



The Corrymeela Podcast - Season 2

Thanks so much for listening to The Corrymeela Podcast. You might like to discuss the episode and the accompanying questions with friends, family, or a discussion group, or just use them for your own writing and reflection.

If you're part of a group, be mindful and considerate of one another's willingness to engage in the discussion - leave space for people to keep their reflections to themselves if they want to. You might also want to agree on some general principles to stick to, like: everybody's invited to speak once before anyone speaks twice, and: try to assume that everybody is speaking with good intent.

In group discussions at Corrymeela, we seek to locate political and religious points of view within the story of the person speaking. If you're gathering as a group, consider how to create a sense of connectedness among you.

You might like to choose one or two of the Very Short Story questions that we like to put to guests at the end of each episode. Your answers to these can be one sentence long, or a few. Belongings are plural, as are identities and nationalities. So feel free to respond to these story prompts in a way that reflects your own story.

- What's something important that you've changed your mind about?
- Are there books, poems, films, albums, works of art, etc that you've turned to again and again?
- Tell us about a time when your national identity felt important to you.
- Tell us about a time when you felt foreign.
- Is there a very short story you can tell us about a time when you said something that surprised you?
- Has anyone ever said that you were disloyal to one of your cultures or identities? Why?



Season 2, Episode 1. Professor Katy Hayward reflection questions & episode transcript

1. Do you have any memories of a time when you encountered some kind of border? What about it struck you as significant (or perhaps insignificant)?
2. Pádraig and Katy talk about borders as points of connection, as well as things that have the capacity to limit or divide. As you think about borders, what are some of the other features that come to mind?
3. Katy is cautious about sharing personal opinions. How does this land for you? During some of the more contentious public conversations and public debates of the last few years, whose commentary (and whose opinions) have you found most constructive, and most helpful? Where and to whom do you look for those things?
4. Katy talks about sovereignty as ‘something very fundamental that individuals generally find attractive, and that is this idea of that capacity to make autonomous decisions that we think are in our own best interests.’ How have you seen the concept of sovereignty used over the last few years? And why do you think it’s such an emotive idea?

Katy Hayward is professor of Political Sociology at Queen’s University Belfast, a Fellow of the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, and an Eisenhower Fellow. Her latest books are the co-authored *Northern Ireland a Generation after Good Friday* (Manchester University Press, 2021) and the monograph *What do we know and what should we do about... the Irish border?* (Sage, 2021). She has written and presented to media, policy, civic and academic audiences worldwide on the Irish border, Brexit, and the protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Welcome to The Corrymeela Podcast: exploring stories and ideas about conflict, peace, theology, and art.

Hello, and welcome to The Corrymeela Podcast. My name is Pádraig Ó Tuama, and with me today is Katy Hayward. Katy is a professor of political sociology at Queen's University in Belfast, and a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. She is an expert on borders and the Northern Ireland protocol, and her book, What do we know and what should we do about the Irish border? was published in 2021. Katy Hayward, you're very welcome to The Corrymeela Podcast.

Katy Hayward:

Thank you so much for having me, Pádraig.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

A real pleasure! We're going to start off with an easy question, Katy. Were there any experiences in childhood that you think prepared you for the work you do now? Or interests in childhood, as well?

Katy Hayward:

Well, there's a question. I would say there's two things. So one is family holidays around Ireland and falling in love with the place. And the other would have been, perhaps as an older child, so was particularly, erm, studying for GCSE history, the First World War. And I think it was the first time, bringing together poetry from the era as well as history, and realising the potential negative effects of, obviously of identities and ideologies and where it can lead, and particularly the responsibility of political leaders in all of that. I think that was a really formative moment. And I do definitely think where I ended up in a funny way, kind of brings together those two experiences, in the sense of an appreciation of, I think the responsibility of political leaders and of citizens and an effort to avoid ending up in a situation where the most horrendous things can, can happen.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I was curious as to whether the politics or the sociology came first; I can maybe make a guess, based on what you're just saying there, Katy but I'm curious: which one came first for you?

