‘SPOILER’ VIOLENCE AND OTHER MYTHS: A Mixed Methods Study of Paramilitaries’ Use of Force in Northern Ireland

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‘SPOILER’ VIOLENCE AND OTHER MYTHS: A Mixed Methods Study of Paramilitaries’ 
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ABSTRACT

While many scholars have written about ‘spoilers,’ actors committed to the use of violence in an effort to undermine political negotiations, there have been few attempts to systematically test whether theories of spoiling behavior effectively explain armed nonstate actors’ use of force. Using a combination of GIS mapping, statistical analysis, and qualitative data gathered from interviews in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I examine the lines of division that formed within Northern Irish paramilitaries during the peace process of the 1990s. By focusing in particular on what I define as intra-movement violence, I examine the way divisions formed and test whether these fissures reflect a moderate-militant divide over peace negotiations. Ultimately, I find that evidence from Northern Ireland is more consistent with an explanation that identifies lines of division relating to intra-movement factors such as local competition or involvement with crime.
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Background

Overview

Between 1968 and 1998 Northern Ireland’s ‘Troubles’ claimed over 3,500 lives.¹ During these thirty years of protracted guerrilla warfare and insurgency, the 5,452 square mile region accounted for over a quarter of the terrorist attacks in Western Europe.² While the year 1972 experienced the highest levels of violence during the Troubles with 472 deaths, 321 (68%) of which were civilians, the attack that claimed the most civilian lives occurred well into the 1998 peace negotiations.³ On 15 August 1998, 29 civilians died in Omagh, County Tyrone during an explosion believed to be the work of a splinter group known as the “real” Irish Republican Army (rIRA).⁴ In the months following, media outlets speculated over whether the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement would survive the aftermath of the violence. Scathing condemnations of the “RENEGADE Republican dissidents” questioned the viability of peace by pointing to an Irish Republican tradition of dividing into factions of ‘dogmatic’

² Terrorism Statistics and definition of Western Europe as comprised of 25 countries (Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Corsica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Vatican City, and the Federal Republic of Germany) from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2013). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd. It should be noted that, like the GTD, I treat terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland as separate from those that occurred in either Ireland or Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales), although both countries experienced Troubles-related attacks. Additionally, the GTD does not contain any information on attacks from 1993 due to these records being lost before they could be digitized.
hardliners and their politically minded counterparts willing to engage in political negotiations.  

While the peace process ultimately endured, the legacy of the Omagh bombing lingers both in an ongoing search for the perpetrators of the crime and in contemporary speculations about whether dissident armed actors might upset Northern Ireland’s “still fragile peace” and prompt a return to violence.  

Members of Britain’s House of Commons noted almost ten years after the Omagh bomb that “it is the fact that dissident republicans continue actively to seek to undermine Northern Ireland’s progress towards peace and normalisation that makes it so important to learn lessons from the experience of Omagh.” Such ‘spoiler violence’ serves both as a reminder of the progress that has yet to be made and as a deterrent to politically engaging members of what Dr. John Horgan has called ‘violent dissident republican’ (VDR) or hardline loyalist factions.

How valid are these concerns that contemporary paramilitaries are intransigent radicals unwilling to negotiate or countenance any discussions of peace? Is it true that, as George Mitchell, one of the chief peace brokers in Northern Ireland, commented “There is a kind of brinkmanship to Northern Ireland politics…The threat of total collapse is a standard part of the political repertoire there.” Do such observations mean that the Omagh bomb evinces the idea that violence during peace negotiations “served

merely to undermine the republican political project and were counterproductive even in terms of the then self-defined ‘ballot box and armalite’ strategy of the republican armed struggle”\(^9\) Or, are tragedies like Omagh, which “[lay] bare for all to see the brutality, the senselessness, the utter insanity of political violence,” requisites for achieving a lasting commitment to political settlement?\(^10\) More broadly, why does violence persist during periods of ceasefire and political negotiation and how does one characterize the violence that occurs? Examining political violence in Northern Ireland after the paramilitary ceasefires of the 1990s offers not only answers to the preceding questions but also new insights into the more general processes of factionalization and coalitional dissolution.

While some argue that Northern Ireland is a unique case and that its utility as a model for peacebuilding has been overstated, the fact remains that in most cases of substate conflict, negotiators inevitably reference a ‘Northern Ireland model’ or make comparisons between Northern Ireland and other conflicts around the world. In 2014, Colombian president, Juan Miguel Santos, adopted a new strategy towards negotiations with FARC, a rebel group against which Colombia’s government has been waging what is alleged to be the world’s longest running civil war. He noted that "The preliminary agreement we announced with the FARC was inspired by the framework agreement with the IRA."\(^11\) A year earlier, American President Barack Obama hailed Northern Ireland as “an


\(^{10}\) Provided in Richard English’s *Armed Struggle the History of the IRA* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2004)., 318

example for those who seek a peace of their own…their blueprint to follow.”¹² That same year, the Lord Mayor of Belfast presented the keynote address at a San Sebastián conference on peacebuilding and the Basque country, where the Northern Ireland peace process was a central topic of discussion.¹³ Given the frequency with which the Northern Ireland peace process continues to emerge in discussions of contemporary politics, it is important to understand why and how the peace process played out the way it did. Furthermore, it is only by studying the intricacies of this conflict that one can effectively identify the elements of the peace process that were unique to Northern Ireland and those that have the potential to assist other efforts at conflict negotiation.

There is an additional benefit to studying historical cases of paramilitary coalition building and fractionalization during peace negotiations such as Northern Ireland because, in these cases, it is possible to trace almost a full life cycle of armed nonstate organizations. The problem with many historical cases, however, is that scholars generally analyzed these events using the tools available during or directly following the conflict. Since the early twenty-first century, a wealth of scholarship and research has emerged around the way that armed nonstate actors organize. In light of these new theories, scholars could benefit from reexamining earlier cases on insurgency, substate-warfare, and paramilitarism.

In this study, I examine the use of violence during the Northern Irish Peace Process. In doing so, I test theories of why armed nonstate groups continue pursuing

violent strategies even after a majority of the movement has adopted a policy of nonviolence and negotiation. In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the Troubles, identifying events, actors, and terminology necessary to understand the case study. Because my later analyses center on republican paramilitaries, I focus my narrative of the Troubles on major events in the nationalist and republican experience of the conflict.

In Chapter 2, I explore existing explanations for nonstate actors’ continued use of force. I also outline the ways in which one can test these explanations using quantitative and qualitative methods. After presenting and analyzing my findings in Chapter 3, I use these insights in Chapter 4 to propose ways we might adjust the frameworks we use to understand ‘spoiler violence.’ Chapters 5 and 6 offer preliminary tests of these new approaches to conceptualizing ‘spoiler violence,’ using quantitative and qualitative methods respectively. Finally, Chapter 7 distills my and suggests avenues of future research.

**Troubles Terminology**

For the sake of clarity and consistency, I now lay out some basic definitions and terminology that I shall utilize throughout the remainder of this study. While the term *nationalist* broadly describes anyone who supported breaking Northern Ireland’s constitutional link with Britain in favor of a united Ireland, *republican* refers to those individuals or organizations that advocate the use of physical force in the pursuit of this goal. Similarly, *unionist* refers to supporters of the constitutional link between Northern Ireland and Great Britain while *loyalists* are those unionists willing to resort to violence. It follows, therefore that all republicans or loyalists are also nationalists or unionists respectively, but not all nationalists or unionists are also republicans or loyalists. In
terms of describing these different political views and the pursuit of a certain political outcome, I shall use the term *movement*. For example, actors interested in pursuing independence from Great Britain would belong to the nationalist or republican movement, whereas actors interested in maintaining Northern Ireland’s position in the United Kingdom would belong to the unionist or loyalist movement. Within each movement, I identify paramilitaries and political parties (for example the Republican Movement includes both the political party of Sinn Fein and the paramilitary force of Provisional the Irish Republican Army). I refer to subdivisions within the paramilitary or political wings of each movement as *factions* or *splinter groups*. In some cases, I shall also discuss *front groups*, or pseudonyms that various paramilitaries adopt.

Among both republicans and loyalists certain individuals actively took up arms and joined paramilitary units, but others endorsed armed struggle without participating in such activities directly. In other cases, republicans or loyalists would hold *parallel membership* in both paramilitary and political organizations. It is also worth mentioning that some individuals held parallel membership in both loyalist paramilitaries and state security forces, such as the British Army or Northern Irish police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). As reports emerged of individual members of the state security forces who held parallel membership in paramilitary organizations, many activists began alleging a system-wide policy of collusion between security forces and loyalist paramilitaries. Evaluating allegations of collusion and analyzing the extent to which security forces endorsed or turned a blind eye to such parallel membership, however, lie outside the purview of this study.

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Because politics and religion are so tightly entwined in Northern Ireland, it is necessary to distinguish between religious and political forms of identity. I use the terms ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ to refer to members of particular religious sects (Roman Catholic and Presbyterian, Anglican, Church of Ireland, etc. respectively). I shall use the terms *community* to refer to the social and religious context in which individuals were raised. In these discussions, I shall often use religious and political identifiers. For example, when referring to the largely Catholic, nationalist, republican population of Belfast’s Falls Road, I use terms such as *Catholic community* (raised in a Catholic family or with a Roman Catholic upbringing), *nationalist community* (raised in a family that supported Northern Irish autonomy and independence from Britain), and *republican community* (raised in a family that supported secession from Great Britain and a union with the Republic of Ireland and, often, that advocated violent methods of change). Similarly, I use descriptors of Protestant (belonging to or raised in the Protestant faith), unionist (in favor of maintaining the constitutional link with Great Britain), and loyalist (unionists who advocate physical force in defense of Northern Ireland’s constitutional status) to describe the generally pro-British and Protestant residents of the Shankill Road. In select cases, I may refer to the former as CNR (Catholic/Nationalist/Republican) communities and the latter as PUL (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist) communities.

**Politics in Northern Ireland, 1921-1969**

The Troubles were hardly the first time the question of British sovereignty on the island of Ireland had preoccupied both nonviolent and physical force activists. Contemporary debates over political sovereignty have their roots in the Anglo-Irish War
(1919-1921) and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which partitioned the island of Ireland. This treaty created a Dublin-based parliament for the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State (later the Republic of Ireland) and a Belfast-based assembly for the six-counties of Northern Ireland. Partition satisfied neither the largely Catholic nationalists nor the largely Protestant unionists in the north east of the island. Figure 1.1 illustrates the partition of Ireland into the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland.

Among nationalists, the 1921 Treaty proved controversial because it granted the Free State dominion status rather than establishing a united and sovereign Irish republic. Additionally, many commentators critiqued the way the British had artificially drawn the borders of Northern Ireland so as to ensure that the province had a Protestant majority. Most notably, the Northern Irish state included only six of the traditional nine counties of Ulster Province. Unionists also objected to the treaty, which, while allowing the six

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15 While there have been many excellent accounts of the Troubles published, I recommend referencing David McKittrick & David McVea’s *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland.* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2002) for a more detailed understanding of the conflict.
northeastern counties to opt out of the Free State, did initially place the counties under the jurisdiction of the Free State. Northern unionists viewed Britain’s apparent willingness to part with the six northern counties as a betrayal that vindicated their fears that they would be living in a neglected outpost encircled by hostile forces.

The semi-autonomous status of the Northern Irish state (often referred to simply as Ulster) reinforced this sense of abandonment and encouraged Protestant, Unionist politicians to adopt a series of policies preventing members of the Catholic, nationalist community from gaining power in Northern Ireland. These policies ranged from gerrymandering of voting districts to ensure a Protestant, unionist majority on local government councils to employment, housing, and voting restrictions designed to minimize the Catholic, nationalist presence in both socioeconomic and political life in the province. Local politicians made explicitly clear that while the Irish “boast of Southern Ireland being a Catholic State…we [in the North] are a Protestant Parliament and Protestant State.”16 Between 1921 and 1972, nationalists became increasingly vocal regarding “[a]ccusations of discrimination, and more general abuse of civil rights,” alleging four main areas of inequity: (a) housing discrimination (b) employment discrimination, particularly employment in the public sector (c) electoral gerrymandering and (d) the passage of legislation that abused civil power and created an aggressive, sectarian auxiliary police force.17

16 Sir James Craig, Unionist Party, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 24 April 1934 Reported in: Parliamentary Debates, Northern Ireland House of Commons, Vol. XVI, Cols. 1091-95.
By 1968, socioeconomic inequity and inaccessible political institutions had created an environment ripe for protest.\(^{18}\) In many ways, the political mobilization of the 1960s did not differ fundamentally from other social and political movements of the time. Adopting the strategies of Martin Luther King Junior and the American Black Civil Rights Movement, civil rights advocates across Northern Ireland declared “We are British subjects and we demand British rights.”\(^{19}\) Among these demands were ‘one man – one job,’ ‘one man – one vote,’ and ‘one man – one house.’ From 1968-1970 civil rights activists focused primarily on nonviolent protests, such as rallies, marches, and sit-downs along major roads.

While the movement emphasized equality under law and on voting, housing, and employment equity, opponents, such as the Minister of Home Affairs in Northern Ireland criticized civil rights marches and campaigns as “[c]ommunist… anarchistic… meant to do away with the existence of Northern Ireland’s status.”\(^{20}\) Other Unionist leaders feared that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had organized the civil rights protests and intended to use the movement as a launching pad for a renewed campaign of armed struggle and guerilla warfare against the British state. The protests attracted worldwide attention when, on 5 October 1968, members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) used batons and water cannons to disband a civil rights march that had been banned by the Northern Irish government at Stormont.

\(^{18}\) For more details on the beginning of the Troubles please see Simon Prince’s *Northern Ireland’s ’68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt and the Origins of the Troubles*. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).
\(^{20}\) “Civil rights ‘sole issue’ in Northern Ireland” *The Guardian* (1959-2003); 5 Nov 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer pg. 18
This event sparked a cycle of violence during which British and unionist politicians responded to civil rights protests with increasingly repressive measures and protesters from both the nationalist and unionist communities engaged in riots, sectarian attacks, and arson. In August of 1969, Catholic and nationalist residents of Derry city’s Bogside neighborhood confronted members of the RUC in a communal riot that became known as the Battle of the Bogside. This three-day riot and other incidences of violence during August of 1969 are generally considered the beginning of the Troubles and the shift away from civil rights activism and towards broader political change and insurgency. In response to these riots, British and unionist politicians introduced a policy of internment without trial in 1971 and deployed the British Army to enforce order.

Ironically, while some civil rights activists like Bernadette Devlin had long framed the campaign as a struggle for not only civil rights but also for broader political reform, declaring that “[w]e are fighting for a socialist republic of Ireland…an Irish workers and farmers republic,” initially, the civil rights movement had self-consciously attempted to distance itself from issues of Irish nationalism in an effort to build a cross-community base of support. In fact, Ivan Cooper, one of the leaders of the 1972 anti-internment march that ended in the infamous Bloody Sunday incident in which British paratroopers shot 26 unarmed civilian protesters, killing 13 immediately, was a nationalist politician from a working-class Protestant background and staunch advocate of nonviolence.

21 Bernadette Likens Civil Rights Fight Here to Irish Struggle Goodyear, Sara Jane;Crews, Stephen Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); 31 Aug 1969; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune pg. 2
The civil rights movement originally had united Irish republicans from both the IRA and the older nationalist organizations known as Wolfe Tone societies; communists; socialists; and members of trade unions, the Labour party, housing associations, and even the Young Unionists of Queen’s University. It was not until the highly publicized violence of 1969 and the repressive measures with which the British state responded to community riots and protests that the rhetoric of opposing the British state and establishing zones of Irish sovereignty began entering public discourse.

Troubles-Related Violence: 1970-1979

The Troubles of Northern Ireland are best understood as a multilayered network of conflicts: violence emerged at the national, political level as militant nationalists and unionists clashed over the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, at the socio-communal level as religious and cultural identity groups battled over issues of belonging, at the neighborhood level, in which paramilitaries competed amongst themselves for dominance in different regions, and at the international level, as Irish nationalists attempted to exploit the coercive, compellant nature of violence so that the British government would withdraw from Northern Ireland. Broadly speaking, however, the conflict of 1969-1998 involved three primary actors: Northern Ireland’s majority Catholic proponents of a united Ireland free from British Rule (nationalists); its majority Protestant advocates of maintaining Northern Ireland’s constitutional link with Great Britain (unionists); and agents of the British State, such as the police force, the army, and British government officials.

