



ANNUAL REVIEW 2022-2023



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

THE SENATOR
GEORGE J. MITCHELL
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL PEACE,
SECURITY AND JUSTICE



THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

CONTENTS

01

RESEARCH

Message from the Director	<u>1</u>
Events	<u>4</u>
Agreement 25	<u>16</u>
Research Workshops	<u>32</u>
Publications	<u>36</u>
Podcasts	<u>40</u>
Blogs	<u>46</u>
Research Funded Posts	<u>56</u>
Successes	<u>58</u>
Institute Metrics	<u>64</u>

02

POSTGRADUATE ACTIVITIES

Postgraduate Research	<u>68</u>
LINAS Conference 2023	<u>72</u>
LINCS / LINAS Seminar Series	<u>76</u>
Fireside Chats	<u>77</u>
Student Blogs	<u>78</u>

03

PARTNERSHIPS AND SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT

Policy Workshop	<u>84</u>
Conversation Series	<u>85</u>
Communities in Transition	<u>86</u>
Legacy Legislation	<u>87</u>
Blog	<u>88</u>

04

PEOPLE

New Appointments	<u>92</u>
Sabbatical Fellows	<u>94</u>
Institute People	<u>96</u>
Postgraduate Students	<u>100</u>

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2022-23 academic year again saw Mitchell Institute colleagues and students pursuing important, innovative and wide-ranging work. In April 2023 the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement Conference at Queen's University was a marvellous gathering together of diverse political, societal and academic voices, twenty-five years after that epochal deal. Other events during the year have also offered major contributions to debate, to academic research and to student experience, reflecting the Institute's work in the fields of peace, security and justice. In terms of Research, Education, Partnerships and Societal Engagement, we hope that our work is making a contribution locally, nationally and internationally.

I'm grateful to Institute colleagues for their continued commitment and skill: Theme Leads Professor Kieran McEvoy, Professor Louise Mallinder and Professor Fiona Magowan; and the Institute team - Dr Wendy-Louise Smith, Brett Walker, Valerie Miller and Louise Milligan. I also want to thank the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Ian Greer, and the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas, for their ongoing strong support for the Institute. Senator George J. Mitchell's enthusiastic backing remains hugely appreciated, and his speech at the April 2023 Belfast Conference was an extraordinary highlight of the year.

We hope that this Annual Review provides a valuable insight into what we do, and that you will see your way to engaging with the Mitchell Institute in our future work.

*Professor Richard English
Director*



01

RESEARCH

The Institute is a flagship for interdisciplinary research, collaborating with internationally renowned partners and researchers, to deliver a range of local, national and international events.



[Available to view on YouTube at go.qub.ac.uk/Mitchell-YouTube](https://go.qub.ac.uk/Mitchell-YouTube)

LECTURE

The Annual Senator George J. Mitchell Peace Lecture 2022

Human Rights, Justice and Negotiating Peace with Terrorists: The Case of Afghanistan

Speaker: Mr Nader Nadery,
Asser Institute, The Hague
13 October 2022
Queen's University Belfast

The Senator George J. Mitchell Peace Lecture Series

The Annual Senator George J. Mitchell Peace Lecture Series celebrates and recognises Senator Mitchell's contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process and to conflict resolution in the Middle East.

His aim of transforming conflict and promoting social justice in Northern Ireland and across the world is shared by our Institute.

The Annual Peace Lecture series was inaugurated in 2018 with a Lecture by President Mary Robinson, reflecting on the life and career of Senator George J. Mitchell and his role in peace negotiations across the world.

2023 Lecture

The past two decades of international intervention in Afghanistan give many important lessons learned in the field of justice and human rights.

On 5 December 2001 a peace agreement for a post-Taliban government was signed in Bonn, Germany. The accord was facilitated by the UN after US and coalition forces launched a military operation against the Taliban, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attack of the United States.

Within a month, the Taliban's rule ended and Afghanistan embarked on a new path of stability, democracy and constitutional rule. The agreement aimed to protect the rights and freedom of Afghan citizens.

The Taliban were provided safe havens across the Durand line, regrouped and launched a deadly insurgency against the Afghan government and NATO forces in the country over the next 20 years.

The United States and the Taliban signed an agreement in February 2020, known as the US-Taliban Doha agreement, to bring an end to the war in Afghanistan. Negotiations had taken place over two years and in the absence of the then Afghan government. The direct talks between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan delegation and the Taliban were one of the four provisions of the US-Taliban Doha agreement.

Later that same year, on 12 September 2020, the Intra-Afghan Peace Negotiation began in Doha. Two large delegations of 21 members each met to find a peaceful settlement after nearly two decades of conflict. However, the US-Taliban negotiation changed the political and military realities of the country and consequently, incentives for a political settlement within the newly created political and military reality had reduced significantly within the Taliban.

The two sides negotiated for 11 months until the Islamic Republic government collapsed on 15 August 2021.

With the collapse of the republic, most of the gains in the field of Human Rights protection - especially of women rights - were being rolled back. There is now a systematic apartheid against Afghan women by the Taliban rulers.

This Lecture told the story of Afghans' struggle for institutionalization of human rights principles, their fight for justice and the international community's failure to side with them.

Nader Nadery discussed what it was like to negotiate peace with a group that was conducting terrorist activities and does not believe in human rights and the citizens freedom.

He spoke of the history of heartbreak and the story of the resilience of people in their quest for dignity and justice in the face of unimaginable adversity.

Nader Nadery

Nader Nadery is a Senior Research Fellow at the Asser Institute and a former member of the peace negotiation team for the Afghanistan Doha Peace Process.

He also served as chair of the Independent Civil Service Commission of Afghanistan and as senior advisor to the Afghan president on public and strategic affairs as well as on human rights issues.

Prior to joining the government, Nadery served as Director of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit and for seven years he served as commissioner of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

Previous Lectures

After Remorse, the Impossibility of Repair

Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Stellenbosch University and Mitchell Institute

Honorary Professor

October 2020

Interconnectedness for Peace in Our Times

Dr Mamphela Ramphele

Activist, Medical doctor, Academic, Businesswoman
and Political Thinker

October 2019

Senator George J. Mitchell:

A True Champion of Peace

Mary Robinson

Former President of Ireland and

UN Commissioner for Human Rights

November 2018



Left to right: Professor Kieran McEvoy, Theme Lead: Rights and Social Justice, Professor Richard English, Institute Director, Speaker: Nader Nadery, Asser Institute, Center for International and European Law, Professor Louise Mallinder, Theme Lead: Legacy, Professor Fiona Magowan, Theme Lead: Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding, Professor Michael Semple, Professorial Research Fellow.

CONFERENCE



Lessons Learned from the Northern Ireland Peace Process: A Conceptual and Practical Look into the Peace Treaty Initiative

19 October 2022
Queen's University Belfast

Organiser: Prof Louise Mallinder,
Mitchell Institute Theme Lead: Legacy,
Professor, School of Law

The Peace Treaty Initiative (PTI) is a major global undertaking to help develop an international law of peace negotiation. It aims to facilitate global consideration of a new multilateral treaty purpose-built to incentivise and stabilise the pathway of negotiation in order to help prevent internal armed conflicts in the first place and end them once underway.

The initiative builds on three years of legal research, diplomatic and expert interviews, and meetings hosted by the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) and its global partners. This culminated in an initial “indicative text” of the proposed treaty, which was meant to offer a practical starting point for a deliberately inclusive global consultation process launched in April 2021.

During this process, UN member states, as well as leading multilateral organisations, universities, faith-based entities, negotiators, law firms, think tanks and NGOs from around the world had the opportunity to comment on the indicative text through their participation in more than 100 high-level regional and thematic consultation events.

This event, delivered in partnership with the Institute for Integrated Transitions, brought experts, practitioners and policy makers together to learn first-hand about the main achievements and challenges with regards to the implementation of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and to consider those alongside the design of the indicative text of the Peace Treaty Initiative.

The input from this event and others across the world led to the development of the Draft Articles for the Convention on Conflict Prevention and Resolution which will be the subject of the next phase of the global consultation process.



Panellists

Prof Dominic Bryan

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Legacy) and School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Prof Chris McCrudden

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Rights and Social Justice) and School of Law, QUB

Dr John Topping

Mitchell Institute Fellow (The Politics of Security and Institutional Peacebuilding) and School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, QUB

Dr Maria-Adriana Deiana

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding) and School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Mariana Casij Peña

Institute for Integrated Transitions

Mark Freeman

Institute for Integrated Transitions



INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS

IN-CONVERSATION

Black Power Past, Present and Future: Ericka Huggins In Conversation with Mary Phillips

13 February 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organisers: Dr Kieran Connell, Senior Lecturer and Dr Keith Gerard Breen, Reader, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

Professor Mary Phillips is an expert on the history of race, gender and social movements in late-twentieth century America. She is also the author of a forthcoming book about Ericka Huggins, a leading player in the Black Panther Movement, former political prisoner, and human rights advocate.

At this *In Conversation* event, Ericka Huggins and Mary Phillips explored the complex relationship between historian and subject and the political urgency of the Black Power project – both in its past and present guises and heading into the future.

Ericka Huggins is an educator, Black Panther Party member, former political prisoner, human rights advocate, and poet.

From 1973-1981, Ericka was Director of the Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School. From 1990-2004 Ericka managed HIV/AIDS Volunteer and Education programs.

Ericka was professor of Sociology and African American Studies from 2008 through 2015 in the Peralta Community College District. From 2003 to 2011 she was Professor of Women and Gender

Studies at California State Universities - East Bay and San Francisco. Ericka is a Racial Equity Learning Lab facilitator for WORLD TRUST Educational Services.

She curates conversations focused on the individual and collective work of becoming equitable in all areas of our daily lives. Additionally, she facilitates workshops on the benefit of self care in sustaining social change.

With Stephen Shames, she is co-author of the book, *Comrade Sisters - Women of the Black Panther Party* (ACC Art Books, 2022).

Mary Frances Phillips is a scholar-activist, public intellectual, and Associate Professor of Africana Studies at Lehman College, City University of New York. Her interdisciplinary research agenda focuses on race and gender in post-1945 social movements and the carceral state. Her research areas include the Modern Black Freedom Struggle, Black Feminism, and Black Power Studies.

She has published journal articles in *SOULS: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, the *Women's Studies Quarterly*, the *Western Journal of Black Studies*, *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, and the *Syllabus Journal*.

Her essays have been featured in the *Huffington Post*, *Ms. Magazine* blog, *New Black Man (in Exile)*, *Colorlines*, *Vibe Magazine*, *Black Youth Project*, and the *African American Intellectual History Society's* blog, *Black Perspectives*.

This event was delivered in collaboration with the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics.



Left to right: Jamie Lukas-Campbell (QUB Student Union Officer), Professor Mary Phillips (Lehman College, City University of New York), Professor Ericka Huggins and Asha Larson-Baldwin (Masters student, QUB)



Left to right: Professor Mary Phillips (Lehman College, City University of New York) and Professor Ericka Huggins.

CONFERENCE



Forgiveness and the Future: Lessons from Northern Ireland, Bosnia and South Sudan

22 February 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organiser: *Professor Gladys Ganiel, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding, Professor, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work*

Almost twenty-five years have passed since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement but the legacy of the past lives on in Northern Ireland. This Conference brought together academics, faith leaders, and practitioners to explore the role of forgiveness in dealing with the past.

Researchers on the Forgiveness and Future-building project, from the Woolf Institute in Cambridge, presented their findings from a two-year project that investigates the role of forgiveness in post-conflict societies from both a psychological and computational perspective.

The project involves research in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and South Sudan and analyses differences in how people intuitively reason about forgiveness in the aftermath of conflict.

Using AI technology, the team has also put together a computational model that builds on previous work on modelling intergroup conflict in Northern Ireland.

This conference was hosted by the Mitchell Institute and delivered in partnership with the Woolf Institute in Cambridge.

Speakers

Prof Richard English

Mitchell Institute Director and Professor, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Dr Katherine O'Lone

Research Fellow, Woolf Institute, Cambridge

Dr Justin E. Lane

Co-Founder and CEO, CulturePulse

Prof F. LeRon Shults

Institute for Global Development and Social Planning, University of Agder

Prof John D. Brewer

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Legacy) and Professor of Post-Conflict Studies, QUB

Prof Fiona Magowan

Mitchell Institute Theme Lead (Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding) and Professor, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Pavol Kosnač

Director, DEKK Institute, Slovakia

Rev Dr Gary Mason

Director, Rethinking Conflict

Prof Gladys Ganiel

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding) and Professor, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, QUB

Judith Thompson

Former Commissioner for Victims and Survivors of Northern Ireland



WORKSHOP

Textiles and the Social Fabric of the Colombian Conflict

14 March 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organiser: *Dr Lauren Dempster,*
Mitchell Institute Fellow: Rights and Social Justice,
Lecturer, School of Law

This interactive and participatory Workshop explored the role of Conflict Textiles as a vehicle for giving testimony about the lived experience of conflict, focusing on Colombia. The Conflict Textiles collection includes arpilleras (three-dimensional appliquéd tapestries), wall hangings and quilts which depict conflict, disappearance, displacement and human rights violations, and resistance against these violations.

These textiles are often made by women, and in particular women who have been directly impacted by violence and human rights violations. In contexts of violence, fear, and intimidation the textiles are a form of witnessing, through which truths can be told and violence documented. In addition to depicting acts of violence and demonstrations of resistance, these textiles also capture the day-to-day lived experience of those living in sites of conflict. Thus, they provide a snapshot of life on the ground in contexts of conflict and mass violence.

A selection of Colombian pieces from the Conflict Textiles collection was on display and were introduced by collector and curator of the collection, Roberta Bacic.

These textiles tell the stories of both those who have remained in Colombia, and those who were forced into exile.

Workshop participants discussed the relationship between these textiles and themes such as voice, agency, memory, truth, justice, and human rights.



LECTURE

The Annual Frontline Defenders Lecture

Jin Jian Azadi / Woman Life Freedom: A Social Vision for Human Rights and Human Dignity

Speaker: Parvin Ardalan
29 March 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organisers:

Prof Louise Mallinder,
Mitchell Institute Theme Lead: Legacy,
Professor, School of Law
Dr Merav Amir, Institute Fellow: Legacy,
Senior Lecturer, School of Natural and Built
Environment

The government's murder of Jina Amini in September 2022 rocketed Iranian society into a revolutionary moment where woman has emerged as a symbol of resistance at the intersection of all forms of discrimination. In this paradigm shift, the past and current protest movements are linked together through the celebrated slogan of "Jin Jian Azadi". A new horizon of change has now opened in front of us.

In this Lecture, Parvin Ardalan described the current revolutionary moment in Iran. How and why did the government's murder of Jina take us to this particular point? She unpacked the radical potential and meaning of Jin, Jian, Azadi (Woman, Life, Freedom). She explored the entangled relation of the three elements of this slogan and argued that this slogan, by linking the everyday and material necessities of life to the abstract notion of 'rights', opens a new

horizon of feminist politics for Iran, in specific and the human rights discourse in general.

In other words, in its insistence on life, this slogan ties material necessities to everyday needs. As such, this slogan provides a concrete meaning to the generic and abstract notion of 'human dignity'. Jin, Jian, Azadi aims at life in its totality and for this it is a radical and transformative slogan.

The Annual Front Line Defenders Lecture Series was established in 2013 to provoke discussion and debate about the range of issues affecting human rights defenders as they work tirelessly to bring about changes and build robust civil societies. Held in partnership with universities in Dublin, Belfast and Galway, the Series is accessible to a general audience with an interest in philosophy, law, human rights or politics.



Parvin Ardalan,
Image credit:
Wikimedia Commons



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



CONFERENCE

Online Extremism and Misinformation

31 March 2023
Online, via Zoom

Organiser: Dr Stephen Herron,
Mitchell Institute Research Fellow

This conference explored the dangerous and complex world of online extremism and misinformation by showcasing current research in these areas and the implications with respect to how we approach their study moving forward.

The conference builds on work currently being carried out by an international team of experts undertaking ground breaking research on Islamic Jihadist and Far Right Extremism including Dr Stephen Herron, (Mitchell Institute, QUB), Dr Weeda Mehran (University of Exeter) and Dr Ben Miller (University of Emory).

By using an interdisciplinary mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the online actions of Far Right and Islamic Jihadists, the team aim to provide policy relevant, high impact outcomes, including moving from reactive approaches when dealing with online extremism to pre-emptive and predictive based approaches.

Speakers

Dr Lisa McInerney
Independent consultant

Dr Ayse D. Lokmanoglu
Northwestern University

Robert Palfreyz
Minerva Social Risk Management

Prof Timothy Limieux
Georgia State University

Dr Kamil Yilmaz
Swansea University

Prof Michael Semple
Mitchell Institute Professorial Research Fellow, QUB

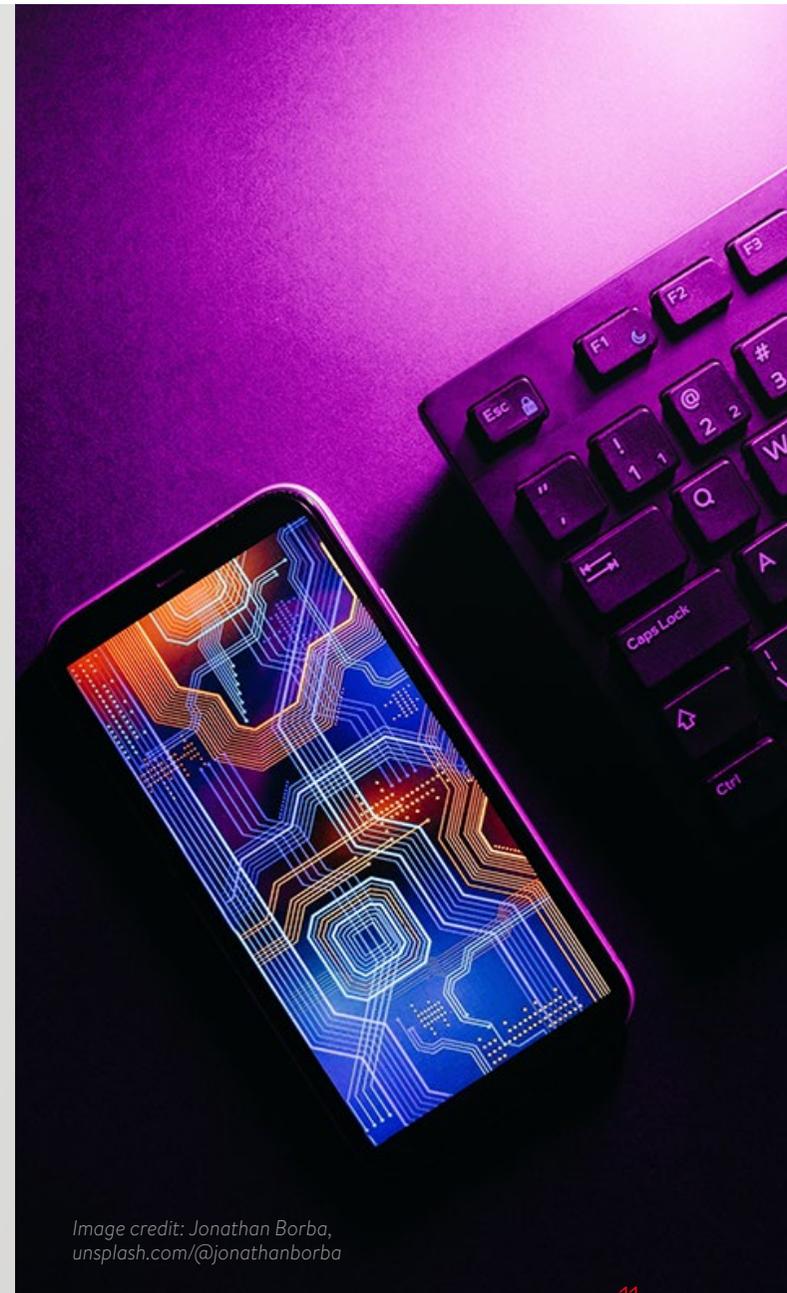


Image credit: Jonathan Borba,
unsplash.com/@jonathanborba

LECTURE



Harri Holkeri Lecture 2023

Perspective; Conscience; Integrity: Reflections from a Career in Diplomacy

Speaker: *Dr Anne Anderson*
24 April 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organiser: *Professor Richard English,
Mitchell Institute Director*

The Harri Holkeri Lecture Series celebrates the contribution of the late Finnish Prime Minister Harri Holkeri to the Northern Ireland peace process. His aim of transforming conflict and promoting social justice in Northern Ireland and across the world is shared by the Mitchell Institute. We are honoured to partner with the Embassy of Finland, London, to host the Harri Holkeri Lecture Series.

At a time of profound change in the international political landscape, this Lecture examined three of the constants that underpin diplomacy in almost all circumstances: perspective, compromise, integrity. Dr Anne Anderson drew on her own extensive experience in diplomacy to provide some illustrations, as well as addressing some of today's most pressing issues, including the conflict in Ukraine and the West's increasingly complex relationship with China. She also applied the same prism in looking at the post-Brexit situation in Northern Ireland and the way ahead for the island as a whole.

Dr Anne Anderson had a forty-five year career in Ireland's diplomatic service, entering the Department

of Foreign Affairs in 1972 and retiring in 2017. For the last twenty two years of her career, she served successively in five Ambassadorial posts: Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva (1995-2001), Permanent Representative to the European Union (2001-2005), Ambassador to France (2005-2009), Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York (2009-2013) and Ambassador to the United States (2013-2017). She was the first female Irish Ambassador in each of those posts.

Following her retirement, Anne became a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Group on the Peace Building Fund (2018-2022), serving as Chair of the Group for the latter two years.

Her current roles include Non-Executive Director of the Smurfit Kappa Group, Chair of the Advisory Group of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy in Washington DC, and a Board member of Druid Theatre, Galway. She is the recipient of a range of honours and awards, including an Honorary Doctorate from Queens University Belfast, conferred by Chancellor Hillary Clinton in May 2022.

Previous Harri Holkeri Lectures include:

*7th Harri Holkeri Lecture
Peace Process – In Light of Brexit Issues*

Bertie Ahern
Former Taoiseach of Ireland and
Mitchell Institute Honorary Professor of Practice
21 April 2019

*6th Harri Holkeri Lecture
Remembering, Forgiving, Forgetting and Imagining*
President Michael D. Higgins
29 May 2018

*5th Harri Holkeri Lecture
Reflections on Women and Peace-building*

Tarja Halonen
Former President of Finland
9 May 2017

*4th Harri Holkeri Lecture
Women, Leadership and Peace-building*

Arlene Foster
Former First Minister of Northern Ireland
23 May 2016

*3rd Harri Holkeri Lecture
Reflections on Brokering Peace in Divided Societies*

Senator George J. Mitchell
22 April 2015

*2nd Harri Holkeri Lecture
Islam, Peace-building and Conflict Transformation*

Ambassador Akbar S. Ahmed
Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, American
University Washington DC
29 May 2014

*1st Harri Holkeri Lecture
Egalitarianism in Conflict Resolution*

Martti Ahtisaari
Former President of Finland
21 May 2013





Left to right: Professor Richard English, Director of the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, His Excellency Jukka Siukosaari, Ambassador of Finland to the UK, Speaker, Dr Anne Anderson, Former Irish Diplomat, Her Excellency Raili Lahnalampi, Ambassador of Finland to Ireland, Professor Ian Greer, President and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast.

WEBINAR



Civil Rights: African American and Northern Irish Dimensions

27 April 2023
Online, via Zoom

Organiser: Professor Richard English,
Mitchell Institute Director

Moderator: Dr Kimberly Da Costa,
Associate Professor, New York University

Delivered in partnership with the African American Irish Diaspora Network and Morehouse College, Atlanta, this Webinar examined the influences and

relationships shared between the African American civil rights movement and the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.

Speakers

Then and Now: Ireland from the Perspective of a Millennial Scholar

Dr Justin McClinton
Morehouse College

Derry, Selma and International Solidarity

Don Mullan
Author, filmmaker, photographer and humanitarian

Civil Rights and Race: Exploring US Responses to the Early Northern Ireland Troubles

Dr Peter McLoughlin

Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy, Senior Lecturer, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics; QUB

Imperfect Parallels between the Civil Rights Movements in the USA and Ireland

Dr Kipton E. Jensen

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of the Leadership Studies Program in the Andrew Young Center for Global Leadership (AYCGL), Morehouse College

SEMINAR

Positive Peace in Northern Ireland: A Northern Irish Peace Index

9 May 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organiser: Dr Andrew Thomson, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy, Senior Lecturer, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

The Good Friday Agreement and many years of peacebuilding work have mitigated conflict in Northern Ireland and provided a path to a shared future. But Brexit border arrangements and mounting discontent are jeopardizing the region's hard-won victories.

This event delved into strengthening positive peace in Northern Ireland and creating an optimal environment for human potential to flourish. It also developed the case for developing a Northern Ireland Peace Index, a report that will provide an empirical assessment and overview of key trends, patterns, and drivers of peace and positive peacefulness in Northern Ireland and provide a valuable monitoring tool to assess changes in peacefulness across different cities and counties over time.