Katy Hayward:

So in a funny way, it was never really that clear, so I ended up studying Peace and Conflict in Magee. And part of the reason why I ended up doing it was partly because of wanting to be in Ireland, and partly because not being clear about a particular discipline that I wanted to study, and peace and conflict

was obviously perfect, in that it was interdisciplinary. And I have sort of had the luxury, I'd say, of not having to then ever as an academic fit in a particular disciplinary category. Partly because of wanting intellectual and knowledge and evidence never to be constrained by a particular discipline; so to be able to take inspiration from various quarters and see the connection between them, and then apply them to the world around us, and better understanding of the world around us. So yes, I sort of ended up- my PhD was in [the] politics department, in UCD, as it happens, but always feeling very happy and comfortable in, you know, going to seminars, etc in sociology, philosophy, etc...

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Katy, you were awarded the title of Political Communicator of the Year in 2019. And then the following year, you were given a Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize in recognition of the way that you've used Twitter to communicate about Brexit. What is it that is of interest to you in terms of access to public evidence and public knowledge? 'Cause, I follow you on Twitter, and I've been so struck by the clarity and the precision that you give, and I've heard you in interviews be really clear about what an opinion is, as well as what evidence is. What is it for you that is so important about that?

Katy Hayward:

Yes, I mean, it's funny you should talk about Twitter, actually, because I've sort of come off it recently... Partly post-Elon Musk, I have to say, and partly because I was beginning to be concerned that actually, part of what I was able to offer was actually now at the point of opinion. So that's been sort of reflecting the wider political environment around the issues that I was contributing - I hoped - to understanding of, which is obviously Brexit and the protocol. And because we hadn't had, wasn't much new to say or much more evidence to present, I sort of felt I was erring towards offering opinion, which then, always, I have to say, always got much more reaction probably than the, the diagrams or the pathway slides. But, I wasn't sure how constructive that was, and there's this whole other dimension, too, erm, that I ended up feeling rather uncomfortable about, which was about me personally... as a commentator, and I was- I didn't want to be sort of thought of in those terms. And I was extremely honoured to have a situation in which the- what I hoped was an academic useful contribution was recognised by such as Ewart-Biggs and the Political Studies Association, simply recognising the very positive things that are on offer through social media, in terms of access to all sorts of people from all different walks of life and levels of interest and knowledge. And, that offered a lot of positive things and it was, it was great to get some encouragement, apart from anything else, to keep going on that; particularly Ewart-Biggs of course which is such a renowned and hugely important and well respected prize, and for them to give it to somebody like me for a Twitter account, I thought was very courageous on their part. Especially as I was being awarded it alongside Anna Burns. I mean, it's really, it's deeply humbling. But in terms of- as I say that the- there's a particular value to Twitter in the access to people, and being able to offer

some evidence, but there's also risks, too, that you begin to offer opinion in place of that, and hence, I'm a little bit more cautious, well a little bit cautious in my position on that, more recently,

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

You know, you have been - on television, on news and radio, in writing, on social media, in lectures, in public engagements - speaking about the border in Ireland: that border that marks the split jurisdiction between the Republic and the North. And I'm curious, first of all about what drew you to the attention of borders- was there something in particular that drew you to wanting to pay attention to that, or was it just what was current in the news at the time over the last number of years?