22 Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association “‘We Shall Overcome’ The History of the Struggle for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland 1968 – 1978” (1978) Provided by CAIN Web Service
While the 1970s proved to be the bloodiest years of the Troubles, throughout the first ten years of the conflict, British and nationalist leaders attempted to negotiate ceasefires and power-sharing agreements. In fact, during this period, Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees “legalized both Sinn Fein...and the UVF, partly to facilitate the business of talking to them,” informal talks produced no actionable policy options.\(^{23}\) Simultaneously, however, loyalist and republican leaders refused to communicate directly and continued pursuing campaigns of both cross-motion and intra-motion violence within the contexts of tit-for-tat killings and factional feuds. Efforts to negotiate compromises and settlements continually failed in the face of both nationalist and unionist protest and, by 1976, British politicians were in “a double bind…the problem was what political policy the government might pursue if both powersharing and majority rule were non-starters. Its answer was to move away from the idea of finding political agreement and to concentrate instead on the security and economic fields.”\(^{24}\)

Rory Mason, who replaced Rees as Northern Ireland Secretary in 1976, “made it clear he was in the more straightforward business of defeating the IRA…[and] that the days of political initiatives…were over.”\(^{25}\) The prior year the IRA had broadened its definition of legitimate targets to include not only recruited security forces but also business figures who were “attempting to stabilize the economy and were therefore ‘part of the Britsh war machine,’” prison guards, and off-duty officers.\(^{26}\) In 1977, young republicans (including Gerry Adams), who had been interned in the early 1970s were

\(^{23}\) McKittrick & McVea, 109  
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 114  
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 199  
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 128
released from jail, and with this new leadership, the republican movement began to reorganize its military apparatus and to develop a more coherent political agenda. For many republicans, their time in prison was the first chance they had to think about political theory and strategies beyond retaliatory attacks. It is possible that political overtures like those that had been made in the early 1970s may have been more successful after the republican movement had time to develop a cohesive agenda, but the failure of prior political initiatives had convinced Mason that the only way to promote security was to defeat the IRA militarily. The late 1970s and early 1980s, therefore, were characterized by a virtual absence of political negotiation or dialogue other than the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, which was soundly rejected by both unionists and republicans. The British government also tightened security measures across Northern Ireland, removing the ‘special category status’ that had previously recognized republican and loyalist prisoners as prisoners of war rather than common criminals in 1976.

**The Armalite and the Ballot Box: 1980-1993**

The republican movement did, however, begin to adopt alternative methods of political protest leading into the 1980s. From 1976 to 1981, republican prisoners had engaged in a ‘blanket’ protest, wearing cell blankets in lieu of prison uniforms, and a ‘dirty’ protest during which they refused to bathe and smeared excrement across the walls of their cells to protest the removal of special category status. The IRA also ended attacks against prison officers in 1980. The ‘political status’ protest reached its peak in 1981 when republican prisoners launched their second hunger strike against orders from the outside republican leadership. Unlike the first hunger strike in 1979, prisoners,
starting with Bobby Sands, joined the strike on a staggered schedule and remained on
strike until ten men had starved themselves to death.

The 1981 hunger strikes proved controversial both within and outside of the
republican movement. Then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, staunchly refused to
negotiate with the republican prisoners, famously noting that “[t]here will be no political
status. Crime is crime is crime. It is not political. It is crime and there can be no question
of granting political status.” Simultaneously, the hunger strikers clashed with IRA
leaders outside of the prison, who “felt the hunger strikes represented a serious diversion
of resources of all kinds from their main campaign of violence.” The IRA finally
agreed to support the strikes when Bobby Sands and other hunger strikers ran for and
won seats in Westminster prior to their deaths. After witnessing the hunger strikers
electoral success, Adams and other republican leaders began advocating for an ‘armalite
and the ballot box’ strategy under which the IRA would pursue simultaneous electoral
and military campaigns. In 1982, the IRA also accelerated its international campaign,
receiving a large shipment of arms from Libya and launching an intensive bombing
campaign in England. In the process, they further expanded their definition of legitimate
targets, attacking both civilian and military targets in an effort to export the fear and
uncertainty of the Troubles to England.

Interestingly, while the IRA refined its political agenda during the 1980s, the
rival Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) “denigrated over the years into a collection
of local gangs often dominated by personalities who had parted company from the IRA,

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28 McKittrick & McVea 142
usually because they were considered too erratic.”

Throughout the 1980s, the INLA became mired in internal feuds between the Belfast and Dublin brigades and between the INLA and a breakaway organization the IPLO, which was known for directed a large portion of its violence against other republicans. Conflict and feuds within the INLA and IPLO continued into the 1990s. In fact, in 1992, the IRA intervened in an internal IPLO feud, forcing both factions’ disbandment.


In 1993, it became public that Gerry Adams and nonviolent Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) leader John Hume had been engaged in preliminary discussions about how they might reach a political settlement. These Hume-Adams talks are commonly cited as the early stages of the 1990s peace process. The following year, the IRA (although not the INLA) and a majority of loyalist paramilitaries agreed to ceasefires in hopes of facilitating exploratory talks between the British government and the republican movement as well as between loyalists and the British government. Negotiations remained tense as the British government demanded the IRA provide guarantees that it would not resume violent action. The IRA broke its ceasefire in 1996 with the bombing of Canary Warf. In the same year, the INLA fell victim to yet another internal feud, and continued violence on the part of loyalists caused many politicians to question whether they could legitimately claim the loyalist paramilitaries remained on ceasefire. Despite such setbacks, in 1998, the Good Friday Agreement passed by referendum with approximately a 72% vote of support in Northern Ireland. When examining the voting patterns among unionists and nationalists, “best estimates

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29 McKittrick & McVea., 157
indicated that the over-whelming majority of Catholics / Nationalists voted 'Yes' perhaps as many as 96 or 97 per cent. In the case of Protestants / Unionists who voted 'yes' it is estimated that the figure was between 51 and 53 per cent.”

Since 1998, Northern Ireland has witnessed the successful incorporation of many former IRA members into the Northern Irish government, including the appointment of Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister and then First Minister. As Northern Irish politics become increasingly normalized, remaining paramilitaries like the rIRA, Continuity IRA (CIRA), and Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH) are generally categorized as, in the words of Dr. John Horgan ‘violent dissident republicans’ (VDR) and criticized as criminal or terrorist organizations set on undermining the peace process. It is with these claims that the current study is concerned.

Understanding Northern Ireland’s Paramilitaries

Longtime Troubles journalist, Peter Taylor notes that, when discussing paramilitaries from between 1970 and 1998, “there are two popular misconceptions … First, that all were mindless thugs devoid of any political motivation … [second] that the conflict is about religion.”

It is undeniably that, many paramilitaries engaged in a certain degree of criminal activity as a source of financing (most notably bank robberies and the drug trade), meaning that individual members often straddled the line between politically motivated militant and common criminal. Taylor observes, however, that,

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/topics/troubles-paramilitaries>
Despite these activities, paramilitary organizations of the Troubles were first and foremost armed insurgent groups with distinct political goals.

As Peter Taylor also emphasizes, sectarianism and religion certainly have shaped politics in Northern Ireland; however it would be a misrepresentation of the conflict to define the Troubles as an issue of religion. The Troubles were thirty-years of conflict over Northern Ireland’s political status. When developing typologies of political violence, it is important to distinguish between the sectarian behavior and attitudes of particular individuals within paramilitaries and the political, ideological goals uniting members of paramilitary organizations. Based on this nuance, I examine the context shaping paramilitary behavior on three levels: movement-wide concerns shared by republicans or unionists as a whole during a given political moment; factional matters of inter-group hostilities or alliances within the republican movement or the loyalist movement; and parochial issues such as contests over leadership or other intra-group conflicts.

In many cases, due to the clandestine nature of these organizations, it is difficult to obtain reliable information about paramilitaries’ exact origins. Broadly speaking, however, it is possible to think in terms of five main paramilitaries. The loyalists had the Ulster Defense Association and the smaller Ulster Volunteer Force. Republicans joined the Provisional IRA, the dominant republican paramilitary throughout the Troubles, the Official IRA, or the Irish National Liberation Army. Most paramilitary violence during the Troubles can be attributed to one of these five organizations or their splinter groups. Figures 1.2 outlines the genealogy of the primary republican paramilitaries that were active during the Troubles and that appear throughout this study.
Conclusion

For the remainder of this paper, I use the case of Northern Ireland’s peace process to test existing explanations for why some armed nonstate groups use violence even after the mainstream movement enters into political negotiations. As a cursory history of the Troubles shows, the Irish republican movement has been notoriously prone to splits and internal divisions. In many way, British allegations that these paramilitaries were criminals and that the conflict in Northern Ireland was first and foremost a security rather than a political issue mirror many contemporary debates over how to understand and address modern-day paramilitaries. I hope the long, well-documented history of republican paramilitaries in Northern Ireland will shed light not only on similarities and differences within the conflict but also on ways in which case studies like this one can contribute to more general discussions of how nonstate actors use force.

It is only by gaining a better understanding of the nonstate actors strategizing and tactics that we can improve strategies of counterinsurgency and peacebuilding. In the next chapter, I explore the primary ways in which political scientists tend to understand the ongoing use of

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32 Martin Melaugh’s “Chronology and Relationship of Loyalist and Republican Paramilitary Group” and “Abstracts on Organisations” Provided by CAIN Web Service
violence by nonstate actors. After dissecting these explanations, I outline several ways through which I might test the validity of each theory.
CHAPTER 2: Theorizing Political Violence

Often, even once mainstream elements of a movement have agreed to adopt strictly constitutional and nonviolent methods of protest and political change, certain nonstate actors continue to perpetrate political violence. Political science literature tends to assume that these actors either do not trust negotiators’ credibility or do not want peace. While a number of studies make this claim, to date there have been no attempts to systematically prove this assumption. I aim to address this gap in the literature with a preliminary mixed-methods study. In this chapter I explore the two primary ways political scientists understand the use of political violence after the introduction of a peace process. I introduce two hypotheses that summarize the main points of each argument. After comparing and contrasting these explanations, I highlight pertinent critiques of the theories. Finally, I explain my research design and outline the ways in which I will test each hypothesis.

The Ethnic Security Dilemma

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain, summarized his interpretation of the ‘lessons of the Northern Ireland Peace Process’, stating that:

What is so destructive in terrorism is not just the wrecking of lives but the impact on the psychology of a community. Above all it obscures the natural desire of the majority for peace by entrenching bitterness and creating an entirely understandable hysteria in which voices of moderation can no longer be heard. It is desperately hard for people to focus on politics when they are under attack.33

Such arguments that, during peace negotiations, ‘militant’ voices drown out those of their moderate counterparts by creating mistrust, uncertainty, and insecurity echo

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33 Hain, “Peacemaking in Northern Ireland: A model for conflict resolution?”
defensive realist theories of the security dilemma. Barry Posen applied the logic of the security dilemma to ethno-nationalist conflicts when he explained how, after the collapse of governance structures, uncertainty and mistrust create a situation in which actors are “more likely to assume their neighbours are dangerous than not.” Paul Roe complicates Posen’s argument, noting that since ethno-politics involve ‘societal security’ rather than sovereign security, the dynamics of the security dilemma at the intrastate level “are far more specific and contextual than those relating to the state.” Because conditions under which a group possesses societal security are less clearly defined than those under which a state possesses sovereign security, threat assessment in ethno-national conflicts becomes exponentially more challenging, thereby escalating the level of insecurity and uncertainty involved in ensuring one’s own security.

It makes sense, therefore, that one might expect to see the security dilemma heavily influence actors in the Northern Ireland conflict where combatants employed force in defense of not only societal, ethno-national security but also territorial, sovereign security. When participants or observers question negotiators’ credibility, uncertainty and mistrust fuel fears about losing influence during political negotiations or losing relevance in a post-conflict society. Credibility challenges thus encourage actors to continue engaging in violence.

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Spoiler Violence

Security dilemma explanations for continued political violence conceptualize militant activity after the introduction of a peace process as an unintentional product of uncertainty and mistrust. By this logic, a return to violence represents what Roe calls ‘a tragedy’ born out of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Stephen John Stedman, however, offers a more malevolent interpretation of militant actors by describing ‘spoilers,’ or “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, world view, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.”37 According to Stedman’s theory, it was no mere accident that the Omagh bomb “[put] increasing pressure on an already fragile assembly…the troublesome divisions between unionists in favour of the Good Friday Agreement and those against it [were] ever wider.”38 Rather, militants of the rIRA consciously used the Omagh bomb to protest peace negotiations and to sow fear throughout the public.

Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter expand on Stedman’s theory, arguing that spoilers undermine peace by exploiting actors’ mistrust of each other and of the government with which they are negotiating.39 The events of 15 August 1998 also appear to vindicate this theory. The Omagh bomb escalated the risks both of a loyalist retaliatory attack and, consequently, of breaking the paramilitary ceasefires; thus the attack jeopardized the ability of British, loyalist, and republican leaders to negotiate.

peace. Theories of “spoiling behavior,” therefore, differ from a security dilemma explanation in that events like Omagh are born not out of a crisis of credibility but rather because organizations like the rIRA believe negotiations represent a betrayal of ideals and/or that peace threatens their organizational interests. Both theories, however, envision ongoing political violence as the product of some contest between moderate elements willing to pursue peace negotiations and hardline militants who oppose such political engagement.

**Comparing Explanations of ‘Spoiler’ Violence**

Based on the writings of Posen, Roe, Stedman, and Walter and Kydd, it is possible to produce two hypotheses explaining why paramilitaries continue campaigns of armed struggle into periods of ceasefire and political negotiation. While this phenomenon is commonly referred to as ‘spoiler’ violence, for the sake of clarity, I will use the term *continued political violence* (CPV) to differentiate between the Stedman-style theory of spoiling behavior and the observation that nonstate actors continue to use violent means of political protest and change rather than enter negotiations or adopt constitutional and nonviolent methods.

*H1:* (Security Dilemma) Crises of credibility prevent actors from trusting each other; therefore prolonging and reinforcing cycles of violence.

*H2:* (Spoiling Behavior) Actors oppose and attempt to undermine peace in order to protect their own ideological or organizational interests.

Under both *H1* and *H2*, peace processes divide those within a movement who are willing to compromise and negotiate (moderates) from their hardline advocates of physical force and ideological purity (militants). Existing literature documents in great detail the methods by which, “under certain circumstances, the opening up of political space may result in
additional channels through which violence can be instigated and organized.\textsuperscript{40} According to Stedman, Posen, Roe, and Walter and Kydd, one of these additional channels that peace processes open is the formation of violent splinter groups. As moderate and militant elements within a movement clash over the peace process, factions organize around these differences. While $H1$ and $H2$ do not reject the notion that factionalization occurs outside periods of political negotiation, they do imply that once a peace process is introduced, the process’ perceived legitimacy becomes the determinant of whether organizations use violent or nonviolent strategies.

While both hypotheses predict continued violence if certain elements within a movement believe that the costs of negotiating and accepting a political settlement outweigh the potential benefits, $H1$ and $H2$ offer different explanations for why and how some elements of a movement choose to employ violence when others pursue political negotiations and nonviolent avenues of political change. Under $H1$, a crisis of credibility drives the factionalization, while a desire to undermine the peace process compels actors to use violence according to $H2$.

**Critiquing the Moderate Militant Divide**

Conventional logic holds that a faction’s opinion of a proposed settlement will determine whether the faction participates in a peace process or engages in CPV. Presumably, groups that are pro-peace will participate in negotiations while militant, ‘anti-peace process’ elements will turn to CPV. Hardline militants may attempt to use violence to undermine this burgeoning peace or because they do not trust the moderate

\textsuperscript{40} Kristine Hoglund “Violence in war-to-democracy transitions” provided in *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*. Anna K. Jarstad and Timothy D. Sisk, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 84
leaders to negotiate a fair settlement. Most scholars use these dynamics to explain events like the formation of the rIRA in 1997 by former members of the PIRA. The problem with such explanations lies in the fact that they assume the introduction of a peace process fundamentally changes actors’ decision-making processes. With the initiation of a peace process, a factions’ attitude towards the peace proposal becomes the primary factor shaping actors’ strategies and tactics.

Under $H1$ and $H2$, violence outside of a period of political negotiation involves a multitude of long and short term strategies, tactics, and objectives. During periods of negotiation, however, $H1$ and $H2$ offer reductionist explanations for violence that emphasize a moderate-militant divide. By focusing only on disagreements relating to the peace process, $H1$ and $H2$ ignore other potential sources of division within a movement, such as resource allocation, local power struggles, and other parochial interests. In the remainder of this study, I use the case of Northern Ireland’s 1990s peace process to test whether one can find quantitative and qualitative evidence consistent with the claim that peace processes alter the way armed nonstate actors think about and deploy force.

