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Belfast, UK

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Jennifer Todd

Identity Change after Conflict

Ethnicity, Boundaries and Belonging
in the Two Irelands

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Jennifer Todd
Geary Institute
University College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland

Palgrave Studies in Compromise after Conflict

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Series Editor's Preface

Compromise is a much used but little understood term. There is a sense in which it describes a set of feelings (the so-called spirit of compromise) that involve reciprocity, representing the agreement to make mutual concessions toward each other from now on: no matter what we did to each other in the past, we will act toward each other in the future differently as set out in the agreement between us. The compromise settlement can be a spit and a handshake, much beloved in folk lore, or a legally binding statute with hundreds of clauses.

As such, it is clear that compromise enters into conflict transformation at two distinct phases. The first is during the conflict resolution process itself, where compromise represents a willingness amongst parties to negotiate a peace agreement that represents a second-best preference in which they give up their first preference (victory) in order to cut a deal. A great deal of literature has been produced in Peace Studies and International Relations on the dynamics of the negotiation process and the institutional and governance structures necessary to consolidate the agreement afterwards. Just as important, however, is compromise in the second phase, when compromise is part of post-conflict reconstruction, in which protagonists come to learn to live together despite their former enmity and in face of the atrocities perpetrated during the conflict itself.

In the first phase, compromise describes reciprocal agreements between parties to the negotiations in order to make political concessions sufficient

to end conflict; in the second phase, compromise involves victims and perpetrators developing ways of living together in which concessions are made as part of shared social life. The first is about compromises between political groups and the state in the process of statebuilding (or re-building) after the political upheavals of communal conflict; the second is about compromises between individuals and communities in the process of social healing after the cultural trauma provoked by the conflict.

This book series primarily concerns itself with the second process, the often messy and difficult job of reconciliation, restoration and repair in social and cultural relations following communal conflict. Communal conflicts and civil wars tend to suffer from the narcissism of minor differences, to coin Freud's phrase, leaving little to be split halfway and compromise on, and thus are usually especially bitter. The series therefore addresses itself to the meaning, manufacture and management of compromise in one of its most difficult settings. The book series is cross-national and cross-disciplinary, with attention paid to interpersonal reconciliation at the level of everyday life, as well as culturally between social groups, and the many sorts of institutional, interpersonal, psychological, sociological, anthropological and cultural factors that assist and inhibit societal healing in all post-conflict societies, historically and in the present. It focuses on what compromise means when people have to come to terms with past enmity and the memories of the conflict itself, and relate to former protagonists in ways that consolidate the wider political agreement.

This sort of focus has special resonance and significance for peace agreements that are usually very fragile. Societies emerging out of conflict are subject to on-going violence from spoiler groups who are reluctant to give up on first preferences, constant threats from the outbreak of renewed violence, institutional instability, weakened economies, and a wealth of problems around transitional justice, memory, truth recovery and victimhood, amongst others. Not surprisingly therefore, reconciliation and healing in social and cultural relations is difficult to achieve, not least because inter-personal compromise between erstwhile enemies is difficult.

Lay discourse picks up on the ambivalent nature of compromise after conflict. It is talked about in common sense in one of two ways, in which compromise is either a virtue or a vice, taking its place among the angels

or in Hades. One form of lay discourse likens concessions to former protagonists with the idea of restoration of broken relationships and societal and cultural reconciliation, in which there is a sense of becoming (or returning) to wholeness and completeness. The other form of lay discourse invokes ideas of appeasement, of being *compromised* by the concessions, which constitute a form of surrender and reproduce (or disguise) continued brokenness and division. People feel they continue to be beaten by the sticks which the concessions have allowed others to keep; with restoration, however, weapons are turned truly in ploughshares. Lay discourse suggests, therefore, that there are issues that the Palgrave Studies in Compromise after Conflict series must begin to problematize, so that the process of societal healing is better understood and can be assisted and facilitated by public policy and intervention.

Jennifer Todd's volume in the Series addresses these sorts of issues in a case study of Ireland, North and South, by looking at the extent to which identity change has occurred to undergird and support broader social and political changes. It is a work of considerable theoretical insight by teasing out the relationship between social transformation and identity change, and of impressive empirical endeavour, with several interconnected pieces of interview research and related secondary data analysis.