Katy Hayward:

Yes, so it was a kind of in a, in a roundabout way. So when I was originally looking at the concept of post-nationalism, in light of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and, in light of European integration, that led me to, obviously, to understanding nationalism and the importance of territory in that, and therefore of course, borders. Originally, my work on the Irish border was primarily about its diminishing significance. So trying to understand the impact of European integration. And indeed, post-Good Friday/Belfast Agreement cooperation on relations across the island. And seeing that in international terms was really useful and it was great to be able to increasingly speak of the border in terms of it being a point of cooperation. And a meeting point, as it's been described by many people. So that was all well and good and obviously then in the context of Brexit, and trying to appreciate what Brexit meant for borders, then it became obviously more important to sort of read up and become expert on what a hardening border looks like, and what was then expected and required of an external border of the European Union. So in a funny way, I've come to sort of border studies, in the reverse way to the way that most people do, about hardening borders rather than softening them.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I mean, it's so interesting to talk about a border on the one hand as a meeting point, and on the other hand, as a dividing point. The Irish word for a border is 'teorann' which means 'limitation'. And, um, I'm fascinated by the idea that, at one point anyway - it feels like a long time ago - that the border that divides the two Irish jurisdictions, could have been considered a place of meeting rather than division. Could you talk about that?

Katy Hayward:

I mean, I think, I think all borders are that, right? Because when we think about borders, and people in border regions, they - if we're talking primarily about open borders - they, it's possible to have lives that benefit from access to the two jurisdictions and in some time- you know in some cases two economies, two cultures...an open door to a wider range of experience. And so in that sense, border regions can be

places of richness and diversity in ways that peripheral areas are not. And so, yeah, I think one- so when we're talking about borders it's worth recognising, of course, this is about two sides of something, and about then there are positive opportunities to come from that, as well as understanding borders, as their, as the capacity to- as having capacity to draw boundaries and to limit.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah. Given the situation in Ireland where, you know, the border, even before Brexit, and obviously, for the 102 years of the border, there has been strong contention about it: some people wanting it and some people not. So, in a contested border region, would you say the same thing rings true, that it can be a meeting place, given that some people want it to be fortified, and other people wish it to be diminished?

Katy Hayward:

So there's a difference here, of course, between the symbolism and the political significance of a border and then the lived experience of being in a border region. So, obviously, dioceses and parishes and communities and townlands sort of cross the border. And so you can have cross-border experiences and identities, regardless of your political affiliation, of course, and aspiration. But also then you do have that political significance of the border. And I think one thing that was really interesting that Brexit highlighted was how people's conception of a border can be so very much affected by that political viewpoint. So we did find that those who voted leave in the border region will be able to talk about the border as if it wasn't right there on their doorstep. So, about taking back control of borders, it was, you know, they meant it. But in the same way that people elsewhere in the United Kingdom, who [were] voting leave meant take back control of borders, erm, it wasn't necessarily something that they expected to see translated into an effect on their everyday life. And obviously, that relates to wider understandings of Brexit, and what that whole process was, in terms of claims being made around sovereignty, and what was possible nowadays for contemporary states to try and promise and achieve. And we're still having that struggle. And so post-Brexit, post-protocol, trying to keep an eye on actually, what it is to have a harder Irish border. And particularly, of course, this is affecting lives, as well as political identities. And most immediately, we know that it's affecting those who don't have British or Irish citizenship, who maybe live cross-border lives, and maybe feel most vulnerable to potential policy changes.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Katy, you mentioned the word sovereignty there. And I wonder if you could take us down a little rabbit hole of sovereignty, 'cause it's used a lot. And I'm curious about, from your point of view, where does your mind go to when you hear the word sovereignty, like you already- when you spoke about borders, you talk about the emotional relationship to the border, and the significance of it, the gesture of it, the

symbol of it, and the politics of it. What when it comes to sovereignty, do you think- where do you, where would you take us with that complicated word?