Speakers

The Global Peace Index and the Institute for Economics and Peace Positive Peace

Serge Stroobants

Director of Europe and the MENA region, Institute for Economics and Peace

The need for more positive peaceful approaches to tackling paramilitarism and new ways to assess progress over time

Claire Hazelden

Research Analyst, Northern Ireland Executive Programme for Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality & Organised Crime

The event was chaired by Mitchell Institute Director, Prof Richard English.

This event was hosted by the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice in collaboration with the Institute for Economics and Peace.

LECTURE



Belfast – Berkeley Conversation Series Conflicted Europe

21 June 2023
Queen's University Belfast

Organisers:

Professor Maruška Svašek, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy; Professor of Anthropology in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics; Dr Merav Amir, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy; Senior Lecturer in the School of Natural and Built Environment.

The first event in the annual Belfast-Berkeley Conversation Series focused on the theme of Conflicted Europe.

The Conversation Series aims to encourage intellectual exchange between scholars from Queen's University Belfast and the University of California in Berkeley.

Speakers

Dr Alexander Titov

Dr Alexander Titov is Lecturer in Modern European History at the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen's University Belfast. He is a historian of modern Russia, focusing on its foreign policy, Russian nationalism, and the political history of the USSR after Stalin. Currently working on a book for Agenda Publishers on Russia and its foreign policy, he is a regular commentator on current affairs relating to Russia.

His work has appeared in national and international media, including the Conversation, the Irish Times, the Independent and the BBC History Magazine.

Professor John Connelly

Professor John Connelly is Professor of History, University of California in Berkeley. He specialises in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. His publications include: From Peoples Into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe (Princeton, 2022), and From Enemy to Brother: The Catholic Revolution in Teaching about the Jews (Harvard, 2012). In 2020, he was Fulbright Fellow at Queen's University Belfast.

Professor Maruška Svašek

Professor Maruška Svašek is Professor of Anthropology at the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen's University Belfast. A large part of her work focuses on Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic, in particular exploring Czech-German relations and Czech art and political change. She established the partnership between QUB and UC Berkeley in 2020 and organised the conferences Sensing Europe (2020) and Conflicted Europe (2022) with colleagues from both universities.

This event was delivered in partnership with the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics.



Left to right: Professor Maruška Svašek (QUB), Dr Alexander Titov (QUB), and Professor John Connelly (University of California in Berkeley)

AGREEMENT 25

Queen's University Belfast welcomed delegates from around the world for a special three day international conference from 17 to 19 April to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

The Agreement 25 Conference celebrated the achievements of those who signed the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement; recognised the role of women in peacebuilding; amplified the voice of the next generation of young leaders and created a dialogue that proposes and considers social and economic solutions to the major issues that will impact the region over the next 25 years.

This three-day conference was hosted by Queen's University Belfast in partnership with the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils, the Council on Competitiveness, Women in Business, Politics in Action, Commission for Victims and Survivors, the Lyric Theatre, Historic Royal Palaces and Inspire's Therapeutic and Wellbeing Services.



Senator George J. Mitchell, Former US Special Representative for Northern Ireland and Chair of the NI All Party Talks

DAY ONE: REFLECT

The Conference was opened with speeches from Prof Ian Greer, QUB Vice-Chancellor, Emma Murphy, QUB Student's Union President and Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, QUB Chancellor.

The keynote address was delivered by Senator George J. Mitchell.

Three panel discussions took place throughout the day with the architects of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998: the UK and Irish governments, local political leaders from 1998; and the Guarantors (former UK, Irish and US Administrations).

The first panel, chaired by Professor Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland, focused on **Building Bridges – The Two Governments** with guests Paul Murphy (the Rt Hon the Lord Murphy Torfaen, former Minister of State and former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland); Tim O'Connor (former senior Irish Diplomat and former Secretary General to the President of Ireland); Liz O'Donnell (former Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Government) and Jonathan Powell (former Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister of the UK).

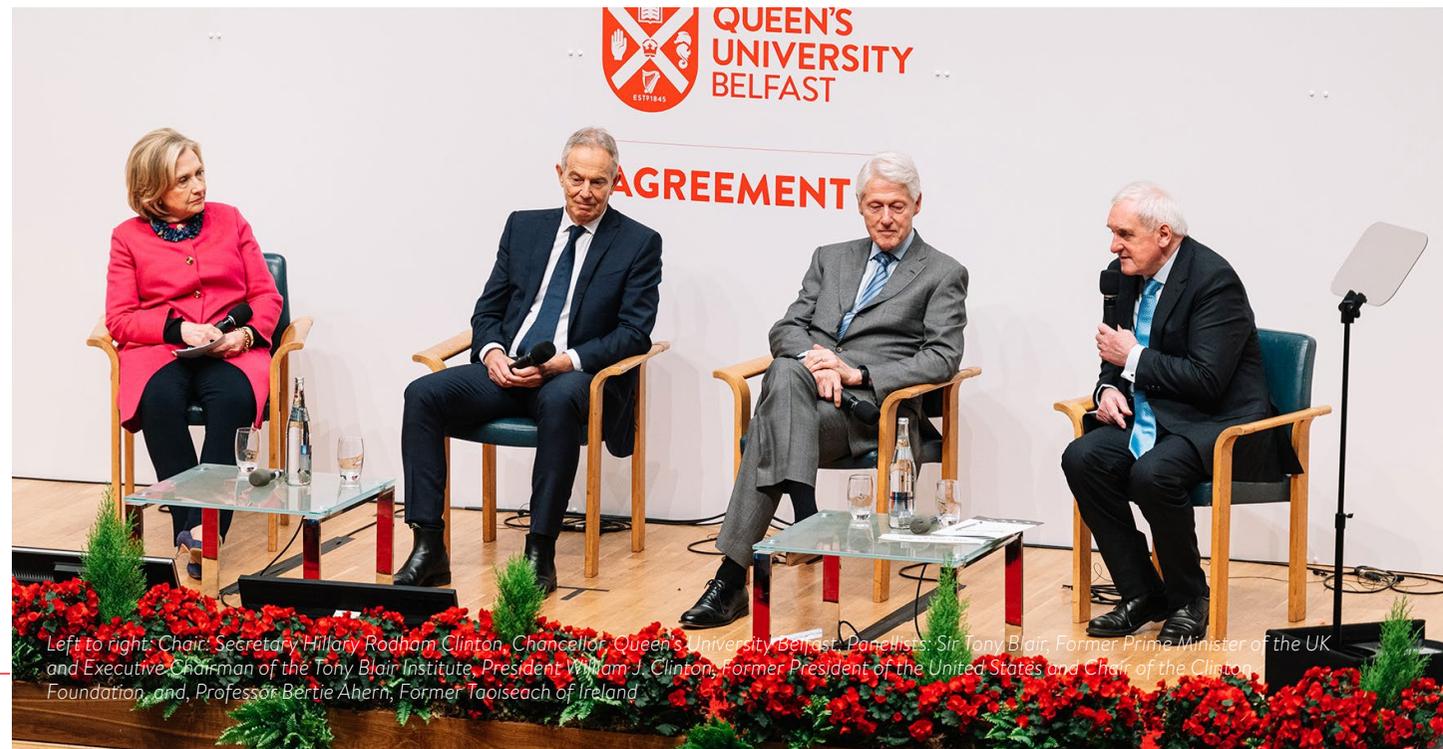
The afternoon started with a panel on **Building Peace – The Parties** with speakers including Gerry Adams (former President, Sinn Féin); Professor Monica McWilliams (co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition); Mark Durkan (former deputy First Minister and former Leader, Social Democratic and Labour Party) and Lord Reg Empey (the Lord Empey Kt OBE, former leader, Ulster Unionist Party).

Secretary Clinton chaired the final panel of the day on **Guaranteeing Peace – The Guarantors**, where Professor Bertie Ahern, Former Taoiseach of Ireland, Sir Tony Blair, Former Prime Minister of the UK and Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute and President William J. Clinton, Former President of the United States offered their unique experience and contribution to the process.

Past leaders and architects of the Agreement were honoured in a video presentation: **In Memoriam**.

Created by local artist Colin Davidson, a bust of Senator George J. Mitchell was unveiled outside the Whitla Hall, paying tribute to the Senator for his contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Left to right: Heather MacLachlan Mitchell and Senator George J. Mitchell



Left to right: Chair: Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast, Panellists: Sir Tony Blair, Former Prime Minister of the UK and Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute, President William J. Clinton, Former President of the United States and Chair of the Clinton Foundation, and, Professor Bertie Ahern, Former Taoiseach of Ireland

DAY TWO: RENEW

The second day of the conference, with the theme of Renew, was hosted by Donie O'Sullivan, US Broadcast Journalist. As well as providing an opportunity to consider the dynamics of peace and conflict, the sessions provided an opportunity to reflect on the politics of the past, present and future.

After a video address from General António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, addresses were provided by The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Micheál Martin TD Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence.

Journalist Mark Simpson chaired a panel on **The Parties In Conversation** with representatives from each of the main political parties in Northern Ireland including Doug Beattie MLA, Leader, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP); Naomi Long MLA, Leader, Alliance Party; Mary Lou McDonald TD, President, Sinn Féin; Colum Eastwood MP, Leader, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Emma Little-Pengelly MLA, Former Junior Minister, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

After addresses by Jamie Lukas-Campbell, QUB Student Union Officer and Ambassador Jane Hartley, a second panel took place discussing **The Good Friday Agreement: A Template for Resolving Global Conflict**. This panel was chaired by Ambassador Mitchell B Reiss, Former US Special Envoy for the Northern Ireland Peace Process, with contributions from Dr Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Congressman Richard E. Neal, Ranking Member of the US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee; Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission Vice-President



Prof Colin Harvey, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Rights and Social Justice and Professor, School of Law

for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight and Dr Amanda Sloat, Special Assistant to the US President and Senior Director for Europe, National Security Council.

There was a special live recording of The Rest is Politics Podcast, hosted by Alastair Campbell and Jamie Stewart.

Mitchell Institute Panel Sessions

The Mitchell Institute hosted five panel discussions in the afternoon.

Rights and Social Justice

Institute Theme Lead: Rights and Social Justice, Prof Kieran McEvoy chaired this panel with contribution from Institute Fellows Prof Colin Harvey, Prof Christopher McCrudden and Honorary Professor Christine Bell, Professor of Constitutional Law and Assistant Principal (Global Justice), Edinburgh University.

Peacebuilding

Prof Fiona Magowan, Institute Theme Lead: Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding, chaired a panel with contributions from Institute Fellows Prof Dominic Bryan, Prof Gladys Ganiel and Honorary Professor of Practice Rory Montgomery, former Irish Diplomat.

Legacy

Mitchell Institute Theme Lead: Legacy, Prof Louise Mallinder chaired this panel with contributions from the Institute's Prof John D. Brewer, Fellow Prof Anna Bryson and Honorary Professor of Practice Michael Maguire, former Police Ombudsman.

The Dynamics of Peace and Conflict

Chaired by Institute Director Prof Richard English, this panel featured contributions from Prof Chris Blattman and Prof Roger Myerson, both from the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflict, University of Chicago and the Dame Louise Richardson, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

The Impact on Victims

Chaired by Institute Fellow: Legacy, Dr Cheryl Lawther this panel involved contribution from Paul Crawford, Institute Alumnus Dr Paul Gallagher, Mary Moreland, Minty Thomson members of the Victims and Survivors Forum and Ian Jeffers, the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.

Masterclass with Senator George J. Mitchell

Masters degree students on the Conflict Transformation and Social Justice programme and US Scholarship students attended a Masterclass, hosted by Senator George J. Mitchell and Institute Director, Prof Richard English.

Collaboration Events

A number of **collaboration events** were held on Day 2 including:

Women in Business – International Voices of Leadership in Association with the Chief Executives Club at Queen's.

Young Voices – Politics in Action which brought over 200 young people from across Ireland to discuss and share their ideas on what peace means to them.

The Agreement 25 Cancer Showcase event celebrated the past successes which led the island of Ireland to take its place on the global cancer research stage and also look to the future and how the island of Ireland and the creation of an All Island Cancer Research Institute, bringing together the best minds on the island of Ireland, can significantly contribute to a world without cancer

A film screening of **Victims Voices** was followed by a panel discussion with some of the people involved in the film, who lost family members to violence from the British Army and both Republican and Unionist paramilitaries.

A celebration of journalism and exploration of the role of the media during The Troubles, in the panel session Media in Conflict and Peace which included a short film.

An evening of music, readings and poetry was hosted by the Seamus Heaney Centre with special guests Gary Lightbody, Lisa McGee and Tara Lynne O'Neill.

DAY THREE: REIMAGINE

The third and final day of the conference was hosted in association with the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils. Presentations and panel discussions focused on enhancing the economic prospects of Northern Ireland.

After a welcome and introduction by Prof Ian Greer and Prof Nola Hewitt-Dundas, opening remarks were provided by Dr Jayne Brady, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Keynote Address was provided by Congressman Joe Kennedy III, US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs.

The first panel **Northern Ireland – A Place to Invest** was chaired by Angela McGowan and featured panellists including: Chris Conway, CEO, Translink; Ellvena Graham, Chair of Tourism NI; Gillian McAuley, President, NI Chamber of Commerce; Celine McStravick, CEO, NICVA and Joe O'Neill, CEO, Belfast Harbour.

A second panel, discussing **Global Northern Ireland**, was chaired by the Honourable Deborah Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council of Competitiveness, USA, and featured: Dr Steven Ashby, Director, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; Sarah Friar, CEO, Nextdoor; Joan Gabel, President, University of Minnesota; Steve Orr, CEO, Catalyst; Josh Parker, CEO, Ancora.

In the afternoon, Chancellor Hillary Rodham Clinton introduced a number of Keynote Addresses from Charles Michel, President of the European Council;



Left to right: Professor Bertie Ahern, Former Taoiseach of Ireland, Colin Davidson, Artist, Heather MacLachlan Mitchell, Senator George J. Mitchell, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Chancellor, QUB, President William J. Clinton, Former President of the United States, Sir Tony Blair, Former Prime Minister of the UK, Prof Ian Greer, Vice-Chancellor, QUB, and The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission; President William J. Clinton, former President of the United States and Chair of the Clinton Foundation; Dr Leo Varadkar TD, Taoiseach of Ireland; and The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister of the UK.

There were two videos featuring Young Leaders. In the first video, they reflect on why the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement has been important to them, and in the second video, they consider the future for Northern Ireland.



Left to right: Senator George J. Mitchell, and Prof Richard English

BLOGS

Some of our Postgraduate Students reflect on their experience and themes of the Agreement 25 Conference, as well as other associated events and activity, in a series of blogs.



Seven Lessons from Agreement 25

Emily Bishko

Emily attended the Agreement 25 Conference and had the opportunity to introduce Secretary Clinton at the dinner on the Monday evening. In this blog, Emily reflects on the emerging themes and discussion points throughout the Agreement 25 Conference.

This week, I had the honor of attending Agreement 25, the international conference hosted by Queen's University Belfast to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement ("GFA"). Brokered by diametrically opposed political parties with support from U.S., U.K., and Irish governments, this 1998 peace accord is attributed with ending three decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland ("The Troubles"). As part of this, it codified Northern Ireland's constitutional institutions and identity. Put briefly, it established Northern Ireland as a devolved UK nation on the island of Ireland with unique Irish/British identity sharing arrangements, including citizen access to either or both passports, free travel between the North and "South" (the Republic of Ireland), and the ability for democratic re-evaluation of this set-up.

Agreement 25 gathered relevant representatives, from then and now, to recognize the challenge of attaining the GFA, the 30-year conflict that preceded it, and its continued importance in Northern Irish society.

The main agenda of the (packed) three-day event featured remarks from 10 heads of state, government, or international organizations; 36 other top government officials; 17 professors or academic fellows; 22 civil society leaders; and 2 student liaisons. Headliners included President Bill Clinton, Secretary Hillary Clinton, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak,

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Senator George Mitchell, and the agreement's multi-party negotiators, to name just a few.

In keeping with the convention's theme of "reflect, renew, reimagine," the leaders emphasized the importance of the Good Friday Agreement in sustaining today's Northern Ireland and offered guidance for where to go for the next twenty-five years. Between their comments and the – dare I say – equally insightful debriefs with classmates and fellow conference-goers (all of whom are very impressive in their own rights), some themes emerged again and again, or captured enough insight they only needed speaking once. Here are some of the top takeaways I noted from the discussions:

#1: Peace and prosperity are linked. Multiple speakers, including the Agreement's architects, today's politicians, and professors, emphasized the tie between peace and prosperity. The conflict started within predominantly working class neighborhoods, where there was high unemployment (~12%, according to some conference speakers), few opportunities, and limited hope for a better future. The fighting reflected and re-enforced these conditions, and it took the cessation of armed hostilities to advance livelihoods. In turn, this advancement, along with concurrent constitutional settlements, ceasefire provisions, and conflict fatigue, sustains the ongoing armistice.

It works: as I wander Belfast today, I could easily remain ignorant of the city's past, even with continued walls and gate closures in some neighborhoods. Even so, tensions between communities remain, usually still along Protestant/Unionist ("We're British!") and Catholic/Nationalist ("We're Irish!") lines, usually still concentrated within working class areas. Paramilitaries have morphed from political forces to criminal gangs and drug traffickers. The conference's speakers are all confident that widespread non-violence will endure, but they caution that relapses could return if economic and egalitarian conditions worsen. As Northern Ireland continues to shift and grow, it is necessary to make sure all its people can benefit from its successes; conflict started when conditions were poor and anger around discrimination rampant.

#2: Seize opportunities – and persevere. Within their reflections, almost every involved negotiator underlined that it was (very) uncertain that their efforts would yield a happy ending. They achieved because they chose to continue, often despite difficult opportunity costs. They also took advantage of opportunities presented by changing momentums, for instance, U.K., U.S., and Irish elections ~1997 and increased interest in Northern Ireland from the American public around that time. The GFA happened because participants decided they wanted it to, with contributors choosing to meet artificially-imposed deadlines, once emphasized. They identified their goals, took chances as they opened, and saw them through.

#3: The peace mediations worked because they created space for frank exchange, individualized attention, and therefore reciprocal trust. The negotiation chair, U.S. Senator George Mitchell, repeatedly claimed that agreement around the

GFA was only reached because of the mediation's emphasis on genuine listening, respect, and consideration across views. This, he said, gathered the trust and needed signatures for the GFA's realization. During a "masterclass" for QUB students, Senator Mitchell laid out his formula for creating such an environment: ask each party how long they need to "make their case" as they would want to, have all parties make these cases to all other parties in a shared space, host private meetings with parties only after all "opening speeches" have aired, develop a view of potential compromises/"answers" but refrain from sharing these solutions until asked, and repeat as necessary. Each stage of this process can take months, but the acknowledgement of hurts, ideas, and contributions is paramount, Senator Mitchell stressed, to enabling confidence and, consequently, participant openness to compromise. I saw for myself the importance of attention, acknowledgement, and interpersonal aid during a side-event featuring conflict victims who feel neglected by amnesty components of the GFA and more recent policy proposals; their pain was compounded by feelings of 'going unheard' and a lack of basic human decency (e.g., limited compassion during grim proceedings, long processes, hidden information, formalized victim-blaming).

#4: The Agreement worked because it was inclusive, comprehensive, for the people, and by the people. Multiple times throughout the week, Senator Mitchell and others stressed that the Good Friday Agreement was successful in enabling armistice because it was inclusive and comprehensive: it responded to the needs and concerns of political views across the spectrum, balancing them throughout negotiations and incorporating them within the GFA's compromises. Again, this resulted from the environment negotiation chairs made efforts to

maintain. In parallel, speakers including Senator Mitchell emphasized that the Agreement was "for the people and by the people" of Northern Ireland. This gives recognition and responsibility for the GFA to local communities, motivating pride and a stake in its continued success. Creating such exhaustiveness and ownership requires time and (many) difficult conversations, but the GFA shows that successful agreements cannot be shortchanged and must be created with consideration, care, comprehension, and proper custody.

#5: Organize votes on what to move "to," not on what to move "from." Reflecting on lessons of Brexit, Naomi Long, Leader of the Alliance Party (the third largest political party in Northern Ireland, with liberal-centrist views), commented that "we should not have referendums without having a formal proposition that people can scrutinize." Her comments responded to the longstanding complications of redefining UK-EU relations, but they also provide a suggestion for future island politics: how to raise the question of re-uniting all Irish counties, a possibility underlying the GFA. However, this is not the only place that deals with constitutional crises. Her suggestion to have elections on what to move "to," not "from," could potentially be useful in multiple situations, from Israel-Palestine territorial disputes to U.S. healthcare re-designs.

#6: Celebrations and criticisms can coincide. While much of the conference celebrated the GFA and its architects, criticisms were also present: of the GFA and missed opportunities, of the choice of who to recognize and not recognize during sessions, and of current issues within local politics. (Within contemporary criticisms, the loudest was a call to end the stalemate at Stormont, the devolved Northern Irish parliament.) In particular, panels on victims and

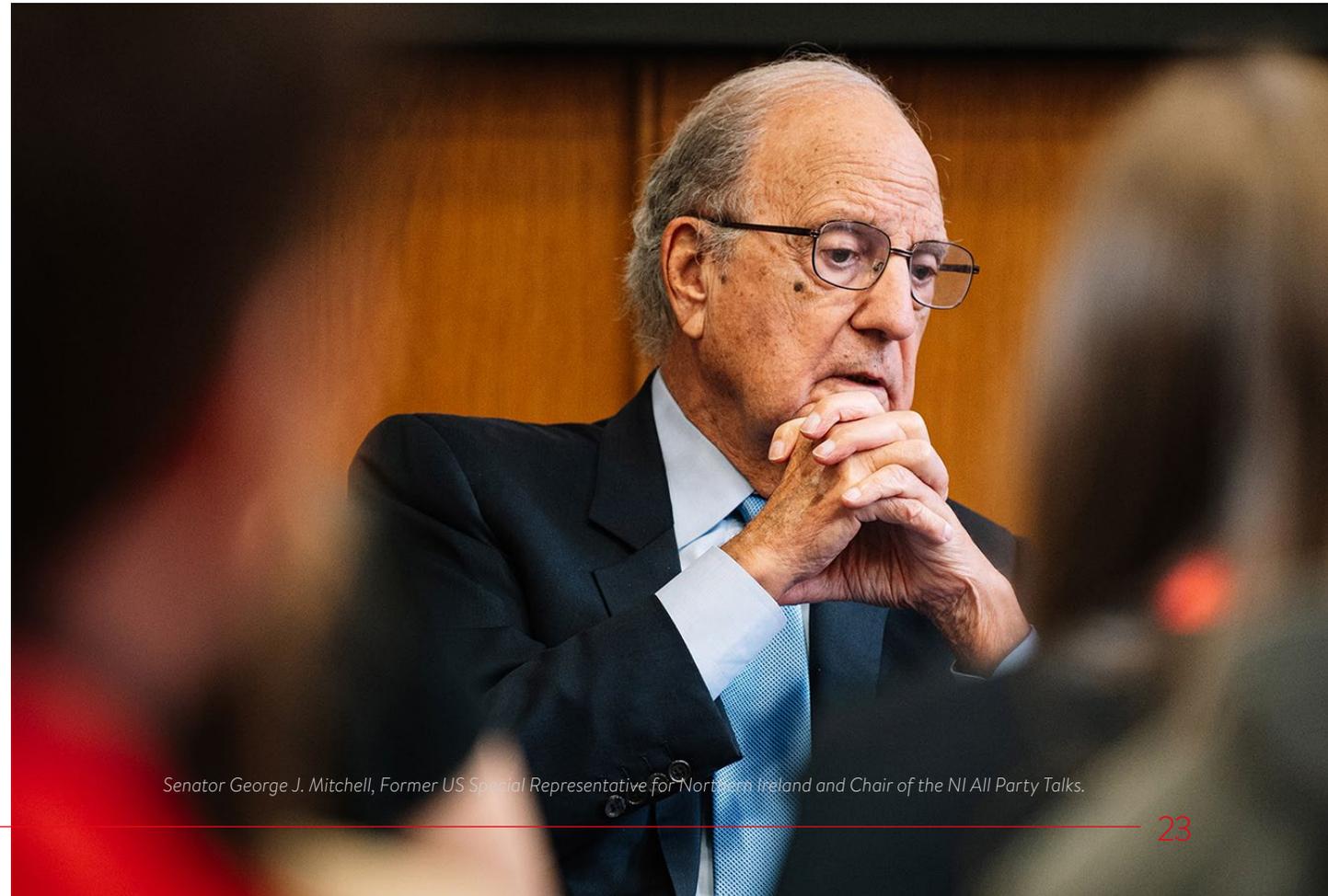
current political debates made clear that, although the GFA underpins contemporary life and prospects in Northern Ireland, there are some who still resent certain concessions made. The conference reminded that compromise is often necessary but worthwhile. It also showed that successes can and should be celebrated, even with needed improvements outstanding.