**Research Design**

My study includes both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis of Troubles-related political violence uses incidences of terrorism associated with the Troubles from 1970 through 2013 and Troubles-related fatalities between 1969 and 2003, as included in Michael McKeown’s database of deaths and Malcom Sutton’s *Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland*. The qualitative analysis utilizes secondary
source research and first-hand interviews with former paramilitaries, Northern Irish researchers and community workers.\textsuperscript{41}

Different patterns of violence are consistent with different explanations for CPV. In the quantitative portion of my study, I examine the spatial distribution of and trends evident in violence by armed nonstate actors, particularly following the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Because $H1$ and $H2$ each emphasizes different causal mechanisms behind continued violence, it is possible to identify types of violence that is more consistent with one hypothesis than the other.

According to $H1$, post-peace process violence will be reactionary and/or defensive, reflecting a sense of mistrust among actors. Intra-movement violence will spike as factions target leaders and groups they consider dangerous or untrustworthy. Factions opposed to a peace process will accept the idea that compromise is, theoretically, necessary but will mistrust the conditions under which a peace process has been proposed or the leaders involved in negotiations. Divisions within and among factions will generally reflect different degrees of confidence in the credibility and reliability of political actors advocating the peace process.

Under $H2$, “rogue” or “fringe” actors will use violence to create uncertainty, fear, and mistrust or to demonstrate that political negotiations will not bring security. Factions will organize around those who consider compromise strategic and those who consider negotiation a form of surrender. These intransigent militants will demand that negotiations happen on their own terms and oppose making concessions not because they

mistrust their negotiating partners but rather because such concessions violate their principles.

Using these trends, I generated three questions for which I expect each hypothesis to predict different outcomes.

1) What types of violence characterize peace processes and how does this differ from periods outside of a peace process? Following the introduction of a peace process, does one observe statistically significant changes in the targets, weapons used in an attack, and groups responsible for (a) fatalities (b) incidents of political violence? If not, when does one observe statistically significant changes?

2) When does one observe statistically significant spikes in violence between subgroups within the same coalition, or intra-movement violence (IMV), and what forms of IMV is most dominant (faction 1 versus faction 2, infighting within a faction)? Does one observe different clusters of intra-factional as opposed to inter-factional violence?

3) How does the spatial distribution of violence relate, if at all, to the spatial distribution of paramilitary strongholds?

I then use $H_1$ and $H_2$ to predict the forms and patterns of violence I would expect to see if each hypothesis holds true.

Regarding Question 1 (types of violence one sees during peace processes), evidence consistent with $H_1$ would include ‘militant’ or ‘hardline’ groups bearing primary responsibility for violence and fatalities; fatalities would be low, reflecting the defensive nature of militant campaigns. I would also expect the types of attacks and weapons utilized to be oriented towards defensive military action. Levels of cross-cutting violence (violence involving at least one republican faction and at least one loyalist faction, in which loyalists only collaborate with loyalists and republicans only collaborate with republicans) would remain consistent. Evidence consistent with $H_2$ would include anti-negotiation ‘militants’ launching attacks designed to undermine peace talk, such as targeting leaders willing to compromise or using lethal,
indiscriminate attacks to create fear and to turn the population against negotiations. Both cross-cutting (republican versus loyalist) and intra-movement (loyalist versus loyalist or republican vs republican) violence might spike as a consequence.

In terms of Question 2 (forms of IMV), for evidence to be consistent with $H1$, I would expect to see a spike in IMV following introduction of a peace process or ceasefire. Violence would be primarily inter-factional. Intra-factional violence would precede the formation of a breakaway group of militant hardliners wary of electoral strategies of political change. Conversely, if I see patterns of IMV in which IMV precedes the formation of a breakaway group of militant hardliners opposed to negotiations, this evidence would be consistent with $H2$.

Regarding Question 3 (the spatial distribution of paramilitary activity), both $H1$ and $H2$ would predict new loci of intra-movement violence to emerge as new factions organize in opposition or support of the peace process. If $H1$ is correct, closer investigation of these new centers of IMV should reveal that they cluster in areas with diverse views towards the specific circumstances of the current peace process. $H2$, in contrast, would predict that residents of these areas hold more immutable opinions towards negotiations as a whole.

I also supplement this spatial analysis by comparing my own analyses of violence during the 1990s and beyond with previous studies of violence throughout the conflict. While McKeown’s dataset includes more details about types of attacks, making it better for running descriptive statistics and making graphs, the summary data in Sutton’s index allows me to geocode the approximate address at which the death took place. Using this geocoded data, I have constructed GIS maps showing the distribution of Troubles-Related fatalities between 1994 and
2001 across the Belfast urban area. I compare my results to a similar GIS mapping project undertaken by Shirlow, et al., in which a team plotted fatalities in different postal code regions.

**Conclusion**

I use the case of paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland during the peace process of the 1990s to the two most common ways in which political scientists explain CPV. $H1$ and $H2$ conceptualize CPV as a fundamentally different type of violence from violence during other stages of a conflict. While both security dilemma and spoiling behavior explanations remain the dominant frameworks through which political scientists understand CPV, both hypotheses rest upon two central assumptions: (a) that violent splinter groups emerge when debate over the adoption of nonviolent strategies and engagement with a proposed peace process divide moderates and militants and (b) that because CPV reflect armed groups’ mistrust or rejection of the peace process, introducing a period of political negotiation alters the way nonstate actors think about and deploy force. In Chapter 3, I perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of political violence during Northern Ireland’s Troubles. In doing so I seek to test whether the actual patterns and experiences I document align with the predictions that logically follow from $H1$ and $H2$. 
CHAPTER 3: Empirical Analysis

This chapter outlines and analyzes my quantitative and qualitative findings regarding CPV in Northern Ireland. Due to the accessibility of data and community members’ willingness to discuss the Troubles with me, I focus this analysis on the period of time commonly referred to as Northern Ireland’s current peace process (1994-1998) and perform a more detailed, micro-level analysis of republican paramilitary activity only.

The Data

In my empirical analysis, I examine two types of data: Troubles-related fatalities and incidences of terrorism from 1970 through 2013. When studying Troubles-related fatalities, I use two different databases of deaths: Malcom Sutton’s Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland, 1969-2001 and Michael McKeown’s Database of Deaths, 1969-2003. I use terrorist incidents as reported in the 2014 Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Sutton’s database records 3,531 deaths while McKeown’s includes 3,649. Both deaths databases include information on the date, responsible party, victim’s name, sex, and communal or political, and basic details of the death. McKeown’s database also notes the context of fatalities, such as occasions when fatalities were the result of factionalism, counterinsurgency, sectarian attacks, or punitive actions. The GTD in turn contains 4,613 Troubles-related incidents and over 130 variables. I focused my analysis mostly on the descriptions of attack type, attack subtype, target type, target subtype, and group responsible.

Within the purview of the current study I apply the following limitations: First, I use a subset of my data that includes only violence following the second IRA ceasefire of 1996. Ideally, my data would include the lead-up to ceasefires to account for negotiations outside of the official peace process; however the GTD is missing data from 1993, making it difficult to perform a reliable analysis of the period directly preceding the ceasefires. Another limitation to the data lies in the fact that the GTD only includes approximate spatial data (i.e., Belfast versus Derry City). In order to study the local patterns and spatial distribution of violence, I needed to be able to cross reference data with newspapers and other media sources to find street names and more specific locational data.

Unfortunately, the GTD only includes enough citations and summary information to facilitate this cross referencing for events beginning in 1996. Even by limiting by data to the year 1996 and later, some entries still did not have enough identifying information and, therefore, could not be included in my spatial analysis. This analysis only considers terrorist incidents for which a particular organization has claimed credit or for which a loyalist or republican group is generally considered responsible. Because incidences of terrorism appear to serve as a better indicator of armed nonstate actors’ behavior than fatality counts, I have also constructed GIS maps of terrorist attacks in the Belfast Urban Area, using the GTD. For these maps, I use a subset of the GTD that includes 115 incidences of terrorism.

While, ideally, my data on paramilitary strongholds would include all of Northern Ireland and pertinent regions in the Republic of Ireland, for the purposes of this study I have limited my dataset to the capital city of Northern Ireland. I am able to use Belfast as a microcosm in which to study paramilitary activity because spatial analyses of social,
religious, and violent trends reveal that “Belfast illustrates much of the division and interdependence that has taken place in Ireland over the last two centuries... complex spatio-religious patterns... resulted in the city being the focus of much of the violence during the Troubles.”

Similarly, while a full investigation of paramilitary activity during ceasefires and peace processes would include a qualitative study of these events and of the political contexts in which they occurred, I focus my qualitative analysis on the case study of the rIRA. I then corroborate my interpretation of the data using interview and secondary source material.

**Coding Paramilitary Fatalities**

I code targets of political violence based on the relationship between the party responsible for the death and the victim of each incident. I examine responsible parties and targets in terms of both their communal (socio-religious) identities and their organizational affiliations (involvement in or association with various military or paramilitary groups). Communal identity requires only two levels of analysis (PUL vs CNR, and then within each category, Protestant, Unionist, and/or Loyalist and Catholic, Nationalist, and/or Republican respectively). I have divided organizational identities into subgroups at three to four levels, depending on the complexity of actors’ organizational affiliations. For organizational identities, I distinguish between combatants (paramilitaries, state security forces/army) and noncombatants (politically involved vs. politically uninvolved). I then identify politically involved

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44 It is worth noting, however, specifically in the case of my fatalities database I make no claims about dynamics of “aggressor versus victim,” for example whether the “responsible party” initiated the violence. Rather, I identify the ‘responsible party’ as the actor that performed the act of killing and the ‘target’ or ‘victim’ as the individual who was killed.
noncombatants as civilian political activists, informers, or alleged informers. Similarly, among the combatants, I distinguish between paramilitaries (loyalist vs. republican) and security forces (state vs. local). Based on this coding scheme, I can, for example, differentiate between cases in which a member of the republican paramilitary the Irish National Liberation Army killed another member of the INLA and a case in which this INLA paramilitary killed a Catholic civilian without any political affiliation. Such distinctions matter when attempting to understand paramilitary strategy. Variations in targets often reflect shifting goals and objectives.

Such distinctions also matter because scholars continue to debate the degree to which local Northern Irish police and security forces were infiltrated by members of paramilitaries or behaved in ways similar to a paramilitary organization. Given that my study is concerned with the actions of paramilitary organizations rather than security forces, I consider such extensions Northern Ireland’s security apparatus as analytically distinct from paramilitary, insurgent forces of the republican and loyalist movements. I do, however, distinguish between paramilitary violence against state security forces (like the British Army) and local security institutions to account for cases in which paramilitaries interacted with members of local security forces on the basis of their personal, neighborhood identities and connections rather than on the basis of their work as an agent or representative of the state.

In the case that an individual is believed to have been both a member of the security forces and a paramilitary organization, I have prioritized the paramilitary identity due to my interest in understanding patterns of paramilitary violence and in an attempt to account for allegations of collusion between paramilitaries and members of the state security services. While this system remains imperfect, the inclusion of coding based on communal identity serves as a
robustness check. This communal identity coding considers the possibility that an individual’s identity as a member of the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist or Catholic/Republican/Nationalist community took precedence over the individual’s identity as a representative of the state.

Using these actor characterizations, I identify two kinds of violence: internal (in which victim and perpetrator were from the same ethno-national community or movement) and cross-cutting (cases in which violence occurs between members of at least two different organizations or communities). Within the category of cross-cutting violence, I disaggregate my data to include inter-paramilitary incidents (what all parties to violence are members of paramilitary organizations), security incidents (situations in which one or more party represent the state, for example a prison officer, member of the police service, or an affiliate of the British Army) and civilian incidents (in which one or more parties had no known paramilitary or military affiliation and was, by all accounts, a noncombatant). Consequently, an example of my final coding for fatalities would be ‘the death of a member of the republican IRA at the hands of a fellow IRA member; a result of intra-factional, intra-movement violence.’

**Fatality Data Analysis and Limitations**

In analyzing data on Troubles-related fatalities, I found that between 1991 and 1995, sub-state targets accounted for 78.40% of the annual Troubles-related fatality count (Figure 3.1).
This represents a statistically significant growth when compared with the 1986 through 1990 average of 42.10%. Likewise, the complementary decline in the proportion of state-targets between the periods of 1986-1990 and 1991-1995 also proves statistically significant. These patterns suggest a decisive shift towards nonmilitary targets (civilians, paramilitaries, etc.) and away from security targets (police, army, etc.) in the lead-up to the paramilitary ceasefires. Within these sub-state targets, however, there is no statistically significant change in the number of fatalities on account of factionalism.

Advocates of security dilemma theories ($H1$) and spoiler behavior explanations ($H2$) emphasize the growing tension between moderates and militants and argue that events like the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994 signal the dominance of moderate, constitutional and electoral strategies of enacting political change over the use of armed struggle. $H1$ and $H2$ both predict a growth in factionalism following the introduction of a peace process or ceasefire as violent.

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45 For all statistics, when evaluating statistical significance, I ran a t-test and determined statistical significance based on $p$-values $<.05$
splinter groups form and moderates and militants clash. Data on Troubles-related fatalities, however, suggests only that civilian and paramilitary fatalities grew leading up to the 1994 ceasefires not that fatalities resulting from factionalism increased. Such evidence is consistent with neither $H1$ nor $H2$.

The average number of fatalities from cross-cutting violence (PUL vs CNR or CNR vs. PUL violence) declined significantly between the time periods of 1984-1993 and 1994-2003; but this change was not accompanied by any statistically significant change in fatalities resulting from only intra-communal/intra-movement violence (IMV). Figure 3.2 graphs fatalities attributable to republican paramilitaries in terms of those that involved cross-cutting violence (republican paramilitaries killing someone outside of the CNR community) and that involved intra-communal/intra-movement violence (republican paramilitaries killing members of the CNR community).

![Troubles Related Fatalities Attributable to Republican Paramilitaries, 1965-2003](image)

*Figure 3.2: Data from McKeown’s Database of Deaths*
H1 and H2 predict that IMV will spike following the introduction of a peace process because, when actors believe a political settlement threatens their interests, militant elements may attempt to use violence to destabilize negotiations. Data on fatalities from IMV around the ceasefires of 1994 and the signing of the GFA in 1998, however, provides no evidence consistent with either H1 or H2. In fact, the frequency of fatalities from IMV has remained relatively consistent since the early 1990s. IMV fatalities started declining in 1999 after the signing of the GFA; however the difference between average number of fatalities from IMV over these five years and the average during the five years preceding 1999 is not statistically significant. Rather, the data suggests that IMV was a constant feature of violence in Northern Ireland both within and outside of periods of political negotiation.

The spatial distribution of fatalities also remains consistent before and after the Good Friday Peace Agreement. H1 and H2 suggest that the introduction of a peace process shifts the way nonstate actors decide whether to use violent versus nonviolent strategies. They argue that after a peace process begins, actors predicate their use of violence on their acceptance or rejection of the peace process. Based on this logic, one would expect pre-ceasefire violence to follow a different spatial pattern from post-ceasefire violence, as militants shift their attention towards protesting or disrupting the burgeoning peace process. Mapping fatalities after 1994 reveals that most CNR and PUL fatalities occurred within their respective communities (see Figure 3.3).

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Spatially, these post-ceasefire deaths appear consistent with their pre-ceasefire predecessors, again challenging the assumption of $H1$ and $H2$ that armed nonstate actors think about and deploy violence differently before and after the initiation of a peace process. Mesev et. al noted that, within the Belfast urban area, “[v]ictims with loyalist or republican affiliations tended to be located in highly segregated Protestant and Catholic areas respectively. In terms of the British Army/RUC victims, deaths tended to occur in highly segregated Catholic areas because [British Army/RUC officers] were more likely to be assigned to keep the peace in those places and were targets for Republican paramilitary offenses.”

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One observes further consistency between pre and post-GFA Northern Ireland when examining the distribution of fatalities in relation to areas of high deprivation. Fay et al found that

\[\text{the distribution of deaths in the Troubles was correlated with the Robson deprivation indicator, and whilst the wards with the highest death rates also score high on the Robson index, no overall statistical association between death rate and deprivation; however, when the number of civilian deaths per ward was used, the correlation between deaths and deprivation scores just about reaches significance (.501), and it is clear that wards with high deprivation scores predominate amongst those with the largest number of deaths.}\]

As Figure 3.4 shows, Troubles-related fatalities continued to cluster in areas with high levels of deprivation after the 1994 ceasefires.