Katy Hayward:

I think very much there is a sense of, when people talk about sovereignty, promise things in relation to national sovereignty, erm, it's trying to appeal to something very fundamental that individuals generally find attractive, and that is this idea of that capacity to make autonomous decisions that we think are in our own best interests. And I think when we talk about sovereignty, this tends to be just expanded out to the, to the national stage as if it is possible to make decisions autonomously. And I think fundamentally, when we think [in] sociological terms, you realise that that isn't necessarily the case. If it is, it's in very limited circumstances, and most particularly when we're talking at the national level, erm, the capacity to make sovereign decisions is wholly constrained by international circumstances. And nowhere is this seen more clearly [than] at a border. So it is possible to harden a border through unilateral decision - so to require certain things of those entering your territory - but it's not possible to make a border more open, porous, without cooperation. And of course people want- generally the trend has been to have more open borders for mutual benefit. And I think this has taken on all sorts of forms in the 21st century. And so it is really interesting that the question of sovereignty is still so present, given how obvious it is that there are immense constraints on sovereignty, not just from other states, but of course from other globally significant players, most particularly international corporations.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

So, like, is sovereignty, as you're hearing it, more important as a symbol or a gesture or as an emotional call, than anything to do with policy and politics?

Katy Hayward:

Yes I think that's where its power lies. It doesn't necessarily, doesn't really mean so much in real terms, I don't think. And this is the interesting thing: so thinking about global Britain (and sorry I always come back to Brexit, I'm a very narrow person!) but erm, global Britain is a classic example of that. So, we will become more sovereign, and we'll have- make independent sovereign choices, we'll leave the European Union, have this global Britain; but what is global Britain, except expressed through an ambition to have trade agreements with other states? And as we know through those trade agreements that have been negotiated so far, they are bringing certain compromises and - if not risks - to the UK, in terms of, you know, decisions being made about what will enter the country, etc. So, yes, there's this complete, almost contradiction in terms that we're seeing in the 21st century, and it is amazing that the quest for sovereignty can be one that can gather still such... that can appeal so much to people. And I think partly this goes back to bigger questions that other people have written so well about in terms of

those wider patterns of feeling that things are out of control, and feeling vulnerable to those forces of all sorts. And so hence the appeal of sovereignty- yeah it's an emotional thing, primarily.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

You're listening to The Corrymeela Podcast and I'm Pádraig Ó Tuama. With me today is professor of political sociology, Katy Hayward. Katy, in your book on the Irish border, you wrote about the historical context in which that border was created, you know- in the years following the First World War, and you were saying that that was a time 'when men drew red lines across maps on lands they had never visited'. Would you say that that was a particularity of the time: do you think it would have been done differently were things happening now? What do you- how do you see the role of time and, a hundred years ago, when Ireland was being partitioned, and maybe thinking about similar partitions that happened around the world in the 20th century- what role do you see was happening there? What influences were going on, what imaginations?

Katy Hayward:

I mean, it was the era of nation statehood. And the idea of it being possible to draw lines - even the idea that they could be temporarily drawn - but dividing up empires in order to create state systems that could potentially be sustainable for a period of time, and that could appeal to a majority national identity. And so yes, we saw this happening very much obviously at the end of the First World War, this transformation of world maps, erm, through, sort of those powerful states and...was it particular to the time? Yes I think so in terms of the dominant nation state ideology, but I think - and again, I'm bringing it back to Brexit and the protocol - but I think one thing that has been quite- one thing that has sort of been brought home again I think in this whole, and over the last few years, is about how it's very much possible for decisions to be made about drawing borders and creating- very significant decisions being made, that actually are removed from those most affected: geographically/physically removed, and also not simply having the information, you know, the consequences of drawing those lines. And when we think about what the- you know, the drawing up of the protocol, the various versions of it...I mean, one way that I would explain where we've come to now through the protocol and into the Windsor Framework is that now we have more evidence and understanding about the consequences of - or sorry the nature of - Northern Ireland's integration with Britain and with Ireland, and therefore the consequences of drawing borders. That's not to say we can predict what this means, but I do think it's been, it's been quite a lesson, in trying to solve a very complicated problem by drawing a border.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah. And do you think that that evidence was there before? Or do you think it's just that it's being paid attention to now or that the evidence has indeed come to light in the last five or six years?