#7: Politicians are people, too. In casual, academic, and media discourses, celebrities seem to become abstractions of themselves, with many recast as demons or heroes. It was refreshing to witness such famous figures in-action this week. Seeing past and present politicians interact with each other, take joy and support in their shared company and that of their partners, and enjoy and get fatigued by unending selfie requests was an important reminder that we all share basic needs and human emotions. Among other benefits, this conference seemed to provide the involved individuals catharsis through the opportunities for reflection and reunion. It is worth remembering that politicians' distinct personalities and preferences almost certainly help shape the outcome of their processes; that conversations with them are fundamentally still conversations; and that anyone could one day work to fill similar shoes. (One shout-out worth sharing: throughout the conference, Senator Mitchell was lauded for his abilities to listen, care, and persist, which many of his peers credited with the GFA's realization. After hearing the conviction, intelligence, and gratitude in his remarks, watching him interact with his colleagues and wife, and learning he requested and held individual chats with each of this year's Mitchell Scholars, I can understand why.)

While Agreement 25 focused on Northern Ireland, its lessons for how to create and sustain peace and navigate turbulent times are widely applicable.

As Senator Mitchell said on Monday, “when you [the people of Northern Ireland] approved this agreement... you were talking, in fact, to the whole world.” I am confident the wisdom shared this week will help us participants better create the impact we aim to.

Emily Bishko is an LLM student in International Human Rights Law at Queen's University Belfast. Originally from Atlanta, GA, she came to Belfast as the 2022-2023 recipient of the Hillary Rodham Clinton Award for Peace and Reconciliation.



Senator George J. Mitchell, Former US Special Representative for Northern Ireland and Chair of the NI All Party Talks.



Twenty-Five Years After the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement: The Triumph of Hope

Martin Burns

Reflecting on the contribution from Senator Mitchell and the dedicated Masterclass for select postgraduate students, Martin explores the impact of the Senator's words on the audience and fellow students in this blog.

A quarter of a century after the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (the Agreement) was signed, dignitaries gathered at Queens University for three days to reflect on what had been accomplished and on the unfinished work of reconciliation.

These are in many ways dark and tumultuous times. A war is raging in the heart of Europe, we are emerging from a global pandemic, inflation is buffeting economies, and the Middle East is still mired in conflict. These three days reminded not only Ireland and the United Kingdom but the entire world of what is possible. I feel very blessed that as a masters student in the Conflict Transformation and Social Justice program at Queens University, I was able to contribute as a volunteer for the conference.

The highlight of the entire conference was without a doubt the remarks of former US Senator George J. Mitchell who chaired the talks that led to the Agreement. In one of the rare moments of political unanimity in Ireland, all parties agreed that Mitchell was indispensable to the success of the Agreement. It simply would not have happened had it not been for his leadership.

The response to Mitchell's simple presence, never mind his eloquent remarks, was like nothing I had ever seen before. The applause for the Senator was deep, long and profound. Looking at the audience in the Whitla Hall, I knew that many in the audience had been touched by the terrible violence which had once covered Northern Ireland. There were more than a few damp eyes looking at Senator Mitchell.

In his remarks to the conference and later in discussions with my colleagues in the Conflict Transformation and Social Justice program, Mitchell

stressed the importance of compromise, respect, persistence and most important of all – listening.

Listening may seem to be a simple, easy, and even passive task. However, as Mitchell explained to our class, listening is really an intense process that is critically important to building trust. In the end, Mitchell pointed out that listening is a sign of respect. It means that the other party is trying to understand you. They may not agree with your position, but they are making a sincere effort to understand your point of view.

Senator Mitchell made the important point that while the Agreement was technically only about the island of Ireland, the implications are global: "When you approved the agreement, you also were talking to Israelis and Palestinians, to Colombians, to Africans, to Asians, to Americans. In fact, you were talking to the world. This is an agreement for peace and for the future, not just here, but everywhere."

As the glow from the conference fades, the task for all of us who want to make the world a better place is to try and build on the impressive legacy that Senator Mitchell has given us all. We may not have the chance to play a role like Mitchell did during the talks that led to the Agreement, but each of us can make a difference in our own way.

Martin is a postgraduate student on the Masters degree programme: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. His dissertation focuses on The Politics of Persuasion: How the Irish Republican Leadership Sold the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to their Constituency.





The Preservation of Peace and a Hopeful Future: The Good Friday Peace Agreement, 25 Years Later

Rombsala Said

In this blog, Rombsala reflects on the themes and discussions from the QUB Agreement 25 Conference and associated events.

On 10 April, 1998, the Belfast Agreement was signed, ending decades of conflict in Northern Ireland.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of that historic event when the people of Northern Ireland, along with their politicians decided the time for peace had come. Forging a new course, they came together in an historic move, and voted for a better, more hopeful future; one without violence, filled with opportunity and prosperity.

The Agreement 25 Conference at QUB - commemorating the 25th anniversary of the peace agreement - was an historic three days filled with emotion, excitement and celebration. The conference brought together political leaders, academics, and activists to reflect on the achievements of the Belfast Agreement and discuss the ongoing challenges facing Northern Ireland.

We heard from the framers of the agreement, the signers, current and past politicians and more. As an American studying an MA in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice, I was on the brink of tears with every speech I heard in the beautiful Whitla Hall auditorium. I was lucky enough to volunteer and attend every event that was held.

The Conference began with a welcome address by Queen's University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Greer. This was followed by an introduction by Queen's University Chancellor, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and a keynote address by Senator George J. Mitchell, who played a significant role as Chair of the talks in the peace process. Senator Mitchell praised the people of Northern Ireland (then and now) for their support of an "established peaceful process as their preferred form of government", and for their overwhelming

"rejection of political violence as a way to solve their differences".

What followed was three days of panels and discussions involving not only politicians and civil servants, but victims and survivors as well. We listened to their stories of struggle, grief, loss and overcoming the most horrific of tragedies. And while they have overcome much on their path to peace, they understand that in spite of these struggles, or perhaps because of them, the work is far from over.

What was made clear throughout the Conference, is that while the politicians and activists were instrumental in facilitating the process and agreement, it was then, and is now civil society and the grass roots organizers who stand at the forefront of continued peace and reconciliation. In a place with no formal government, it is up to the people to continue the work, it is the people who are painting the peace...and boy are they up for the task.

On 26 April, I attended another conference that was held as a part of the 25th Agreement celebrations at the Mac Theatre, Belfast: "Paving the Path to Peace: Civil Society and the Northern Ireland Peace Process". Here, we heard from the people on the ground who started their journeys long before the final cease-fire, before the peace talks began and the agreement was inked, before the historic vote took place. Work that took decades, culminating in an imperfect compromise on the path to peace - but the work didn't stop there.

From women's coalitions to trade unions to religious leaders bringing together divided communities, they strove for unity. For they knew the importance of putting their differences aside in order to achieve peace.

In Avila Kilmurry's (Social Change Initiative) speech she emphasized the importance of listening to the people. In 1994, following the cease-fire, a community survey was conducted which asked the people what they needed and the problems they wanted addressed. The response was overwhelming and included housing, jobs, political prisoners, victims and survivors and overall their civil liberties. They wanted a sustainable future. Kilmurry stressed that Transversal Politics is a key factor in achieving this, people working together, sharing and respecting their differences. It is vital to bring things back to a value-base: this is how to forge ahead and create sustainable peace now and for the future.

Mary Montague (Mediators Beyond Borders) echoed this sentiment: *"Peace is not just the absence of violence, nor is it something that's actually given to the people through political agreements. Whilst these create an environment for change, it is the change within people's hearts and minds and spirits that transforms conflicts to sustainable peace, the word being sustainable. That is the opportunity that is offered to participants when they engage in being listened to"*

Listening... for me this was a key takeaway from the events over the last two weeks. Senator Mitchell emphasized this as key in any mediation or negotiation, especially as an outsider who was only here to help. In order to continue peace within the communities, the first step to continue to listen to the people and head what they are asking for and what they want.

As Bronagh Hinds (Senior Associate, DemocraShe) said, *"The peace process belongs to the people, not politicians"*. Therefore, it is vital to continue listening and working with the people of Northern Ireland to forge a sustainable path of continued peace.

Overall, the observance of the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement at Queen's University and throughout Belfast was a significant event that provided an opportunity for experts, activists and the public to come together, share their experiences and perspectives, and continue the important work of building peace in Northern Ireland.

The conferences and panels demonstrated the progress made over the past 25 years, while also acknowledging the ongoing challenges that need to be addressed to achieve a lasting and sustainable peace in the region. It was stated multiple times in the last two weeks that while the agreement didn't solve all of their problems and was far from perfect, it was a necessary compromise to forge a path forward. It is now, however, up to the people to keep it going. One thing it seems that all sides can agree on is that no one wants to see violence return to the streets of this wee country.

The future for Northern Ireland is bright and hopeful. Here's to another 25 years of peace and progress in Northern Ireland.

The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice set up a Masterclass for the MA Conflict Transformation and Social Justice students. For myself and my fellow classmates, it was this Masterclass with Senator George J. Mitchell that was the highlight of the week... or rather a lifetime.

Senator Mitchell explained his role in the peace process and what it was like as an "outsider" to come into the conflict and help the two sides find common ground and compromise in the road to peace. Senator Mitchell emphasized the key in any mediation or negotiation is listening, especially as an outsider who is simply there to help, and with no plan or agenda

of their own. This was the theme of the Senator George Mitchell Masterclass given by the Mitchell Institute for the MA Conflict Transformation and Social Justice Cohort.

Senator Mitchell stressed two very important points of his involvement with the peace talks and agreement. First, he made it very clear that he was there with no American plan - no Clinton or Mitchell plan, he was simply there to listen and to help facilitate and mediate.

Second, and most important of all, he emphasized the need to really listen to all parties involved. To not speak until all parties have had a chance to make their arguments. Only after this has been done, and they have asked for an opinion, should one be given.

As someone else who is an "outsider", hearing Mitchell's speech was a powerful reminder that one does not need be from a place in order to love and advocate for that place.

During the Masterclass, students were given an opportunity to ask the Senator questions in an effort to gain more insight into how he accomplished what he did, especially as an outsider, and how the process and lessons-learned can be implemented globally in similar situations.

Rombsala Said is a postgraduate student on the Masters degree programme: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. She is researching the link between paramilitaries and racism in Northern Ireland, with a focus on community discourse and the false sense of safety/security that they perpetuate throughout the neighborhoods where they are still active.



Reflections on 'The Victim's Stories'

Mollie Sullivan

*On Day 2 of Agreement 25, Mollie was involved in the collaboration event **Victim's Voices**, showcasing the film 'Victim's Voices' which features 8 people who lost family members to violence from the British Army and both Republican and Unionist paramilitaries. The film screening was followed by a panel discussion with survivors featured in the film. Mollie reflects on the themes of these events in this blog.*

There has been much coverage on Agreement 25, the recent Conference held at Queen's University to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, the treaty which largely ended 30 years of violent conflict in Northern Ireland known as The Troubles. Across the three days of the Conference, panellists and attendees were invited to reflect on the achievements, legacies, and implications of the Agreement.

Within Agreement 25, two events were dedicated to Victims of The Troubles. One was a panel held on day two with members of The Victims and Survivors Forum, and the other was a collaborative event I helped bring to Queen's: a film viewing of 'The Victim's Stories' and discussion with survivors featured in the film. The film, which highlights stories of Victims who cross sectarian lines to tell their stories together, has been shown at the UK, Irish, and EU parliament buildings.

'The Victim's Stories' features 8 people who lost family members to violence from the British Army and both Republican and Unionist paramilitaries, including in the Omagh bombing, the Ballymurphy massacre, and Bloody Sunday. Raymond McCord, prominent Victim's rights campaigner and spokesperson for the film, has worked tirelessly to get answers about the 1997 murder of his son, Raymond Jr. Despite being from an Ulster Protestant family and having served in the Royal Air Force, Raymond Jr. was killed by a loyalist paramilitary group. Since, investigative reports by the Police Ombudsman have confirmed that the investigation into Raymond Jr.'s murder was mishandled in order to protect police informants. Those featured in 'The Victim's Stories' continue to campaign for perpetrators of violence to be held accountable for their actions.





The Victims in the film demand the abandonment of the British government's Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill, which would effectively grant amnesty to former soldiers and others involved in the conflict. McCord presented a framed document signed by all political parties in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland opposing the Legacy and Reconciliation Bill to a senior Conservative MP who attended the film viewing. At another point in the conference, McCord presented a framed version of the document to Chancellor of Queen's University, Secretary Hillary Clinton, who expressed support for McCord's cause while serving as US Secretary of State. Earlier in the conference, Dr. Monica McWilliams, co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and former Chief Commissioner of the NI Human Rights Commission noted that opposition to the UK's Legacy and Reconciliation Bill has "united all parties" in the North, which "doesn't happen often."*

Watching 'The Victim's Stories' and hearing from those featured in the film in-person was incredibly moving and eye-opening. I was struck by the way the Victims crossed community divides to support one another through their shared experiences of grief, pain, and search for recognition from the state. McCord's point that, "Victims do not have a political or sectarian agenda in their pursuit of truth and justice"*** shone through at this event. It was heartening to see over 100 people in attendance, including a school group from Derry/Londonderry. Despite continuous challenges to their search for recognition, the Victims show that the legacy of The Troubles doesn't have to be one of continued hatred and division, but can be one of shared compassion in a society that values truth and justice for all impacted by the tragedies and legacy of The Troubles.

Victims are telling their stories. Is the British government listening?

'The Victim's Stories' was produced by Mobile Media and The Truth and Justice Movement.

* Power, Jack. (18 April 2023). "Belfast Agreement Conference: Politicians in Northern Ireland 'Took Risks,' says Blair - as it happened." Irish Times.

** McCurry, Kate. (27 September 2022). "Irish Politician to attend screening of film about Troubles killings." Irish Mirror.

Mollie Sullivan is a postgraduate on the Masters degree programme: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queen's University Belfast. Her research interests include grassroots peacebuilding, youth, peace, and security, and cross-cultural exchange as a tool for local and global transformation. Hailing from North Carolina, she enjoys dance, art, and spending time outdoors, preferably by the mountains or the sea.



Keep talking: a reflection on how dialogue keeps peace alive

Whitney Westbrook

In April, Whitney attended a number of conferences relating to the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement and another on teaching contested histories. In this blog, she discusses the need to keep talking about history if we want to continue building a more peaceful world. She discusses the importance of younger generations who have not experienced conflict to be taught about history, to apply this to their current context and to be aware of the warning signs so that we can prevent mass atrocities in the future.

At Agreement 25, the event commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement hosted at Queen's University Belfast, I watched as the leaders of each major political party in Northern Ireland gathered for a panel discussion on building peace.

It was mildly ironic as they took their seats next to one another on stage in front of the world: Stormont hasn't had a sitting government since I moved to Belfast in September 2022.

Yet seeing these leaders on stage, engaging in dialogue to commemorate this important anniversary, gave me hope. Some days, it seems like these leaders and their parties still have insurmountable differences. That day, they were able to put them aside to celebrate how far Northern Ireland has come in the past 25 years. To me, this underscores a firm belief in a commitment to peace that might just supersede partisan fighting.

The week of 17 April 2023 wasn't exactly the typical week I pictured having when I moved to Northern Ireland in September 2022 to pursue a Master's degree in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queen's University Belfast. Yet at the same time, it was also exactly what I had envisioned.

I was beyond fortunate to attend two days of Agreement 25, followed by three days of the annual EUROCLIO conference on teaching contested histories through the Queen's University JETSET Award. Within a matter of days, I saw Hillary Clinton give a speech, took part in a private masterclass on conflict resolution taught by Senator Mitchell, and participated in a workshop co-taught by Croatian and Serbian teachers on countering extremism in the classroom.

I spent the entire week talking about peace – how to build it, how to maintain it, how fragile it is.

Hosted in Vilnius, Lithuania, the theme of this year's EUROCLIO conference was "The Complexity of History: Unpacking the Past." The conference focused on fostering positive dialogue and teaching contested histories. EUROCLIO is an association for European history teachers, but I was quickly disillusioned of the idea that I might be the only non-European - and the only non-teacher - when the two people I sat between on the very first day were South African and American nonprofit practitioners working in the education space. This theme seemed to attract a particularly international contingent, highlighting the relevance of this topic to countries around the world.

The conference consisted of three days of panels, workshops, and site visits around Vilnius. One of the topics that kept coming up was whether it might ever be good practice not to teach histories that are extremely recent and highly controversial. "Don't kids deserve the chance to create new narratives that don't revolve around conflict?" a teacher from the Balkans asked in a workshop. Her point was that none of her students were born during the 1990s. These discussions mirrored similar conversations I have had with teachers from around Northern Ireland about teaching the Troubles. With no personal memories of these conflicts, some people think, shouldn't younger generations get the chance to start over? Yes...but also, no.

Two days later, I was walking beneath the iron "Arbeit macht frei" gates leading into Auschwitz-Birkenau, about to tour the infamous Nazi death camp that had captured my childhood horror and fascination.

I have been fascinated by conflict and peace from a very young age, something I've only recently realised I can chalk up to a complicated relationship with my German heritage. Both of my grandmothers were born in the early 1940s in Berlin, and my grandfather's parents emigrated from Germany in the inter-war period. I grew up surrounded with stories of wartime heroism – a great grandfather who helped hundreds of Jewish people find work in other countries; a cousin who refused to report for compulsory military service and was shot in front of his family. I am extremely proud of these acts of defiance, but what has always nagged at me is what I don't know. Most of my family lived in Germany through the war, and I fear that there are darker truths that simply aren't being passed down to future generations for fear of shame or reprisals.

We don't like to talk about the darker parts of our pasts, either collective national pasts or personal pasts. It's easier to just sweep it under the rug and hope that it gets forgotten as people die and new generations grow up unaware.

However, there is something very dangerous about not engaging in that dialogue. I would have steered clear of using the cliché that “those who don't learn history are doomed to repeat it” if I hadn't seen it inscribed in a plaque in the first exhibition barrack in Auschwitz. We have to keep talking about history if we want to continue building a more peaceful world. We must be aware of the warning signs so that we can prevent mass atrocities in the future.

One of the best presentations I saw at the EUROCLIO conference was a multi-country project in which students used place-based learning to explore the victims of national socialism in their own countries. The teachers from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Denmark talked about how their students applied what they

learned from their project to today's circumstances, particularly regarding racism. Their findings: We have to keep a historical dialogue alive so that we aren't doomed to repeat it.

If I can impart one lesson from the Agreement 25 conference, the EUROCLIO conference, and my visit to Auschwitz, it would be to keep talking about history. It is not an easy task, but continued dialogue will enable us to build peace and maintain it for generations to come.

Whitney Westbrook is a student on the MA Conflict Transformation and Social Justice programme. She is writing her dissertation on the challenges that peace education NGOs face in the different contexts of Cyprus and Northern Ireland.

JETSET is an award of £750 offered by the QUB Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences for students studying within the Faculty, to enable them to take part in international activity during the 22/23 academic year that that will enrich their degree and support their skills development relevant to their chosen career.



RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

[Return to contents page](#)

The Mitchell Institute Research Workshop Series offers an interdisciplinary platform to showcase research and stimulate debate and discussion. The Workshops provide a forum for authors at various stages in the writing process – from early drafts to published works – to explore their ideas, hypothesis and findings with academics and practitioners from a range of disciplines and at various career stages. Attendees read the articles, publications or drafts in advance of the Workshop, using the full duration of the Workshop for discussion and debate. The Workshops enable the sharing of practical experience and expertise in the publishing landscape as well as research development for the authors.



Commitment to the ‘National’ in Post-Conflict Countries: Public and Private Security Provision in Lebanon

Prof Melani Cammett, Harvard University and Mitchell Institute Honorary Professor

*21 September 2022
Queen’s University Belfast*

At this research workshop, participants discussed the recently published paper *Commitment to the “National” in Post-Conflict Countries: Public and Private Security Provision in Lebanon*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Volume 66, Issue 7-8, April 2022, by Melani Cammett and co-authors.

Based on a conjoint survey experiment of a nationally representative sample, the paper assesses the degree to which citizens in a “divided society” express a preference for candidates who pledge to provide national security provision or targeted protection for ingroup members only.

The authors find that, on average, citizens favour comprehensive security for the whole polity. Furthermore, even supporters of sectarian parties with strong militias, such as Hezbollah, which can most credibly offer ingroup protection, do not prefer group-specific over national security.

Topics of discussion centred on a number of themes, including the role of Ottoman and European colonial legacies in shaping patterns of security provision and politics more broadly in the country; the behaviour and incentives of the Hezbollah leadership in maintaining its militia; the reasons for the exclusive focus on Sunni and Shia Muslim respondents in the study and the nature of Christian political representation in contemporary Lebanon;

and the rationale for the particular research design and field research strategies that the authors adopted.

The workshop concluded with a broader discussion of how Professor Cammett arrived at her research agenda on identity politics and socioeconomic development and on approaches to academic publishing.



The USA and the Northern Ireland Conflict

Dr Peter McLoughlin
Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy

29 November 2022
Queen's University Belfast

Participants discussed a chapter on the Reagan era from Dr McLoughlin's forthcoming book on the subject Irish America, the US Government, and the Northern Ireland Problem: 1968-2023. McLoughlin argues the subtle but important effects that the Reagan administration had in progressing the situation Northern Ireland, and the influence that moderate Irish-American activists, working alongside the Irish government, had in producing this outcome.

The questions addressed and themes discussed included the relative importance of the Reagan government in terms of Margaret Thatcher's decision to sign the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement; the efforts of Ulster unionists to influence political opinion in the US, why they had such difficulties in this, but arguably became more effective in the Clinton years and particularly the George W. Bush era; the importance of the mainstream US media to debates on the subject, and how this would become even more crucial through the changes brought by the peace process; the role of key officials in the Reagan administration, and how their position changed over time; the role of more radical lobby groups, who had less influence on the White House, but had stronger grassroots presence in Irish-America; and methodologies of writing on complex narratives that address key scholarly debates but also produce work that is readable for non-experts.

The workshop concluded with Dr McLoughlin suggesting ways in which junior scholars in particular, might approach the publication of research in both book and article formats, and how one can feed the other.



Prof Kieran McEvoy



Dr Lauren Dempster

Embarrassment in Conflict and Transition

**Prof Kieran McEvoy, Mitchell Institute Theme Lead:
Rights and Social Justice**
**Dr Lauren Dempster Mitchell Institute Fellow:
Rights and Social Justice**

6 December 2022
Queen's University Belfast

Mitchell Institute Theme Lead Prof Kieran McEvoy and Institute Fellow Dr Lauren Dempster presented at a Workshop on the relationship between embarrassment, non-state armed groups, and the transition from conflict.

They introduced the academic literature on embarrassment, drawing mostly on social psychology. They then explored a number of points of intersection between embarrassment and the activities of armed groups, focusing on the Provisional IRA. Particular attention was given to the utility of embarrassment as a tool of resistance by those impacted by past violence, drawing on two case studies: the disappeared of the NI conflict and punishment violence.

A number of key themes were drawn out, including the importance of audience, the significance of a group's self-presentation (particularly in light of Scott's 'seeing like a state'), and the potential for a sense of moral obligation to impact how organisations respond to past violence.

In the subsequent discussion, a number of thought-provoking points were raised. These included exploration of the concept of embarrassment, how to differentiate between embarrassment and shame, and further thoughts on the place of the audience, the identity of the 'embarrasser,' and the ways in which this type of mobilisation tactic might impact upon other aspects of the transition away from conflict.



**Homeland Insecurity:
The Rise and Rise of Anti-Terrorism Law**

**Professor Conor Gearty,
London School of Economics**

*10 May 2023
Queen's University Belfast*

In advance of this Research Workshop, Professor Gearty shared draft chapters from his forthcoming book *Homeland Insecurity: The Rise and Rise of Anti-terrorism Law*.

Attendees from numerous disciplines engaged in intense and productive debate with one of the world's leading scholars in the field.

Participants explored the main themes in the book: how anti-terrorism law shapes democratic culture, how it impacts the understanding of what living in a free society is all about and debated whether these laws secure or undermine freedom and civil liberties.

They discussed the origin of anti-terrorism laws and how the 'war on terror' and the associated anti-terrorism laws were so easily accommodated within democratic polities in the decade after the attacks of 11 September 2001.

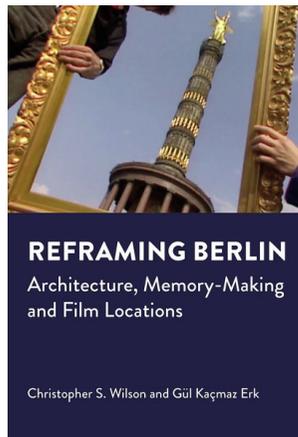
Conor Gearty is Professor of Human Rights Law at the London School of Economics (LSE) and a barrister in practice at Matrix Chambers.

He is Vice-President for Social Sciences at the British Academy and also a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, a Bencher at both Middle Temple and the King's Inn, and the recipient of four honorary degrees from universities in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States. In 2021 he was awarded an Honorary QC in recognition of his work in law.

PUBLICATIONS

[Return to contents page](#)

Institute Fellows and colleagues have published a number of books this year which aim to enhance understanding of a range of themes, responding through analysis of current research, examination of policy and practice, and case studies.



