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The "Troubles:" Northern Irish Political Contention from Sunningdale to the Good Friday Agreement

Daniel J. Foley

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The "Troubles:" Northern Irish Political Contention from Sunningdale to the Good Friday Agreement

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Daniel J. Foley
Candidate for Bachelor of Arts Degree
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Capstone Project Advisor: _____
Advisor Title & Name

Capstone Project Reader: _____
Reader Title & Name

Honors Director: _____
Stephen Kuusisto, Director

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Abstract

This paper looks to answer the question: Can the contentious politics thesis of Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly explain why the Good Friday Agreement (1998) (GFA) successfully produced a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, when the Sunningdale (1973) and the Anglo-Irish (1985) agreements failed to do so? I set out to study the buildup and aftermath of each agreement and subsequently examine each through the lens of the contentious politics thesis, searching for causal mechanisms and processes that explain the success of the GFA. The purpose of the contentious politics thesis is not to examine various forms of contention (i.e. coups, civil wars, revolutions) one by one and make broad generalizations for each of them. Quite the opposite; the goal is to "identify parallels in the ways that apparently disparate forms of contention work, and show how their differences result from varying combinations and sequences of mechanisms in contrasting regime environments" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). In place of the "static, single-actor models (including their own) that have prevailed in the field of contentious politics," McAdam, Tarrrow, and Tilly identify causal mechanisms and processes that recur across a wide-range of contentious politics and "shift the focus of analysis to dynamic interaction."

The main method I used for this work was researching books and articles written on the subject. This includes primary source documents, in particular the memoirs of people participating in the events discussed and newspaper articles published at the time. The books and articles generally fell into two categories: the historical record and material related to the contentious politics thesis. McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow's *Dynamics of Contention* and Tilly and Tarrow's *Contentious Politics* were essential for the identification of the causal mechanisms and processes. Paul Dixon's *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace* provided me with a highly accessible and detailed history of the "Troubles." With the large amount of information available on Northern Ireland, combined with the works of McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow, research was the best and most appropriate method for completing my Capstone Project.

I argue that the contentious politics thesis furthers our understanding of the triumphs and failures of each agreement and helps explain why it took three decades to broker a lasting peace. As I demonstrate, recognizing the causal mechanisms and processes improves our comprehension of how each agreement came into existence and why the GFA was the only one to experience long-term success. The *object shift* by the nationalist community, the *co-optation* of Sinn Féin into the peace talks, and the *identity shift* by the Republic of Ireland are some examples of the causal mechanisms and processes that distinguished the GFA from Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I also apply the thesis to the Bosnian War (1992-95) to exemplify how it allows us to identify causal mechanisms and processes in both Bosnia and Northern Ireland and subsequently critically compare the two dissimilar conflicts.

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my readers, Professor Terry Northrup and Political Science Ph.D. student Meagan Stark. They both took time out of their busy schedules to assist me with this project and provided me with crucial outsider perspectives on my work. This allowed me to construct my Capstone in a more accessible manner for those not familiar with the subject matter. I am very grateful for all their assistance and hope these few words properly express this gratitude. I would next like to thank my family, who supported me throughout my academic career. It is thanks to my parents that I possess the drive and work ethic to complete a project like this. I cannot thank them enough for all the support and encouragement they have given me throughout the years. I would also like to thank Daniel Connors, Ryan Gertz, Frank Gervasio, Edward McLaughlin, and Daniel Rider. These men have been my close friends for many years and have always been willing to lend an ear when I needed to discuss either this work or anything else. To the many professors I had class with during my four years at Syracuse University, I am extremely thankful. They helped me improve my writing, analytical skills, and commitment to quality work, all of which were necessary to finish this Capstone. In particular, Professor Michael Ebner helped me a great deal. I had the pleasure of taking three classes with him and I greatly appreciate the time he spent going over every paper I wrote to help advance my writing skills.

Finally, I would like to thank my advisor for this project and for most of my time at Syracuse University, Professor Gavan Duffy. Professor Duffy has been my advisor since I joined the Honors program in the spring of 2009. I took his honors section of PSC 129 that semester and he always pushed me to produce the best possible work. I struggled to adapt to Professor Duffy's teaching style and expectations, and received my lowest grade in college in that class. This only inspired me to work harder because I knew I could do better. I came to Professor Duffy last spring to discuss potential ideas for my Capstone. I knew I wanted to study political conflict in Ireland, but I lacked a firm idea. He suggested I take his graduate course on political conflict as an independent study for political science. In that class, I learned about the contentious politics thesis for the first time and after several discussions with Professor Duffy, I finally had a solid idea for my Capstone. As my undergraduate career concludes, I look back and fully appreciate all the times he pushed me to take a more difficult class, apply for a scholarship, and strive to produce my best possible work. Without him, this Capstone would not exist. For this and all the guidance over the past three years, I am exceedingly grateful.