Katy Hayward:

Yeah, so this was the point: that they didn't have the evidence, they didn't know what was crossing the Irish Sea, for example. So they looked at it in terms of what was possible to manage, so, much easier to manage a sea border with, you know, seven air and sea entry points than to manage a land border with 270 border crossings. And so that pragmatic decision was made without really knowing- and they would have said so themselves: they didn't know exactly what type of movement they were having to control for then. And then in those controls, what disruption would be caused by that. And I think that's- that tells us a lot about the nature of borders, and we talk about borders in terms of flows across it. And so, yes, actually, it was possible for people to, in effect, although they weren't drawing lines on a map, but they were bringing in controls and requirements to a new place, that could be done without actually having the knowledge of the consequences of that. Now, it wasn't- you know, obviously it wasn't affecting daily lives in the way that partition originally did. But it did bring disruption. And including ultimately then political disruption that had not been anticipated.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

In the last period of time, the Windsor Agreement has been agreed upon and signed and is beginning to be rolled out, and there's different versions about what it might mean depending as to who's commenting you listen to; what is it that you think is significant in terms of that agreement that's been reached in the last while?

Katy Hayward:

So the Windsor Framework is an extraordinary set of documents. So at the moment it's just an agreement in principle; we have to see the UK and the EU formally agree it and then we also have to see legislative change in the UK and the EU to enable it to come to pass. I think what's most notable about it is that it's about allowing for the evolution of a relationship. And what we see here is significant adjustment on the part of the EU in recognising the unique place of Northern Ireland. And why it's so significant is that we're not just talking about flexibilities when it comes to regulatory rules that apply on goods moving from Great Britain just to be sold in Northern Ireland: it's much bigger than that. It's also about the capacity of the EU to be able to show some appreciation of the situation here in Northern Ireland as can be expressed from the ground up. And the thing that I think is most hopeful here, 'cause of course the hope in this Windsor Framework is when it comes to those relationships. So, recognising the capacity of the UK-EU relationship to find mutually agreeable solutions to the problems that they recognise will arise, through discussions and dialogue and the joint committee- so you've got that at that top level between the Commission and the UK Government. And then at the bottom level, you have this commitment to consultation with Northern Ireland public from the EU- a commitment to building structures for direct engagement with the EU- erm, sorry, with Northern Ireland from the EU level, and that's really remarkable and that doesn't, that hasn't been promised elsewhere or allowed for any other

country associated with the EU- even the member states don't get it. So that gives me, you know, that's quite exciting to see and we would just like- it'd be great to see that built upon fairly quickly I think, as a means of showing recognition of this really unique context that we have here.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I'm struck by what you say about relationship. And obviously, you know, that means political relationship and kind of acknowledgement and recognition in that way, as well as the possibility of kind of cordial relationships. Like, somebody I heard describing the peace between Britain and Ireland once described it as needing to occur between the governments in London, Dublin, and Belfast, but also in Washington DC and in Brussels; that somehow all of those governments were involved in looking at what peace might mean on the island of Ireland, with relationships with Britain and with relationships with itself as well, and the two Irish jurisdictions. It seems like the last number of years have seen increasing frostiness in those relationships. Do you think that we're at a stage now where political leaders are beginning to say that some kind of political warmth - in personality, but also then in terms of concessions towards each other - is that coming back into the fray now, rather than increasing mild chilliness, or maybe even major chilliness?

Katy Hayward:

Yes, so I think that's- that was the really good thing to see in the announcement of the Windsor Framework is the genuine warmth and respect that seems to exist there between Prime Minister Sunak and Ursula von der Leyen as the Commission president. And that gives us cause for hope and it reminds us of those occasions where we've seen photo ops with, you know, with political leaders that have significant roles here in Northern Ireland and just seeing you know, a warmth in a relationship does make a difference and gives us some confidence. I think- and we know that the British-Irish relationship has been tense. And of course that- we need to think differently now about that bilateral relationship because actually, it's not just the two of them making this marriage now that affects Northern Ireland, it is very much an international concern now. So all EU 27 member states have...are, if you like - to use that very overused phrase - co-guarantors of the agreement now, because what they are willing to accept or allow under the protocol/Windsor Framework for Northern Ireland; the amount of engagement they're wanting, and allowing to see direct with Northern Ireland, all of that has a significant impact here, and therefore, on the sense of stability here. So that's very much changed. And I think, obviously the British-Irish relationship remains key, but it's much more complicated than it was before, in that if the UK-EU relationship is poor, then that will always negatively affect the British-Irish relationship in a way that it didn't before. You know, in the past, obviously, [the] UK had its own tensions in the EU, but still remained there, and now it's outside, there is a concern that those tensions obviously can have very practical effects; obviously [that] then puts pressure on that British-Irish relationship and indeed,