*Christopher S. Wilson and Gül Kaçmaz Erk.
Bristol: Intellect Books,
February 2023*

BOOK

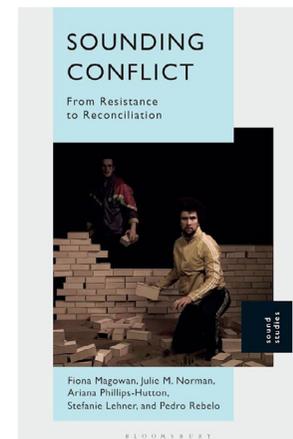
Reframing Berlin: Architecture, Memory-Making and Film Locations

Dr Gül Kaçmaz Erk and Christopher S. Wilson

Reframing Berlin is about how architecture and the built environment can reveal the memory of a city, an urban memory, through its transformation and consistency over time by means of ‘urban strategies’, which have developed throughout history as cities have adjusted to numerous political, religious, economic and societal changes.

These strategies are organised on a ‘memory spectrum’, which range from demolition, new construction, Disneyfication to supplementation, suspension, memorialisation.

The book reveals the complicated relationship between urban strategies and their influence on memory-making in the context of Berlin since 1895, with the help of film locations. It utilises cinematic representations of locations as an audio-visual archive to provide a deeper analysis of the issues brought up by 12 strategies and 24 case studies including the mutated Berlin Wall, Hitler’s demolished New Reich Chancellery, the appropriated TV Tower, the relocated Victory Column, and the city’s adapted bunkers and techno clubs in relation to memory-making.



*Fiona Magowan,
Pedro Rebelo,
Stefanie Lehner,
Julie M. Norman,
Ariana Phillips-Hutton.
London:
Bloomsbury Academic Publishing,
February 2023*

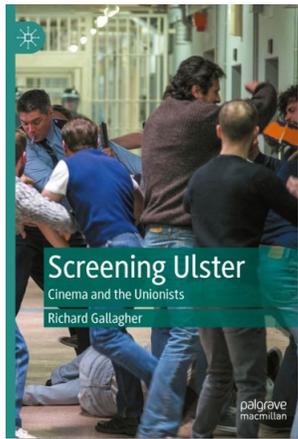
BOOK

Sounding Conflict: From Resistance to Reconciliation

**Professor Fiona Magowan, Dr Stefanie Lehner,
Professor Pedro Rebelo, Dr Julie M. Norman
and Dr Ariana Phillips-Hutton**

Sound, music and storytelling are important tools of resistance, resilience and reconciliation in creative practice from protracted conflict to post-conflict contexts. When they are used in a socially engaged participatory capacity, they can create counter-narratives to conflict. Based on original research in three continents, this book advances an interdisciplinary, comparative approach to exploring the role of sonic and creative practices in addressing the effects of conflict.

Each case study illustrates how participatory arts genres are variously employed by musicians, arts facilitators, theatre practitioners, community activists and other stakeholders as a means of ‘strategic creativity’ to transform trauma and promote empowerment. This research further highlights the complex dynamics of delivering and managing creativity among those who have experienced violence, as they seek opportunities to generate alternative arenas for engagement, healing and transformation.



Richard Gallagher.
London: Palgrave Macmillan,
March 2023

BOOK

Screening Ulster: Cinema and Unionists

Dr Richard Gallagher

This book presents extensive research into the cinematic representation of the British-identifying Protestant, unionist and loyalist community in Northern Ireland and is the first time such comprehensive analysis has been produced.

Gallagher's research traces the history of the community's representation in cinema from the emergence of depictions of both nationalist and unionist communities in social-realist dramas in 1980s British and Irish cinema to today, through periods such as those focused on violent paramilitaries in the 1990s and irreverent comedy after the Northern Ireland peace process.

The book addresses the perception that the Irish nationalist community has been depicted more frequently and favourably than unionism in films about the period of conflict known as "The Troubles". Often argued to be the result of an Irish nationalist bias within Hollywood, Gallagher argues that there are other inherent and systemic reasons for this cinematic deficit.



THE KILLING OF JOHN CRAWFORD

A Victim-Centred and Co-Designed Truth Recovery Process

2023



REPORT

The Killing of John Crawford: A Victim-Centred and Co-Designed Truth Recovery Process

**Professor Kieran McEvoy,
Mitchell Institute Theme Lead:
Rights and Social Justice
Professor of Law and Transitional Justice,
School of Law, QUB**

On 16 May 2023, Professor Kieran McEvoy launched a report on the murder of John Crawford, who was the victim of a sectarian killing in 1974. The killing was carried out by the UVF but it was never claimed as the organisation was on cease-fire at the time. Since then, John Crawford's family have been trying to find out what really happened, facing many barriers and challenges over the last 50 years. The report details Paul Crawford's lengthy and painstaking engagement via an interlocutor acting on his behalf over several years to get the most information possible about the murder of his father, and a formal acknowledgement of responsibility from the UVF. Writing the report itself on such a sensitive and complex topic also took a number of years.

Professor Kieran McEvoy said he was asked to write up this report and to put the work in the broader context of legacy debates on dealing with the past in Northern Ireland.

Paul Crawford said: "I just want to express my huge and sincere thanks from myself and my wider family for everything Professor McEvoy has done. The report really made a difference in validating everything. Thank you also to the Mitchell Institute and QUB for their support. We are eternally grateful."

The report speaks directly to the workability of one of the mechanisms agreed to in the Stormont House Agreement 2014 (SHA) – a mechanism that has since been omitted from the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act which was recently passed through the United Kingdom parliament.

Professor McEvoy said "I would like to pay testament to Paul's courage and tenacity in having initiated and then seen this process through to its successful

conclusion. However, victims should not have to do that. It is the responsibility of the state to provide such mechanisms and the state has failed Paul and thousands of other victims.

"As was recognised in the Stormont House Agreement, in addition to proper investigations, one of the ways in which information can be gleaned is from the groups themselves that are responsible for past violence. Information can only be accessed in this way if there are armed groups who have the political will and the capacity to provide that information and if there are effective mechanisms - such as through the work of an interlocutor."

He concluded: "There are a number of court cases about to be launched challenging the legality of those legacy legislation. In addition, at an event here in Queens in January 2023, the leader of the opposition Sir Keir Starmer promised that if elected, a Labour government will repeal this legislation. That commitment was reconfirmed by the Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn in Westminster recently. With such legal challenges in train and the possibility of a general election and a labour government in 2024, I suspect that the Stormont House Agreement may well be the basis for any legacy rethink. If that happens, Paul Crawford's hard work in demonstrating that information recovery from an armed group is possible may well prove of huge value to many other families."



PODCASTS

[Return to contents page](#)

TALIBAN, TURBANS AND THE SMARTPHONE

Established in 2022 by Professor Michael Semple, and produced by Colm Heatley, the Taliban Turbans and the Smartphone podcast series explores developments in Afghanistan since the Taliban take over in August 2021.

Series 1 explains how the Taliban managed to take power in Kabul in August 2021 and what they did in their first year. This series includes important background to what is happening in Afghanistan today. Each episode features a guest interview, offering perspectives from analysts, activists, veterans and humanitarians.

In Series 2, Michael and Tamim Asey, Afghan Analyst and technocrat, follow developments in Afghanistan, exploring policy, politics, security and economics under Taliban rule. They discuss the people and events which they find significant in the unfolding saga of Afghanistan under the Taliban.

SERIES 1

Listen to the episodes on iTunes and Spotify



tinyurl.com/Mitchell-iTunes



tinyurl.com/Mitchell-Spotify



EPISODE 1 Victory and Collapse a Year On

Over a year has now passed since the Taliban recaptured Kabul and went on to re-establish their Islamic Emirate. At the time of their entry into the capital, Taliban supporters relished a sweet, almost miraculous, victory. But for Afghans opposed to the Taliban, August the 15th marked the collapse of their Republic, and with it a loss of freedoms and hopes. In victory and collapse, this podcast considers how Afghan perspectives on the Taliban takeover have been shaped by the first year of the Taliban in power.

This episode features a guest interview with new generation Afghan analyst Tamim Asey.



EPISODE 2 The State and the Economy Under Taliban Rule

In forcing their way into Kabul on 15 August 2021, the Taliban took control of the Afghan state.

This episode considers what the Taliban have done with the state; the extent to which they have pursued radical transformation or continuity; and what Taliban statecraft has meant for Afghans living under Taliban rule and for the Afghan economy.

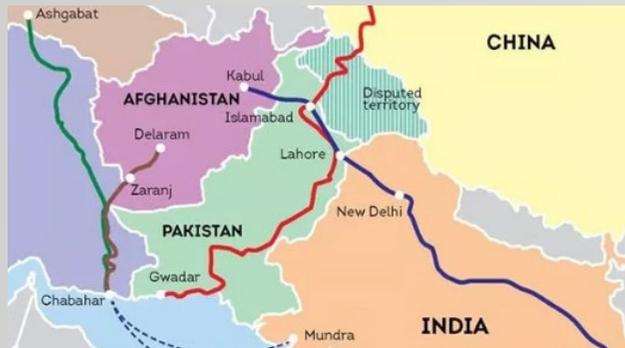
This episode features a guest interview with a veteran Taliban commander.



EPISODE 3
Human Rights and Exile

This episode explores the state of human rights under the Taliban and secondly the exodus of Afghans from their country triggered by the Taliban takeover. The human rights crisis and the mass exodus from the country are each significant aspects of Afghan experience. They are also intricately related. Egregious human rights abuses conducted by Taliban forces with impunity have helped to drive Afghans across the borders.

This episode features a guest interview with Shaharзад Akbar, Chairperson of the Republic’s Independent Human Rights Commission.



EPISODE 4
Humanitarian Assistance, the State of the Media and the Taliban’s Quest for Recognition

The Taliban leaders expected that the international community would soon accept the reality of the change of rulers in Kabul. They counted on prompt diplomatic recognition to open up access to the international finance needed to run Afghanistan. Instead, no country has recognised the Islamic Emirate and official development assistance remains cut off.

In this episode Michael asks what Afghanistan’s new isolation has meant for all those struggling with the country’s humanitarian crisis.

This episode features a guest interview with an Afghan journalist and civil rights activist.



EPISODE 5
The Armed Conflict

The Taliban’s uncontested capture of Kabul did not end armed conflict in Afghanistan. A year on, the Taliban find themselves fighting two insurgencies. In the mountains of the north a “National Resistance Front” is fighting against the Taliban’s Islamic authoritarianism. In Kabul and the cities, Daesh is waging a bloody campaign, accusing the Taliban of being worldly western stooges. This episode looks at why violence continues despite the decision by the US and others to sit out this round of the Afghan war.

This episode features a guest interview with the Republic’s Minister for Refugees, Nur Rahman Akhlaqi.



EPISODE 6
The Peace Process

In seizing Kabul, the Taliban collapsed the Islamic republic under which Afghanistan has been governed for twenty years. They also collapsed the peace process, abruptly ending three years of intense efforts by the US to broker a settlement between the Afghan conflicting parties. But the conflict in Afghanistan is not over and all the key questions around the country's future remain unresolved. This episode asks what is happening on peace-making, over a year after the last formal process was aborted.

This episode features a guest interview with Mawlvi Atta ur Rahman Saleem, Deputy Chairman of the Republic's High Commission for National Reconciliation.

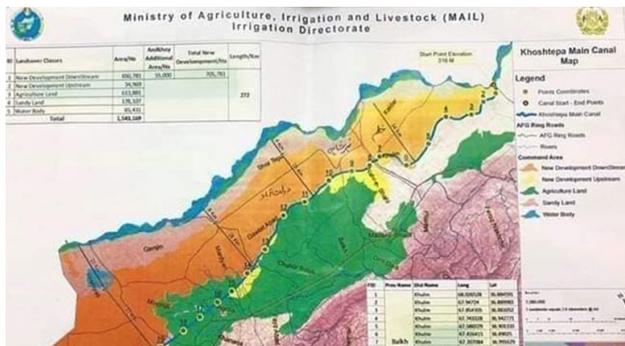
SERIES 2



EPISODE 1
Revolutionary decrees and the Taliban's assault on Afghan women

The Taliban are now well into a second year of imposing their revived Islamic Emirate on Afghanistan. The Taliban's Amir, Haibatollah Akhundzada, has published a series of radical decrees which he claims are, step by step, imposing an Islamic system of government and law. In the latest move, the Taliban have banned girls from university and stopped Afghan women from working in aid agencies, except in the health sector.

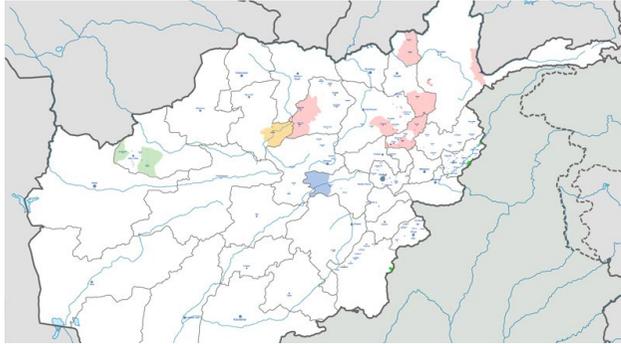
In this episode, Tamim and Michael assess the outcome of a mission to Afghanistan by UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammad. They locate this exchange in the context of the latest stage of the Taliban's roll-out of their Islamic Emirate.



EPISODE 2
The Qosh Tappa Canal project – Threat to ethnic harmony or doomed vanity project?

The Taliban Movement is basically famous for two things – for waging armed jihad and for imposing an austere moral code. In this episode Michael and Tamim explore why this Islamist Movement has involved itself in digging a canal across the plains of northern Afghanistan. The Qosh Tappa Canal is a mega project – it is like digging a ditch wider than a football field, stretching from London to Liverpool. It has been championed by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Emirate's Deputy Prime Minister who heads the National Economic Council.

Tamim and Michael try to work out why the Taliban are throwing so many resources at digging a ditch in the desert.



EPISODE 3

Emirate versus Khilafat – The ISKP Critique of the Taliban

For researchers of the Taliban, the ISKP campaign is significant not just because of the horrendous violence, but because it deploys Islamist rhetoric and reasoning against the Taliban. Perhaps much of the Taliban leadership worries more about what ISKP says about them than they would worry about any number of Security Council resolutions. Taliban have always invested heavily in maintaining the unity of the movement and the authority of their Amir. So, in ideological rather than military terms, the most obvious threat to the Taliban and their unity is if ISKP jihadist rhetoric finds resonance with disillusioned Taliban fighters.

In this episode Michael and Tamim explore what ISKP is saying about the Taliban.



EPISODE 4

The Hazaras and the Taliban – A reality check on minority rights under the second Emirate

The Hazara ethnic group suffered under the Taliban’s first Islamic Emirate. The Hazarajat region was the first to rebel against that Emirate and the Taliban army burnt down the regional centre Bamyán in revenge. Massacres of Hazara civilians followed. Many feared that there would be a repetition of these events once the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

In this episode Michael and Tamim do a reality check on minority rights under the second Islamic Emirate, asking how Hazaras have been treated by the Taliban this time round. They start with impressions from this year’s commemoration of the 28th anniversary of the killing by Taliban of the main Hazara jihadi leader, Abdul Ali Mazari and then reflect on Hazara political participation and the state of human rights.



EPISODE 5

The women’s ban extended to the UN – are the Taliban pursuing contradictory objectives?

On Tuesday 4 April 2023 the UN mission in Afghanistan went into crisis mode: Taliban officials in Nangarhar prevented UN Afghan women staff from going to work. The UN responded by telling all staff to stay home while the mission leadership sought explanations from the Emirate on what was behind the new restrictions.

The Islamic Emirate is indeed now applying the ban on Afghan women working in aid agencies to the UN, in line with the way it has enforced that ban in NGOs. This is a critical time for the internationally supported assistance mission in Afghanistan – agencies cannot continue “business as usual” and are forced to consider reducing staff and cutting programmes. The ban has impacted donors funding of Afghan assistance.

In this episode, Michael and Tamim explore the Taliban objectives underpinning their latest women’s ban.



EPISODE 6

The Taliban's Amir – Is he transforming the Afghan state?

Media reports sometimes refer to Haibatollah as “the Taliban’s reclusive Amir”. The label is out of date. Haibatollah is still careful but not at all reclusive. He invites a steady stream of Taliban officials, commanders, religious scholars and even businessmen to his office in central Kandahar to receive instructions from him and listen to his vision for a truly Islamic Afghan society. In the last week of the fasting month of Ramadan, Zabiullah Mujahid released the Taliban Amir’s Eid message, projecting an idealised picture of the Islamic state. The picture of justice, piety, security and prosperity is more grounded in aspirations than reality. But in recent months we have witnessed real changes in the way Afghans are governed.

In this episode, Michael and Tamim ask: is Haibatollah transforming the Afghan state?



EPISODE 7

Is there internal dissent in the Taliban movement and does it matter?

This episode addresses the Islamic Emirate’s internal politics and considers the factional tussles and differences over ideology and tactics within the movement. What do these differences in perspective between the Taliban factions tell us about the prospects for a change in the Emirate’s hard-line policies?

Michael and Tamim explore the question of whether the Emirate should be prepared to compromise on its hard-line policies, in particular the restrictions on women, in response to Afghan popular sentiment and to mend fences with the international community. But does the movement’s doctrine of obedience to the Amir just make internal politics irrelevant?



EPISODE 8

Do the Taliban have an economic policy and if so what is it?

This episode focuses on what the Taliban have been doing to the Afghan economy, piecing together their economic policy. The Taliban aspire to a form of self-reliance, which they have pursued through revenue collection. But they are more focused on rewarding members for their jihad than growing the economy.

In this episode, Michael and Tamim discuss: What the Taliban understand by self-reliance; Taliban fiscal policy and how they have managed the transition to high dependence on budget support to funding the budget from domestic revenue; monetary policy and how Afghanistan has avoided the devaluation and inflations which accompanied previous political crises; the limitations of the Taliban’s business-friendly approach; and economic outcomes and what this means for the Afghan population and resource distribution.



EPISODE 9

Emirate Land - What have the Taliban achieved through all their decrees about land and property rights?

Taliban Amir Haibatollah has issued multiple decrees dealing with land ownership issues. He follows in an historic tradition. One of the key themes in the development of the modern state has been how Afghan Amirs, from Ahmad Shah Durrani onwards, conducted military campaigns to stamp their authority onto outlying provinces and then followed up by settling their followers and loyal populations on land in the conquered territories.

In the modern conflict, the early PDPA regime announced land reforms, which were supposed to break up the holdings of “feudal landlords” and distribute forfeited land to peasants. In the Republic many of the powerful figures of the Republic used their influence to lead and profit from a property boom as millions of Afghans shifted to the cities.

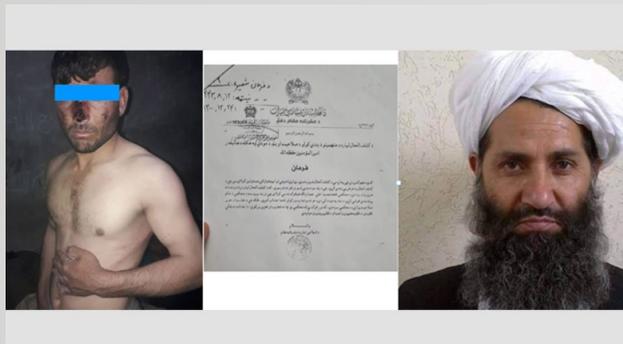


EPISODE 10

The pre-history of engagement with the Taliban – what UN Special Coordinator Sinirlioğlu should know

This episode addresses one of the topics that has been around as long as the Taliban have existed –how best to engage with the movement. In April 2023 the UN Security Council appointed Turkish diplomat Feridun Sinirlioğlu to the role of Special Coordinator. Central to his mission is this old question of how the United Nations and other international actors should engage with the Taliban.

Michael and Tamim discuss the challenges confronting the Special Coordinator and then dip into what feels almost like ancient history. They look at the lessons learned in Afghan and UN engagement with the Taliban and their first Emirate, between 1994 and 2001.



EPISODE 11

Rule of law in the Emirate security sector – will the Amir’s latest decree end decades of torture in Afghanistan’s intelligence agency?

This episode focuses on what the Taliban have been doing to the Afghan economy, piecing together their economic policy. The Taliban aspire to a form of self-reliance, which they have pursued through revenue collection. But they are more focused on rewarding members for their jihad than growing the economy.

In this episode, Michael and Tamim discuss: What the Taliban understand by self-reliance; Taliban fiscal policy and how they have managed the transition to high dependence on budget support to funding the budget from domestic revenue; monetary policy and how Afghanistan has avoided the devaluation and inflations which accompanied previous political crises; the limitations of the Taliban’s business-friendly approach; and economic outcomes and what this means for the Afghan population and resource distribution.

In a series of blog posts, the Mitchell Institute has been providing response and expert analysis of local, national and international developments and events.

TRANS-ASIAN NETWORKS AND ISLAMIC MILITANCY IN THE NEW ERA: REFLECTIONS FROM SOUTH-EAST ASIA

PROFESSOR MICHAEL SEMPLE
PROFESSORIAL RESEARCH FELLOW

November 2022

Islamic State affiliated militants in Indonesia have declared that the chaotic final withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan proves that jihadists in their region can eventually triumph. They have appealed to volunteers to travel to Afghanistan and serve with the “Islamic State of Khorasan Province”. This is just one way in which ripples from the Taliban’s re-establishment of their Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan have reached as far as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The developments over the past year have illustrated the potency of long-distance networks in the exchange of ideas and people across the Asian continent. But, in trying to understand the interaction of militancy in West and South-East Asia, we need to take account of the transition of era which has taken place over the past two years– the *Zeitenwende* as Olaf Scholz latterly named it. Indonesian, Philippino and Malaysian Muslims first travelled to Pakistan and Afghanistan in large numbers in the final decade of the Cold War and operated in Afghanistan and then Syria during Global War on Terror (GWOT). Global actors have now made the transition from the GWOT to the era of global challenges and new strategic competition, largely diverting attention from militancy in Asia. I recently had an opportunity to travel to

South-East Asia for a UN-sponsored conference, to take stock of the Islamist militant networks that span the continent. The conference coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Bali bombings. These thoughts are inspired by the conference and my travels in the region.

Islamist militancy continues to pose a security threat in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia despite the *Zeitenwende* and re-ordering of global priorities. Indonesia hosts the region’s largest militant networks. The *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah* functions as the main affiliate of Islamic State. It calls for extending the Caliphate to Indonesia and has been responsible for a string of terrorist incidents in the country in recent years. *Jamaah Islamiah* (JI), however, has a longer pedigree. It has roots in the anti-colonial movement, pioneered Indonesian participation in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and is affiliated with Al Qaeda. The peak of its notoriety came with the 2002 Bali bombings. In recent years, JI has paused its terrorist attacks and concentrated on rebuilding its transnational network for the struggle ahead. The scale of militancy in Indonesia is hinted at from the caseload of Indonesians captured in Syria. Some 1,250 Indonesian nationals are held in the Syrian democratic Forces camps in northern Syria.

In the Philippines, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants acted as one component of the long-running insurgency in Mindanao until the Comprehensive Agreement between the Philippines government and the main Moro groups in 2014. But the effect of the Islamic State’s idea of a Caliphate on militant ambition in Philippines was illustrated by the five-month long siege of Marawi in 2017. A militant coalition including ASG with newly developed links to IS took over and tried to hold a major urban centre.

Malaysia has mainly served as a transit point for the militants but has also been impacted by militant attacks. Malaysia’s Sabah province in Borneo has become one of the main hubs for militants in the region.

The first person I met in the street in Sabah was one of the many immigrants who have crossed the sea from Mindanao. Locals in Lahad Datu gave testimony about the effect of kidnappings, piracy and smuggling conducted along the coast by criminal-linked militants operating from Philippines and Indonesia.

In the Sulu Sea, territory of all three countries lies within a radius of 100 km. The Malaysian security response has included posting military personnel on 14 of Sabah’s

offshore islands, to protect the valuable tourist trade. My research in Afghanistan suggests five actual or potential linkages between the conflict there and militancy in South-East Asia – the inspiration effect, sanctuary, military training and organisation, material assistance, trafficking and finance.

So far the inspiration effect has worked through “looking in” rather than “looking out”. It is ironic that Indonesia’s IS-linked propagandists have taken the lead in citing Taliban victory to recruit people to join their struggle for the Caliphate, given that Islamic State does not actually hold territory in Afghanistan and is at war with the Taliban. Meanwhile, JI, with its history of linkage to the Taliban’s Al Qaeda allies has not actively tried to exploit the re-establishment of the Emirate.

