamics of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland (Galligan 2013; Ashe 2007, O'Keefe 2012), surprisingly little has been written on the ways in which the conflict has shaped or constrained feminist organising. Singular focus on groups or initiatives like the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, Peace People or the Women's Support Network has overshadowed the contested history, intricacies and shapeshifting of the wider feminist movement. This paper examines the role of contested identities in the fractured development of the feminist movement in the North. I take the concept of 'bridge-builders', introduced by Todd and Ruane in *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland* (1996), to explain how contentious identity politics are mediated within the feminism movement. Based on in-depth individual interviews with feminist organisers, this paper charts how 'bridge-builder feminism' became a distinguishing feature of Northern Irish feminism. Bridge-builder feminism was used as a mechanism to transgress what Todd calls the 'grammars of nationality' (Todd 2015). I argue this organising approach came to thrive at the expense of intersectional feminism, minimised the complexities of women's identities and continues to impact upon the capacities of the feminist movement to address key feminist issues.

"So are you a Derry girl? Or a Londonderry girl?": Exploring individual and group regulation of social identity performance in Northern Ireland: Orla Muldoon, Rob Lowe, Claire Campbell, Geoff McCombe, University of Limerick

Northern Ireland has a history of ethno-nationalist conflict in which national (Irish/British) and religious (Catholic/Protestant) social identities are strongly elided. Whilst attempts to move beyond this dichotomous structure are observed (e.g., the potentially superordinate label 'Northern Irish'), such attempts are often unsuccessful. This paper looks at participants' orientation to identities associated with conflict, and their subsequent management of such identities in mundane contexts. Data is reported for two studies: i. interviews (N = 61) and focus groups (N=6) conducted with individuals across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties and ii. workshops during which participants (N=25, age 20-77) undertook a series of activities including a tour of Derry/Londonderry incorporating areas marked by social conflict, and talks by ex-prisoners during which focus groups were conducted. Initial identification of tropes was by thematic analysis, with further consideration of the discourse of identity informed by discursive psychology. Themes relating to identity saliency and conflict in Northern Ireland are reported that outline the failure of strategies of impartiality and interpersonal relations, and instead point to the inter-and-intragroup maintenance and regulation of identities rooted in conflict.

Brexit, the Border, and Constructing a Dual-Identity Future for Northern Ireland: Peter McLoughlin, QUB

This paper provides a brief overview of progressive thinking on the issue of political identity from the earliest days of the Northern Ireland settlement process in the early 1990s through to the current impasse between the main parties. In doing so it focuses mainly on arguably the chief architect of the peace process, and the party which engaged in the most serious

reflection on the nature of identity division in Northern Ireland – John Hume and the SDLP. The paper offers a defence of the basic approach to identity offered by Hume and the SDLP, which was largely adopted in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA). However, the paper also considers critiques of that approach which argue that the GFA served to institutionalize and reproduce identity conflict in Northern Ireland, creating continued instability, including the political stalemate now evident. The paper argues that the current impasse is more a result of Brexit than defects in the GFA, but acknowledges that the UK's proposed departure from the EU presents a severe challenge to the accord. However, the paper suggests that the solution to both Northern Ireland's continued conflict over identity-based issues and the problems of Brexit is in fact to extend the political logic of the GFA by moving towards a fully bi-national polity.

Panel III: Borders and Boundaries; including, but not exclusive to Brexit
(Chair: John Baker, UCD)

Justice Beyond Borders and the Challenge of Substantive Decolonization - Investigating the Irish Case: Shane O'Neill, Keele University

In this presentation I will argue that dominant egalitarian liberal accounts of justice have typically been insensitive to injustices that arise from a lack of fit between state boundaries and national communities. This problem is particularly evident in cases where those boundaries were drawn in the context of a process of decolonisation. My suggestion is that we should rethink the demands of justice in a global context, for this and for many other reasons, as the challenge of creating a fully decolonised world. Were we to do so, then we would be far better placed to understand the entanglements of state, nation and disputed boundaries, as significant issues to be addressed in any serious attempt to achieve just relations between political communities. In making this argument I will draw on the case of the Irish border, from partition, through the achievements of the 1998 Agreement, to Brexit and beyond.

Borders of states and boundaries of citizenship: Iseult Honohan, UCD

Citizenship is attributed to individuals by nation-states. But citizenship can be both transnational and supranational. And it can vary across borders along the dimensions of legal status, participation, and membership. This paper considers the variety of ways in which the boundaries of citizenship diverge from those of states and examines alternative normative approaches to such divergence. It also considers some practical implications of these approaches for the complex post-Brexit status of Northern Ireland.

Bordering, Debordering and Rebordering on the Island of Ireland: Cathal McCall, QUB

This paper examines border reconfiguration on the island of Ireland. It is organised around the dynamics of bordering, debordering, and rebordering. It will explore the manifestations and nuances of the Irish border between 1921 and 1993, the period synonymous with bordering. The ensuing 25 years of debordering, which was underpinned by Europeanisation and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, will then be discussed in economic, political, social and cultural contexts. Finally, the rebordering proposed by Brexit will be examined in these contexts.