the North-South relationship. So seeing warmth there, and a bit of trust building means more than it might otherwise have done because we know the significance is huge.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I mean, warmth is, it seems like a soft diplomatic word, but you're speaking about warmth as having, kind of, pretty significant power in terms of trade agreements and international relations between governments and, like the European Union and the British government and the US. Do you think that there's a broader, kind of human condition lesson in this about warmth; I'm asking you to veer off the sociology Katy, but I'm curious if you reflect on warmth that happens in political spheres and think about that in other areas, too, of society and life?

Katy Hayward:

Yes. So yeah, I'm finding myself using that term and I wouldn't normally I think- but it makes a nice change from 'mood music'!

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I remember the mood music, yeah!

Katy Hayward:

Yes! And now we have- now we've seen them dancing together-that's great... I think, funnily enough, so talking a wee bit with those involved in some of the discussions and negotiations, one thing that really strikes me is how ready people were for an improvement in that relationship. And I will, I will put it in a certain way that wasn't said to me, but the way I'm sort of understanding this is: they, they knew each other- the UK and the EU knew each other, like, they're very familiar, and indeed, they grew together over the last 50 years. And there's a sense, there was almost a sense of waiting until the other side was offering something that was kind of familiar, so particularly for the UK just waiting for- I don't know what the word is, it's not sincerity, but a- just this sense of the EU could say: actually, we do believe you that you want an agreed outcome here. So even though we had such things as the protocol bill on the table, etc, I think there was - and it wasn't just one, and it wasn't just a foreign secretary, wasn't just a prime minister, there were others as well - that people could respond to this sense of a genuine intention there to improve that relationship. And recognise this is not sustainable, erm, in the longer term, we need to- we're always gonna have a relationship: let's make it a better one, rather than a worsening one. And so it was really I think it is very- it's really interesting how, just that human sense of being able to trust that somebody wants the same thing as you in terms of a better relationship, opened up all sorts of possibilities then to be able to bring to the table, a willingness to show a bit of trust and a willingness to show flexibility. Now, that's not to say that the safeguards in the Windsor Framework aren't pretty serious and heavy. And, you know, the EU isn't just going into this with blind trust; it has

to be sure and its member states that the flexibility it's showing is backed up with safeguards. But at the same time, there's a confidence about this because there's a sense of sincerity there and genuine human relationship that's been built and invested in. So, and we know that- we know that from the Good Friday Agreement and negotiations that went into that: it's about- it is about relationship building, no matter how much you disagree, at least you know each other and respect each other at a certain level, and that's come into play... and not before time.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

You're listening to The Corrymeela Podcast and I'm Pádraig Ó Tuama. With me today is border expert and sociologist Katy Hayward. Katy, you mentioned the Good Friday Agreement just now. I'm curious: what is it that you think is significant about that, as you look at it through the lens of somebody who pays attention to peace and conflict, to the border in Ireland, to political negotiations; what is it that you- what are the standout lines or standout hopes at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement?