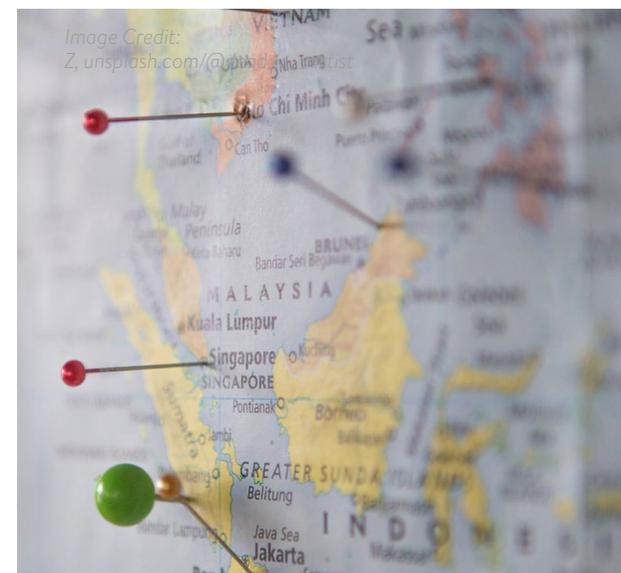
Taliban-ruled Afghanistan clearly has again become a sanctuary for international militants, including those from SE Asia. But the rules governing this sanctuary are different from the one which operated in the nineties. In the first Islamic Emirate, the Amir, Mullah Omar, actively patronised the coalition of militants from multiple countries, allowing them to operate military camps and research laboratories and to deploy military units in the Afghan civil war. Under the restored Islamic Emirate, the Taliban’s intelligence agency has been tasked with keeping tabs on militants. This entails Taliban intelligence helping militants find housing, paying stipends and ensuring they keep a much lower profile than in the old days. In today’s Afghanistan, foreign militants can rent a house and drive around with armed bodyguards. But the Taliban still claim that they are not free to run operations outside Afghanistan. It remains to see how this contradiction evolves.

During the Taliban’s insurgency, the most active foreign militants served as advanced military trainers

and “engineers” who helped in technical and tactical innovation. Some of them were the most formidable fabricators of advanced Improvised Explosive Devices. This terrorist training capacity and the men who provided it are intact in Afghanistan. The foreign militants’ Afghan counterparts now occupy senior positions in the Islamic Emirate security apparatus. Afghanistan has proven capacity to train militants for operations elsewhere in Asia, but it remains to be seen whether the Taliban will actually tolerate this, or indeed if there is a demand.

The Taliban, now that they are responsible for a whole state, have generally struggled to finance their own operations. There seems little prospect of them funding militancy outside the country in the way that Islamic State did when it held territory in Iraq and Syria. However, the return of the Taliban to power has boosted regional criminal networks focused on Afghanistan, with a rise in kidnapping, armed crime and the production and trafficking of opium, heroin, crystal meth and marijuana. Any international terrorist financial linkages to Afghanistan are likely to involve funds raised in this criminal economy rather than direct financing by the Taliban.

In terms of Afghanistan’s impact on regional security, the elephant in the room is arms and narcotics trafficking. The Taliban took control of a vast stock of US military equipment in 2021. Items from this inventory are being acquired by the globally-networked arms dealers who worked closely with the Taliban during the insurgency. There is a real threat of Afghanistan and Pakistan’s arms dealers supplying items such as US Army M4 rifles to any group fighting in Indonesia or the Philippines. And the Taliban’s reinforced links to Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps have boosted the movement’s control over Afghanistan’s most globally significant export commodity – heroin.



The heroin trade is the Taliban controlled activity in Afghanistan with most potential to fund militancy elsewhere in Asia.

Scholars are still probing the operating principles of this era of global challenges and new strategic competition. We know that the US has de-prioritised global terrorism, as symbolised by its withdrawal from Afghanistan. But men who have spent a lifetime training and inspiring jihadi fighters now find themselves in power in Afghanistan and still linked to the global jihadists of Al Qaeda. It remains to be seen just how far the Taliban will be prepared to go in supporting militant causes outside Afghanistan. At least some of the consequences of the Taliban’s decision on whether to impose boundaries on their jihad will continue to ripple as far as the three countries around the Sulu Sea.

BLOOD AND DIRT: ENCOUNTERS WITH WILFRED OWEN

PROFESSOR FRAN BREARTON

MITCHELL INSTITUTE FELLOW: LEGACY

PROFESSOR OF MODERN POETRY, SCHOOL OF ARTS, ENGLISH AND LANGUAGES

January 2023

My first encounter with Wilfred Owen's poetry was – as it is for many – at school: 'Dulce et Decorum Est'; 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', 'Exposure', 'Strange Meeting' – all iconic poems embedded in British consciousness, and central to the cultural 'memory' of war. I remember my (inspirational) English teacher's passionate quoting of Owen's 1918 draft preface – 'Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War' – culminating in that famous phrase 'The Poetry is in the pity'. Only many years later did I conclude that the poetry isn't in the pity: rather, as Geoffrey Hill noted, 'the pity must be registered in the poetry'; were it otherwise, it's unlikely his work would still hold so much fascination for new generations of poets and critics. (A session on 'war poetry' with my MA Poetry class last autumn turned out to be the perfect preparation for the BBC Radio 4 'In Our Time' episode focusing on Wilfred Owen). And while Owen the protest-poet remains, for many, the touchstone for anti-war sentiment, voicing with compassion the suffering of his men, we do well to remember Keith Douglas's later observation about soldiering – that 'here the lover and killer are mingled'. While Owen detailed the horrors of war, he was also the soldier who, in his own words 'lost all [his] earthly faculties and fought like an angel', thereby passing, as he notes, the 'limits' of his own 'Abhorrence'.

Killed at the age of 25, just a week before the Armistice, Owen is perhaps England's most famous

modern war poet, and, along with friends Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, one of a group who have coloured in profound ways our understanding of the First World War – the journey from innocence to experience; the ultimate futility of war; the wilful ignorance of the people at home (especially the women!); even the focus on one particular theatre of war (the western front), the images of which become a synecdoche for the 'Great War' as a whole. They have done so, at times, to the understandable dismay of historians and literary critics, whose views of the war in terms of its military strategy, global theatres, political import, and cultural legacy are not to be found in the lyric poems of a small group of middle - to upper-class educated and unmarried white British men – all volunteers, all officers (Isaac Rosenberg is the notable exception here), all deeply embedded in a sometimes homoerotic male literary coterie.

Owen began as the partial outsider (grammar school not public school) who came to those friendships only in 1917, but who became, posthumously, the central figure among the 'war poets'. His poems, published first by Sassoon in 1920, again by Edmund Blunden in 1931, and in a definitive edition by Jon Stallworthy in the 1980s, have proven far more influential and enduring than those of the 'peers' he was so delighted to find: 'I go out of this year a Poet', he wrote to his mother in 1917, 'as which I did not enter it. I am held peer by the Georgians; I am a poet's poet.'

Loved by poets, and influential on the expansive genre of war poetry over the last 100 years, Owen's presence reverberates in Irish poetry too, and my own critical engagement with Owen, and with other Great War poets, has always been in that archipelagic context.

Louis MacNeice, in 1941, describes Owen, T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence (and 'within narrower limits, Robert Graves') as 'the finest [early 20th century] poets in England'. Owen's presence in early Heaney is unmistakable, albeit mediated through Ted Hughes's own First World War obsession.

In the early years of the Troubles, Michael Longley was not alone in looking to Owen and the Great War generation as exemplars of how the poet works in extremis: 'the poet', Longley wrote in *Causeway* in 1971, 'is not some sort of super-journalist commenting with unfaltering spontaneity on events immediately after that have happened. Rather, as Wilfred Owen stated over fifty years ago, it is the artist's duty to warn, to be tuned in before anyone else to the implications of a situation.'

That Owen was not beloved by Yeats, however, is part and parcel of Yeats's own hostile attitude towards the Great War ('some blunderer has driven his car on to the wrong side of the road – that is all. If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering as we do the discomfort



Image Credit:
Wellcome Images, Wikimedia Commons

of fever...') as well as to its trench poets ('passive suffering is not a theme for poetry').

It is in this context that interest in Owen informs a much wider debate both within and outwith Ireland too – about the nature of poetry; its 'use and function'; its relationship with, or dependence on, conflict; whether, as W.H. Auden put it in his elegy for Yeats, poetry indeed 'makes nothing happen'.

Heaney makes every excuse for those elements in Owen he dislikes, notably his 'excessively vehement adjectives and nouns': 'His poems have the potency of human testimony, of martyr's relics, so that any intrusion of the aesthetic can feel like impropriety'.

Yeats, on the other hand, describing Owen as 'all blood, dirt and sucked sugar-stick', says that 'There is every excuse for him, but none for those who like him'.

For both Heaney and Yeats, it is Owen's most famous poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', that generates unease, although both do him less than justice. Yet none of the ink spilled by historians, poets or critics voicing such unease has ever displaced Owen in terms of his centrality to cultural memory of the First World War.

Like it or not, Owen both informs western memory of conflict, and becomes something of a litmus test for how conflict can or should inform poetry. It's unlikely the aesthetic and political differences brought into focus by his work will ever be reconciled; but perhaps this is one of the few contexts – *vive la différence* – where there is something to be said for keeping the wound green.

TRACING THE HISTORY OF UNIONIST REPRESENTATION IN CINEMA

DR RICHARD GALLAGHER
MITCHELL INSTITUTE ALUMNUS
March 2023

Throughout the history of cinematic representations of Northern Ireland, unionists have been presented in a limited and consistently negative manner by filmmakers. They have also been presented much more critically and less frequently than their Irish nationalist counterparts. In my book, *Screening Ulster: Cinema and the Unionists* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), I trace the history of depictions of the unionist community from the emergence of depictions of both nationalist and unionist communities in social-realist dramas in 1980s British and Irish cinema to today, through periods such as those focused on violent paramilitaries in the 1990s and irreverent comedy after the peace process.

The Troubles has, perhaps understandably, dominated depictions of the North of Ireland. The conflict has certainly provided ample material for drama; this is evidenced in the wide range of fiction films that have been and are being produced. Films about the period of conflict have ranged from de-politicised films, where specific agents in the conflict are left unnamed to realistic docudramas representing historical people and events.

A close reading of these films helps illustrate this cinematic deficit and explain the types of portrayals chosen by filmmakers. I also explore many of the possible explanations for the absence and what it is about the medium of fiction film – rather than literature, theatre or television – that produces such depictions. A proper assessment of the unionist

community's representation in film was made difficult due to the fact that at the core of the unionist identity is an imbricated British identity – this is an identity that, unlike Northern Irish unionism, has been well catered for in cinema.

The British identity is also characterised by its difficulty to define; it merges four nations into one, is constantly being negotiated and has historically needed to be flexible to incorporate empire. When overlapping versions of the Northern Irish unionist identity such as loyalist (a term usually used to define working-class unionists), Protestant (as both an ethno-communal designation and indicator of religious belief) and Irish (both Northern Irish and Irish in a general sense) are factored in, the complexity becomes even greater and significant tensions arise.

I argue that the complexity that has come to characterise unionism is found to be largely absent in cinema and, as such, there has been a negation in the representation of this wide-ranging and diverse section of Irish society. It also finds that representations generally offer a narrow definition of the unionist identity that rarely escapes a polarised relationship with Irish nationalism.

The study demonstrates that the orthodoxy in such films about the North of Ireland and the conflict is of a soft nationalist kind. A focus being primarily on republican paramilitaries is also not necessarily a good

thing for Irish nationalism or republicanism as it implies that the paramilitary violence carried out was entirely of the green variety. Unionism and the British state can be seen to get a pass as a result. The loyalist violence that is depicted is also seldom presented as being politically motivated and this can be seen to contrast significantly with depictions of republican violence which is almost always presented within a context of injustice or oppression.

Many unionists have claimed that this deficit in the film world is reflective of how the unionist community is generally treated by the media or, given the influence of Screen Ireland in so many films set in Northern Ireland, how unionism will be treated by the media in any future amalgamation with the south. What this cinematic deficit says about politics, society, the medium of film, the film industry and, indeed, identity in a possible United Ireland has thrown up some fascinating findings.

Richard Gallagher is a former postgraduate student at the Mitchell Institute. He was awarded his doctorate from Queen's University Belfast in 2022. He is now working as a Political Advisor in Dublin.

*In addition to his recent monograph, he published an article on 'The Troubles Crime Thriller and the Future of Films about Northern Ireland' in *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* (Issue 22, 2022).*

BOSTON COLLEGE EXCHANGE VISIT – APRIL 2023

DR CHERYL LAWTHER
MITCHELL INSTITUTE FELLOW: LEGACY
READER, SCHOOL OF LAW
May 2023

Queen's University Belfast has a long-standing relationship with Irish Studies at Boston College. Funded by the 2022-23 QUB-Boston College Irish Studies Exchange Award, I was fortunate to spend a week in Boston College in April 2023.

The objective of my visit was to share work from my upcoming monograph 'Constructing Victimhood in Transitional Justice: Beyond Innocence and Guilt' (Oxford University Press 2024), utilise the collections in the world-renowned Burns Library and develop research connections.

Arriving in Boston on 8 April and being present on campus during the week of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and President Biden's visit to Northern Ireland, my stay quickly became more pertinent than I originally imagined.

Formally, I had the opportunity to participate in two high-profile scholarly exchanges. The first was a panel on 'Contemporary Issues in Transitional Justice: Comparative Perspectives'. Chaired by Professor Brinton Lykes and sitting alongside Professor Zinaida Miller from Northeastern University, this seminar brought Irish Studies into conversation with Boston based transitional justice scholars for the first time. Joined by Boston College Professor James Smith, an expert in historical institutional abuse in Ireland, our conversation was wide ranging and showcased the best of interdisciplinary research.

My second undertaking was a guest seminar where I delivered a paper on 'Transitional Justice, Haunting and the Presence of the Past in Northern Ireland'. This paper draws on interviews with victims and survivors of the Northern Ireland conflict and argues that in the absence of a formal process of dealing with the past, three forms of haunting persist – the haunting of lost lives as a result of unanswered questions and a continued politicisation of victimhood; the haunting of landscape – how, via memorials, walking tours and other manifestations of place-memory, the unsettled past persists in the physical world around us; and how intersection between haunting and unresolved trauma has contributed to high levels of conflict-related mental health problems and transgenerational trauma. Framed against the backdrop of the passage of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill which looks set to provide a much-diluted approach to dealing with the past in Northern Ireland and the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, this seminar provoked considerable critical discussion and debate.

In addition to these events, I had the opportunity to engage with Irish Studies students at Boston College, teaching a graduate class on 'Dealing with the Legacy of the Northern Ireland Conflict' and participating in a series of lunches and conversations across campus. The commitment shown by the students and their interest in all things Northern Ireland left me feeling reassured that the future of Irish studies is bright!

I left Boston to return to Queen's and the GFA25 celebration events with a renewed vigour for my work, the importance of interdisciplinary research and the value of international research exchanges. The formal and informal scholarly exchanges, conversations in the corridors with staff and students and opportunities to listen and reflect on other perspectives will continue to inform my work for some time to come.

A final word of thanks goes to my host for the week, the Sullivan Chair in Irish Studies, Professor Guy Beiner. Guy created a warm and welcoming environment for my stay, set-up multiple opportunities for me and was extremely gracious with his time and expertise. I look forward to strengthening the connections between our institutions in the years to come.



PUTTING AFGHAN ECONOMIC STATISTICS IN PERSPECTIVE: NOTE IN RESPONSE TO STATISTICS ATTRIBUTED TO THE ECONOMIST

PROFESSOR MICHAEL SEMPLE
PROFESSORIAL RESEARCH FELLOW

May 2023

A friend drew my attention to some factlets which a tweet had attributed to The Economist. I thought I should respond with some comments on Taliban economic performance. Yes, the Taliban are best known as an armed, militant Islamist movement. But, since they insisted on grabbing a monopoly of power in a country with a forty or so million population, they should now expect to be assessed on economic performance rather than just military prowess or effectiveness of jihadi communications.

To my mind, the most significant economic statistic coming out of Afghanistan is that the annual revenue controlled by the Afghan Taliban Movement is now \$2.1bn by my calculation (and \$2.3bn by the “Economist’s” calculation). Surely this fact alone renders pretty much all terrorist financing control around the world irrelevant. Terrorist facilitators are routinely jailed for passing on one or two thousand dollars to a listed terrorist organisation. The Taliban remain under sanctions. But their General Directorate of Intelligence pays monthly stipends to the members of the Tajikistani, Uzbekistani and Uygur jihadist movements hosted in Afghanistan and can now do this “on budget”. Is anybody going to be prosecuted for the carelessness which handed a sanctioned entity a revenue stream worth billions?

In the light of the way the Taliban conducted themselves during their first stint in power in the 1990s and during the insurgency, it is not hard to

explain what they are doing now that they are back in control of the Afghan state. Here are my responses to the factlets attributed to The Economist.

Currency

Quote: “*The collapsed currency is back to USD/AFN 1:87, only 7% lower than before Kabul fell*”

My response: Currency stability has been achieved by tight monetary policy – no expansion of M1 as strictly limited issuing of paper currency (employees complain the notes they get are all damaged!) and almost no credit in the country. And, based on US Treasury special exemption UN agencies transferred 1.8bn USD cash to Kabul and deposited it in one of the Afghan private banks during 2022. This was the same rate of transfer as during the Republic and effectively balanced the supply of dollars with demand. And, of course, the main hard currency earners of humanitarian assistance (\$3bn in 2022) and narcotics (massive stocks being sold on despite cultivation reduction) were buoyant enough to support the \$4bn trade deficit.

State revenues

Quote: “*State revenues are \$2.3bn, up 10% on the year*”

My response: Afghanistan now has an authoritarian government which treats economic statistics as state

secrets. They now do not publish the budget or full revenue figures, so anything you see is selective. WB monitoring of the first 10 months of FY 22/23 had 75% performance against a target of Afs. 1.98 bn, or \$2.1bn. I am doubtful of the \$2.3bn claim and shall continue to use \$2.1bn as my upper end estimate of actual revenue. The key point on how they have achieved it is by more than doubling customs take, upping the import & export tariffs. 48% of revenue coming from customs is deeply problematic – the measure is regressive & makes margins on trade dangerously narrow, jeopardising the \$400m Afghanistan has recently been earning from selling coal to Pakistan. Anyway, the \$2.1-\$2.3bn figure is around 16% of Afghanistan’s GDP, which is in line with typical 15-20% of GDP as government revenue in low and middle-income economies. Perhaps people should get used to looking at Afghanistan as a low-income economy with an authoritarian government and thus not in a category of its own.

Bribery and corruption

Quote: “*The proportion of businesses that bribe customs officials is down from 62% to 8%*”.

My response: The bribery figure is survey-based evidence. I am doubtful of this one. The reporting I receive from Afghanistan suggests that bribe-taking and extortion are endemic. But the Taliban are good at suppressing news critical of their Emirate.

Perhaps a figure collected during the Republic when there was no penalty for speaking your mind (62%) is not comparable with a figure derived when Afghans fear being detained for speaking or posting criticism of the authorities (8%). I was amused recently to see the Taliban authorities discussing letting Transparency International operate, given that, almost by definition, the Taliban are non-transparent.

Civil service salaries

Quote: “All 800,000 government employees are paid on time despite the loss of 75% of the state budget (formerly provided by foreign donors)”

My response: This one is a half-truth. Performance on payment during 2022/23 was pretty good and salaries were getting regular. Payment has been irregular again since March because they have still not approved

the budget, although this week saw the start of Q2, 1402. But you should not be surprised at them paying salaries. This is almost the whole point of the Emirate. A systematic purge (called “tasfia”) is underway to replace those Afghans appointed under the Republic with members of the Taliban movement. Civil service pay is their reward for jihad. And the 75% figure is wrong. The Republic’s budget for 1398 was Afs 396 bn of which 48% came from foreign grants/budget support. But that budget included both operational and development heads. The Emirate budget dropped development spending to 12%, which I suspect they have not been able to fund, so the real figure is lower. Basically, Taliban have slashed development spending and tweaked domestic revenue raising and now spend almost all the budget on salaries.

And for the future, one might ask what the Taliban will do when no one is prepared to give Afghanistan \$3bn

humanitarian assistance, equivalent to 25% of GDP because their Amir is posturing as being anti-west.

For more, listen to my podcast, Taliban Turbans and Smart Phones, available from the Mitchell Institute website and on other platforms. Series 2 Episode 8 focuses on Taliban economic policy.

Professor Michael Semple is a Professorial Research Fellow at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice and the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen’s University Belfast.

He works on innovative approaches to peace-making and engagement with militant Islamic movements in Afghanistan and South Asia.



Image Credit:
Olgamielnikiewicz Wikimedia Commons

TALKING WITH THE TALIBAN CAN WAIT: WHY DIALOGUE AMONG AFGHANISTAN'S DEMOCRATIC FORCES IS NOW THE PRIORITY FOR PEACE

PROFESSOR MICHAEL SEMPLE
PROFESSORIAL RESEARCH FELLOW

July 2023

Talking with the Taliban can wait: Dialogue among Afghanistan's nationalist and democratic forces is now the priority for Afghan peace. Here is why:

Over the past few months, I have been listening to the ideas of Afghans involved in previous rounds of their country's peace process. Since August 2021, they have all agonised over what to do next. US-inspired efforts to engage with the victorious Taliban have delivered nothing for Afghans. But Afghan peacemaker skills are still relevant to the new context.

Afghan 'peacemakers' include men and women who were members of Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation commissions, served on the negotiation team supposed to cut a deal with the Taliban, or worked as officials, government advisers or religious scholars. Some, since the collapse of the Republic, have been involved in "lessons learnt" exercises to collate the experience of previous dialogue and negotiations with the Taliban. Other Afghans I listen to operate at a more local level, as former elected representatives, mediators, consensus-builders, and advocates for their community's interests in dealing with the state or national political actors. Afghanistan is blessed with a wealth of talent, experienced workers for peace and reconciliation.

The harsh reality is that Afghans now live under an authoritarian regime, which explains the lack of results from dialogue with the Taliban. The constitution has

been abolished. There is no freedom of speech. Civil society is severely restricted. The security agency is hyperactive and effective. It spies on the population, detaining and disappearing those deemed a threat to the regime, with no accountability. The top leadership is ideologically committed to a permanent jihad, the agenda of which involves removing women from public life, purging society of the heresy of democratic values, and asserting a Taliban monopoly of state power.

There is no prospect of meaningful political negotiations with the Taliban any time soon, much as Afghan peacemakers would love to be involved in another negotiation process. The Doha Process, in which the Taliban supposedly committed to intra-Afghan negotiations, but instead ran the clock down, is over. The Taliban are in power, without any clear challenger or interest in moderating their policies or in a power-sharing deal.

The determinedly exclusive nature of the Islamic Emirate means that it should not be considered a stable equilibrium. The Taliban's determination to concentrate privilege, resources and authority in their narrowly based movement creates a sense of ethnic, ideological, and associational exclusion which necessitates reliance on the repressive apparatus to maintain power. Such a "settlement" cannot in any meaningful way be considered peaceful. It is inherently vulnerable to reverting to open armed

conflict because of the residual military potential of multiple excluded groups.

Furthermore, progress towards peace and freedom in Afghanistan is now only likely to be attainable through a protracted struggle, led by Afghans, to dismantle the authoritarian Islamic Emirate and replace it with an inclusive political system. For examples of how other nations have confronted the challenge, Afghans can look at the South African struggle against Apartheid or the ongoing Myanmar resistance to the junta. These examples are now more relevant than the Colombian negotiations in Cuba or the Northern Ireland peace talks, which Afghan peacemakers have previously been encouraged to model their efforts on.

Afghan peacemakers and committed political activists have an opportunity to shape the process of reorienting the country's politics to the difficult struggle against dictatorship. This involves new roles, priorities and ways of operating. One profound change is that only Afghans can take the initiative this time round, unlike in the US-led peace process. The struggle for peace and freedom can only be led by people with a stake in the country. Western diplomats can perhaps be excused for devising their doomed schemes for accommodation with the Taliban because they could never have had a mandate to advocate mobilising a 'freedom movement'. Afghanistan is simply not their country.

The Afghan 'freedom movement' will need to develop a convincing vision of the peaceful endpoint of the struggle. Peacemakers can help form this vision. They have already concluded that a renewed political system must institutionalise pluralism, which accords a stake to all of Afghanistan's ethnic and religious groups. The experience of concentration of power under both the Republic and the Emirate has driven discussion of schemes to decentralise power. And the Taliban's crass instrumentalization of religion as the cover for a power grab means that a freedom movement needs to articulate how it can act as the true guardian of Afghans' religious values.

These weighty political issues need to be fleshed out and presented as a convincing vision of a free and inclusive Afghanistan, which resonates with the population and around which coalitions can be built.

The Taliban have inadvertently focused attention on the centrality of the question of women's role in Afghan public life. Through their ideas and practice, Afghan peacemakers can now ensure that women are integral to the peace movement and that the vision includes a convincing statement of Afghan women's rights. The issue of generational change is closely related. The median age of the Taliban leadership is 55 years – the Emirate is a regime of greybeards. Likewise, the men who led Afghanistan's wars of the 1980s and 1990s played an outsized role in the politics of the Republic. They still have some convening power but cannot dominate the freedom movement. The vitality of the freedom movement may well depend on how it manages the transition to women and millennials in leadership roles.

One of the fascinating challenges involves addressing the representation deficit. Having grabbed power at the barrel of a gun, the Taliban clearly do not

represent the populace. But no one else can credibly claim to do so either. The freedom movement needs platforms which articulate the popular will. But Taliban authoritarianism leaves no space for open politics within the country. Maybe the deficit can be addressed through innovative ways of convening community representatives and designing a national dialogue outside the authoritarians' control.

Peacemakers are now scattered across Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, Turkey and beyond – whereas they previously could all gather for a meeting in central Kabul. It has been fascinating to observe how the resistance fronts have embraced Zoom. However, more work is required to think through the implications of the new geography of Afghan politics. Peacemakers need a joined-up approach, linking multiple locations, in which those who do the hard work of challenging authoritarianism on the ground also have a voice.