![Figure 3.4: Troubles-Related Fatalities and Deprivation (as measured by NRA Program. NRA data was provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)](image)

Of the 75 deaths that occurred between 1994 and 2001, only 11 of these fatalities took place outside of one of the 15 Belfast Neighborhoods recommended as Neighborhood Renewal Areas (NRA) in June 2003. The Northern Irish Department for Social Development notes that NRAs

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48 Marie Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth *Northern Ireland’s Troubles: The Human Cost* (Londonderry: INCORE, 1997) excerpt provided by CAIN Web Service
are “neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of wards across Northern Ireland…identified using the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure.” Both fatalities and terrorist attacks tend to cluster in areas considered to be within the top 10% of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. Such consistency in terms of the spatial distribution of pre and post ceasefire violence challenges the notion that ceasefires and peace processes fundamentally change armed nonstate actors’ use of force. Studying correlations between economic deprivation and violence can also help scholars refine our understanding of the relationship among socioeconomic deprivation, crime, and dissident politics. Unfortunately, until data collectors adopt more systematic ways of measuring political violence, spatial analyses will prove only as useful as the most reliable dataset from which they are constructed. Later I propose some preliminary ways of improving data collection; however this is a topic that requires more extensive study than my cursory exploration permits and, consequently, lies outside the purview of this paper. Examining fatalities provides only a partial image of the levels of violence occurring within movements because such data only captures violence that ended in death. Using terrorist attacks rather than fatalities as an indicator of IMV offers a more accurate measure of overall levels of violence by including cases of non-lethal violence and provides a context in which to consider fatality data.

**Terrorist Incidences Coding**

When coding incidences of terrorism as opposed to fatalities, I still began by distinguishing between the different paramilitaries responsible for the attack. In order to better understand paramilitary strategies, I grouped attacks by target: military/security versus nonmilitary. I chose this division because at many points during the Troubles, paramilitary

combatants emphasized their perception that they were in a war with the ‘British occupiers.’ Counterarguments often emphasized the idea that, despite such claims, paramilitaries focused more of their energy on targeting innocent civilians and terrorizing populations than on attacking representatives of the British state. Separating these targets allowed me to examine such assertions. The GTD provides basic information about targets. Using these details, I grouped attacks targeting members of the army or security forces, elements of the British security infrastructure (military barracks, police stations, etc.), or hijackings in which hijacked vehicles were used to attack either of the aforementioned targets as security targets. All other targets are classified as ‘nonmilitary.’ Figure 4.5 details this breakdown of security and nonmilitary targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Nonmilitary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus (excluding Tourist)</td>
<td>Laborers (General)/Occupation Identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Barracks/Base/Headquarters/Check Post</td>
<td>Political Party Members/Rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Buildings (Headquarters/Stations/School)</td>
<td>Named Civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Patrol (including vehicles and convoys)</td>
<td>Police Security Forces/Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Security Forces/Officers</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons/Jails</td>
<td>Non-State Militia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers/Troops/Officers/Forces</td>
<td>Marketplace/Plaza/Square (where many people gather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi/Rickshaw</td>
<td>Politicians/Political Parties/Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles/Transportation</td>
<td>Movements/Political Party Meetings/Rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity Identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Areas (e.g., Public garden, parking lot, garage, beach, public buildings, camps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion Identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant/Bar/Caf???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail/Grocery/Bakery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools/Universities/Educational Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrorist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Train/Train Tracks/Trolley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unnamed Civilians/Unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicles/Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village/cities/towns/suburb (large area)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5: Coding scheme for terrorist attack targets as recorded in the GTD
Within the category of attacks against nonmilitary targets, I further separated ‘public’ attacks (those that endangered large numbers of innocent civilians or passersby) from ‘targeted’ attacks (that involved minimal risk to those not directly targeted). I base this coding on Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence, which explains the “likelihood of violence as a function of [political] control” certain forms of violence prove more advantageous to nonstate actors than others. 50

Kalyvas distinguishes between selective and indiscriminate violence. 51 In this context selective violence refers to acts of force designed to convey certain messages to a specific audience; while indiscriminate violence is violence in which anyone can become a victim regardless of one’s political affiliation or actions. He argues selective violence is preferable to indiscriminate violence because it consolidates an actor’s control over a region more effectively than does indiscriminate violence. Selective violence, however, is most likely in regions of contested control in which one actor holds more power than its rival but fails to monopolize authority. In situations of complete control or parity between rivals, violence is unlikely; whereas zones of no control tend to see mostly indiscriminate violence. By this logic levels of violence, reflect different distributions of power among rivals.

Building off Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence, when analyzing patterns of terrorist attacks after the Good Friday Peace Agreement, I divide more indiscriminate, public attacks from cases of targeted violence. According to Kalyvas, groups theoretically prefer to use targeted violence and will do so when they have the influence, opportunity, and resources. By separating these different forms of violence, I hoped to better understand the nature of post-ceasefire

violence and the strengths, goals, and strategies of armed nonstate actors. Given the shortcomings of using fatality data as a proxy for political violence, I use the GTD as a robustness test of my findings when measuring political violence in terms of fatalities.

**Terrorist Events Analysis and Limitations**

Using terrorist attacks as a measure of political violence continues to challenge the central principles of $H1$ and $H2$ that peace processes both divide moderates and militants and change the way nonstate actors evaluate and deploy violence. Between 1980 and 1989, Troubles-related attacks accounted for 26.78% of all the terror attacks in Western Europe. While fatalities from the Troubles dropped throughout the 1990s, political violence in Northern Ireland accounted for approximately 29.19% of all the terrorist attacks in Western Europe, which is not a statistically significant change from the violence of the preceding decade, suggesting consistency in both pre and post ceasefire violence.

When measuring political violence in terms of terrorist incidents, IMV also still emerges as a consistent feature of conflict both before and after ceasefires. One way in which the data may support $H1$ or $H2$ is that IMV spikes in 1995 and 1996, following the first paramilitary ceasefires. These attacks were largely the work of an organization called Direct Action Against Drugs (DAAD) and the INLA, which had not agreed to the ceasefire and was waging an internal feud at the time. While participation in the peace process was a matter of debate during the INLA feud, the conflict of 1995 and 1996 had its roots in a rivalry between Gino Gallagher and Hugh Torney. According to Henry MacDonald

Gallagher had been in conflict with Torney since 1992. After the UDA massacre of Catholics...on the Ormeau, Gallagher...had urged that the INLA take retaliatory action. Torney
had refused to sanction it. The bad feeling between the two increased when Gallagher took over the leadership, and expelled the former chief of staff.\textsuperscript{52} The deaths in this feud were highly personalized, launched largely in a retaliatory tit-for-tat style between the Gallagher’s INLA and Torney’s INLA-GHQ. Similarly, fatalities attributable to DAAD had largely been justified as ‘community policing’ and punishment of drug dealers. Such violence appears far more consistent with a strategy of consolidating and maintaining power in a region rather than with a strategy of undermining peace negotiations. In fact, many argue that DAAD was formed as a front group for the PIRA specifically so that the PIRA could continue to claim to be on ceasefire.

While it is important not to overstate the uniqueness of IMV to post-accord environments, IMV remains an important topic to consider when studying splinter groups and the continued use of armed force because it is one of the clearest ways of observing how factions compete, negotiate, and form alliances. These cases of IMV, particularly the existence and behavior of DAAD, provide examples of cases in which the purpose of CPV appears to be something other than undermining or rejecting peace negotiations. Unfortunately, further exploration of the various purposes for which actors use violence is a topic requires more detail than I can include in this current paper and remains a topic in need of further study.

One of the limitations of the GTD, however, is its focus on global trends in terrorism as opposed to local patterns of violence in specific case studies. When I attempted to plot the information from the GTD on a map, I found that a large number of entries were geocoded for Belfast city centre. The Global Terrorism Database records 4,540 Troubles-related terrorist attacks, 2,201 occurring in or around Belfast. Looking more closely at republican attacks between

1996 and 2013, however, I found that many incidences geocoded for the city centre had occurred in other parts of the city. In fact, for the year 1996 and onwards, the GTD records 24 republican terrorist attacks occurring right outside Belfast City Hall. I found that only one of these 24 entries actually occurred in the reported location.

While the GTD remains the most exhaustive, geocoded databases available, there remain a number of issues that constrain its analytic utility. First, the GTD includes only events that qualify as ‘terrorism.’ The GTD defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.”53 As a result, the GTD distinguishes between terrorism and events associated with organized crime, hate crime, inter/intra-group conflict, and insurgency or other guerilla actions. This definition proves problematic when studying post-ceasefire paramilitarism in Northern Ireland.

The problem with the GTD’s filtering of criminal and insurgent activity lies in the fact that a common method of delegitimizing nonstate actors is to label them ‘criminals’ or ‘terrorists.’ The GTD uses a category of ‘Doubt Terrorism Proper’ to mark when events may be the result of crime, insurgency, or internal conflict rather than terrorism. In these cases, while database creators had some doubts about whether a particular event qualified as terrorism, they lacked sufficient evidence to exclude the event entirely. It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that events that the START team considered clear examples of criminal activity, guerilla warfare, or intra- and inter-group conflicts are not included in the database. It is unclear from looking at the

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Global Terrorism Database, however, how its creators distinguished between actions politicians dismissed as criminality or lawlessness and legitimate forms of political violence.

The GTD limits its entries to events considered ‘terrorism’ as opposed to more general political violence. As a result, while the database includes some so called ‘punishment beatings’ (generally considered a form of vigilante justice), in other cases these events are considered examples of crime or internal-group conflict and, therefore, excluded from the database. The GTD also excludes violence deemed ‘insurgent or guerilla action.’ This filtering mechanism provides incomplete counts of paramilitary activity. Examining the events that GTD include casts doubt on accuracy of some of these judgements. In some cases, attacks against the loyalist paramilitary, the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), are coded as attacks against the military whereas in other cases targeting the UDA is considered targeting a terrorist organization or militia. Such inconsistency in coding raises concerns that violence perpetrated by certain pro-state armed actors may be considered military or security action and, therefore, excluded from the database. The case-specific coding also proves questionable when it codes the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), which focused exclusively on constitutional and electoral political organizing, as a violent political party.

Qualitative Analysis

As demonstrated by the cases of the INLA and DAAD between 1995 and 1996, qualitative evidence further challenges $H1$ and $H2$ because such study does not reveal origins of violent ‘dissident’ republican organizations to any clear desire to undermine political negotiations or doubts about leaders’ credibility. As MacDonald and Holland note,

[m]any of those who remained with the Official republican movement…had done so not because they necessarily agreed with the leadership’s views on the future course republicanism might take but because they suspected the Provisionals of not having any real politics at all. Many others had
remained simply because of personal loyalties, which often play a more crucial role than ideological reasons in deciding who goes with what faction.54

While most conventional explanations of the 1969 split emphasize the conflict between the ‘moderate Officials’ and ‘militant Provisionals,’ MacDonald and Holland suggest that among the rank and file ideology mattered much less than among the leadership. The split of the CIRA from the PIRA in “1986 can be seen as a power struggle within the leadership which was accompanied by tensions surrounding the gradual politicization”55 Similarly, a self-proclaimed nonviolent dissident republican and former member of the PIRA observed that “the contention that formed the real IRA was within leadership figures.”56 The disagreement between Gerry Adams and alleged founder of the rIRA, Michael McKevitt, is usually interpreted as a case of the intransigent militant rejecting the compromise and negotiation of his moderate counterpart. Wendy Pearlman, however, uses George Tsebelis’ concept of a nested game to claim that post-ceasefire violence challenges “not only the substance of policies but also the very process of collective decisionmaking and the legitimacy of claims to represent the collective.”57 The prospect of a political negotiation may put strain on existing coalitions, reigniting old rivalries among leaders. While often justified in terms of acceptance or rejection of the peace process, the lines of division that form when a splinter group emerges are not built only on members’ acceptance or rejection of the peace process. Rather, groups like the Real IRA organize around

54 MacDonald & Holland, “Chapter 1: Fault Lines,” Para. 10
56 Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015

While McKevitt certainly opposed the Good Friday Agreement, it is unclear whether the root of his conflict with the PIRA and Sinn Fein lies in disagreement over the peace process or in an ongoing struggle for leadership within the republican movement. Horgan notes that McKevitt, prior to splitting with the Adams leadership, was an active member of the PIRA Army Executive. During negotiations among Republicans, Loyalists, and the British state, however, “[t]he executive had largely been excluded.”\footnote{Johan Horgan, \textit{Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland’s Dissident Terrorists} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31} In fact, the IRA ceasefire of 1997 “was called without the full support of the Executive.”\footnote{Ibid., 31} Within this context, McKevitt’s defection from the PIRA in 1997 appears to be more a consequence of the internal competition for power between the Army Executive and Army Council than a response to the peace process alone.

\section*{Conclusion}

Arguing CPV is about undermining the peace or the result of nonstate actors’ inability to trust the peace process implies that nonstate actors use violence differently before and after a peace process begins. My study found no evidence to suggest that peace processes alter the way armed nonstate actors think about or employ violence (a premise on which \textit{H1} and \textit{H2} depend). Data on fatalities and terrorist attacks suggests that while a majority of post-GFA violence has been intra-movement violence, IMV was a consistent form of violence \textit{throughout} the Troubles. Contrary to the predictions of \textit{H1} and \textit{H2}, this IMV did not center on conflicts between moderate and militant elements within a movement. Rather, violence appears to be specifically targeted...
against individuals loyal to rival leaders or an issue of demonstrating paramilitary strength in a certain area. Furthermore, the consistency in Troubles-related fatalities from factionalism suggests that patterns in inter-factional as well as intra-factional violence share many similarities before and after the peace process. This consistency challenges $H1$ and $H2$, which emphasize peace processes’ transformative effect on political violence. In Chapter 4, I explore potential explanations for this dissonance and propose more nuanced frameworks for understanding paramilitary CPV.
CHAPTER 4: Rethinking Political Violence

Alternative Explanations for CPV

Arguments about insecurity and attempts to undermine the peace process assume that processes of division and factionalization are intrinsically linked with debates over political settlements between militant extremists and moderate, constitutionalists. In fact, Stedman argues that “[p]eace processes create spoilers…spoilers exist only when there is a peace processes to undermine, that is, after at least two warring parties have committed themselves publically to a pact or have signed a comprehensive peace agreement.”61 Security dilemma arguments like those of Roe and Posen suggest that “[n]egotiations would succeed in designing peaceful transitions if the participants could be protected during the implementation period;” therefore linking levels of paramilitary CPV with the degree to which actors find themselves trapped by the security dilemma.62 By assuming that violence would not occur during peace processes without the presence of spoilers or uncertainty, Kydd and Walter, Stedman, Posen, and Roe cast cooperation and collective action as a default while disunity and intra-movement antagonism are considered aberrations from the norm.

At first glance, a bias towards collective action appears theoretically sound. After all, “[f]indings indicate that the existence of multiple groups in civil wars has important

implications for war outcomes...both the number of groups and their relations matter.” 63

The presence of more rebel groups means that a state or opposing force must divide its resources, thereby lessening the burden on each of the individual rebel groups. When rebel groups actively collaborate, they can collectively improve their strength relative to the government by sharing resources, strategies, and information. It makes sense, then that, should the prospect of politically negotiated peace make collective action more costly than collaboration, the actors would divide into factions. Consequently, it is reasonable to infer that factionalization would occur more frequently during periods of peace negotiation than during other periods of a conflict. By this logic, individuals with varying degrees of militancy and political conviction organize under a common movement. The introduction of a peace process, however, divides moderates and militants, causing the latter to break away from the parent group and form a splinter organization committed to the continued use of political violence. This conceptualization of nonstate actors (illustrated in Figure 4.1) reflects what is commonly known as the ‘unitary actor model.’

**Figure 4.1: Unitary Actor Model**

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Since the mid-twenty-first century, however, scholars have increasingly questioned the validity of analyzing nonstate actors using a unitary-actor model. Despite this, theories of ‘spoiler’ violence continue to utilize this framework. According to Diani “although social movements and coalitions consist of dense interorganizational networks only the former display high levels of collective identity.” Management theory holds that a “coalition is defined as two or more parties who cooperate to obtain a mutually desired outcome that satisfies the interests of the coalition rather than those of the entire group in which it is embedded…coalitions are temporary alliances designed to increase individual coalition members’ outcomes on a particular issue; when the issue is resolved, the coalition dissolves.” Consequently, if subgroups feel that they do not have enough of a voice in the negotiating process by remaining within a movement, they may withdraw from a coalition and attempt to pursue their own interests directly.