Most comparative research on the island of Ireland simply compares the two parts and does not involve an integrated research design where the North and South are studied in the one project. Professor Todd's book exemplifies the virtues of genuine comparative research, where the two Irelands are treated as one for research purposes and trends across both are the focus of the study.

Moreover, Ireland is a good case study with which to address theoretical and empirical ideas about identity change and socio-political change. Partition of the Island in 1921 after a bloody war of independence offers the opportunity to assess lines of convergence almost a century later, especially in the context where Brexit has given international attention to the status and nature of the border within Ireland. The North's emergence out of more recent conflict permits analysis of the role of identity change as cause and effect of its peace process. Ireland is also extremely well studied as a society and has generated a wealth of survey data that provides a backcloth to the interview data generated in this study and

useful points of comparison to the primary data generated by the author and her colleagues. It allows a strong and quasi-experimental analysis of everyday processes and their macro-impact. The focus on Ireland is thus a strength.

The book thus works at many levels, theoretical, empirical, national and comparative. It is always a sign of the excellence of a book that one can peel away several layers to a sophisticated argument. I take from it, for the purposes of this Series, three key arguments: (a) the attention Todd gives to the everyday practice of identity; (b) to the many localized practises of which identity change consists; and (c) her argument that there is greater evidence of identity change at this everyday level than in collective group processes. Todd is a political scientist, myself a sociologist, but we share the view that groups change when their members do, even if more slowly and hesitantly. Professor Todd's focus on everyday identity changes by ordinary laymen and women offers Ireland the prospect of a society in which the 'ordinary virtues', as Michael Ignatieff, terms them, of empathy, respect, tolerance and compromise emerge stronger than ever before. This gives us hope for Northern Ireland as it emerges out of conflict. As General Editor, I warmly welcome this addition to the Series.

Belfast, UK
June 2018

John D. Brewer

Preface and Acknowledgements

In retrospect, this book began in 2002 in an emergent ‘Celtic Tiger’ Dublin where it was difficult to tell what of the relentless self-promotion of government, universities, media and business was true and what was false. It was four years after the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. The initial surge of optimism was subsiding after successive political crises, unionist unwillingness to commit on devolution or to move on policing, and republican refusal to decommission arms. The research began with a recognition that neither I nor my colleagues knew how people were responding to the major political and social changes around us. When the prospect of research funding arose, I was clear that we had to go out and ask ordinary citizens how they thought about the changes. I was also clear that the research had to compare North and South as very little research at the time had done.

Much discussion later, the research project Changing Irish Identities (CII) began in 2003 at the Geary Institute, University College Dublin. I acknowledge PRTL13 (The Third Irish Government Programme For Research at Third Level Institutions), the then Director of the Geary Institute Stephen Mennell, and the incoming Director, Colm Harmon, who provided encouragement and support over the next four years. The PIs of the CII project were John Coakley, Alice Feldman, Tom Inglis and me. We appointed a researcher—Dr Theresa O’Keefe—to conduct interviews. All five of us continued with weekly two-hour-long discussions as

we met the challenges of defining and operationalizing 'identity' and defining and assessing appropriate methods of interviewing. The discussions stimulated me to write an initial article on identity change.

In 2004 I applied for further funding for a North-South project 'Intergenerational Transmission and Ethno-national identity in the Irish Border Area' (ITENIBA) (2004–2006). My partners were Orla Muldoon and Karen Trew, social psychologists then in Queens University Belfast. I acknowledge funding from EU Peace III programme, via the Irish Higher Education Authority North South programme, and the help of the Geary Institute and Colm Harmon, its Director. Colm encouraged me to recruit an international advisory board, which included Michèle Lamont who was a very important influence and advisor, then and later. For the Geary strand of the ITENIBA project, we appointed two researchers, Dr. Nathalie Rougier, a social psychologist, and Dr. Lorenzo Cañas Bottos, an anthropologist. We engaged in two years of very intensive and collaborative research and constant discussion and published a number of articles together, some with the Belfast team, and some with Theresa O'Keefe (see Appendix).