Peacemakers will have to fundamentally rethink the toolkit of politics as they adapt themselves to a role in challenging authoritarianism – which modes of resistance are relevant in the face of Taliban control of the territory and readiness to employ their repressive apparatus? There is a traditional Afghan toolkit from the early struggle against the Communists and Soviets and there is scope for Afghans to consider South African resistance tactics. Part of this tactical innovation will involve adopting modes of struggle which do not depend upon centralised pots of resources. The harsh reality is that no one will pay Afghans to seek their freedom.

Coalition-building is perhaps the most relevant skill for Afghan peacemakers in the early stages of the freedom movement. In the second year of the

revived Islamic Emirate, Afghan democratic and nationalist politics remain so fragmented that Taliban and international actors alike feel comfortable in ignoring the resistance. A freedom movement resting on a coalition which mobilises the nation could not be ignored. And, frustratingly, the broadest resistance grouping, the Supreme Council for National Resistance, has been hamstrung by the personal rivalries of the six or so leadership figures from the Jamiat party. Their dispute has proven intractable, but the council will be ineffective until it is resolved. Sometimes politics requires permanent mediation.

The situation confronting Afghans is truly daunting. Catastrophic errors by their own leaders and international partners have left them under authoritarian rule. International actors are still in denial, left dabbling in Taliban engagement long after Afghans realised that the Taliban only demand their subservience.

Getting Afghanistan back onto a trajectory towards sustainable peace depends upon the emergence of an effective freedom movement. The priority political tasks necessary to progress the movement involve dialogue and organisation among the Afghans who buy into the idea of a free society and inclusive political system. These tasks include developing the vision that resonates, building forms of organisation that span the country and the region, innovating in tactics, and building consensus and coalitions. All of these involve dialogue among Afghanistan's nationalist and democratic forces. Talking with the Taliban can wait.

RESEARCH FUNDED POSTS

[Return to contents page](#)

COMPLEX CONFLICT AND PEACE PROFESSOR MICHAEL SEMPLE PROFESSORIAL RESEARCH FELLOW



Professor Michael Semple is Professorial Research Fellow: Complex Conflict and Peace Research based at the Institute. Michael was previously Practitioner Chair. He works on innovative approaches to peace-making and engagement with militant Islamic movements in Afghanistan and South Asia. His interests include the political culture of the Afghan Taliban and kindred militant Islamic movements, the role and potential of dialogue and social media in conflict transformation and the challenge of pluralism in the post 9/11 Muslim world.

In 2023, Professor Semple launched a two-year project to conduct research on the political culture of the Afghan Taliban Movement and track developments in the Afghanistan conflict through this lens.

The project aims to contribute to western policymaking on Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban takeover and establishment of a second Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. In particular, the research endeavour is designed to offer insights on possible strategies to establish an inclusive political system, which is still widely considered a sine qua non for attainment of sustainable peace in Afghanistan's diverse Muslim society. Other post-2021 western concerns include the humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses in Afghanistan and the threats of terrorism, narcotics and mass migration emanating from the country.

The research project offers its insights into Taliban actions and perspectives as a contribution to the evidence-based policy response.

The Taliban capture of Kabul on 15 August 2021 was not a “end of history” moment for Afghans and Afghanistan. Rather, it was the start of a new phase in the struggle to control and define the country.

The research team has a hand in chronicling and making sense of this struggle. The research findings inform the **Taliban, Turbans and Smartphones Podcast Series**, featuring analysis and discussion with Afghan leaders and thinkers, including members of the former Afghan government, NGO's, and others

involved in the country's politics as the country seeks to rebuild under a new Taliban government, 20 years after the former Taliban rulers were overthrown.

Series 1 explains how the Taliban managed to take power in Kabul in August 2021 and what they did in their first year.

In Series 2, Michael and Tamim Asey, Afghan Analyst and technocrat, follow developments in Afghanistan, exploring policy, politics, security and economics under Taliban rule.

The Podcasts demonstrate just how profound and equally fascinating and troubling the story of Afghanistan has been since the Taliban takeover.

**NOTHING IN COMMON?
ANALYSING IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE FAR RIGHT & JIHADI EXTREMIST
RHETORIC AND TREND INDICATOR TOOL KIT FOR DEALING WITH ONLINE EXTREMISM**

DR STEPHEN HERRON
MITCHELL INSTITUTE RESEARCH FELLOW



Funded by the Queen's University Belfast Agility Fund, the project **Nothing in Common? Analysing Identity Formation in the Far Right & Jihadi Extremist Rhetoric** explored the complex and multifaceted world of online extremism and was completed in the first half of 2023.

The Agility Fund is an internal funding allocation which underpins the Research Quality pillar of the University's Research & Innovation Strategy for 2030. The Fund aims to drive a dynamic research

ecosystem by providing support for research activities which will build on our core strengths. The Fund supports pump-priming, research engagement, partnership development, networking as well as supporting initiatives which enhance the wider research culture at Queen's University Belfast.

Principal Investigator for the project, Professor John Brewer along with Research Fellow Dr Stephen Herron led an international team of academics from the University of Exeter and Emory University, USA, to carry out a comparative analysis of Far Right and Islamic Jihadist online activity.

The research combined quantitative methods such as natural language processing and qualitative analysis including virtual ethnography. It builds upon previous work carried out by Dr Herron, Dr Weeda Mehran, Co-director of Centre for Advanced International Studies and the programme director for International Relations University of Exeter and Dr Ben Miller, Associate Teaching Professor, Emory University.

As part of the project, a virtual conference on Online Extremism and Misinformation was held on 31 March 2023, bringing together a variety of sectors including academia, policy, think tanks and practitioners. Through presentations and discussion, participants explored the dangerous and complex world of online extremism and misinformation by showcasing current research in these areas and the implications with

respect to how we approach their study moving forward.

The team are currently preparing a paper for publication.

Following on from the success of this project, Dr Cheryl Lawther, Institute Fellow: Legacy and Reader, School of Law, and Dr Stephen Herron were awarded further funding from the Queen's University Belfast Impact Acceleration Account (IAA), funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The IAA fund enables researchers to carry out longer-term pieces of work to accelerate the impact of their research and support knowledge exchange between Queen's and external impact partners.

The latest project: Trend Indicator Tool Kit for Dealing with Online Extremism will contribute to developing, with stakeholders, an innovative predictive, trend indicator model for wider usage relating to online extremism and potential offline actions. It is anticipated that the toolkit will assist in implementing effective and timely early intervention systems for organisations and networks interested in understanding and dealing with online extremism and misinformation.

SUCCESSSES

[Return to contents page](#)

We are delighted to share the success of Institute Fellows whose academic standing and significant contribution to their various research fields has been recognised by Fellowship Awards, election to prestigious international academies and grant awards. We celebrate the success of one of our Honorary Professors of Practice whose leadership and contribution to peacebuilding on both sides of the Irish border has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours.

PROFESSOR FIONA MAGOWAN AND PROFESSOR KATY HAYWARD ELECTED TO THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY



Prof Fiona Magowan



Prof Katy Hayward

Professor Fiona Magowan, Mitchell Institute Theme Lead: Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding; Professor of Anthropology, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics and Professor Katy Hayward, Mitchell Institute Fellow: The Politics and Security of Institutional Peacebuilding; Professor of Political Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work and Co-Director of the Centre for International Borders Research were elected to the Royal Irish Academy in May. The ceremony took place on 26 May at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin.

The Royal Irish Academy is an all-island independent forum of peer-elected experts. Membership of the Academy is the highest academic honour in Ireland. The academic body promotes study and excellence in the sciences, humanities, and social sciences, as well as to public service and has been honouring Ireland's leading contributors to the world of education and learning since its establishment in 1785.

Fiona has been recognised for her research which draws on ethnographic fieldwork across a global range of settings, her research in ethnomusicology, religion, gender, arts, and performance is internationally esteemed.

Professor Magowan commented "I am greatly honoured to be elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy with its world-leading research in the arts, humanities and social sciences. I look forward to collaborating with Academy colleagues to advance publicly engaged research agendas across the island."

Professor Hayward was awarded a Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize for her work improving public understanding of the impact of Brexit on the island of Ireland.

Professor Hayward said "My very first conference paper as a PhD student in UCD was delivered in the Royal Irish Academy. I recall the sense of awe and excitement as I entered its splendid building in Dawson Street; and I still feel the same today!"

"But becoming a member is much more than a personal honour. Truth, tradition, and academic independence are essential to the functioning of a good democratic society. The Royal Irish Academy plays an essential role in this regard on the island of Ireland. It will be an enormous privilege to contribute to that."

LEVERHULME MAJOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AND EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL CONSOLIDATOR GRANT AWARDED TO PROFESSOR KIERAN MCEVOY



Professor Kieran McEvoy, Mitchell Institute Theme Lead: Rights and Social Justice and Professor of Law and Transitional Justice, School of Law, has been awarded a prestigious Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship. The three-year Fellowship commences in September 2023 and will focus on Apologies, Arms Struggle and the Transition from Violence.

Leverhulme Major Research Fellowships are designed to allow distinguished researchers in the social sciences and humanities time to complete a major piece of research.

Commenting on the award, Professor McEvoy said “I am very pleased to have received this award. With other colleagues here at Queen’s I have spent significant time and effort in recent years working on transitional justice related research and impact related programs of work, often working across several projects at once.

This Leverhulme Fellowship will allow me time to focus exclusively on apologies and political violence. The dissemination component of the grant includes ‘road testing’ some of the ideas through short visiting fellowships at Columbia University, New York and Australia National University Canberra.

The goal is to produce a book on the subject, as well as other pieces of work which will be of practical use in framing how armed groups can better address their responsibilities for past human rights and humanitarian law violations.”

Professor McEvoy is one of three Co-investigators on a project which was recently awarded a grant of £1,990,000 from the prestigious European Research Council Consolidator Grant.

ERC Consolidator Grants are designed to support excellent researchers at the career stage at which they may still be consolidating their own independent research team or programme. Applicants must demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their proposals.

Iosif Kovras, Associate Professor at the University of Cyprus is the Principal Investigator on the project. Iosif completed his PhD at Queen’s University Belfast and was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Mitchell Institute.

This five year comparative transitional justice project will explore the motives that drive disappearances in times of political violence. Over 350,000 people

are disappeared every year as a result of political or ethnic conflict.

Responding to the award Prof McEvoy said “These ERC awards are extremely hard to get. I have been involved in a few ERC bids which I thought were excellent, but did not make it over the line.

On this project I will be supporting Iosif with the broader management of this large and complex project as well as focusing, in particular on the utility of law as a framework to hold accountable those responsible for disappearances in Cyprus, Chile and Bosnia as well as being a source for nudging them towards ‘doing the right thing’ in assisting with the recovery of remains.

Iosif was one of our first post-docs here at the Mitchell Institute and I was lucky enough to be his mentor. He is an excellent scholar and a lovely colleague.

Before he took up his current post as an Associate Professor at the University of Cyprus, we worked together on another ESRC funded transitional justice project which Iosif led, and it was an absolute pleasure to work together. I am really looking forward to working with him again on this hugely important project.”

BRITISH ACADEMY MID-CAREER FELLOWSHIP AWARDED TO PROFESSOR LOUISE MALLINDER



Professor Louise Mallinder, Theme Lead: Legacy (School of Law, QUB) was awarded a highly competitive British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship in 2023.

The British Academy Mid-Career Fellowships support individuals who are deemed to be outstanding researchers and communicators who will promote public engagement and understanding of the humanities and social sciences. The scheme is open to scholars with a significant research track record who are normally no more than 15 years from the award of their doctorate degree.

The Fellowships allow academics time to focus on a major piece of research, by enabling them to take time away from their teaching and administration commitments.

Prof Mallinder will use the Fellowship to advance the research on the legality, legitimacy and impact of amnesties enacted during armed conflict and peacebuilding that she is currently undertaking as part of the PeaceRep project, led by the University of Edinburgh. In addition to completing a monograph and other scholarly outputs on this topic, Professor Mallinder will publish an updated version of her qualitative database on amnesties together with a new quantitative dataset. She will also engage in a series of dissemination and public engagement activities.

In discussing the award, Professor Mallinder said: “I am delighted and greatly honoured to receive this Fellowship. It will provide me with dedicated research time that will enable me to complete a monograph and other academic publications that will draw on original empirical data to explore how states and other international actors engage with amnesty laws during and after armed conflicts and to reflect on what this means for the status of conflict-related amnesties under international law.

This research should be of value to researchers working the fields of transitional justice and conflict peace, as well as mediators, activists and jurists. In addition to these publications and the datasets, as part of the Fellowship, I will also deliver a range of dissemination activities including lectures, podcasts, a policy report, and blogs.”

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY OBSERVATORY



Prof. Muiris MacCarthaigh, Mitchell Institute Fellow: The Politics and Security of Institutional Peacebuilding and Professor, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

The International Public Policy Observatory (IPPO) has recently been awarded £2.2m funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to build on their work from Phase 1, to mobilise and assess evidence from institutions across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland on the best ways to mitigate the social harms associated with COVID-19, with a renewed focus on what research could inform policies to support recovery from such a seismic shock.

IPPO was established in December 2020 to provide policymakers with insights from social science research that could inform and enhance decision making during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IPPO is a collaboration between University College London, Cardiff University, Queen's University Belfast, the University of Glasgow, the University of Auckland and the University of Oxford, together with think-tanks including the International Network for Government Science (INGSA) and academic news publisher The Conversation.

IPPO engages with research teams nationally and internationally to mobilise knowledge and harness its potential policy impact. One of the key aims is to bridge the gap between social sciences research and policymaking by bringing accessible and relevant research into the hands of those who are putting these ideas into practice.

With the new funding, IPPO intends to provide useful tools and evidence products for policymakers to enable them to access the most pertinent research solutions in relation to four key challenges: the Net Zero target, Levelling Up & Cities plans, Inequality and COVID-19 recovery.

Prof Muiris MacCarthaigh, Institute Fellow: The Politics and Security of Institutional Peacebuilding and Professor, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics is the Northern Ireland Lead for the project.

Speaking on the ESRC award, Muiris said “The award of this new round of funding to extend our work with

governments as they seek to deal with many policy challenges in a post-Covid environment is a welcome testament to the work we have conducted during the worst of the pandemic.

The Observatory offers a unique resource for public service organisations as it gathers evidence and intelligence from across the globe, and I look forward to working with public servants and other stakeholders locally to ensure they maximise these opportunities it offers.”

**HONORARY PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE PETER SHERIDAN
AWARDED A CBE IN THE KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2023**



Professor Peter Sheridan, Mitchell Institute Honorary Professor of Practice and Chief Executive of Co-operation Ireland

Professor Peter Sheridan, Mitchell Institute Honorary Professor of Practice and Chief Executive of Co-operation Ireland has been recognised for his outstanding leadership and contribution to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.

Peter Sheridan has been Chief Executive of the peace building charity Co-operation Ireland since 2008. Established in 1979, Co-operation Ireland is an all-island peace-building organisation, working to build a shared and cohesive society by addressing legacy issues of the conflict and facilitating contact and collaboration between people from different backgrounds both within and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Funded by The Executive Office, the Communities in Transition Project (CIT) is a collaboration between Co-operation Ireland and the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice at Queen's University Belfast which aims to build community resilience in eight areas where there is a history of paramilitary activity, criminality and coercive control. The primary objective is to support the transition of these sites to a point where paramilitary groups no longer exercise influence, by building capacity and empowering communities through a range of initiatives including Area Regeneration; Capacity Building; Community Safety and Policing; Environment and Culture; Health and Wellbeing; Personal Transition; Restorative Practice; and Young People.

Under Peter's leadership, Co-operation Ireland enabled the first state visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Republic of Ireland in 2011 and the reciprocal visit of the President of Ireland to the United Kingdom.

In 2012, the organisation helped facilitate the historic handshake between the Queen and then deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness. From 1976 to 2008 Peter was a police officer in Northern Ireland. Before retiring, he had responsibility for murder and organised crime investigations.



INSTITUTE METRICS

OCTOBER 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2023

[Return to contents page](#)



35,628
WEBSITE
VIEWS

Visitors from 74 countries such as Germany, Spain, The United States of America, Mexico and Brazil visited the Mitchell Institute website, with over 100 views from 23 countries.



125,136
TWITTER
IMPRESSIONS

Our followers include academics, researchers and practitioners from a range of universities and institutes across the world, as well as members of the public with an interest in the activity of the Institute.



4,465
YOUTUBE
VIEWS

Recordings of Institute talks and lectures from leading academics, practitioners enable people from across the world to engage with Institute activity.



**1,324
PODCAST
LISTENERS**

Podcast Listeners on iTunes and Spotify for the Taliban, Turbans and Smartphones Podcast series.



**£2,949,442
GRANT
INCOME**

During the academic year 2022-2023, Mitchell Institute colleagues secured £2,949,442 in grant income. This included £456,808 in overheads/contributions.



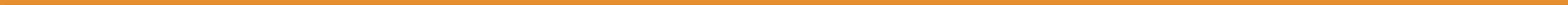
**183
POSTGRADUATE
RESEARCH
STUDENTS**

63 Mitchell Institute academics are the 1st Supervisor for 183 Postgraduate Research students.

58 Mitchell Institute academics are the 2nd Supervisor to 126 Postgraduate Research students.

02

POSTGRADUATE
ACTIVITIES



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

[Return to contents page](#)

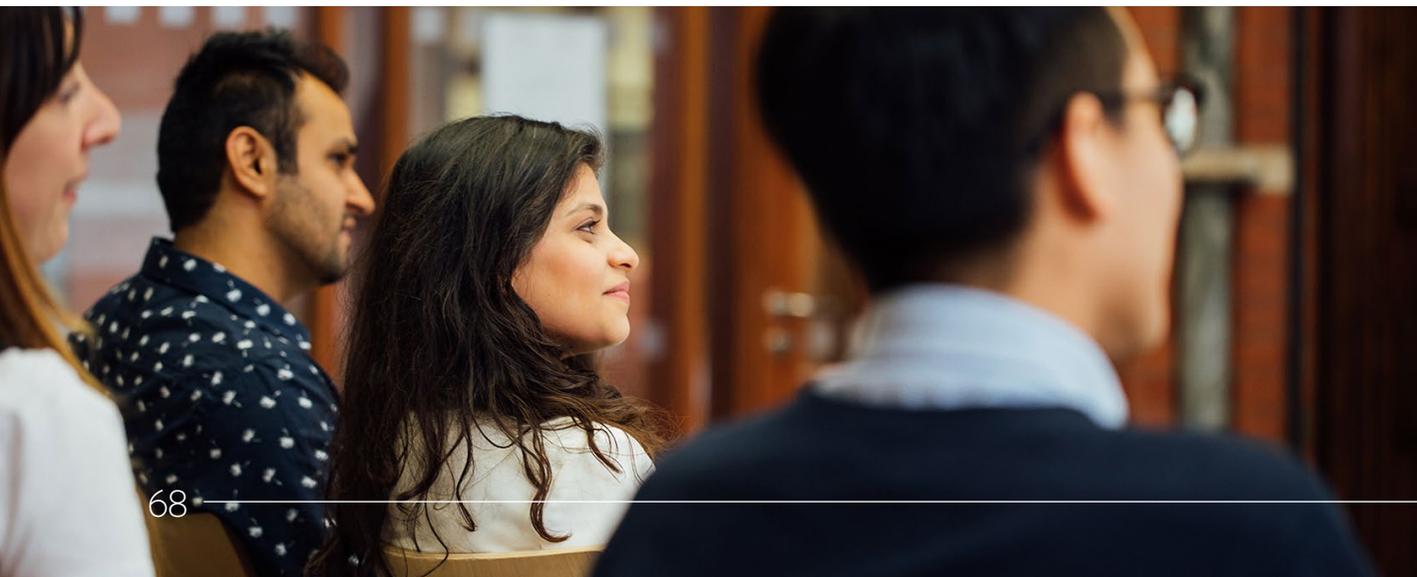
There are currently 183 Postgraduate Research Students whose first supervisors are Mitchell Institute academics. The Institute is also home to two Doctoral Training Programmes:

- The Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Cybersecurity and Society (LINCS)
- The Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS)

These Programmes have total funding of £2.4million, from the Leverhulme Trust and from the NI Assembly Department for the Economy for a total of 30 postgraduate research students, from 2015 to 2026. There are currently 19 students enrolled on these two programmes - a significant proportion of our student cohort.

The postgraduate students contribute significantly to the strong interdisciplinary community of the Institute. They have opportunities to get involved in the development and delivery of dedicated postgraduate activity, through formal and informal events, such as the Annual Postgraduate Research Conference and Fireside Chat Series. By doing so, they build on their transferable skills and expertise, enabling significant personal development.

Our students have access to the extensive expertise within the Institute and across Queen's University Belfast as well as through the Institute's network of national and international researchers, professionals, practitioners and communities from a diverse range of disciplines.





DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

LINAS

LEVERHULME INTERDISCIPLINARY NETWORK ON ALGORITHMIC SOLUTIONS

The Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS) Doctoral Training Programme was established in 2021 to develop a cohort of Doctoral Scholars who can address the implications of massive-scale data processing, artificial intelligence and machine learning for both the actual operation of algorithmically driven public decision-making in wider society, and within science and engineering. The development of Large Language Models of generative AI such as Chat GPT which have caught attention recently have given new impetus to this research area.

LINAS brings together legal scholars, social scientists, physical scientists, mathematicians, computer scientists and engineers to develop a distinctive cohort of doctoral students working across the boundaries of their own disciplines to explore the wider themes here.

This Doctoral Training Programme will receive a total of £1.35million from the Leverhulme Trust with match funding from the Department for the Economy for 30 scholarships over 72 months, from 2021 to 2027. This funding covers the tuition fees and maintenance grants (at standard UKRI rates) in addition to supporting training and development needs.

The first cohort of 6 LINAS students commenced their studies in autumn 2021 and were joined by another 6 students in autumn 2022. The scholars are working on a variety of interdisciplinary projects ranging from legal technology and the ontology of law, algorithms and market abuse, and the challenges of unmanned ariel devices.

Professor John Morison (Programme Co-ordinator) said “LINAS brings together a wide range of PhD scholars and an extended supervisory team to explore the implications of massive-scale data processing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). Our focus is on exploring the actual operation of algorithmically driven public decision-making in wider society, and within science and engineering.

All 12 of the Doctoral Scholars currently enrolled have all successfully passed through their annual reviews and taken full part in the extensive programme of LINAS activities that bring the various postgraduate students and staff members together from across a range of disciplines within the University.

This includes a seminar series, book club, a very vibrant ethics discussion group, and a film event alongside a number of training sessions. Notable among the activities was the Student-led Postgraduate Conference in May on AI, Ethics and the Human which attracted a large audience from both within QUB and beyond.”

LINCS

LEVERHULME INTERDISCIPLINARY NETWORK ON CYBERSECURITY AND SOCIETY

The Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Cybersecurity and Society (LINCS) Doctoral Training Programme was established in 2015 to support Doctoral Scholars undertaking pioneering research at the interface between the social sciences and electronic engineering & computer science.

LINCS brings together The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice and the Centre for Secure Information Technologies (CSIT) to develop a distinctive cohort of 15 doctoral students working across the boundaries of their disciplines, opening up new avenues of enquiry centred initially on the priority themes and specific PhD projects.

This Doctoral Training Programme was awarded £1.05million from the Leverhulme Trust with match funding from the Department for the Economy for 30 scholarships over 60 months, from 2015 to 2023.

This funding covered the tuition fees and maintenance grants (at standard UKRI rates) in addition to supporting training and development needs.

The first cohort of LINCS students commenced their studies in Autumn 2015.

Professor Cathal McCall (Programme Co-ordinator) said “As one of the original Leverhulme Doctoral Training Scheme programmes LINCS was a pathfinder for interdisciplinary research on cybersecurity and society at Queen’s. LINCS opened exciting, innovative and rewarding avenues of enquiry enabling researchers to develop futures-oriented collaborations and offer interdisciplinary support to its Leverhulme Doctoral Scholars. The programme ended in 2023. However, it has been succeeded by the Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS) ensuring continuity of futures-oriented postgraduate research in this rapidly developing field of study.”

LINAS CONFERENCE 2023

[Return to
contents page](#)

AI, ETHICS AND THE HUMAN

The Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS) Doctoral Training Programme hosted an annual Postgraduate Research Conference at Queen's University Belfast on 10 May 2023. It was organised by a small committee of students from the LINAS cohort and focused on a broad theme related to AI and ethics, chosen by the committee. The conference is entirely student-led.

The Annual Postgraduate Research Conference provides a platform for postgraduate students and researchers, from Queen's University Belfast and beyond, to showcase their research to a wide audience and to build networks with other interdisciplinary researchers from across the world.

This year's theme was 'AI, Ethics and the Human'. Through presentations and discussions, major questions pertaining to the implications of massive-scale data processing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) were addressed.

AI is permeating our daily lives: it extends to our socialisation with others, our job applications and even our healthcare. These algorithmic decision-making processes are increasingly far-reaching, and yet many remain unaware of their extent as they operate in the background of our lives. The LINAS conference discussed both this ubiquity and invisibility.