The notion that factions emerge when the costs of collective action outweigh the benefits implies that certain divisions and sub-groupings within a movement might pre-date peace negotiations. Unlike spoiler and security dilemma explanations, a collective action-based model of group formation and factionalization conceptualizes movements not as a united front but as a coalition of groups temporarily allied in pursuit of an overarching common interest (Figure 4.2).

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64 Mario Diani, Isobel Lindsay, & Derrick Purdue, “Chapter 10. Sustained Interactions? Social Movements and Coalitions in Local Settings” in Strategic Alliances: Coalition Building and Social Movements, ed. Nella Van Dyke & Holly J. McCammon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 220
65 Jeffrey Polzer, Elizabeth Mannix, Margaret Neale “Interest Alignment and Coalitions in Multiparty Negotiation” Academy of Management Journals 1998. No 1, 42-43
Using this model of substate organizations as nonunitary actors, I propose that it may be possible to understand trends in Northern Ireland’s CPV if one accepts that Putnam’s two-level game applies both to state and non-state actors. According to Putnam, policymaking and international relations involve a two-level game in which “At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and the politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing adverse consequences of foreign developments.”

Figure 4.3 illustrates the sub-state application of the two-level game.

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At the intramovement level, local actors and sub-groups pressure the movement’s central leadership to adopt different agenda items, while the central, political elites attempt to gain power by creating coalitions. At the intermovement level each movement’s leadership seeks to maximize its ability to satisfy local, subgroup demands while minimizing adverse consequences of negotiating with representatives of states or members of other movements. These political elites encounter an additional level of complexity if negotiations include one or more state actors. In the multi-level game, subgroups weigh the costs and benefits of collective action while central leadership performs a cost-benefit analysis of accommodating subgroup demands. Within the
context of negotiations, some demands that the central leadership previously accommodate may become too costly to include in a negotiation agenda or subgroups may overestimate the bargaining clout they hold within a movement.

**CPV as a Product of Power**

Existing explanations for CPV conceptualize violence as oriented towards peace negotiations; thereby ignoring the possibility that nonstate actors might use violence or break into factions for other reasons. This bias is evident in statements like Martin McGuinness’ regarding violent dissident republicans claiming that “those people who are trying to destabilise [the peace] need to understand that the task they’re involved in will have no good outcome for them. There is no prospect whatsoever of these people destroying the Peace Process.”

Because all the hypotheses predict that certain armed nonstate actors will continue to use CPV, it is necessary to evaluate not whether violence is present but rather in what way violence occurs. Stathis Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence emphasizes the importance of a movement’s internal balance of power. Kalyvas distinguishes between selective and indiscriminate violence. In this context selective violence refers to acts of force designed to convey certain messages to a specific audience; while indiscriminate violence is violence in which anyone can become a victim regardless of one’s political affiliation or actions. The selective violence model explains the “likelihood of violence as a function of [political] control” and predicts that

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the balance of power within a region changes the types of violence that occur there.\textsuperscript{68} Kalyvas’ analysis centers on coercive violence (violence meant to control a population) against civilian populations; however it is possible to follow his train of logic through to violence between combatants of rival factions and to periods of ceasefire and political negotiation. From the observation that varying levels of political control shape the types of violence groups can employ, I propose that it may be possible to also explain the presence of CPV by examining the levels of control organizations have over their own members. This logic produces $H3$:

\hspace{1cm} \textit{H3: (Organizational Weakness)} Organization leaders direct violence so that it reflects a particular political or organizational agenda; any violence that deviates from this pattern results from a lack of political leadership within an organization. In the case of peace processes, politically directed violence reflects division of political opinion among a movement’s leadership while seemingly apolitical violence indicates that political leaders have lost their monopoly over the use of force.

As evinced by the statistics on intra-movement violence in Northern Ireland, factions feud and compete with each other outside of periods of political negotiation, presumably over issues unrelated to peace; therefore it makes sense that these issues would continue to shape violence after the introduction of a peace process.

Much contemporary research on coalitions and nonstate actors suggests that a nonunitary actor model best explains this factionalization. Consequently, factionalization is best understood not as the reorganization of actors but rather as a return to and alliance of different subgroupings in the face of threat to that particular subgroup’s interests. Fotini Christia’s research on alliance formation and coalition building reinforces the idea that threat to a subgroup can prompt actors to reevaluate

\textsuperscript{68} Kalyvas, \textit{The Logic of Violence in Civil War}. ‘Introduction’ I.3. ROAD MAP Para. 16
their membership in a movement. Christia argues that “relative power drives alliance choices.”\(^6^9\) Christia argues that within a coalition “each group wants to be part of a coalition that is large enough to win the war but also small enough to maximize the group’s share of postwar power.”\(^7^0\) These internal dynamics predict that “a decisive victory will lead to bandwagoning, with smaller parties wanting to join on the side of the winner, whereas an expectation of a negotiated settlement or of continued fighting with no clear winner will perpetuate a balancing configuration among the warring parties until the end of hostilities.”\(^7^1\) Consequently, under Christia’s model, a peace process matters in so much as it alters the balance of power within a movement. Using Christia’s balance of power model I propose \(H4:\)

\(H4: (\text{Windows of Opportunity or Vulnerability})\) Negotiations loosen existing hierarchies and power structures; thereby offering political elites (who use violence to pursue of both grand strategic goals and parochial interests or rivalries) a chance to shift the balance of power in their favor. Violence tends to follow preexisting lines of division or competition within and among factions.

For the remainder of this chapter, I explore further the implications of each hypothesis and the ways in which they offer a more nuanced understanding of the conditions that produce CPV.

\textbf{Political Instrumentality and Organizational Strength Thesis}

In addition to Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence, Brendan O’Duffy’s analysis of violence in Northern Ireland also informs \(H3\). While O’Duffy’s article dates from before the peace process had begun in earnest, his analysis remains useful because it


\(^7^0\) Christia “Chapter 2: A Theory of Warring Group Alliances and Fractionalization in Multiparty Civil Wars” Para. 4.

\(^7^1\) Christia, “Chapter 2: A Theory of Warring Group Alliances and Fractionalization in Multiparty Civil Wars” Alliances and Civil War Termination, Para. 4
challenges the moderate-militant binary and offers an alternative explanation for paramilitary activity. O’Duffy suggests that “while affective motivations may be primary determinants of the strength of attachment to a nationalist cause, they are largely contained by organizations which use violence instrumentally to pursue political goals or defend political interests.”\(^{72}\) According to O’Duffy, changes in the targets and intensity of paramilitary violence mirror shifting strategic objectives, opportunity structures, and the organizational strength of the paramilitary organizations.

O’Duffy’s political instrumentality thesis envisions the presence of a peace process as one of many factors shaping actors’ decisions rather than as the key variable determining whether factions continue to use force. He contends that paramilitary groups generally maintain tight control over the use of force and “focus it towards strategic, ethno-national objectives.”\(^{73}\) He attributes the infamous Shankill Butchers murder gang’s reign of terror between 1975 and 1982 to a lack of loyalist political leadership and a subsequent inability of loyalist elites to “exert control over their hard men.”\(^{74}\) O’Duffy claims that division within leadership weakens central control over the use of force, thereby implying that what Stedman would term ‘spoiler’ violence may have its roots not in any attempt to undermine political overtures but rather in the fact that elite weakness loosened the organization’s ability to control instances of intra-movement violence.

Expanding upon this claim, O’Duffy claims that, had it not been for the internment of suspected loyalists in 1973 and the arrest of a large proportion of the UVF leadership in 1975, “‘psychopathic’ killers…would never have been allowed to pursue


\(^{73}\) Ibid., 765.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 756
their campaigns of indiscriminate killing, ignoring leadership’s attempts to stem the campaign of assassination against nationalists…[in favor of] a political program.”

O’Duffy holds that any deviation from the strategic use of political violence, like the activities of the Shankill Butchers, suggests a breakdown in paramilitary organizational strength. In emphasizing organizational strength, O’Duffy challenges the moderate-militant binary. He suggests that when paramilitaries function properly, violence retains a political goal, meaning that if political elites commit to a political agenda, the organization will deploy violence in a way that supports these objectives. Conversely, weakened leadership structures and organizational infrastructure, not radicalized politics among dissident elements of a movement, explains seemingly indiscriminate or extreme forms of violence. The breakdown of a movement or emergence of factions has its roots in weak leadership rather than differing political opinion.

Like O’Duffy, $H3$ suggests that, throughout a conflict and into periods of peace negotiation, leaders use violence in pursuit of a political agenda. The best predictors of whether an organization will continue violence into periods of political negotiation and ceasefire are either the interests and strength of political elites and organizational leadership or a weakened organizational leadership and subsequent inability of political elites to monopolize the use of force. Under $H3$ it would not be surprising to see CPV because peace processes tends to divide and weaken leaders as constituents become frustrated either with the pace of a peace process or the compromises necessary. This frustration can be rooted in mistrust of the leadership or a divide among moderates and militants; however $H3$ holds that these factors alone do not explain

$^{75}$ O’Duffy, 756
CPV. Rather, CPV occurs when political leaders lose control over their hardened thugs, unleashing a new wave of apolitical, opportunistic violence.

**Windows of Opportunity and Vulnerability**

There have been some preliminary efforts to explain ‘spoiler’ violence as a product of competition within a movement over the balance of power. While Wendy Pearlman uses the language of ‘spoiler’ violence she echoes Christia when she proposes an ‘internal contestation model’ of CPV, claiming that “[a]ctors turn to negotiating or spoiling to contest both what a proposed settlement entails and who has the power to decide this and other matters on behalf of their community…participation in spoiling of negotiations offers an opportunity to advance their struggle for political dominance.” Like Christia, Pearlman emphasizes the importance of expected returns from a negotiated settlement when she argues that leaders of the dominant faction [within a movement] are likely to have the most to gain from a peace process, as they can expect to be the ones invited to participate in negotiations. This outcome offers these individuals external recognition of their leadership and increases their access to material resources and institutional power over rivals.

Contrary to the moderate-militant divide $H1$ and $H2$ predict, Kalyvas, Pearlman, and Christia argue that factionalization follows lines of division based on regional loyalties and competitions. I build off Christia’s theory of alliance formation and Wendy Pearlman’s internal contestation model to propose $H4$. Like Pearlman’s theory, $H4$ emphasizes the importance of the balance of power and argues that these divisions are over issues of power, such as positions of leadership or resource allocation rather than acceptance or rejection of a peace settlement. As

78 Ibid., 85
Pearlman notes, “[a] peace agreement, or even the prospect of a peace agreement, can heighten contestation over the terms of legitimate representation because it favors some factions and disfavors others.”

To understand $H4$, it is necessary to further establish why and how periods of political negotiation provide actors with windows of opportunity or vulnerability. As Christia argues, conflicts generally end in one of three outcomes, each of which encourages actors to pursue different behavior: “(1) no prospects for a settlement or no obvious winner, leading to balancing; (2) prospects for negotiated settlement, also leading to balancing; or (3) an obvious winner emerging, leading to bandwagoning behavior.” According to Christia, one may expect warring parties to bandwagon (or ally with the victor) if it becomes clear that the victor cannot be stopped by an opposing coalition. The logic of bandwagoning is that subgroups would rather be a ‘junior partner’ in a winning coalition than any part of a losing side.

Conversely, Christia predicts balancing behavior, or opposition to the dominant party, in the case of a negotiated settlement and in cases where it is possible to prolong the conflict. She argues that as long as there is a possibility that subgroups may secure more bargaining leverage, these elements will oppose stronger parties that might take the lion’s share of postwar power. The capacity of certain factions to influence a peace process consequently means that periods of political negotiation heighten asymmetries of power within coalitions and movements. Negotiations give asymmetries of power within a movement additional importance because, with the addition of new negotiating parties, political elites have to

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79 Pearlman, 84
80 Christia “Chapter 2: A Theory of Warring Group Alliances and Fractionalization in Multiparty Civil Wars” Alliances and Civil War Termination, Para. 5
make more decisions about which local, subgroup interests they will accommodate and incorporate into the movement-wide platform.

H4 combines this study of balancing and bandwagoning behavior with Pearlman’s internal contestation model. Under H4, subgroups attempt to balance against more powerful elements within a movement to explain the formation of splinter organizations during periods of political negotiation. The addition of Christia’s balancing and bandwagoning argument strengthens Pearlman’s claim by specifying the conditions under which H4 is most likely to play a role: cases, such as the negotiation of the Belfast Agreement, in which there is no clear winner.

Comparing Hypotheses

At first glance, the logic of H4 appears to be simply another way of stating H1 or H2. Arguably H2 involves balance of power issues because subgroups feel threatened by an impending peace negotiation and, consequently refuse to adopt strictly nonviolent methods of protest. Similarly, one may propose that H1 accounts for internal balances of power because – in cases with no clear winner – political elites are unable to make credible guarantees to different elements within their movement, prompting mistrust and a return to violence. H4 remains distinct from H1 and H2, however, in that, while actors under H1 use violence because they do not trust the peace negotiations and actors under H2 use violence because they do not want peace, H4 suggests that actors continue using violence because they are dissatisfied with the current balance of power and with their anticipated share of post-accord power.

This distinction proves important when considering possible strategies of counterinsurgency and cooptation. If actors do not trust a peace negotiation or do not want a peace negotiation, the likelihood of being able to coopt these elements and incorporate them into
negotiations appears slim. However, if actors prefer violence over negotiation because they are dissatisfied with the internal balance of power, this understanding leaves room for more potential negotiations. It is possible that actors who have already agreed to political negotiation may have an interest in keeping splinter groups out of the negotiation because they are unwilling to shift the balance of power. In this case, negotiations open not only windows of opportunity for certain subgroups to attempt to increase their own share of power but also windows of vulnerability for those subgroups that are favorably situated within the movement’s hierarchy or structural network. Consequently, rather than relying on the centralized political elites to negotiate with their “rogue” constituencies, mediators may be served better by communicating directly with armed groups.

Unlike spoiler violence theorists and security dilemma advocates, H3 allows for the possibility that, in some cases, certain forms of violence, including CPV, reflect organizational weakness within a paramilitary rather than disagreements over the peace process itself. For example, according to O’Duffy, the blatantly sectarian violence of the Shankill Butchers represented not a disagreement over whether the UVF should pursue a political agenda but rather a simple campaign of serial murder against apolitical targets by a rogue group within the UVF. This third hypothesis argues that if organizations with strong leaders divide, it will be along political lines, and only organizations with weak leadership will engage in patterns of violence that lack a clear political agenda.

In contrast, H4 uses the arguments of Kalyvas, Pearlman, and Christia to predict that factionalization will follow parochial rather than political lines of cleavage regardless of the strength of an organization’s leadership. In fact, they go so far as to claim that localized conflicts and competitions often directly shape patterns of political violence, as local and supralocal actors
attempt to unite political and personal interests. Pearlman even notes that “[i]n the internal contestation model, some of the negotiating or spoiling that is supposedly intended to alter the course of the conflict is actually designed to contest leadership over and representation of a single national community.”

Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence conceptualizes a relationship between armed actors and populations in which “the interaction between the political and the private spheres” shapes political violence. The means through which political actors and local entrepreneurs unite these spheres is an ‘alliance’ or an arrangement in which “[supralocal actors] provide the latter with the external muscle, thus allowing them to win decisive advantage over local rivals; in exchange supralocal actors are able to tap into local networks and generate mobilization.” The relationship between supralocal (national, regional, etc.) and local actors means that, in shaping the balance of power within a region, “local cleavages matter. Although these cleavages are not the only mechanism producing allegiance and violence, they appear to have a substantial impact on the distribution of allegiances as well as the targets and intensity of violence.”

Kalyvas cites numerous cases in which civil war and the language of political ideology masked animosities that had their roots in familial links, neighborhood rivalries, and personal interests.

