

# World Opinion and the Northern Ireland Peace Process



Frank Louis Rusciano

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*This book is dedicated to Luca and Bianca, and to all the children of  
Northern Ireland.  
Your parents wish that you live in peace.*



## FOREWORD

In the winter and spring of 2012, I had the pleasure of being a University of Ulster Policy Studies scholar sponsored by the Fulbright Foundation. I spent my sabbatical at the Jordanstown campus, which had extensive resources regarding the Troubles and peacemaking in Northern Ireland. My previous research had been focused upon world opinion, and my last book argued that conditions following the end of the Cold War engendered a “global rage” created by new status dislocations among nations. Two decades of terrorism and political and ethnic violence resulted in the years before and after the millennium.

Given this argument, Northern Ireland posed a fascinating question for me: Why in the midst of an era characterized by these types of upheavals did Northern Ireland, an area that had seen such violence for about 30 years, make peace? With the usual cautions one must apply in attempting to define a historical era, I hypothesized that the conditions for peace in the six counties had something to do with the changes in world opinion that occurred after the Cold War. These changes, which promoted violence in so many other areas, created an environment for a peace agreement due to Northern Ireland’s unique circumstances. I then set out to investigate this hypothesis through studies of the region’s recent history, questions of identity, analyses of leadership, and comparisons to similar upheavals in other parts of the world. This book is the result of that investigation.

Projects like this are nearly impossible to attempt without significant support, and I was privileged to have it in many forms from several quarters. The Fulbright Foundation funded my stay and research in Northern Ireland. Rider University gave me a sabbatical to pursue this opportunity,

providing financial support and help in the visa process. The University of Ulster gave me full access to their enormous resources, many of which were not available in the USA. I am grateful for all these forms of institutional support that made this project possible.

I would be greatly remiss if I did not mention the personal support I received from both Rider University and the University of Ulster. At Rider, my colleagues Jonathan Mendilow, Barbara Franz, and Michael Brogan provided excellent commentary when I presented earlier portions of the manuscript to them. Jonathan provided special support in advising how to address the reviewers' comments. My wife and colleague, Roberta Fiske-Rusciano read several of the chapters and provided detailed commentary on the contents; she also provided useful suggestions regarding silencing, identity, and world opinion. In addition, Professor Chistopher J. Hill of Cambridge University in the UK provided important commentary on certain sections of the book.

My friends and colleagues at the University of Ulster provided invaluable insights into my research topic and the past and present situations in Northern Ireland. Cathy Gormley-Heenan was an excellent resource for studying leaders in Northern Ireland, and her book on this subject was invaluable. Jonny Byrne's work on peace walls and his general knowledge of the history of Northern Ireland also contributed a great deal to this project. Monica McWilliams was gracious enough to take time out of her myriad peace-making efforts around the world to talk at length with us, and provide insights into the peace negotiation process that I would never have known otherwise. Her direct involvement in the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement was both a source of valuable knowledge and an inspiration. Finally, Ruth Fee, who directs the department with which I was associated, proved to be both an excellent problem-solver and mentor for this project. She provided me with access to everything I needed to write, advice on where to live, and numerous other practical matters. But she also was a font of information and commentary on the project I was attempting. In addition, her assistant Carol Morley was a great help in many other matters that arose in the course of our stay. I am proud to know all of these people, but I am privileged to call them my friends.

I originally thought of dedicating this book to all of the people who have labored, past and present, to create and extend the peace in Northern Ireland. I changed my mind, however, when I recalled the statement I heard most often from these extraordinary individuals: "we wish for our children to live in peace." It is to the children—both my grandchildren and the children of Northern Ireland—that this book is thus dedicated.

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