The main objective of the Conference was to motivate and encourage researchers to consider and explore these AI-driven, human-technology interactions across a broad range of fields, including education, medicine, the home, borders, and wider society. How is AI changing what it means to be human?

Organising Committee

This year's Conference Committee included:

- Karli Gibson (Chair)
- Shania Kirk
- Anna Montgomery
- David Mark
- James Sweeney
- Joshua Weston

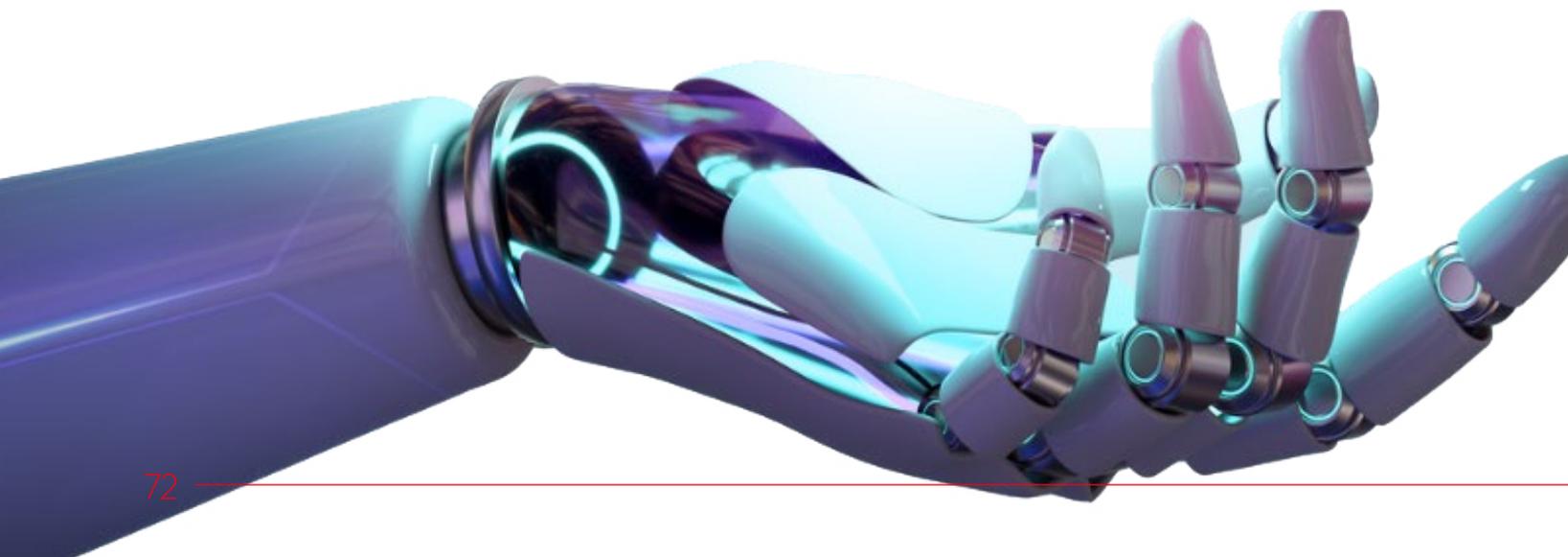




Image credit: ThisisEngineering RAEng
unsplash.com/@thisisengineering

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Data for International Security:
Why and How Data Practices Matter*

Professor Matthias Leese

Assistant Professor for Technology and Governance
at the Department of Humanities, Social and Political
Sciences, ETH Zurich

PANEL 1 SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY

Chair

Dr Ciarán O'Kelly

Senior Lecturer, School of Law,
Queen's University Belfast

Panellists

UK Bordering: An Algorithmic Hostile Environment

Karli Gibson

Queen's University Belfast

*Intelligent Voice Assistants: A Fundamental Influence on
the Age of Surveillance Capitalism*

James Sweeney

Queen's University Belfast

*Decentralised Defence: 3D Printing, Security, and the
Democratisation of Weapons Manufacturing*

Jason McKillen

Queen's University Belfast

PANEL 2 AUTOMATION AND ROBOTICS

Chair

Dr Teresa Degenhardt

Mitchell Institute Fellow: The Politics of Security and Institutional Peacebuilding, Senior Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, QUB

Panellists

The Responsibility Gap: A unique problem for social robots

Hugh Williams

Queen's University Belfast

3 Ps of Programming Morality into Killer Robots

Femi Omotoyinbo

Queen's University Belfast

'I'm Dying to Talk to You': Technological Approaches to Mitigate the Risks in Ghostbots

Mauricio Figueroa

Newcastle University



*Image credit: Mahdis Mousavi
unsplash.com/@diseii*



PANEL 3 AI IN SOCIETY

Chair

Dr Mike Bourne

Mitchell Institute Fellow: The Politics of Security and Institutional Peacebuilding, Reader, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Panellists

smART attack - Examining the societal and legal implications of AI generated artistry

David Mark

Queen's University Belfast

AI and Core Electoral Processes: Mapping the Horizons

Stanley Simoes

Queen's University Belfast

Managing the Influence of EdTech Companies on the UK Education System

Shania Kirk

Queen's University Belfast

Emergent Program Generation for Lightweight AI

Jarlath Warner

Queen's University Belfast



LINCS / LINAS SEMINAR SERIES

[Return to
contents page](#)

The 2022-23 Seminar Series is co-ordinated by LINAS Doctoral Scholars Anna Montgomery and James Sweeney and Dr Meg Schwamb, member of the LINAS Core Academic Team.

The Seminars explore the implications of massive-scale data processing, artificial intelligence, and machine learning for both the actual operation of algorithmically driven public decision-making in wider society, and within science and engineering.

15 NOVEMBER 2022

Liability as a Security Incentive in the Digital Age

David Mark

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

Ideas and Institutions

Shania Kirk

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

Digital Services Act/Online Safety Bill, Algorithmic Enforcement and Fundamental Rights

Prof Giancarlo Frosio

School of Law, QUB

18 JANUARY 2023

Talking Technologies – How Safe is Our Voice?

James Sweeney

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

Experimenting with Drones in the Global South

Mariana Janot

PhD student in Interinstitutional Graduate Program in International Relations “San Tiago Dantas” (UNESP, UNICAMP, PUC-SP); Visiting Student, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB

Towards Group Fairness in Clustering

Stanley Simoes

PhD student, School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

26 APRIL 2023

UK Bordering: An Algorithmic Hostile Environment

Karli Gibson

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

AI in Education – Challenges, Risks and Mitigation Methods

Marc Elliott

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

Xiaofa the Robot Judge and the Impossible Task of Mapping Law

Prof John Morison

Professor of Jurisprudence, School of Law, QUB; LINAS Programme Leader on the LINAS Doctoral Programme

FIRESIDE CHATS

[Return to contents page](#)

Established in 2019, the Fireside Chat series is a student-led initiative, developed and delivered by a Fireside Chat Co-ordinating Committee of Mitchell Institute PGR students. PGR students Darren Colbourne and Brendan McKee co-ordinated the series for 2022-23.

The 'Fireside Chat' is a reference to American history and politics and also acts as a tribute to Senator George J. Mitchell. The key aims of the Fireside Chats are to provide a platform to showcase the interdisciplinary research going on across the Institute and beyond, and to enable networking for postgraduate students, researchers and practitioners at a range of career stages.

30 NOVEMBER 2022

A Culture of Peace? The Role of Museums in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

Emily Traynor Mayrand
Georgetown University

14 DECEMBER 2022

Truth and Justice Through the Archive: How Archivists Impact Transitional Justice

Julia Volkmar
Queen's University Belfast

23 FEBRUARY 2023

Nursing The Troubles: Examining the Oral History of Acute Care Nursing that Worked During The Troubles in Belfast

Dr Megan Kelly
Queen's University Belfast

29 MARCH 2023

Remembering Divided Histories: The Somme and The Rising

Dr Deirdre MacBride
Queen's University Belfast

20 APRIL 2023

Irish America and The Northern Irish Civil Rights Movement

Dr Melissa Baird
Special Project Co-Ordinator,
Linen Hall Library



STUDENT BLOGS

[Return to contents page](#)



Student Focus
Jarlath Warner
LINAS Doctoral Scholar

My PhD research is focused on how we can design and develop new Artificial Intelligence (AI) devices which do not sacrifice performance or give rise to unwanted bias or unfairness but still respect the physical limits of their operating environment (in terms of power, size of chip and energy consumption). Within this research we are interested in the deployment of AI technology in smart sensors and wearable devices and how AI can be designed and implemented to solve a given problem.

The need for this research is due to the fact that with existing devices, bias and unfairness can be introduced (intentionally or unintentionally) at the detriment of individuals. Many times, bias is introduced either through the algorithmic design of the device or by the data used to train an AI, or even a combination of both. Therefore, to tackle such issues of bias we need engineered solutions backed by thorough research and testing, especially now with AI becoming more ubiquitous in society.

Within my PhD research, the approach adopted aims to incorporate learnings from a variety of AI and computer science fields, in particular the methodology and techniques offered from neuromorphic computing. This will allow us to potentially benefit from the efficiency and performance gains it offers as well as provide us with the groundwork to develop our technology on and to focus on minimising bias and unfairness with our AI's predictions.

We have identified a new AI architecture that we are currently applying to perform cardiac abnormality

detection by processing the signals produced by an individual's heart, something which can be crucial in the monitoring and early detection of heart disease. This technology allows for the possibility of deployment within a small and energy efficient wearable form factor while still remaining highly performant in real-time operation.

In my spare time and aside from my PhD, I have a great interest in using my knowledge and background in computer science to develop new AI technology which could be used for the betterment of others. I also have a great interest in gaming as well as mixed martial arts and I regularly train as a way to take a break from my studies. I am currently training for my 2nd dan black belt in Ju-Jitsu and hope to attain this belt later this year.

Jarlath is a first year Doctoral Scholar on the Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS) programme.

He is one of the young entrepreneurs working in the world of digital selected for the Belfast Telegraph's 30 under 30 for 2023, for excelling in their businesses, which vary from app creation, digital marketing and innovative online platforms.

Jarlath is the founder and Chief Executive of Axonnr, an AI Robotics start-up company which specialises in using robotics to improve the lives of those with prosthetic limbs.



Empathy: A Critical Part of Diplomacy and Politics

Martin Burns

Masters degree student: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice

The value of empathy, the ability to share and understand the feelings of others, is not a value that one often associates with discussions of politics at any level. This is something that hurts us all because as former Irish Diplomat Anne Anderson pointed out in the Harri Holkeri Lecture 2023 “Perspective; Conscience; Integrity: Reflections from a Career in Diplomacy” at Queen’s University Belfast on 24 April 2023, without a sense of empathy you cannot even begin to “understand what needs to be addressed.”

Anderson’s astute observation applies to politics be it at the United Nations Security Council or in the most local of elections. Politics is about people and to succeed in this field logically you need to understand their needs and dreams. One reason that we may shy away from talking about the importance of empathy in political life is because we associated it with agreement. An effective political leader or diplomat can empathise with someone without agreeing with their position. Empathy is about understanding, not agreement.

Over the last several years, many books and articles have been written about Trump voters. For better or worse, I have read many of these works. The one that I have found the most instructive is *Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (The New Press 2018), by Arlie Russell Hochschild. By training, Hochschild is a sociologist and is now a professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley.

Hochschild began the work that resulted in *Anger and Mourning on the American Right* by trying to understand why people who could benefit from environmental regulation sometimes oppose it. Her work took her to southern Louisiana where she lived with the people and tried to understand their thoughts and feelings. As she puts it in the book, she

got over the empathy wall to understand why the people of south Louisiana felt the way they did.

By no means, does Hochschild agree with all the political stands of the people she meets. However, she does come to understand why they think and feel the way that they do. For an American politician today, the lessons that Hochschild learns are simply invaluable.

We can easily take the lessons of empathy that Hochschild gives for American politics and apply it to the world stage. For example, American foreign policy towards Vietnam would have been more successful if the United States had more understanding of the Vietnamese. The same could be said of the French in Algeria.

Another learning from Hochschild’s work is that it reminds both politicians and academics of the important contribution that sociologists and anthropologists can make to the field of international relations.

History has proven Ambassador Anderson to be quite correct. Without empathy, you cannot begin to understand the nature of the issues to be addressed.

Martin is a postgraduate student on the Masters degree programme: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. His dissertation focuses on The Politics of Persuasion: How the Irish Republican Leadership Sold the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to their Constituency.



Annual LINAS Conference, May 2023

Karli Gibson

LINAS Doctoral Scholar

On Wednesday 10 May 2023, the first Annual Leverhulme Interdisciplinary Network on Algorithmic Solutions (LINAS) Conference took place. The student-led conference welcomed presenters and attendees from a wide-range of backgrounds and disciplines to discuss how artificial intelligence is changing what it means to be human.

Early in the academic year, we settled upon the theme of 'AI, Ethics and the Human' and welcomed doctoral scholars and academics researching at the intersections of the technical and the social to attend.

With the conference, we hoped to create a collaborative environment through which to address urgent questions about the implications of massive-scale data processing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).

Within the social sciences, questions arise about algorithmic systems: what does they mean for human agency? How are we to understand accountability without transparency in the face of 'black box' algorithms? And what does this mean for human rights law? Within disciplines of science and engineering, similar questions are posed: how can we develop fair algorithmic solutions? And how can we work transparently?

The LINAS Conference was designed to bring together a multiplicity of disciplines, including law, politics, computer science, engineering, maths and physics, in order to embody the interdisciplinary nature of the LINAS programme and to address these important questions.

The day consisted of three panels of doctoral scholars and the LINAS forum. After the conference was opened by Mitchell Institute Director Professor Richard English, the first panel of the day 'Surveillance and Security' commenced. Consisting of James Sweeney, Jason McKillen and I, we focused on the effects of surveillance technologies in different areas of society, from border technologies to 3D printing of weapons.

The second panel, 'Robotics and Automation', featured presentations from Hugh Williams, Femi Omotoyinbo and Mauricio Figueroa, discussing the ethical implications of implementing robotics into our daily lives.

The final panel of the day was 'AI in Society', with David Mark, Stanley Simoes and Jarlath Warner, questioning the use of AI in art, elections and health, respectively.

Each panel provoked both technical and non-technical questions from the audience, and kick-started discussions that illustrated the necessity of understanding the profound implications of AI on society.

We opted to provide some of the early year LINAS scholars with the opportunity to showcase some of the other cutting-edge research taking place within the Mitchell Institute.

We chose a short, forum style presentation, aptly named the 'LINAS Forum' with speakers Jessica Barr, Marc Elliott, Anna Montgomery, Katherine Pittalis and Josh Weston providing five-minute presentations each. The forum gave these doctoral scholars with an opportunity to explore and receive instructive feedback on their research from a range of interdisciplinary academics, asking thought-provoking questions that provided guidance for further research.

Professor Matthias Leese of ETH Zurich ended the conference with his insightful keynote presentation titled 'Data for international security: Why and how data practices matter'.

Professor Leese addressed the accuracy, completeness, and trustworthiness of data, and how it changes over time, and his presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session.

The day concluded with closing remarks from LINAS Coordinator, Professor John Morison, and after a long day of stimulating debates around AI and ethics, the LINAS Organising Committee and the rest of the speakers celebrated that evening in Belfast City Centre.

Karli Gibson is a second year Doctoral Scholar on the LINAS Doctoral Training Programme. Her research explores questions of responsibility at the automated border. Adopting a material-semiotic approach and engaging with Critical Race Theory, she investigates the racialized character of automated borders, where blame lies for racialized border decisions, and the impact of these decisions upon the bodies of irregular migrants.



03

**PARTNERSHIPS
AND
SOCIETAL
ENGAGEMENT**

POLICY WORKSHOP

[Return to contents page](#)

Domestic and Sexual Violence Mitchell Institute and the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland

29 September 2022
Queen's University Belfast

Mitchell Institute Fellows and colleagues from the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland met at QUB on 29 September for a Policy Workshop on Domestic and Sexual Violence. This Workshop was informed by the implementation of The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 and subsequent Statutory Guidance published in March 2022. Discussion reflected on policy, practice and research.

Prof Richard English introduced the event, with Deborah Brown, Justice Delivery Director, Department of Justice, providing the context for developing partnerships with the 2 local Universities – Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University – to enhance evidence-based policy making and the need for engagement between policy makers, analysts, and researchers.

Institute Fellow Prof Anne-Marie McAlinden (Professor in Law and Criminal Justice, School of Law QUB) presented the findings from her research on sexual violence. She discussed the need for a trauma-focused approach to understand the dynamics of sexual offending, the role and impact of digital technology in offending and sexual norms and the role of public health and community in preventing and responding to sexual violence.

Institute Fellow Dr Cheryl Lawther (Reader, School of Law, QUB) presented the findings from her research into the "Shadow Conflict" – the experience of sexual



Left to right: Prof Anne-Marie MacAlinden (QUB), Dr Cheryl Lawther (QUB), Katie Taylor (DoJ), Deborah Brown (DoJ), Prof Fiona Magowan (QUB), Prof Richard English (QUB), Steven McCourt (DoJ), John Kerr (DoJ), Cathy Galway (DoJ) and Verónica Holland (DoJ).

and gender-based violence in Northern Ireland. She highlighted a number of policy recommendations including the need to develop a trauma-based approach to criminal justice and legal practices, the need to respect vulnerability and the need to develop best practice on how to include the voice of victims in developing policy.

The presentations were followed by discussion and debate around a number of key issues including:

- Understanding the prevalence and impact of violence in the short, medium and long term
- The role and impact of law, legal processes and the criminal justice system
- Understanding a holistic approach to safer communities and the role of public health and care services

Mitchell Institute Director Richard English commented:

‘This excellent Workshop reflected just how valuable engagement between Queen’s University and the Department of Justice can be. Discussing the evidence-based insights of Mitchell Institute colleagues allowed for real progress in terms of partnership between academics and the policy community. The challenges faced in this area are enormous. But the possibilities for fruitful progress were also evident, based on exactly this kind of partnership and dialogue.’

CONVERSATIONS SERIES

[Return to contents page](#)

Conversations on Britishness and Irishness

The Conversations on Britishness and Irishness Series was initiated in early 2023 as a way of facilitating open and respectful discussion about cultural and political identities in and relating to Ireland.

The Series forms part of the Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South (ARINS) initiative – a partnership between The Royal Irish Academy and the Keough Naughton Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, to generate authoritative, independent and non-partisan research and analysis on a range of important issues for contemporary Ireland.

The Conversations Series features politicians from across the UK and Ireland, with questions and discussions from an invited audience. The events are co-hosted by the Mitchell Institute, The Royal Irish Academy and the Keough Naughton Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

The Series was launched at Queen's University Belfast on 31 January 2023, with Dame Arlene Foster and former Taoiseach and Honorary Professor of Practice at the Mitchell Institute, Bertie Ahern in conversation. The event was chaired by William Crawley, Journalist and Broadcaster.

The second event took place on Monday 15 May 2023 at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin.

Participants included: Doug Beattie MLA, Ulster Unionist Party; Joanna Cherry MP, Scottish National Party; and Claire Hanna MP, Social Democratic and Labour Party. The event was Chaired



Prof Richard English, Mitchell Institute Director (QUB); Prof Cathy Gormley-Heenan, University Provost at Ulster University; Prof Colin Barr, Professor of Modern Irish History and Director of the Clingen Family Center for the Study of Modern Ireland at the Keough School of Global Affairs at University of Notre Dame; Claire Hanna MP, Social Democratic and Labour Party; Joanna Cherry MP, Scottish National Party; and Doug Beattie MLA, Ulster Unionist Party.

by Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, University Provost at Ulster University.

The third event took place on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at the University of Notre Dame (USA) in London and featured a conversation between Lord Peter Weir of Ballyholme and Mr Declan Kearney MLA. The session was chaired by Dr Mary C. Murphy, Jean Monnet Professor in European Integration, University College Cork.

Mitchell Institute Director, Professor Richard English commented:

“The Mitchell Institute is delighted to be partnering with Notre Dame and the RIA in hosting this important series of discussions about Irishness and Britishness. Constructive debate is vital for the present and future politics of these islands, and it is a positive development to see these conversations emerge and grow.”

COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

[Return to contents page](#)

Supporting Communities Where There Has Been a History of Paramilitary Activity and Coercive Control

24 May 2023
Queen's University Belfast

The Cross-Executive Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme is active across all of Northern Ireland to support people and communities who are vulnerable to paramilitary influence and harm. The Communities in Transition project is one strand of this Programme.

Funded by The Executive Office, The Communities in Transition Project (CIT) is a collaboration between Co-operation Ireland and The Mitchell Institute which aims to build community resilience in eight areas where there is a history of paramilitary activity, criminality and coercive control.

The primary objective is to support the transition of these areas to a point where paramilitary control groups no longer exercise influence. Through a range of projects and interventions delivered by government departments, statutory agencies and partners in the voluntary and community sector, communities are supported to become more empowered and build their capacity through dedicated initiatives including:

- Capacity building
- Community safety and policing
- Environment and culture
- Health and wellbeing
- Personal transition
- Restorative practice
- Young people

Since 2020, Prof Dominic Bryan, Professor, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics; Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy and Dr Brendan Sturgeon, Research Fellow, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, have been working with Co-operation Ireland to research and evaluate CIT.

Additional funding of £145,500 was provided by The Executive Office to deliver a series of Learning Events to look at ways in which the community, statutory and academic sectors can best complement each other in tackling paramilitarism and criminality. A number of Roundtable Events took place in 2022 to develop a collective sense of the type of Learning Events that would benefit and meet the needs of those currently working on these areas and to focus on the language and framing of the Communities in Transition Programmes and the findings of the Area Reports.

The Communities in Transition Area Reports were launched on 24 May 2023.

Engaging with 1400 participants Prof Dominic Bryan and Dr Brendan Sturgeon led a team of researchers in the design and development of ten Area Reports, which would facilitate an overview of the sites within which the Communities in Transition project is active.

The ten sites include:

- Ardoyne
- Carrickfergus
- Derry/Londonderry
- East Belfast
- Larne
- Lurgan
- New Lodge
- North Down
- Shankill
- West Belfast

Using an innovative mix-methods approach, including a Household Survey, in-depth Qualitative Interviews and a PGIS Spraycan Mapping Tool, the research team explored the current social condition of each of the sites. Activity led by groups funded by CIT to address some of the key issues in the areas was another key focus of the research.

Key findings of the project include:

- 32% of participants agree or strongly agree that paramilitary groups had too much influence on young people in their area
- 34% felt that paramilitary groups created fear and intimidation in their area
- 59% indicated that improved relationships with the PSNI would help make people feel safer
- 68% of the total number of participants agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community in their neighbourhood
- 52% indicated that paramilitary groups contributed to crime, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour in their area
- 27% noted that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence in their area

Reflecting on the project, Prof Dominic Bryan said:

“It is important that we understand the complex role played by paramilitary groups, understand how this is experienced by people and recognise the context around the use of coercive control including the economic vulnerability of these areas.”

LEGACY LEGISLATION

Public and Private Engagement on Legacy Legislation

Over the past 12 months, the controversial Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill 2023 progressed through the Houses of Parliament and is expected to receive Royal Assent in autumn 2023. The legislation ends all Troubles-related criminal investigations, civil remedies, inquests and Police Ombudsman investigations, and replaces them with a new Independent Commission on Reconciliation and Information Recovery. The Commission will have the power to review serious Troubles-related offences, to offer conditional immunity for those offences, and to make recommendations on oral history and memorialisation. Institute Fellows engaged extensively with this process through analysing the legislative proposals, engaging with policymakers, and contributing to public debate.

For example, the Institute's Legacy Theme Lead, Professor Louise Mallinder, has reflected on the political and legal significance of these developments in interviews for BBC Radio 4's Law in Action programme, in interviews with a German media network, and in an op-ed for *The Conversation*. Louise has also drawn on her expertise on amnesties to deliver presentations on the relationship between the conditional immunity scheme, to be established by the Legacy Bill, and its stated objectives of information recovery and reconciliation. This included a delivering a seminar at the Northern Ireland Assembly in June 2023 with Prof Anna Bryson on 'Reflections on the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and Reconciliation'.

Institute Fellow (Legacy) Professor Anna Bryson delivered a range of conference presentations to



and international audiences on the potential of oral history to address legacies of trauma and violence in Northern Ireland. These presentations included critiques of the oral history and memorialisation elements of the Legacy Bill. Anna also presented on dealing with the past in Northern Ireland in the legacy panel of the GFA25 Conference, which was chaired by Louise. Anna was interviewed by Professor Colin Harvey for an episode on 'Legacies of Conflict and Constitutional Change' for the QUB 'Constitutional Futures' podcast series and she published an op-ed in *The Conversation* entitled 'Good Friday Agreement: 25 years on, the British Government is Seeking to Undo Key Terms of the Peace Deal'. In August 2023, she was invited to participate in a Féile an Phobail panel on 'The Good Friday Agreement: Unfinished Business'. Later that month she also met and briefed a visiting delegation of Swedish MPs on the wider implications of the legacy legislation for the rule of law.

The Institute's Rights and Social Justice Theme Lead, Professor Kieran McEvoy, together with Daniel Holder of CAJ, addressed the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (CoM) on the UK legacy legislation at the invitation of the Irish government. The CoM subsequently issued a strongly worded critique of the UK government's legacy legislation.