Katy Hayward:

D'you know what Pádraig, I was just writing about this recently and thinking about this and going back to the agreement and those phases that have been- they're very familiar to us. And yet they would become circumscribed, both in their import, and in their consequence, and in their geographical effect. So to explain what I mean, looking at the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and we see these terms such as 'rigorous impartiality'; about protection of civil, social and economic [and] political rights. And also around commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences, right. We tend to think of those things just as applying to us in Northern Ireland, whereas in actual fact they are about Britain and Ireland. So, exercising sovereign power - as it's called - in Northern Ireland with rigorous impartiality: that's the responsibility of the UK, and possibly in the future, of Ireland. And, commitment to protection of civil, political, economic and social rights is across the respective jurisdictions of Ireland and the UK: it's not just within Northern Ireland. So when we appreciate that, it helps us understand quite how important this agreement is, not just for Northern Ireland, but for these islands as a whole. And indeed, you know the promise to- the principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships- that's not just within Northern Ireland. It's between these islands. And, aren't we ready to see that now? I mean, that's, that's why things have felt so fragile and under pressure and strain, because we have not seen fulfilment of those commitments across these islands and in that relationship, let alone within Northern Ireland. And, this is what I hope that this, you know 25 years on, that actually...for both the UK and Ireland to recognise this is significant for their citizens across these islands, not just in this little place.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

I'm going to return to the, to sociology. I'm curious what trends you're noticing in terms of current political engagement regarding Dublin and Belfast and London and maybe broader as well, and political conversations too- what is it that- what trends do you think are emerging that are going to continue to be important over the next while; I suppose I'm particularly interested in what sociological trends are you seeing that, that really are worthwhile paying public attention to?

Katy Hayward:

I mean, there's the...possibly most worrying that we've seen for a while is the alienation from the political process. And so, when we look at survey data about opinion on the agreement, you know: should it- is it fit for purpose, should it be reformed, should it be removed? ...A really worrying thing is about the fact that, you know, a third of people under the age of 35 maybe don't know, and have no opinion on the matter. And I do think we see that sense of alienation having a negative effect, not just in terms of non-participation in political activity and in the civic sphere, but also people leaving, of course, and sort of giving up on the peace. And also, there is a disjunction between people's political priorities, particularly amongst younger people, and their express needs and what they would like to see offered from, from the state if you like - from public services - that simply are not, not there and there's not much prospect of them coming into play, either. So, we know amongst younger people, their priority is mental health and wellbeing. Even when we say, you know, even such question as: what would make Northern Ireland a good place to live? It's that issue that comes to the fore as the biggest concern. And not only are we not addressing that, the situation is worsening, by the week, almost. And so that would be, that would be concerning as well, I think. So, that political alienation, but also when people are concerned for mental health and wellbeing, that tells you something about civil society, and about individuals' place in society and their connection to other people, erm, that really does suggest a- wider social problems that are gonna be very, very difficult to address in the longer term.

And, this is gonna sound biased, but it's not- I'm just speaking from, just experience, and that is, you know, in terms of the international interest, and particularly from EU member states, I am struck by how- even just things like longer interviews and a concern to sort of understand the wider social dynamics here and the wider social context for the challenges posed by Brexit and the value placed on the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement etc: that's very clear from international states. But from the UK, there's something different going on, and there's definitely been, obviously, the appreciation that Northern Ireland is in a difficult position, and is particular. Erm, but I think, and I think, you know, I do think that tends to- Northern tends to be understood in terms of how it might play into dynamics in Westminster. In particular in terms of personalities and drama. And this is why, you know, this is why I would be particularly concerned around the future, because of how small and superficial understanding of politics has become in the UK. And, now there are some very notable exceptions, and really important

ones. But for the most part, including, you know the mainstream media coverage of Northern Ireland and indeed, wider issues around the UK's domestic and international responsibilities, tends to just fall back to party dynamics, and Westminster dynamics and, and that's hugely negative and worrying for the longer term for the UK as a whole, I think.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

What are - this is the last question before we go on to some Very Short Story questions - but, are there trends that you see that you think are really worthwhile building on; earlier on you mentioned warmth, is that the main one that you see- an increasing warmth between some of the leaders? Are there other trends too, that you think are signs of something where there might be a sea change?