While Kalyvas focuses his analysis more on the onset and conduct of civil wars than on the termination of such conflicts, it is not unreasonable to explore the possibility that similar mechanisms continue to shape CPV. In other words, if “local cleavages may even subvert central ones, causing factional conflicts within supposedly unified political

81 Pearlman, 82-83
82 Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War “Chapter 11: Cleavage and Agency” 11.3 Alliance. Para 2
83 Ibid.,11.3 Alliance. Para.5
84 Ibid., 11.1 Center and Periphery, Para. 29
camps” during civil wars, it would be a reasonable to argue that parochial interests continue to shape armed nonstate actors’ behavior after a elites begin to negotiate peace.\textsuperscript{85} Fotini Christia has also emphasized the importance of parochialism in civil wars, arguing that “[factional] subgroups tend to be led by local elites…and differ from each other along regional lines; they may also have leadership disputes between them that predate the war. Critically, these subgroups exist and are identifiable prior to the onset of the war.”\textsuperscript{86} Kalyvas and Christia both suggest that movements are best described as coalitions of localized subgroups rather than unitary actors; furthermore they argue it is power rather than political ideology that drives civil war violence. The coalitions that Kalyvas and Christia describe challenge conventional interpretations of CPV that stress moderate-militant binaries as the primary determinants of whether actors engage in or reject political negotiations.

Neither $H_3$ nor $H_4$ rejects the possibility of conflict between “moderate” and “militant” elements; however $H_3$ and $H_4$ consider factionalization during peace processes a dynamic, multi-faceted process that extends beyond the moderate-militant divide. These hypotheses allow one to examine long-term reasons for intra-movement competition, including but not limited to different attitudes towards compromise. Consequently, under $H_4$, it is also possible to envision a situation in which leaders may use their monopoly over the use of force for seemingly apolitical objectives, such as in prosecution of local rivalries and power struggles. Unlike $H_3$, $H_4$ does not suggest that only groups with weak or contested leadership dissolve. Christia argues that factionalization is a consistent feature of civil wars, claiming that “Wartime alliances,

\textsuperscript{85} Kalyvas \textit{The Logic of Violence in Civil War}, “Chapter 11: Cleavage and Agency” 11.1 Center and Periphery, Para. 28
\textsuperscript{86} Christia “Introduction” The Argument, Para. 4.
and the groups that comprise them, are not merely imagined but rather constantly reimagined communities.” Christia further emphasizes this consistency by arguing that, as the relative balance of power within an alliance changes throughout the course of a civil war, so too does a subgroup’s commitment to upholding the alliance.

In the case of “an asymmetric loss experienced by a group’s constituent subgroups... groups will fracture along prewar cleavages, be they regional differences or preexisting leadership disputes.” This process of factionalization can happen at any point during a conflict and results from changes in the internal balance of power within a coalition and changes in subgroups’ ability to pursue strategic and political goals within a coalition rather than from the introduction of external factors, such as a peace process. Consequently, political negotiations are most significant because they weaken the common interest that previously bonded factions under a coalition. Without a common, unifying interest, pre-existing differences of political opinion gain salience and begin to play a larger role in shaping actors’ behavior during periods of peace negotiation.

In contrast, arguments about organizational structure and political instrumentality focus on objectives, opportunity, and internal organization and suggest that violence resurfaces when leaders are unable to control the methods through which constituents pursue their political objectives. Furthermore, the theories envision different roles for peace negotiations in shaping and propagating violence.

87 Christia “Introduction” The Argument, Para. 2.
88 Christia “Chapter 2: A Theory of Warring Group Alliances and Fractionalization in Multiparty Civil Wars” Para. 3
Conclusion

In the following chapter, I explore further the benefits of shifting away from explanations of CPV that emphasize $H1$ and $H2$ and towards more nuanced approaches like $H3$ and $H4$ that consider contemporary theories and insights into the way nonstate actors organize and form alliances. The four hypothesis that have been introduced are summarized in Figure 4.4.

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<th>Hypothesis</th>
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<td>H2: Spoiling Behavior</td>
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<td>H3: Organizational Weakness</td>
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</tr>
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**Figure 4.4: Hypotheses and CPV**

In the next chapter, I perform some preliminary analyses testing the plausibility of $H3$ and $H4$. Due to the more complex nature of these hypotheses, the data I used to test $H1$ and $H2$ proves marginally useful but ultimately insufficient to produce any concrete inferences. Consequently, Chapter 5 also outlines the types of data and research that would be necessary to more successfully test $H3$ and $H4$. 
CHAPTER 5: Experimental Empirics

While I had initially hoped to replicate the types of tests I performed on $H1$ and $H2$ with $H3$ and $H4$, I quickly realized that current methods of data collection and measuring political violence are insufficient to test more nuanced explanations for CPV. This chapter will, therefore, focus mostly on the possible uses of GIS mapping and conflict databases for understanding patterns of political violence. While very much a work in progress, I consider the strategies I outline promising areas of future research and topics highly deserving of more detailed scrutiny than I can accommodate within the purview of this paper. In lieu of more reliable data, I perform a brief qualitative analysis evaluating the validity of both $H3$ and $H4$.

Preliminary Analysis

As with $H1$ and $H2$, I examined fatality and terrorism data in relation to the following three questions:

1) What types of violence characterize peace processes and how does this differ from periods outside of a peace process? Following the introduction of a peace process, does one observe statistically significant changes in the targets, weapons used in an attack, and groups responsible for (a) fatalities (b) incidents of political violence? If not, when does one observe statistically significant changes?

2) When does one observe statistically significant spikes in violence between subgroups within the same coalition, or intra-movement violence (IMV), and what forms of IMV is most dominant (faction 1 versus faction 2, infighting within a faction)? Does one observe different clusters of intra-factional as opposed to inter-factional violence?

3) How does the spatial distribution of different IMV relate, if at all, to the spatial distribution of paramilitary strongholds and/or local voting patterns?

Regarding Question 1 (types of violence one sees during peace processes), if well-organized factions focus more on targeted attacks designed to eliminate dissident elements either by assassination, imprisonment, or political delegitimization, this
evidence would be consistent with $H3$. Additionally, these actions would not be limited to ‘militants.’ Crime and apolitical violence would spike within organizations lacking strong leadership. Finally evidence consistent with $H4$ would include examples of violence in which well-organized factions focus both on political and economic gain, increasing not only targeted attacks against rivals but also campaigns to take control of resources. Violence might also result in changes of leadership within factions or the targeting and/or emergence of splinter groups and organizations. These organizations would not necessarily be comprised of ‘militants.’

In terms of Question 2 (forms of IMV), if my evidence is consistent with $H3$, low level inter-factional violence would have been a consistent feature of paramilitary activity outside of the peace processes, as different factions clash in pursuit of their own interests. Because $H3$ emphasizes political elites’ ability to monopolize the use of force by members of their own factions, intra-factional violence would emerge primarily within disorganized groups. In contrast, $H4$ suggests that violence within factions is the product of internal competition rather than weak leadership. $H4$ would, therefore, predict that intra-factional violence will also occur within both well organized and disorganized groups. If I see a case in which the frequency of both inter-factional and intra-factional violence increase around the introduction of a peace process but both forms of intra-movement violence have been consistent features of paramilitary activity prior to the peace process, this evidence would be consistent with $H4$.

I investigate Question 3 (the spatial distribution of paramilitary activity) to see whether violence follows preexisting lines of divisions such as economic political theory (socialism, communism, etc) or is organized around competition for power and resources
within and among factions. Such evidence would be consistent with \( H4 \). \( H3 \) predicts that violence would occur in regions with weak leadership; this could include areas without strong traditional ties to any one paramilitary and, consequently, no clear group with a monopoly over the use of force. Under \( H3 \), I would also predict that violence would occur in paramilitary strongholds if certain organizations were undergoing a transition of leadership or a lack of leadership due to mass arrests and incarcerations. As when I was testing \( H1 \) and \( H2 \), I use GIS mapping to facilitate this analysis.

**Fatality Data and Analysis for \( H3 \) and \( H4 \)**

Because \( H3 \) and \( H4 \) hold that CPV results from institutional and organizational weaknesses and because they consider peace processes one of many conditions that could weaken leadership and power structures, both hypotheses predict that IMV will emerge outside of periods of political negotiation. \( H3 \) suggests that any conditions that cause leaders to lose their monopoly over the use of force, such as transitions of leadership in the case of death, could prompt an outbreak of criminal and seemingly apolitical violence.

As noted in Chapter 3, an analysis of Troubles-related fatalities demonstrates that factional competition and IMV exist outside of the context of political negotiations. Between 1968 and 1998, approximately 14\% of the combatant fatalities in Belfast could be characterized as ‘intra-movement.’\(^8^9\) These fatality counts from intra-movement violence have remained at a relatively consistent level since the 1980s. While some of these deaths are believed to have part of the paramilitaries’ efforts to maintain discipline

\(^8^9\) Malcolm Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland, 1969-1993,” (October 1999) and Michael McKeown’s “'Remembering': Victims, Survivors and Commemoration Post-Mortem, database and documents” (June 2009), both Provided by CAIN Web Services
within their ranks, of the all the intra-movement fatalities, approximately 23% of the loyalist fatalities involved more than one loyalist faction while about 43% of the republican fatalities were inter-factional. Because inter-factional fatalities involved a member of one loyalist or republican paramilitary killed a member of a separate faction within its same umbrella movement, it is unlikely that the deaths were punitive, disciplinary actions. Additionally, these inter-factional deaths do not tend to cluster around periods of peace negotiations, thereby challenging the notion that, in the absence of a peace process, factions will tend to favor cooperation over competition. $H1$ and $H2$, which emphasize the way peace processes divide moderates and militants, are unable to account for such instances of intra-movement violence outside of periods of political negotiation.

I argue that to fully understand the strategic calculus of armed nonstate groups during peace processes, one must examine long-term patterns of behavior within this organization. Coalitional politics rather than the degree of militancy serve as the best predictor of whether a faction will continue to use violence after its parent organization has already entered into political negotiations. Fatality data from 1994 through 2003 appears consistent with $H3$’s contention that paramilitary violence is generally politically motivated and strategically focused. Between 1994 and 2003, the average number of fatalities on attributable to republican paramilitaries was 9.6, a statistically significant drop from the preceding 10 years, during which the average fatality count was 38. $^{90}$ Instances during which the trends do not always align suggest moments where group cohesion would have been strained, meaning that centralized

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$^{90}$ All Troubles Related Fatalities were recorded in McKeown’s Database of Deaths and analyzed by the author unless otherwise noted. A t-test for fatalities between 1984 and 2003 yielded a p-value of .02631. Significant within a 95% confidence interval.
leaders would not necessarily have maintained their usual monopoly over the use of force. For instance, fatalities from IMV remain the same or continue to increase in 1973, 1981, 1984, and 1994 despite the fact that fatalities overall tend to decline during these periods. The years 1973, 1981, 1984, and 1994 all mark turning points in Northern Ireland’s politics, years during which it was not unusual to see divisions and factions forming within a movement.\footnote{The following details come from CAIN Web Service’s chronology of the Troubles} 1973 marks the year of the Sunningdale Agreement, under which Northern Ireland had a short-lived power-sharing system of governance. In 1981, republican prisoners in the H-blocks of the Maze/Long Kesh prison went on hunger strike, and Sinn Fein began to refocus republican attention on political action. In 1984, Irish and British politicians began a series of discussions that would produce the highly controversial Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, under which both governments affirmed that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would only change with majority consent. Finally, in 1994, a large number of loyalist militias and the largest republican paramilitary, the IRA, declared tense ceasefires.

IMV may account for a larger number the Troubles-related fatalities following 1998, but it has represented a shrinking percentage of Northern Ireland’s terrorist attacks overall. While almost all Troubles-related fatalities since 2001 have been the product of IMV, in those same years, IMV has accounted for fewer than ten percent of all annual terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland. For example, although 2013 saw growing numbers of Troubles-related fatalities (most of which were the result of IMV), IMV did not even account for three percent of the year’s terrorist attacks. This trend suggests that while contemporary IMV may be more lethal, it has not necessarily become more frequent. Under Kalyvas’ theory of selective violence, selective violence is preferable to indiscriminate violence because it consolidates an actor’s
control over a region more effectively than does indiscriminate violence. Selective violence, however, is most likely in regions of contested control in which one actor holds more power than its rival but fails to monopolize authority. In situations of complete control or parity between rivals, violence is unlikely; whereas zones of no control tend to see mostly indiscriminate violence. This observation is consistent with H3’s prediction that organizational weakness gives rise to CPV as thugs and criminals exploit paramilitary authority in a region for their own enrichment. It is also consistent with H4’s suggestion that CPV results from intra-movement competition over power. This observation, however, contradicts H1 and H2’s prediction that violence will be perpetrated by rogue, fringe groups using terrorism as the ‘weapon of the weak.’

**Terrorism Data: Political Violence and Crime for H3 and H4**

When evaluating different explanations for CPV, the purpose for and motivation behind violence matters. Traditional ‘spoiling behavior’ explanations for political violence (H1 and H2) envision the use of force as a product of nonstate groups’ attitudes towards a peace process. According to these theories, the primary reason actors continue to use violence is either that they either do not trust the peace process or that they wish to undermine negotiations. Involvement in crime is generally interpreted as a fundraising effort. Others argue that “without a clear political purpose, [paramilitaries] started getting into organized crime, drug dealing and prostitution.”

Such arguments that organizations have strayed from their original political goals after being co-opted by criminals interested in personal advancement echo the predictions of H3. An alternative explanation for the relationship between post-ceasefire paramilitarism and crime could be that,

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without a common goal or centralized command structure, these organizations are now more prone to competition and intra-movement conflict and controlling or engaging with organized crime may be yet another way factions can compete for power ($H_4$).

Any efforts to measure the scale of violence in substate conflicts are inherently plagued by a potential selection effect. As one moves farther into the years considered post-peace process and constitutional, electoral strategies become institutionalized as the only legitimate forum for political dissent, it becomes increasingly likely that politicians and media outlets will characterize incidences of violence as ‘crime’ or ‘intra/inter-group fighting.’ In recent years, members of mainstream Northern Irish political parties, such as Sinn Fein’s Martin McGuinness (himself a former member of the IRA) have decried contemporary paramilitaries as “traitors to the island of Ireland…[who] betrayed the political desires, hopes and aspirations of all of the [Irish] people…[and] don’t deserve to be supported by anyone.”\(^{93}\)

At this same press conference, Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde assured the public that “collectively I am clear we will solve these crimes.”\(^{94}\) Scholars and politicians alike tend to characterize violence before 1998 as largely political and ideological and contrast these paramilitary activities with the “robberies, tax fraud, drinking clubs, smuggling, counterfeiting, and drug dealing” of contemporary paramilitaries.\(^{95}\) Robberies and crime, however, have long been strategies of paramilitary fundraising.\(^{96}\) Furthermore, Moran has argued that not only radical, fringe groups but also more mainstream paramilitaries continue to play an active role in


\(^{94}\) Ibid.


Northern Ireland’s criminal activity. By contrasting ‘contemporary’ paramilitaries (‘dissident’ republican groups like the CIRA or rIRA) with ‘pre-GFA’ paramilitaries (ie., the PIRA), scholars miss valuable opportunities to explore the full diversity and extent of paramilitary activity in post-accord Northern Ireland.

As Kalyvas has noted regarding arguments that ‘new wars’ are increasingly characterized by criminality, “[it] is highly possible that interpretations of recent civil wars that stress their depoliticization and criminalization are attributable more to the demise of the conceptual categories generated by the Cold War than the end of the Cold War per se.” It is also possible to apply this same logic to studies of post-peace process political violence. One must consider the possibility that a perceived decline in political violence may have more to do with the fact that elites benefit from labeling dissent as criminal activity and less to do with an actual decline in the frequency of violent political action. This is not to suggest that contemporary Northern Ireland is anywhere near as volatile as it was during the Troubles; however when one questions claims that crime has replaced political violence, it is possible to note a concerning pattern in paramilitary activity. After a period of steady decline following the GFA, the number of terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland began to rise again at an average rate of 118% per year starting in 2006 (Figure 4.5).