In June 2023, Prof McEvoy was involved in organising a one-day conference at Queen's University Belfast on legacy legislation. The conference was addressed by Judge Robert Spano, former president of the European Court of Human Rights and Dr Isabella Risini, an expert on inter-state challenges. The event was chaired by Prof Bryson. The conference was attended by many victims' groups and lawyers working on legacy and one of its key objectives was to encourage as strategic an approach as possible to litigation against the legacy legislation once it was passed into law.

GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

[Return to contents page](#)

West Coast Reflections on the Path to Peace

Dr Peter McLoughlin

29 June 2023

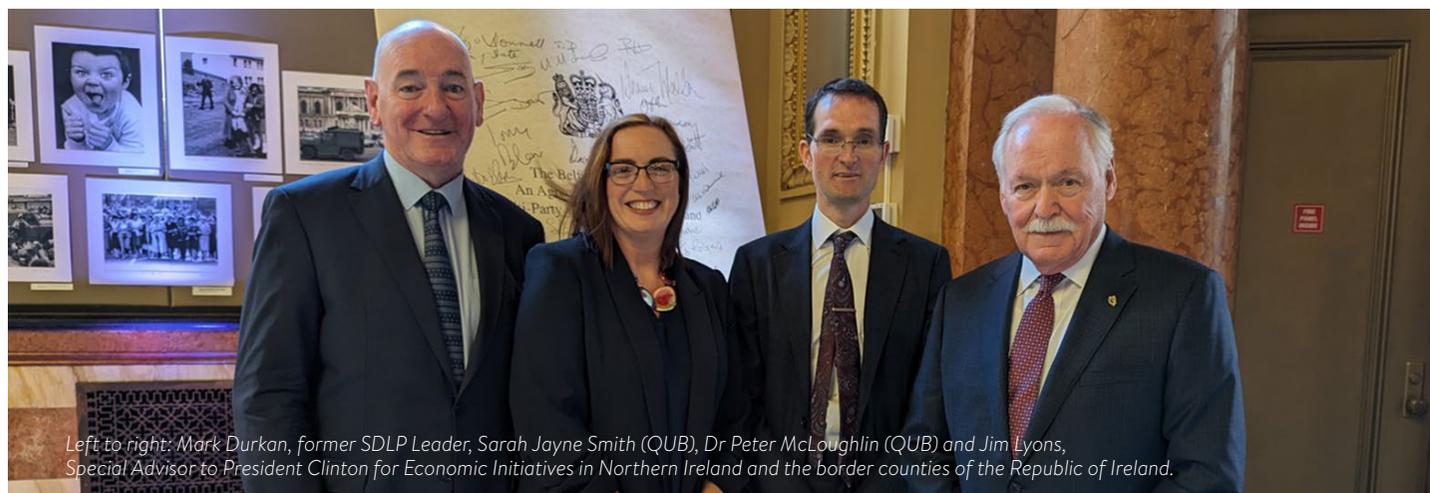
San Francisco

On 29 June 2023, the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice co-hosted an event with the Consulate General of Ireland, the California Legislative Irish Caucus and the British Consulate General in San Francisco, to reflect on 25 years of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

With contributions by key figures in both the USA and Ireland, the event focused on the vital role that US actors played in supporting the British and Irish governments and the local Northern Ireland parties in creating the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, and the continued efforts that are being made to ensure the revival of the power-sharing Executive that it produced. The audience included Queen's alumni, enhancing our global Queen's community.

Mitchell Institute Fellow (Legacy) and Senior Lecturer in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Dr Peter McLoughlin, chaired a panel discussion with key figures involved in the peace process or the supporting US role.

Mark Durkan, former SDLP Leader, shared his experience of being a leading negotiator of the 1998 accord, and later as Deputy First Minister in the power-sharing Executive that it created. He spoke of the role that political figures like John Hume and David Trimble played in the peace settlement, but also civil society, including the voters in both parts of Ireland who provided its electoral mandate.



Left to right: Mark Durkan, former SDLP Leader, Sarah Jayne Smith (QUB), Dr Peter McLoughlin (QUB) and Jim Lyons, Special Advisor to President Clinton for Economic Initiatives in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

Sarah Friar, CEO of the San Francisco-based company, Nextdoor, spoke about the underrepresentation of and the vital part that women like Monica McWilliams had in making the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. In addition, Sarah spoke about the role that US investment played in supporting the peace process, and the current challenges of Brexit, including the economic opportunities that the Windsor Framework provides for both Northern Ireland and US investors.

Jim Lyons replaced Senator George J. Mitchell in 1997 as the Special Advisor to President Clinton for Economic Initiatives in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic. He reflected on his role in promoting economic development across the island of Ireland, and how this also incentivised compromise from the various actors involved in the peace process.

The centrepiece of the event was a Fireside Chat between the Irish Ambassador to the US,

Geraldine Byrne Nason, and the former US House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi.

Pelosi was the first woman to hold the role of US House Speaker. She has long been a supporter of the Northern Ireland peace process and led a delegation of high-ranking US politicians to Ireland in 2019, visiting both sides of the border. During that visit she stressed the importance of protecting the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in the context of the ongoing Brexit negotiations.

Representatives from the California Legislative Irish Caucus also spoke at the event, as well as the UK government's Consul-General for San Francisco, Joe White, and his Irish counterpart, Micheál Smith.

Dr McLoughlin is currently completing a book on the role of Irish-America and the US government in Northern Ireland.



04



NEW APPOINTMENTS

[Return to contents page](#)

ACADEMIC STAFF

Professor Michael Semple

*Professorial Research Fellow:
Complex Conflict and Peace Research*

Michael will be conducting research into the complex conflict in Afghanistan, with focus including the political culture of the Afghan Taliban Movement, other conflict actors and emergent civic and political resistance to Taliban rule.

The research is policy-oriented, delivering insights to policy makers relevant to the management of the peace process, as well as contributing to public education and debate.

Michael was previously Practitioner Chair at the Institute.

Dr Stephen Herron

Research Fellow

Funded by the QUB Agility Fund, the project Nothing in Common? Analysing Identity Formation in the Far Right & Jihadi Extremist Rhetoric, involved a comparative analysis of online extremism between Islamic Jihadists and the Far Right.

This innovative research project involved an international team from leading universities including QUB, the University of Exeter and Emory University using an interdisciplinary mixed methods approach.

Stephen's research interests include online extremism, misinformation and information manoeuvre as well as armed forces veteran transition and well-being.

HONORARY TITLES

Professor Melani Cammett

*Honorary Professor
Professor of International Affairs,
Department of Government;
Director of the Weatherhead Centre
for International Affairs,
Harvard University*

Melani's work centres on identity politics, intergroup relations, and development, and many of her current research projects explore the nexus between politicized identity-based conflict and socioeconomic factors.

Her research focuses on Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon. She aims to compare the nature of relations across different subnational localities.

Avila Kilmurray

*Honorary Professor of Practice
Peacebuilding and Migration Executive,
Social Change Initiative*

Avila Kilmurray is the Peacebuilding and Migration Executive at Social Change Initiative (SCI) in Belfast.

Her work centres on community-based peacebuilding and conflict transformation in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland and also to support for inclusive community development and leadership.

Avila is an activist on women's issues and participation, tackling poverty, conflict transformation and social justice.

VISITING SCHOLARS

Professor Azrini Wahidin

*Professor of Sociology
Head of School, Social and Political Sciences,
University of Sydney*

Azrini's work links criminal justice and social justice, looking at post-colonialism, race, sexuality, gender and social exclusion. She also has a strong interest in research methodologies and research ethics.

Her current research focuses on the issues of imprisonment, penal policy, the legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland and South Africa, former female ex-combatants, violence against women, women in the criminal justice system, transitions out of custody, the criminalisation of migrants, the engendering of punishment, LGBT+ prisoners and the experiences of elders in prison in the UK and USA.

Dr Bonnie Weir

*Senior Lecturer in Political Science,
Co-Director of the Program on Peace and Development,
Yale University*

Bonnie's research is grounded in extensive, qualitative fieldwork paired with original spatial and survey experimental data through which she hopes to highlight the very personal and local nature of insurgency, counter-insurgency, and societal division.

Emma Sky

*Director of International Leadership Center,
Lecturer, Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs*

Emma has served in several advisory roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has also worked in the Palestinian territories to develop Palestinian Institutions and promote co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Emma has provided technical assistance on a range of issues including human rights, justice reform, security sector reform and conflict resolution in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa.

Both Emma Sky and Bonnie Weir will be working with us to consolidate the work already done between Yale and the Mitchell Institute, in particular, in relation to the emerging Peace Partnership, which aims to enhance peace leadership globally, and to generate practical benefits and ideas for leaders facing real-time conflict dilemmas.

Dr Eva Urban-Devereux

*EUR CAPS Visiting Professor for the International Chair
in Humanities and Social Sciences*

Dr Eva Urban-Devereux was previously a Senior Research Fellow at the Mitchell Institute.

As Visiting Scholar, Eva will be building on the networks and collaborations that she developed during her time at QUB.

This includes a collaborative arts postgraduate teaching and research project, led by Weimar Bauhaus University, involving postgraduate research students, with the other partners being QUB, University of Rennes 2, Concordia University Montreal, UCC, and the University of Barcelona.

Dr James E. Waller

*Christopher J. Dodd Chair in Human Rights Practice
and Director of the Dodd Human Rights Impact
Programs for the Human Rights Institute,
University of Connecticut*

James' fieldwork includes research in Germany, Israel, Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Guatemala.

His current research project is a comparative analysis of the literal and figurative notion of "walls" in deeply divided societies. Grounded in the lived experience of people in deeply divided societies, he will explore physical walls of social separation, symbolic walls of identity separation, and hidden walls of geographical separation.

Professor Helen Kinsella

**Fulbright Commission US Friends of Queen's
University Belfast Visiting Distinguished Scholar
Professorship**

*Associate Professor of Political Sciences
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities*

Helen was awarded a US Friends of Queen's University Belfast Visiting Distinguished Scholar Professorship to conduct research and contribute to the academic life of Queen's.

Working with Professor Debbie Lisle, (Institute Fellow: The Politics of Security and Institutional Peacebuilding; Professor, School of HAPP), and colleagues Dr Jamie Hagen and Dr Maria-Adriana Deiana, both Lecturers in the School of HAPP, the collaboration focused on gender and armed violence. It included a qualitative study of tear gas to better grasp how harm, aid, and legacies of armed violence are gendered and the ways harm is experienced, aid is delivered, and violence is remembered.

Helen has an outstanding track record and has received many awards, including the prestigious Sussex International Theory Prize. Her research interests include international humanitarian law; international norms and institutions; international security; gender and armed conflict; international relations theories; contemporary political thought and feminist theories.

SABBATICAL FELLOWS

[Return to contents page](#)

SABBATICAL FELLOWS 2022-23

The Mitchell Institute Sabbatical Fellowship Scheme 2022-23 was open to all QUB academic staff who had already been awarded Sabbatical Leave by their School during this academic year.

For the duration of their Fellowship - up to a maximum of one semester - recipients are provided with office space at the Institute; receive £4,000 to support their research activities and present their research in a Mitchell Institute Lecture or Workshop during their period at the Institute.

Dr Lauren Dempster

I was a Sabbatical Fellow in the Institute in Semester 1 of the 2022-23 academic year. Having spent my Post-Doctoral years in the Institute, I was delighted to have the opportunity to be based there once again. I found the experience to be hugely valuable for several key reasons.

First, I found having a separate space outside of my Law School office very useful for focusing on my planned Sabbatical activities. As a result, my time in the Institute was really productive. I am currently working on a monograph, co-authored with my colleague Dr Rachel Killean (University of Sydney) on the relationship between environmental harm

Dr Lauren Dempster, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Rights and Social Justice; Lecturer, School of Law and Dr Peter McLoughlin, Mitchell Institute Fellow: Legacy; Senior Lecturer, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, were the first two Queen's academics to be awarded the Mitchell Institute Sabbatical Fellowships. They found the experience very beneficial, especially the financial support and dedicated office space and support at the Institute.

and Transitional Justice, and made good progress on drafting several chapters during my time at the Institute.

Second, and relatedly, I was able to use the funding that came with the Fellowship to travel to Australia to advance this work, and I am grateful to Richard for approving this. As a Visiting Fellow at the University of Sydney's School of Law, I was able to work with Rachel on our monograph - having time in-person to develop our ideas was invaluable. During this trip we received useful feedback that we will be incorporating into our manuscript through delivering presentations at the 8th Annual Australian International Criminal Law Workshop in Sydney

Peter used the funding to conduct research in the archives in Dublin and London for his forthcoming book.

Lauren used the funding to travel to Australia to attend conferences and strengthen collaboration with internationally renowned colleagues.

Peter and Lauren presented at Research Workshops on each of their research areas.

and at the Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference in Darwin.

Finally, the Mitchell Institute is such a valuable part of Queen's University Belfast. As an interdisciplinary researcher, I valued being part of the Institute community.

Peter McLoughlin

Being at the Mitchell Institute for the duration of my sabbatical has been wonderful, and I was very sad to leave. Obviously, the funding that comes with this position has been hugely beneficial, allowing me to spend a number of weeks working in archives in Dublin and London to conduct research for my book *Irish America, the US Government, and the Northern Ireland Problem: 1968-2023*.

I found working in the Institute itself to be great help. As well as the fantastic colleagues, the PhD students working here have been a huge inspiration – a reminder of what focused research is about after becoming so used to juggling teaching and administration commitments in a normal term.

As mundane as it sounds, having an office at the Institute where I could focus and dedicate my time to research has also helped. Though only a few doors down from my office in my home School, it felt very different from that space – which is always messy, and has all the reminders of the usual teaching and administration demands. Having an office in the Institute made for far more productive writing. As a result, I was able to send completed chapters to OUP, and now hope for a positive response (fingers crossed) which would help spur me through the remaining chapters and editing process. The latter is always hardest for me, but I'm hoping that what I'm forced to cut will allow me to produce some new articles, none of which I could have done without the Sabbatical Fellowship.

I also received very useful feedback during my Sabbatical Fellowship, not least by hosting one of the Mitchell Institute Research Workshops, presenting one of my chapters. When the book is finished, I certainly hope to come back to speak about the project as a whole.

Being optimistic, perhaps we'll also have our challenges with the Protocol sorted by then, so I can write a nice final chapter about President Biden visiting to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. It would certainly be a good way to recognise the role of the Institute's patron, Senator Mitchell, in helping to negotiate that accord. Here's hoping!



Dr Peter McLoughlin



Dr Lauren Dempster

LEADERSHIP

Professor Richard English

Director
Politics and International Studies

Professor Fiona Magowan

Theme Lead: Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

Professor Louise Mallinder

Theme Lead: Legacy
School of Law

Professor Kieran McEvoy

Theme Lead: Rights and Social Justice
School of Law

PROFESSOR OF POST-CONFLICT STUDIES

Professor John D. Brewer

RESEARCH FUNDED POSTS

Professor Michael Semple

Professorial Research Fellow

Dr Stephen Herron

Research Fellow

FELLOWS

Legacy

Prof Louise Mallinder

Theme Lead
School of Law
Law

Dr Merav Amir

School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology

Prof Gordon Anthony

School of Law
Law

Dr Dina Belluigi

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Education

Prof Fran Brearton

School of Arts, English and Languages
English

Prof John D. Brewer

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology

Dr Graham Brownlow

Management School
Business and Management Studies

Prof Dominic Bryan

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies

Prof Anna Bryson

School of Law
Law

Dr Garrett Carr

School of Arts, English and Languages
English

Dr Evropi Chatzipanagiotidou

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies

Prof John Coakley

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Prof Marie Coleman

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
History

Prof Brice Dickson

School of Law
Law

Dr Joe Duffy

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Social Work and Social Policy

Dr Michael Duffy

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Social Work and Social Policy

Dr Clare Dwyer

School of Law
Law

Ms Lesley Emerson

School of Arts, English and Languages
Education

Prof Tony Gallagher

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Education

Mr David Grant

*School of Arts, English and Languages
Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts*

Dr Jonathan Heaney

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology*

Prof Audrey Horning

*School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology*

Prof Joanne Hughes

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Education*

Dr Cheryl Lawther

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology*

Prof Keith Lilley

*School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology*

Prof Anne-Marie McAlinden

*School of Law
Law*

Prof Cahal McLaughlin

*School of Arts, English and Languages
Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts*

Dr Peter McLoughlin

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies*

Dr Cathal McManus

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Education*

Prof John Morison

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Ciaran Mulholland

*Medicine, Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences
Social Work and Social Policy*

Prof John Nagle

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology*

Prof Brendan O'Leary

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies*

Dr Francis O'Neill

*Medicine, Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences
Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care*

Dr Des O'Rawe

*School of Arts, English and Languages
Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts*

Prof Pedro Rebelo

*School of Arts, English and Languages
Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts*

Prof Maruska Svasek

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies*

Dr Andrew Thomson

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies*

Dr Jeremy Watkins

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Philosophy*

Rights and Social Justice**Prof Kieran McEvoy**

*Theme Lead
School of Law
Law*

Dr Yassin Brunger

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Michelle Butler

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology*

Dr Mary-Louise Corr

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Lauren Dempster

*School of Law
Law*

Prof Colin Harvey

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Heather Johnson

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies*

Prof Christopher McCrudden

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Kathryn McNeilly

*School of Law
Law*

Dr Ronagh McQuigg
School of Law
Law

Dr Luke Moffett
School of Law
Law

Dr Alice Panepinto
School of Law
Law

The Politics of Security and Institutional Peacebuilding

Dr Timofey Agarin
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Michael Bourne
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Teresa Degenhardt
School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology

Dr Peter Doran
School of Law
Law

Prof Katy Hayward
School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology

Dr Gül Kaçmaz Erk
School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Culture and Society

Dr Jonathan Lanman
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies

Prof Debbie Lisle
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Prof Muiris MacCarthaigh
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Prof Cathal McCall
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Lee McGowan
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Andrew Pepper
School of Arts, English and Languages
English Language and Literature

Prof David Phinmore
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Paulo Sousa
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies

Dr John Topping
School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Criminology and Sociology

Religion, Arts and Peacebuilding

Prof Fiona Magowan
Theme Lead
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Anthropology and Development Studies

Dr Véronique Altglas
School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology

Dr John Barry
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Piotr Blumczynski
School of Arts, English and Languages
Modern Languages and Linguistics

Prof Gladys Ganiel
School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology

Prof John Garry
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
Politics and International Studies

Dr Satish Kumar
School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Geography

Dr Edel Lamb
School of Arts, English and Languages
Arts English Languages

Dr Stephanie Lehner
School of Arts, English and Languages
English Language and Literature

Dr James Nelson

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Education*

Prof Mícheal Ó Mainnín

*School of Arts, English and Languages
Modern Languages and Linguistics*

Dr Tristan Sturm

*School of Natural, Cultural and Built Environment
Geography*

Prof Rhiannon Turner

*School of Behavioural Science
Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience*

Dr Ulrike M. Vieten

*School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Sociology*

Dr Keira Williams

*School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
History*

EMERITUS PROFESSOR

Professor Hastings Donnan

HONORARY PROFESSORS

Prof Christine Bell

University of Edinburgh

Prof Melani Cammett

Harvard University

Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

HONORARY PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE

Prof Bertie Ahern

Former Taoiseach of Ireland

Prof Andrew Heyn

Former British Consul-General in Hong Kong

Prof Avila Kilmurray

*Peacebuilding and Migration Executive,
Social Change Initiative*

Prof Christopher Maccabe CB

Former Political Director of the Northern Ireland Office

Prof Michael Maguire CBE

Former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Prof Rory Montgomery

*Former Irish Permanent Representative
to the European Union*

Prof Jonathan Powell

Former Chief of Staff to Tony Blair

Prof Peter Sheridan

CEO of Co-operation Ireland

VISITING RESEARCH SCHOLARS

Roz Goldie

Prof Darren Kew

University of Boston, Massachusetts

Prof Peter Shirlow

Liverpool University

Prof Sally Shortall

University of Newcastle

Emma Sky OBE

Yale University

Dr Eva Urban-Devereux

Dr James E. Waller

Keene State College, New Hampshire

Prof Azrini Wahidin

University of Warwick

Dr Michael Wardlow

Dr Bonnie Weir

Yale University

SABBATICAL FELLOWS 2022-23

Dr Lauren Dempster

Dr Peter McLoughlin

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

Dr Wendy-Louise Smith

Administrator

Valerie Miller

Clerical Officer

Louise Milligan

Clerical Officer

Brett Walker

Clerical Officer

POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Leverhulme LINCS / LINAS Doctoral Scholars

Jessica Barr

Machine learning-enhanced diagnostics of open quantum networks

Brian Byrne

Exploring Immersive Filmmaking as a Digital Resilience Tool with Refugee Communities in Northern Ireland

Colette Casey

Emotions and Fake News

Michael Collins

The Vigilant Image: Documentary Technologies in the Age of Global (In) Security

Oliver Donnelly

Playing with fire? Monitoring and Engineering Political Interactions in Video Games

Mark Elliott

Advancing Algorithmic Transparency in a Data Driven World

Karli Gibson

Security and Responsibility: Emergence, Decision, and Distributed Agency

Shania Kirk

Can Business and Human Rights Frameworks Shape Accountability for AI in Information Ecosystems?

Cian Luddy

“He is /ourguy/” Trump’s Securitized Moves and the AltRight Online Public

Konstantin Macher

Programming Security Ethics in Cyber-Physical Systems

David Mark

Secure Environments, Legally Compliant Environments, Safe Environments: Understanding the Dynamics for Confidence with Algorithmic Decision-making

Ciara McHugh

Returning the Gaze: Global Perspectives on the Impact of Surveillance Technology in Police-Community Relations

Tomás McInerney

From Private to Public: The Inter-Operability and Governance of Private Sector Algorithmic Solutions in the Public Sector

Jason McKillen

When Does One Become Dangerous? Exploring the Use of Algorithms and Machine Learning in the Process of Detection of Dangerousness on the Basis of Previous Data

Anna Montgomery

The Smart Home as a site of control: Analyzing the impact on victim-survivors of domestic abuse

Louise O’Hagan

Human Element of Data Exploitation

Matt O’Neill

Cyberbordering the European Union?

Katherine Pittalis

Algorithmic regulation of the music industry regarding the consumption of music

Nora Poloni-Gallagher

Algorithmic Accountability: Public Control of AI Decisionmaking

James Sweeney

Talking Technology: Regulating and ensuring the safety of intelligent voice assistants

Jarlath Warner

Bias in Lightweight AI for Smart Devices

Joshua Weston

Machine and Algorithmic Driven Discovery in Big Data: Implications for Scientific Reproducibility

Mark Williams

Detection and Prevention of Inappropriate and Criminal Behaviour in Social Media

Institute Postgraduate Students

Judith Fullerton (Self Funded)

Cultural Trauma and Transgenerational Transmission in Northern Ireland

Megan Kelly (DfE Funded)

Nursing the Troubles: An Oral History of Emotional Labour within Acute Nursing in Belfast During 'The Troubles'

Deirdre MacBride (DfE Funded)

Popular Memories of the Rising and the Somme: Northern Ireland 2016: A Case Study

Yumi Omori (Japan Student Services Organization)

Mothers' Experiences of Conflict and Conflict Transformation in Belfast

GRADUATES

Dr Patrick Brown (DfE funded)

Social Liberal Peace building and the Case for a Universal Income in Northern Ireland and its Effect on Conflict Transformation
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Muhammad Feyyaz

The Persistence of Terrorism: Exploring Global Dynamics and the Case of Pakistan through a Grounded Theory Lens
Graduated winter 2022

Dr Matthew Gault (DfE funded)

Commemorating the Troubles in County Fermanagh: Remembrance in rural spaces
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Richard Hargy

The United States Department of State and Northern Ireland 2001 – 2007: How the bureaucratic dynamics of an executive branch of the federal government affected American intervention in the peace process
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Megan Kelly (DfE Funded)

Nursing the Troubles: An Oral History of Emotional Labour within Acute Nursing in Belfast During 'The Troubles'
Graduated winter 2022

Dr Chrysi Kyratsou (DfE funded)

Refugees' Musicking: Meanings and Encounters in Greek Reception Centres
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Deirdre MacBride (DfE Funded)

Popular Memories of the Rising and the Somme: Northern Ireland 2016: A Case Study
Graduated summer 2022

Dr Sonia Najjar

Settler Colonialism, Civil Society and the Judaisation of East Jerusalem
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Matt O'Neill

Cyberbordering the European Union?
Graduated summer 2023

Dr Eleanor Williams

The Dark Side of Peace: Were the state's intelligence activities during the conflicts in Northern Ireland (1969 -1998) and Colombia (1978 – 2016) ethical?
Graduated summer 2023

**The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute
for Global Peace, Security and Justice**

Queen's University Belfast
18-19 University Square
Belfast, United Kingdom
BT7 1NN

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9097 3609 / 1346
Email: mitchell.institute@qub.ac.uk
Website: go.qub.ac.uk/mitchell-institute
Twitter: [@QUBMitchell](https://twitter.com/QUBMitchell)
YouTube: go.qub.ac.uk/Mitchell-YouTube