Katy Hayward:

Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't place too much on warmth, because...

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

...OK. You're cool about warmth?!

Katy Hayward:

Yeah! Yes, I think there's been the willingness to think in new ways around engagement and about structures for engagement. So I'll have hinted at earlier in the Windsor Framework there is this commitment to try and have more direct engagement with Northern Ireland; more consultation, more inclusion of expertise, as well as a role for the Northern Ireland assembly and I think that's all very positive. That's very much as it relates to the EU. And there is then a gap about how we see plugged into the UK/Westminster decision making process, there's a sort of an absence there of information from Northern Ireland directly. And so there's a sort of asymmetry there, that is really- you couldn't have predicted it. And perhaps that sort of model of engagement could be built upon more broadly across the UK. Otherwise, I don't see too much, erm, you know, I'm tryna to think but there's not too much to be hopeful on in terms of the UK constitution more generally at the moment, I think there's a lot to be concerned about.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Katy Hayward, thank you very much for coming on The Corrymeela Podcast, we really appreciate your time.

Katy Hayward:

Thank you so much for having me.

The Corrymeela Podcast is created in partnership between Corrymeela and FanFán. It's produced by Emily Rawling, with mixing, editing, and theme music by Fra Sands at Safeplace Studios, and presented by me, Pádraig Ó Tuama. The podcast is generously funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Community Relations Council Northern Ireland, and the Irish government's Reconciliation Fund. Thanks to them, and thanks to Corrymeela's friends and supporters, and thanks to you for listening.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

So Katy, for our Very Short Story questions, I'm curious, what's something important that you've changed your mind about?

Katy Hayward:

OK, I think if I'm honest, it's about business in the private sector. So I did write a little bit in the past around the private sector and cross-border cooperation, but I've always had a wariness of them, 'cause I've never had experience of working in the private sector as you probably wouldn't- erm, not be too surprised to hear! And I have been so impressed and humbled by my engagement with those in the private sector, and really seen such a spirit of civicness, and courage, and careful intelligence and concern that I'd never expected to see amongst some business leaders in Northern Ireland and indeed Ireland and the wider UK. And that's something I've changed my mind about, and I'm glad to have [been] able to do so; that's not to say that I'm not heavily critical of capitalism, etc etc! Erm, but I just- that's been something good to change my mind about.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Obviously, we all carry multiple cultures and identities in us. Has anybody ever said to you that you were disloyal to one of your cultures or identities, Katy?

Katy Hayward:

Erm, from a very early age, my father would criticise me for not standing for the national anthem after the Queen's speech on Christmas Day! And I started that very young and I think that kind of set me off on a trend.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

And lastly, is there a short story you can tell us about a time when you said something that surprised you?

Katy Hayward:

So recently I gave a talk- it was the Keele World Affairs lecture in, er, in Keele, - surprisingly enough! - a couple of months ago. And there was a question at the end. And I wasn't sure how to answer it- it was basically looking for a last word around the future. And I had an answer to it that I didn't know I was going to have. And, erm, it was about hope. And...it's a really bad answer 'cause I can't remember what I said! But, I think- so fundamentally it came down to, you know, the fact that those- there was a few hundred people there - the middle of England - coming to hear about the Irish border, actually. And the question and answer session afterwards was really good, because they had really good questions. And that gave me hope. So even though I would like to have given them hope, around, you know, this'll all settle down and everything we can get back to the way things were. Of course we can't do that anymore. But the fact that 300-odd people had come in the middle of a fairly scuzzy night, to hear somebody obscure talking about the Irish border, really gave me hope, because there's a quest there for information and understanding amongst people who day-to-day would never hear about Northern Ireland or think about it. And I was able to express that to them. And that, that sort of came from somewhere in me that I hadn't necessarily thought about too much. And it was a really- it was a, it was a moment that I'll never forget, actually. And it was great to be able to try and offer them encouragement in trying to find information and understanding in something that's so complicated and often off-putting.