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97 Jon Moran, Paramilitaries, ‘ordinary decent criminals’ and the development of organised crime following the Belfast agreement” International Journal of the Sociology of Law. Vol 32 No. 3 (September 2004), 263 - 278
98 Stathis N. Kalyvas, “‘New’ and ‘Old’ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?” World Politics, 54, (October 2001), 117.
99 Unless otherwise noted, all statistics on terror incidents are from the author’s own analysis using the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) from 2014. Due to the potential selection effect described earlier, it is important to consider the figures reported in the GTD as a minimum estimate of violence during any particular time. It is also vital to note that the database lacks any information on terrorist incidents from 1993.
Although the number of terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland has undeniably declined in recent years, as Figure 4.6 demonstrates, when one studies Northern Ireland’s paramilitary violence in relation to overall patterns of violence across Western Europe, it becomes difficult to distinguish between Northern Ireland’s violence of the 1980s and the paramilitary activity of the 1990s. This observation reinforces the importance of questioning the way scholars distinguish between political violence and depoliticized, criminal activity. If Kalyvas is correct and perceived spikes in apolitical violence have more to do with a lack of conceptual categories than they do with actual changes in the levels of nonstate violence, it becomes all the more important to critically reexamine the way we measure paramilitarism in post-accord societies.
In fact, while Northern Ireland’s Troubles dropped from accounting for almost 80% of all Western European terrorist incidents during the height of the Troubles to a mere five percent within the first full year of the 1990s ceasefires, in 2013 Troubles-related violence accounted for close to half of all the terrorist attacks in Western Europe. As Figure 4.6 shows, contemporary levels of Troubles-related violence, as measured in relation to violence across Western Europe are at a larger percentage than has existed during the majority of the years since 1974.

Conventional wisdom holds that this current (post-ceasefire) violence differs from pre-GFA violence in that paramilitaries are increasingly associated with drug trafficking and other organized crime, but scholars have yet to provide any quantitative evidence in support of the idea that contemporary violence is characterized more by criminality than by politics. Furthermore, such studies could prove useful in revising or clarifying the definition of political violence in a post-ceasefire context. In lieu of any such concrete data, it seems premature to accept politicians’ claims that current violence is the work of ‘traitors’ and ‘criminals’ and, therefore, should not be compared to other forms of paramilitarism.

**Coding Neighborhoods**

Most studies have examined traditional ‘orange-green’ maps, dividing Northern Ireland into predominantly Protestant and predominantly Catholic areas. While this division offers useful insights regarding overall patterns of Troubles-era violence, when studying competition within and among factions, a more detailed coding scheme becomes necessary. The spatial analysis I propose also requires understanding levels of paramilitary control in various regions. In this study, I begin exploring ways to measure paramilitary territorial claims, identifying neighborhoods by the dominant armed nonstate organization in the area.
With the help of Neil Jarman from the Institute of Conflict Research, I have identified neighborhoods in North and South Belfast as affiliated with either the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) or Ulster Defense Association (UDA). Since previous studies show that Catholics or Protestants were killed in CNR or PUL communities respectively, I seek to gain a better understanding of intra-movement violence by studying how violence was distributed in relation to areas associated with different paramilitaries. While a qualitative study of the rIRA’s formation suggests preliminary support for a model of factionalization and CPV that focuses on balance of power, I was curious whether $H3$ and $H4$ could be tested systematically using quantitative data.

After talking to residents of Northern Ireland, I discovered that most people know which paramilitaries dominate each area and the reasons various factions are at odds with one another. Interestingly, there have been few scholarly efforts to gather and visually represent this information in any central location. Other methods of gathering information on paramilitaries that I tried were examining voting behavior for city councils and mapping the locations of memorials or murals recognizing different armed groups. It may be possible to gather information about support for dissident or radical politics based on the activity of ‘dissident’ political organizations; however given the overwhelming dominance of Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), focusing on voting behavior alone offers few insights into politics outside of the mainstream.

It is also possible that studying street graffiti in support of different paramilitary organizations may prove illustrative; however, I will require far more rigorous exploration and

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100 Similarly, given the fact that existing studies show Troubles-related violence tended to cluster in poorer neighborhoods, it would be useful to develop a method by which to measure peace dividends since the 1998. I would hypothesize areas that have seen fewer peace dividends are more likely to favor ‘dissident’ politics or politics outside of the mainstream.
research before I can speak to the potential benefits of using street graffiti as a proxy for paramilitary presence. A final strategy of measuring territorial claims by different paramilitaries may be to study cases of punishment beatings, since paramilitaries generally carry out these acts in or around territory over which they hold a degree of influence. At present, however, it is unclear how one might gather reliable information on punishment beatings, a notoriously underreported crime. Asking residents seemed to be the most useful way to gather information about paramilitary presence in an area and is ultimately the strategy I would recommend pursuing in the future.

Analyzing Neighborhoods and Limitations

Initially, I had hoped to use murals and memorials to various paramilitaries as a proxy for paramilitary claims to a region. However, after checking the locations of murals and memorials against data on paramilitary strongholds I acquired from Neil Jarman, I found that memorials did not serve as a reliable proxy for paramilitary territorial claims (Figure 4.7).^101

Figure 4.7: Map of Belfast with Memorials and Paramilitary Strongholds, 2015

^101 It should be noted that Jarman is most familiar with loyalist strongholds in north and south Belfast. Claims by paramilitaries in West Belfast are therefore not included in my mapping. All areas are approximate and require more in-depth cross-referencing and geocoding than I have been able to complete for this particular project. Memorial
While some memorials certainly overlapped with areas in which various paramilitaries remain active, there were a number of areas in which the active paramilitary was not the only paramilitary to which memorials or murals were erected. An additional limitation to using memorials as a proxy for paramilitary presence is that many ‘dissident republicans’ do not have murals or memorials at present. Furthermore, memorials and murals generally do not capture the micropolitics of competition among regional commands or other localized tensions that might contribute to levels of IMV.

In my analysis, I have looked primarily at the way that violence reflects paramilitary territorial claims; however, it is also possible to envision a situation in which patterns of territorial claims, particularly by different factions within the same movement, emerge as a result of different forms of violence. When conducting research on the relationship between territorial claims and violence, it is also important to consider the idea that the direction of causality may change at various points during a conflict. For example, it may be possible that violence and intra-movement competition shapes initial factional claims over territory, but as these identifications become more entrenched, the territorial claims may begin to shape patterns of violence.

More concerted efforts to map paramilitary ties to different neighborhoods will not only provide more reliable information on paramilitarism in general but will also allow for more accurate spatial analyses of nonstate targeting and violence. The data I gathered from Jarman appears promising but requires more intense cross-referencing and refining. The present data only covers current paramilitary claims and focuses largely on north and south Belfast. In addition to being limited in scope, this information does not necessarily match paramilitary

presence at other points between 1996 and 2013. In order to conduct a truly comprehensive study on territorialism and paramilitary activity, it would be necessary to identify areas of influence throughout the conflict. With this information, scholars could more accurately analyze variation in intra-movement and inter-factional violence.

Conclusion

When beginning this chapter, I had hoped to use information on Troubles-related fatalities, terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland, and territorial claims by paramilitaries to test $H3$ and $H4$. After more closely examining the available data, I realized that it is not currently possible to undertake the types of spatial analyses I envisioned. My studies reinforce the need for research that critically examines the categories used to analyze political and criminal violence. In order to facilitate such studies, it will be necessary to develop better methods of measuring political violence and paramilitary activity. While each a fascinating topic in and of itself, more thorough exploration of how we might refine data collection methods lies outside the purview of this paper.
CHAPTER 6: Qualitative Analysis

Evaluating H3: Continued Political Violence as Criminal Activity and Weak Leadership

Scholars like O’Duffy, who have explored the influence of internal contestation on violence, would argue that violence continues during peace processes when weak political elites lose control over militant elements within their organizations. Former IRA-member Seanna Walsh, who describes violent anti-agreement republican groups as having no community support and no political or military strategy, echoed this idea when he observed that “It’s almost at times as if they exist as gun gangs.” Commentators observe that “[t]roubled though it may be, the evolving peace process has stripped the I.R.A. of much of its political mission,” causing many ex-paramilitaries to turn to crime. Furthermore, in 2005, “Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, claimed that the dissidents’ only support comes ‘from a few nutters and idiots.’” According to O’Duffy and H3, men like McKevitt are either extremists interested in violence for the sake of personal greed and enrichment or weak leaders who cannot control the criminal impulses of their ‘hard men.’

Comparative studies, however, challenge O’Duffy’s notion that criminality arises under conditions of weak leadership. Analyses of civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina suggest that “[t]he violence that erupted in Yugoslavia principally derived not from a frenzy of nationalism – whether ancient or newly inspired – but rather from the actions of recently empowered and unpolicing thugs.” Unlike O’Duffy who argues that thugs and criminals shape violence only under conditions of weak political leadership, Mueller claims that politicians may consciously

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102 Seanna Walsh in in discussion with the author, January 2015
104 Quoted in Tonge “No-one likes us; we don’t care’: ‘Dissident’ Irish Republicans and Mandates” The Political Quarterly. Vol 83. No. 2. (April-June 2012) 219–26
‘outsource’ violence to hooligans after which “recruited and encouraged by leading politicians and operating under a general framework of order provided by the army, a group of well-armed thugs…would emerge in an area where the former civil order had ceased to exist…As the only group willing – indeed sometimes eager – to use force, they would quickly take control.”\(^{106}\)

Arguments like Mueller’s not only contradict \(H3\) but also demonstrate the importance of analyzing why and how politicians coordinate with and recruit ‘hard men.’

Closer examination of what John Horgan calls ‘violent dissident republicans’ (republicans committed to the continued use of violence after the GFA, or VDR) also challenges the idea that all post-accord violence in perpetrated by extremists who view violence as an end in and of itself or opportunists interested in using violence to enrich themselves. Horgan notes that members of VDR groups belong to one of two distinct generations: new republican recruits with “little to no adult experience of the Troubles…[and] dissident leadership figures and those with previous active service in the Provisional IRA and early CIRA exploiting opportunities to glorify active involvement in militant Republicanism.”\(^{107}\) The former IRA member and current nonviolent dissident is now a youth worker. He also reflected that “I do not see a groundswell of young people joining these organizations…The republican movement is made up of families…‘dissidents’ tend to be older, seasoned republicans.”\(^{108}\) This older generation includes men like McKevitt who have long histories of republican activity and, consequently, occasionally tense or hostile relationships with other republican leaders.

Furthermore, many allegations of contemporary militants’ apolitical criminality emphasizes the frequency of punishment beatings and other efforts to establish control over a

\(^{106}\) Mueller, 53  
\(^{107}\) Horgan, 91  
\(^{108}\) Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015
neighborhood. ‘Community policing’ of low level crimes and neighborhoods, however, has long been a feature of the Northern Ireland conflict, and in fact “because the [P]IRA would have been involved in containing that sort of activity there is some sort of advantage [to VDR groups] to taking on that role.”\textsuperscript{109} In this sense, vigilante justice appears to be a strategic effort to establish groups’ legitimacy in the area rather than the product of rogue criminals and hard men.

**Evaluating H4: Continued Violence as Internal Contestation and Competition**

I argue that violence continues after the introduction of a peace process when political leaders like Michael McKevitt attempt to shift the balance of power away from their rivals. In some cases politicians may consider the recruitment of ‘hard men’ and thugs strategically beneficial, however, unlike Mueller, I do not consider greed and crime to be the primary motivating factor behind political violence. Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 echoed Pearlman’s theory when he noted that “I still don’t think today it [the formation of dissident republican groups] was about spoiling…[but rather] the goals and objectives of republicanism…I think spoiler politics is a good label to distract from genuine discussion about legitimate views.”\textsuperscript{110} Like Pearlman, I propose that VDR groups use violence as a way to challenge not the peace process itself but rather the ability of mainstream republicans to speak for the entire republican movement.

This contest over legitimate representation is evident in McKevitt and the Army Executive’s rivalry with the Army Council. According to ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 McKevitt questioned the ability of “senior figures in Sinn Fein negotiation on

\textsuperscript{109} Seanna Walsh in in discussion with the author, January 2015
\textsuperscript{110} Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015
behalf of the republican movement.”111 While many members of Sinn Fein held parallel membership in the IRA, they were generally more representative of the Army Council than the Army Executive. ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 claims that the defection of 1997 had its roots in a disagreement not about the peace process but rather about whether it was legitimate for “some leaders [to have] alleged that they had extra-dispensation to engage with British, representing parallel roles.”112 Despite the fact that the republican movement included members with a wide range of political opinions, “it [the dominant republican leadership] did not allow any political dissent within its ranks.”113 This tendency towards rigid hierarchy and the homogenization of political opinion is not uncommon among paramilitary organizations, and “Crenshaw has proposed that the proliferation of factionalism…may be largely due to the terrorist group’s aversion to internal dissent, or to borrow the parlance of Albert Hirschman they are averse to ‘voice,’ and often regard it as more detrimental than exit.”114

Such debates over legitimacy explain the existence of dissident republicanism, but it does not necessarily explain the persistence of violent dissident behavior. From the perspective of VDR groups violence remains necessary because the political system as it is currently structured leaves no room for alternative forms of nonviolent republicanism. Because the dominant unionist and nationalist parties (the Democratic Unionist Party – DUP - and Sinn Fein, respectively) rarely compete for the same votes, meaning that it is in Sinn Fein’s interest to continue to quash dissent within the nationalist and republican communities. Rather than create opportunities for new republican parties to enter the political system, mainstream republicans cope with dissent

111 Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 Morrison, “Chapter 2: The affirmation of Behan?” To split is not to end: Splits in terrorist organizations, Para. 5
through a process of sidelining that involves “alienation, isolation, character defamation.”\textsuperscript{115} These arguments raise numerous questions about the potential for political reform and debates over whether dissident republicanism could become a viable nonviolent political force. Unfortunately, a full exploration the feasibility of nonviolent options for expressing dissent lies outside the purview of this paper.

In \textit{H4}, I also expand upon Pearlman’s argument to account for the fact that “sometimes breakaway groups will be a group of mates who, when you talk to them, don’t really differ all that much on an ideological level from others.”\textsuperscript{116} As Morrison has noted, “Even when they found out what the real reason for the split was…they sometimes found themselves more in agreement with the side they were supposed to be opposing…but they stayed with these groups because of the trust.”\textsuperscript{117} \textit{H4} considers the possibility that local factions may also use violence as a way of competing among themselves for territory, resources, and power. I base my emphasis on local conditions on the fact that throughout the Troubles “there were a lot of politicized people, but the vast majority were reacting to what was happening in their streets and communities.”\textsuperscript{118} Republican paramilitaries have traditionally organized under a local brigade structure with paramilitaries recruiting neighborhood youth through different social and familial networks. When I asked Seanna Walsh how republicans decided which faction to join during the Troubles, he also noted that republicans aligned with different organizations because “there would be different on the ground circumstances that would affect different areas.”\textsuperscript{119} This

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015
\item Dominic Bryan, director of Queen’s University Belfast Institute of Irish Studies, in discussion with the author, January 2015
\item Ex-IRA/current nonviolent dissident republican #1 in discussion with the author, January 2015
\item Seanna Walsh in discussion with the author, January 2015
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
decentralized system caused paramilitaries to develop stronger identifications with their local brigades than with the larger Republican movement.

In fact, the locus of power in Irish Republicanism has traditionally been at the neighborhood, community level. During the Irish War for Independence, IRA of 1919 was best described as a loose federation of actors. Units organized under local leadership and had little contact with or instruction from any centralized authority. This lack of an overarching leadership structure created patterns of violence that tended to be episodic in nature and caused the war to develop a highly regionalized character. Certain counties, particularly the south and west of the island bore the brunt of the violence for the war years. Interestingly, like in the Troubles and contemporary forms of paramilitary violence, regions with high levels of political violence had high levels of religious homogeneity. It is possible that homogeneous regions, which have denser CNR communities, are more likely to also include traditionally republican and politically active families. The fact that such regions have a larger sample of politically active republicans may increase the likelihood of locals deciding to initiate a skirmish with police or engage in feuds with their neighbors. Such explanations for the tendency of Irish Republican violence to cluster in ethnonationally and religiously homogeneous regions, however, are only exploratory, and the topic warrants future investigation.

What the history of Irish Republicanism does reinforce, however, is the traditional importance of local community and familial ties in inspiring and sustaining republican sentiment and activity. Similarly to how ex-IRA men from the Troubles emphasize the importance of local conditions in determining whether they and their peers joined paramilitaries, in the 1920s, “when they volunteered as IRA men, they often did so as a group of bonded comrades together, local
young men in an actual as much as an imagined community."\(^{120}\) M.L. Smith observes that, central to the division of pro-Treatyites and anti-Treatyites during the Irish Civil War, was “People seem often enough to have chosen a Civil War side because of individual ties to those whom they followed, admired, remembered or honoured…As the nation divided, new actual communities were build more tightly in rival relation to one another, and those often focused on love, friendship and intimate loyalty.”\(^{121}\) In fact, during the Civil War, lines of cleavage and violence often aligned with neighborhood rivalries and mirrored longstanding family feuds. As Hart observes, during the Irish Civil War, “family and faction dictated the course of the IRA split in units all over Ireland…Once again, it was the Brennans against the Barretts in Clare, the Hanniganites against the Manahanites in east Limerick, and the Sweeneys versus the O’Donnells in Donegal as all the old feuds were reignited.”\(^{122}\)

Given the similarities in recruitment and paramilitary structures among Irish republican paramilitaries of the 1920s, the Troubles, and contemporary Northern Ireland, I argue in *H4* that local conditions and parochial interests continue to shape not only the recruitment and maintenance of paramilitaries but also the way these paramilitaries use violence. I base this argument both on the historical precedents mentioned earlier and on the patterns one observes when examining the loci of both violent and nonviolent dissident republican activity. In 2001, Human Rights Watch reported that

Children's right to education was threatened in September in the Ardoyne area of Belfast where local protesters--who identify themselves as Protestant "loyalists" to the U.K.--lobbed a blast bomb, tossed bottles, and shouted sectarian slurs at Holy Cross elementary


\(^{121}\) Ibid., “Chapter 4” Para. 12.