Funding ended just as I was beginning to use the data to work with my own ideas on identity change. A year's sabbatical (2006–2007) funded by the Irish Research Council showed me the size of the task of coding 220 interviews largely by myself. The sabbatical was spent in Nîmes, where Joseph Ruane was conducting the French part of his funded comparative study of Protestant minorities.¹ When the opportunity of interviewing mixed marriage Protestant-Catholic couples emerged, we decided that we would do it best together, and I worked with him interviewing another 30 respondents in the Gard.

Publishing all of this was delayed by the other demands of Irish academic life and by the Irish economic bust which increased pressures, lowered resources and took my attention away from what would have been in the best of circumstances a difficult process of analysis. However, by 2012 a thorough revision of the concepts and new phases of analysis were well

¹'Irish Protestants in the European Context', funded by an IRCHSS Government of Ireland Research Projects Grant in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2005–2007.

underway. In 2014, I undertook a small set of follow-up interviews, funded by the Institute for British Irish Studies, UCD. These were conducted by Dr. Susan McDermott, Oisín O'Malley Daly, and me, according to the interview schedule of the ITENIBA project. Through 2015–2016 I completed several redrafts, including one at the European University Institute in Florence where I was a Fellow in the School of Political Science and Sociology in spring semester, 2016. The book was finished in 2017 and underwent more revisions and delays before John Brewer suggested I send it to his series with Palgrave Macmillan. UCD College of Social Sciences and Law funded research assistance towards publication.

I thank all of those interviewed for their kindness, generosity and willingness to give of their time, and thank all of my colleagues on the succession of projects.

Among those who helpfully commented on draft chapters and presentations or were helpful in other ways were Matthias Bähr, John Baker, Lorenzo Bosi, John Brewer, Lorenzo Cañas Bottos, John Coakley, Stephanie Dornschneider, David Farrell, Iseult Honohan, Melanie Hoewer, Tom Inglis, Jennifer Jackson, Brigid Laffan, Marie-Jo LaTorre, Sinisa Malešević, Orla Muldoon, Niall O'Dochartaigh, Theresa O'Keefe, Nathalie Rougier, Joseph Ruane, Marie-France Savinel, Andy Storey, Tobias Theiler, Daniel Thomas, Karen Trew, and a range of participants at conferences including the Council for European Studies; ASEN, London, 2013; ASA Eastern meetings 2013; ECPR joint sessions, 2015; IPSA Cyprus, 2017; the Dubrovnik Spring School in Conflict, 2017; EUI/SNS lecture and conference, October 2017; and the UCD Spire seminar. Thanks too to generations of MA and PhD students through this period, particularly to Gladys Ganiel, Adrian Millar, and Claire Mitchell, who were there from the start and who developed identity ideas in distinctive ways; to Michael Anderson, Thitiwat Boonyawongwiwat, Jennifer Jackson, Pascal Pragnère, Justin Sinnott and Lupa Ramadhani, who wrote about identity and boundaries and Jodi Zaffino who didn't; to Melanie Hoewer, Roland Gjoni and Benjamin Claeson, who were there at the end as significant critics, and to research assistants including Mary Brennan, Oisín O'Malley Daly, Kayla Torre, and Paul Turner, to Theo Honohan for helping with graphs and tables and to Eoin O'Mahony for making the map.

Joe Ruane and Tom Inglis read through the whole book and John Coakley read much of it. They made very generous, insightful and helpful comments. John Coakley, Caitriona Devery, David Farrell, Dara Gannon, Brigid Laffan, Colin Scott, Ben Tonra and Paul Walsh gave institutional support, as in different ways did Iseult Honohan, Melanie Hoewer and the late Elizabeth Meehan. Bahar Rumelili cooperated with me on a cognate project in 2015 and alerted me to a much wider range of literature.

Cian Ruane and Eva Ruane were generously supportive, and discussions with them helped me clarify my ideas. Joe Ruane was present throughout. Discussions with him were of major intellectual importance across the whole range of dimensions that the book addresses, and through the whole sequence of stages of this seemingly interminable project. We had ended our joint book in 1996 with a call for emancipation in Northern Ireland, and in a way this book is about the individual's role in creating a more emancipatory future. I hope he likes it.

Very belated thanks to my late parents, who experienced many of the contradictions of life in Northern Ireland and kept alive ethical values amidst ethnic group constraints, and to my brother.

Despite the help from so many, this was a very personalized project that I persisted in against all advice. None of those acknowledged bear responsibility for my mistakes although they did help me overcome some of them.

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