UK Borders and Brexit: a comparative perspective: Katy Hayward, QUB

The Irish border is not the only border to be affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Brexit will also have direct implications for the border with Gibraltar and the management of the sovereign base areas in Cyprus. It will also have indirect implications for borders *within* the United Kingdom. This paper will outline the different challenges faced by the UK government in relation to these boundaries, their significance and the dominant approaches taken towards these challenges. It will consider, in particular, the ways in which the government has 'framed' these borders. The second half of the paper will then consider the case of the Irish border and how it has been addressed so far in the Brexit process, focusing in particular on the 'solutions' proposed and on the language used to manage and shape the presentation of the difficulties entailed in establishing a post-Brexit border. At the heart of this paper is analysis of current UK political discourse about Britishness, sovereignty and the Union – how this sits uncomfortably with the realities of the UK, its various parts and its overseas territories.

Panel IV: Comparative Perspectives (Chair: Stephanie Dornschneider, UCD)

Great Nations and Small Empires: Nationalist Movements in Ireland and the Balkans, Siniša Malešević, UCD

In this paper I explore the historical dynamics of nationalism, imperialism and state formation in Ireland and the Balkans. More specifically the paper zooms in on the late 19th and early 20th century and analyses how nationalist movements developed and spread in interaction with the competing neighbourly state projects. Both the Irish and Balkan nationalist movements are traditionally depicted as the typical representatives of the 19th century 'small nation' movements fighting against the 'great empires' (i.e. British, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman). The conventional narratives emphasise the mutually exclusive character of nationalism and imperialism and depict 'small nations' as the enemies of imperial projects. In this paper I contest these interpretations by demonstrating how 19th and early 20th century 'small nations' movements have had drawn equally on the imperialist and the nationalist tropes to legitimise their calls for the existence of the sovereign and independent polities. The paper also engages with the recent work of Jennifer Todd and provides a comparative historical sociology of Irish and Balkan cases.

How do Small States Cope with Open Ethno-National Conflicts involving their "Co-Nationals" – A Comparative Study of Partition Politics of Albania and Ireland, Roland Gjoni, UCD

This paper compares the post-partition politics of Ireland and Albania towards their "co-ethnic populations" in Northern Ireland and various Balkan states over a century long period. The research addresses one principal question: Why and how do partitioned states engage with ethnic kin outside state borders? The paper focuses on the strategies and actions of the Albanian and Irish state elites in dealing with large Albanian populations in the Balkans and Irish Catholic community in Northern Ireland over more than one hundred years of the state existence, their relationships with host states where partitioned Albanian and Irish communities reside and their relations with great powers and the international community. Based on primary sources in the form of elite interviews, previously researched archival records in the Albanian case and witness seminars developed in the Breaking the Patterns of

Conflict project of UCD/SPIRE, I argue that weak kin states faced with mobilized external kin do not simply control or orchestrate the elites of kin states but largely shape their response in accordance with kin mobilization patterns. Bringing together an analysis of institutional change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010) and the importance of timing and sequencing in the study of politics (Pierson 2005), the study concludes that domestic interests of state security and stability underpin the strategies of small kin states and in the long-term kin mobilization patterns drives their shift into more activist kin states.

Conflict Management in South Africa and Northern Ireland Compared: Adrian Guelke, QUB

Comparison of South Africa and Northern Ireland as cases of intractable conflicts became commonplace during the 1980s. The pairing of the two societies has remained popular, despite divergence in their political trajectory. The political settlement in Northern Ireland, despite frequent crises, stands out as a relatively successful use of consociationalism as a means of promoting political accommodation in a deeply divided society. In the case of South Africa, by contrast, consociational devices have not played a significant role in sustaining liberal-democracy after apartheid. The establishment of a Government of National Unity merely smoothed the path to majority rule. Legal rather than political constraints have placed limits on the conduct of the Executive under a majoritarian system. These include the bill of rights and the office of the legal protector. The paper explains why such different approaches to the challenge of creating a legitimate dispensation in a deeply divided society were adopted in these two cases. It also seeks to assess the pluses and minuses of the two approaches in their respective contexts.

From #TogetherforYes to #NiUnaMenos. A comparative analysis of women's rights movements for reproductive rights and the church-state relationship in Ireland and Argentina: Melanie Hoewer, UCD

In recent years, reproductive rights campaigns have been fueled by tragedies of women in Ireland (*Savita Halappanavar's* death in 2012) and in Argentinia (the brutal murder of a pregnant 14-year-old Argentinian girl in 2015). While such single events have been important for social mobilisations on reproductive rights, the public outcries that followed them are a sign for wider trends of secularisation and liberalisation in these societies. This paper compares the connection between social mobilization and the connection of religion and national identity in Ireland and in Argentinia. Looking at nuanced change in the entanglement of religion and nationality, it sets out to provide a framework for further exploring different political outcomes of women's social mobilisations. In particular, the paper compares underlying explanations for the successful abortion referendum in Ireland (25 May 2018) and the failing of the Abortion Bill in Argentina (9 August 2018).

Wrap-up Panel: Bronagh Hinds (Democrashe), John Doyle (DCU), Duncan Morrow (UU); (Chair: Paul Gillespie, Deputy Director, Institute for British-Irish Studies, UCD)

Remarks on the publication of Jennifer Todd's *Identity Change after Conflict: Ethnicity, Boundaries and Belonging in the Two Irelands,* John

Brewer, QUB, Editor of Palgrave Macmillan's Compromise after Conflict Series