\(^{122}\) Quoted in Stathis Kalyvas’ “The Ontology of "Political Violence": Action and Identity in Civil Wars ontology of violence” *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol 1. No. 3. (Sept. 2003), 480
students, girls aged four to eleven, as they made their way to school. Loyalists issued death threats against some parents.\textsuperscript{123}

Elaine Kane Burns, a mother whose two children attended Holy Cross School at the time, continues to express frustration with the fact that the Holy Cross dispute made it seem as if nothing had changed for Ardoyne residents since the peace process. She notes that “it was still the same faces of the RUC, it was still the same machinery being used…and you saw Loyalists still being able to affect the lives of innocent people.”\textsuperscript{124} \textit{H4} predicts that regions like Ardoyne that where peace “has always been one foot in and one foot out…the slightest thing can ignite at any time” are more likely to become hotbeds of dissent and protest.\textsuperscript{125} Indeed, this same area belongs to the city council district where, in the 2014 Belfast City Council elections, during the twelfth and final vote count the SDLP’s Nichola Mallon won with 1,248 votes against independent candidate, Dee Fennell, who earned 1,087 votes. This election caused great concern in Belfast, as Fennell is a vocal anti-agreement republican who at a recent Easter commemoration argued that armed struggle remained ‘legitimate’ in 2015. He claimed that “We are occupied by a foreign government, a foreign army and her agencies. The use of armed struggle to oppose this is our right…the important thing is to join the IRA. As you leave here today, ask yourself is it enough to support republicanism or could you be a more active republican?”\textsuperscript{126}

Fennell’s electoral performance evinces the influence local conditions continue to have on local Northern Irish politics and in some ways is unsurprising given the local politics of Ardoyne. When asked about VDR paramilitaries, Burns commented that the community tends to

\textsuperscript{124} Elaine Burns in discussion with the author, January 2015
\textsuperscript{125} Elaine Burns in discussion with the author, January 2015
support anti-agreement people like Fennell and members of VDR groups who are “there to lobby and highlight a strategy around addressing social need where they see the main parties have kind of ignored…replicating what the IRA did” and creating parallel structures through which they might fulfill community needs. The local politics of Ardoyne reinforce how “It’s important to know why people chose which side they went on and often times these decisions aren’t made because of the reasoning of the splits. At the time…people are making decisions because of what they’re hearing on the ground because of the people they trust themselves in their local neighborhoods.”

Conclusion

Currently, most data-driven projects on conflict mapping have focused on fatalities or incidences of terrorism. This tendency is largely related to the availability of data. I argue, however, that focusing on this type of data is no longer sufficient given the combination of twenty-first century data analysis techniques and contemporary theories about how armed nonstate groups organize. Many studies have examined the relationship between Troubles-related fatalities and either spatial segregation between Catholic and Protestant community members or deprivation levels across Northern Ireland; none of these studies, however, have examined patterns of violence during ceasefires and peace processes specifically, nor have they compared these patterns with patterns of violence outside of periods of political negotiation. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, spatial analysis of political violence holds great potential to clarify the dynamics of post-accord political violence. To do this requires more refined data collection strategies, a critical reevaluation of how to measure political violence, and a concerted effort to understand local politics not only between but also within factions and organizations.

127 Elaine Burns in discussion with the author, January 2015
128 “Dissident Irish Republicans and Ulrich Beck”
Based on the results of my quantitative and qualitative analyses, I hypothesize that political negotiations provide windows of opportunity for actors to capitalize on tensions that predate the peace process. Consequently, I would expect the divisions that emerge during peace processes to follow lines of cleavage that are consistent across periods of political negotiation and periods without great emphasis on political avenues for change. My windows of opportunity thesis suggests that higher frequencies of internal violence would accompany periods of political negotiation, but I would not expect patterns of internal violence, specifically cases of inter-factional, internal violence, to change in terms of spatial distribution, target types, and attack forms during peace processes.

While one might initially expect to see more signs of inter-group conflict during periods of political negotiation, consistency of the targets, types of attacks, and spatial distribution suggests that lines of division within a movement have not changed with the introduction of a peace process. Instead, these preexisting differences have gained salience; therefore increasing the frequency with which violence occurs within a movement as factions compete militarily or constituents of one faction begin to align themselves with a competing faction. In contrast, if my hypothesis is incorrect and factionalism emerges out of peace processes, it would be reasonable to expect the violence that emerges during these periods to reflect new lines of division and, therefore, to be analytically distinct from earlier forms of internal violence.
CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

Revisiting Explanations for CPV

I have introduced four competing explanations for why armed nonstate actors continue to use CPV: $H_1$ (security dilemma), $H_2$ (spoiling behavior), $H_3$ (political monopolies over the use of force), and $H_4$ (windows of opportunity/vulnerability). When contrasting these hypotheses, it becomes clear the ways in which $H_4$ differs from other explanations for the continued use of CPV.

First, peace processes serve a notably different function in $H_1$ and $H_2$ from $H_4$. Under $H_1$ and $H_2$, peace processes divide those within a movement who are willing to compromise and negotiate (moderates) from their hardline advocates of physical force and ideological purity (militants). This is the same behavior $H_3$ predicts in the case of organizations with strong leadership; however $H_3$ also predicts that disagreement over peace processes may catalyze less well organized groups to break into subgroups organized around the strongest local leaders, who – if they happen to be motivated by greed rather than political ideology – will use the language of agreement or opposition to a peace process to consolidate their control over the faction. $H_4$ suggests that peace processes weaken the common interest among coalition allies. This loss of a common interest alters nonstate actors’ calculus in so far as it changes, highlights, or allows for an opportunity to alter inequities within a movement’s internal balance of power.

While $H_1$ and $H_2$ do not reject the notion that factionalization occurs outside periods of political negotiation, they do imply that, once a peace process is introduced, the process’s perceived legitimacy becomes the determinant of whether organizations use violent or nonviolent strategies. In contrast, $H_4$ contends that, because peace negotiations weaken the
common interest among factions, the divisions that emerge follow lines of cleavage predating the ceasefire or peace process.

A second difference among the hypotheses is the causal mechanisms behind factionalization and the continued use of force. Under $H1$, a crisis of credibility drives factionalization, while a desire to undermine the peace process compels actors to use violence according to $H2$. Under $H4$, violence occurs because actors see opportunities to shift the balance of power within a movement. Armed nonstate actors that continue using violence may, in fact, use force as a way to weaken a dominant faction or to win a seat at the negotiating table independently of the wider movement. Again, while $H3$ makes no direct mention of peace processes, one can infer that this hypothesis involves a hybrid of the patterns predicted by the other three: organizations with strong leadership will behave the way $H1$ or $H2$ predicts, while organizations with weak leadership may experience higher levels of fractionalization when the central leadership structure cannot effectively set an agenda.

Finally, all four hypotheses predict different behavior from armed nonstate actors after the introduction of a peace process. According to $H1$, post-peace process violence will be reactionary and/or defensive, reflecting a sense of mistrust among actors. Incidents will largely involve inter-movement or inter-factional violence. Divisions within factions will generally reflect different degrees of confidence in the peace process or political actors. Under $H2$, “rogue” or “fringe” actors will use violence to create uncertainty, fear, and mistrust or to demonstrate that political negotiations will not bring security; factionalization reflects differences relevant to the peace negotiations. $H3$ argues that patterns of violence will change based on leadership’s strength and organization’s group cohesion. Well-organized groups with strong leadership will deploy violence against
politically strategic targets; factionalization will reflect different political visions; less well-organized groups may break into factions or use force in a seemingly random or apolitical fashion. Like $H_3, H_4$ argues that old rivalries emerge during periods of political negotiation; however $H_4$ allows for the possibility that the rivalries may or may not be political in nature, focusing – instead – on broader issues of the balance of both political and economic power within and among factions. Lines of division that emerge will tend to follow preexisting cleavages and will reflect different (but not exclusively political) interests. Where interests are political, violence will mirror patterns predicted by $H_3$. Consequently, in some cases paramilitaries may take hardline positions or align with militant elements of a movement in order to weaken their rivals rather than because these factions themselves hold radical or hardline views.

My study revealed evidence that was consistently at odds with $H_1$ and $H_2$, most notably the consistency in patterns of violence before and after the peace process. Adopting a view of peace processes as the catalysts rather than the causes of division and CPV helps to explain these trends. While attempts to systematically test $H_3$ and $H_4$ revealed weaknesses in the way we collect and process data about political violence, preliminary tests and qualitative analyses provided evidence most consistent with $H_4$. Some incidences of violence may be part of larger campaigns to undermine and disrupt peace talks, but I contend that it is also necessary to examine factionalization as a consequence of rivalries and parochial interests that pre-date any attempt to negotiate political settlements. I propose that, rather than creating new divisions within coalitional forces and movements, peace processes open windows of opportunity during which political and military elites can exploit existing divisions and consolidate power dynamics. Consequently, many cases of
what is commonly considered “spoiling behavior” may have less to do with disagreements over the actual participation in or rejection of political negotiations and more to do with internal group dynamics, intra-movement politics, and micro-level, parochial interests among local political and military leaders. Adopting this more nuanced vision of CPV not only more accurately predicts the types of violence one observes in Northern Ireland but also aligns more closely with contemporary understandings of substate organizations as nonunitary actors.

Moving Forward

Studying dissident republicanism complicates our understanding of ‘spoiler’ violence. It casts dissidents not as irrational, blood-thirsty “men of war” but rather as political actors capable of negotiation and political engagement but alienated by dominant actors. In the case of Northern Irish republicanism, “spoilers” were a consequence of elite-negotiated peace and the fact that mainstream republicanism left no room for dissent. If a dominant faction holds too great a monopoly over the movement’s leadership and agenda it essentially ‘squeezes’ out certain elements. The process of delegitimizing these elements creates ‘spoilers.’ One can see evidence of this in the tiered system of membership within most dissident organizations: founding, alienated elites/”old guard” and the young new members without any political education who are frustrated with their existence and opportunities.

Studying the reasons that coalitions disintegrate may shed light on how to rebuild alliances among factions or forge new coalitions when preparing to establish transitional governance structures. Examining factionalization as a consequence of internal competition among leaders rather than external pressure to either accept or reject a peace process suggests a model of paramilitary and substate military organization in which
elites coopt and exploit for their own gain legitimate grievances that a population holds. If not peace negotiations but rather chances for leaders to consolidate power cause organizations to split into factions, it is possible to imagine new or unconventional methods of buying off spoiler opposition movements or encouraging these groups to participate in political settlements.

Internal dynamics of rebel groups are all the more important because, as the case of Northern Ireland shows, negotiating peace and transitional governance “depended ultimately on the leaders involved...The key challenge for the Government was to identify the positive elements within the opposing communities and to encourage and sustain them...and understanding the pressures on them from within their own movement or party and from outside.”\(^\text{129}\) My hypothesis conceptualizes actors like “republicans” or “loyalists” not as cohesive movements that may split in the face of disagreement but rather as heterogeneous assemblies whose constituent parts temporarily set aside their differences in the interest of achieving some form of collective action. It is still necessary to develop a more complete understanding of how \(H3\) and \(H4\) apply differently at the elite level and among the rank and file, if at all. This basic reframing of the ‘spoiler’ debate, however, offers a promising basis for theory building not only about current threat levels from dissident republican or loyalist paramilitaries but also in regards to coalitions and factions about which we have little intelligence. In the face of information deficits regarding issues like the Syrian opposition movements, theorists can benefit from conducting in-depth case studies and comparative analyses of the ways paramilitary organizations have collaborated, divided, and operated in other civil wars.

\(^{129}\text{Hain}\)
This is not to reject all current arguments about spoiling behavior as violence directed towards undermining peace processes; rather I hope to complicate discussions of political violence during periods of political negotiation by proposing an alternative model through which we might understand patterns of paramilitary violence and organization.

Northern Ireland has been described as having an “imperfect peace.” The question remains, however, what does this ‘imperfect peace’ look like and what does it mean for the definition and durability of peace? John Galtung identified two forms of peace: positive peace, or the absence of structural violence (cases in which there is no actor directly committing violence); and negative peace, the absence of personal violence (violence committed by an actor). The peace of the Belfast Agreement reflects neither positive nor negative peace, yet it is undeniable that – for the majority of Northern Ireland, life has dramatically improved since 1998. In a conversation this past summer, community worker Joe O’Donnell from the Belfast Interface Project noted that “for about 80% of the people here, Northern Ireland is a post-conflict society, but for that last 20%, they are still living very much in conflict.” Elaine Burns echoed this sentiment when, in reflecting on the Good Friday Agreement, she observed that “I think we did expect that we would see massive change…but those things in reality did not come to Ardoyne…What has been the dividend to people who suffered the most?...Nothing has really changed.” That patterns of violence do not change after the introduction of a peace process indicates that peace processes do not alter the nature of political violence. This continuity in

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132 Joe O’Donnell in discussion with the author, June 2014
133 Elaine Burns in discussion with the author, January 2015
patterns of violence implies that what changes is not the type of violence that occurs but rather the way people categorize it. Continuity also highlights the importance of studying whether rebranding and delegitimizing violence truly makes for an equitable and durable peace.

The process and strategies of delegitimizing violence also require further exploration. After 1998, the British government and Northern Irish state began seeing returns on what had been a decades-long project: the criminalization of political violence in Northern Ireland. One of the most famous turning points in the Troubles was the election of Bobby Sands as a Westminster MP. “The sheer scale of Sands’ victory stunned Margaret Thatcher’s government. His 30,000 votes gave the lie to the prime minister’s scathing dismissal of the IRA prisoners” as criminals and thugs acting without any public support. With the introduction of the Belfast Agreement and the rebranding of Northern Ireland’s police service, what were formerly acts of war and political violence are now considered ‘anti-social behavior’ and acts of crime.

While in retrospect many scholars consider Mrs. Thatcher’s uncompromising stance on the criminal status of IRA prisoners a mistake that prolonged cycles of violence, it is worth investigating this claim further. If, in fact, the peace of the Belfast Agreement is not the absence of personal or structural violence but rather the delegitimization and criminalization of armed struggle, does this vindicate Mrs. Thatcher’s overall strategy of counterinsurgency? Have recent efforts to delegitimize violence succeeded where Mrs. Thatcher’s counterinsurgency failed not because the grand strategy itself has changed but rather because authorities adapted the tactics through which they pursued this strategy?

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Finally, what are the additional consequences of a counterinsurgency strategy and definition of peace that focuses on delegitimizing rather than eradicating violence? This study has demonstrated the ways that, from a scholarly perspective, strategies of delegitimization make it more difficult to accurately judge the levels of political violence occurring in an allegedly post-conflict society. From a more practical standpoint, however, if political violence remains an active but largely unrecognized part of life for many in Northern Ireland, how can the state work to manage violence and protect its citizens? From the perspective of violent dissident republicans, the criminalization and delegitimization of armed struggle silence dissent from mainstream republicanism because the political system leaves no room for plurality within the republican-nationalist camp. Is there a way of recognizing legitimate political grievances while delegitimizing the tactics used to express these frustrations?

In response to questions about why he continues to report on Northern Ireland, a conflict many believe to have been sorted after the 1998 GFA, longtime Troubles journalist Peter Taylor notes that “All sorted it is not. In some places normality seems a veneer to hide the powerful undercurrents of bitterness and resentment that have never gone away.” This study has only scratched the surface of the ways in which it is practically, theoretically and intellectually beneficial to continue studying cases like Northern Ireland. It is only through more rigorous exploration of existing areas of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction that scholars and practitioners alike will be prepared to more effectively address future situations involving substate warfare and armed nonstate actors.

\[Who\ Won\ the\ War?\]


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