Introduction

   The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the Sunningdale, the Anglo-Irish, and the Good Friday Agreements of Northern Ireland through the lens of the contentious politics thesis of Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. The Sunningdale, Anglo-Irish, and Good Friday Agreements emerged during the course of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland and all strove to engineer a peace between the feuding nationalist and unionist communities. This work argues that the contentious politics thesis furthers our understanding of the triumphs and failures of each agreement and helps explain why it took three decades to broker a lasting peace. The paper will first provide an introduction to the contentious politics thesis, then a concise summary of Ireland's contentious history from 1600 to the division of Ireland into North and South in 1922. Next, it will present a brief summary of the background and general reaction to each agreement, followed by the examination of the similarities and differences of the settlements, and then it will identify causal mechanisms and processes in the build up and aftermath of each agreement to demonstrate the contentious politics thesis' dynamic and progressive approach to studying contentious politics. Finally, it provides a section that compares the Bosnian War (1992-95) to the "Troubles" to help illustrate how the same causal mechanisms and processes can be identified in two distinct conflicts and ends with my conclusions.[1] As I will demonstrate, recognizing the causal mechanisms and processes improves our comprehension of

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[1] To make clear what mechanisms and processes are being discussed, I italicize them throughout the text. A full glossary for the mechanisms and processes discussed is available at the back of this work in Appendix 1. Also included is a list of the abbreviations used throughout the work. This is in Appendix 2.

how each agreement came into existence and why the Good Friday Agreement was the only one to experience long-term success.

Figure 1: Ireland (left) and Northern Ireland. *Source:* **U.S. Department of State, "Ireland Country Specific Information" (left picture). Infoplease.com, "Map: United Kingdom" (right picture).**

The Contentious Politics Thesis

McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly developed the contentious politics thesis after continual frustration with the compartmentalization of studies concerning political struggle. In place of the "static, single-actor models (including their own) that have prevailed in the field," they identify causal mechanisms and processes that recur across a wide-range of contentious politics and "shift the focus of analysis to dynamic interaction" (2001). This is not a theory, for as Tilly and Tarrow state in their book *Contentious Politics,* "the contentious politics approach looks deliberately for similarities in cause-effect relationships across the wide range of political struggles without aiming for general laws that govern all of politics"

(2007). The purpose of the thesis is not to examine various forms of contention (i.e. coups, civil wars, revolutions) one by one and make broad generalizations for each of them. Quite the opposite, the goal is to "identify parallels in the ways that apparently disparate forms of contention work, and show how their differences result from varying combinations and sequences of mechanisms in contrasting regime environments" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). The thesis allows us to recognize trends amid various types of conflicts. It argues that, though contentious situations exist on a wide spectrum, similar causal mechanisms and processes are present in all of them, which helps to explain how contentious events occur. I use the conflict in Northern Ireland as a case study to test the thesis and determine if identifying causal mechanisms and processes in the buildup and aftermath of each agreement can explain why the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was the only one to experience relatively long-term success. Tilly and Tarrow define mechanisms as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (2007). Mechanisms compound into processes, which "are regular combinations and sequences of mechanisms that produce similar transformations of those elements" (2007). As I illustrate below, recognizing causal mechanisms and processes that occurred during the buildup and aftermath of the GFA does explain why it held up compared to the previous two agreements. The *object shift* by the nationalist community, the *co-optation* of Sinn Féin into the peace talks, and the *identity shift* by the Republic of Ireland are some examples of the causal mechanisms and

processes that I discuss at length that help clarify what distinguished the GFA from Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA).

Historical Background

The long contentious history between the British and Irish dates back to the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169. Over 800 years later Ireland is still divided between the British ruled North and an Irish Republic in the South. Although the Normans first invaded Ireland in 1169, the Irish lived relatively undisturbed until the 17th Century. Under James I (r.1603-1625) the colonization of Ireland began, forcing native Irish off their land to make way for colonists from Great Britain (Ellis, 1975). Prior to James' rule colonists tended to assimilate with the Irish, rather than forcibly remove them. In 1641, amidst the schism between Charles I and Parliament, the Irish rebelled to re-claim the land taken from them by colonists (Ellis, 1975). The Irish clans formed the Irish Catholic Confederacy in 1642, which recognized the king as head of state but supported measures to end Ireland's subservient position to Britain. However, the Confederacy was unable to reach an agreement with Charles before he was captured in 1648 and the Parliamentary forces vowed to crush the Irish Confederacy (Ellis, 1975). Oliver Cromwell led a brutal invasion of Ireland, slaughtering whole villages and hunting down Catholic priests. In 1652 Charles Fleetwood, the Commander-in-Chief of Ireland, ordered all Irish to move the far west province of Connaught or County Clare in the southwest under pain of death. In January 1653, Catholicism was banned in Ireland and in April of that year the last Irish garrison surrendered

to Cromwell's forces. Irish land was distributed to soldiers leaving Cromwell's army, while thousands of Irish were forcibly deported to British plantations in Barbados (Ellis 1975). The British constructed a series of forts around Connaught and Clare to keep those Irish who remained inside. Cromwell died in 1658 and the monarchy was restored in 1660, but the plight of the Irish was just beginning.

The penal laws, which discriminated against the Irish Catholic population, took full effect under William and Mary. These laws, including the ban of Catholics from political participation, remained an issue of contention in Ireland well into the 19th Century. In May 1798, inspired by the French Revolution, Wolfe Tone led an uprising of the United Irishmen against British rule. The British successfully arrested several of the United Irishmen's leaders prior to the revolt and the French aid they were relying on did not arrive (Beckett, 1966). The revolt failed quickly across Ireland and when the French did arrive in August, they experienced brief success before capitulating to British forces. Tone was captured and found guilty of high treason, but committed suicide in prison before his execution. Tone strove for an independent Ireland, but he failed to rally the Irish people to his cause and was ultimately defeated by his lack of support. However, he would be glorified by future generations when the fight for Irish independence finally came to fruition (Beckett, 1966). After the failure of Tone's rebellion, the British took advantage of Irish vulnerability and passed legislation bringing Ireland into political union with Great Britain. The Act of Union took affect on January 1, 1801, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

The political leadership of Daniel O'Connell, the Great Famine, and the Home Rule movement led by Charles Steward Parnell were the key Irish events of the 19th Century. During the first thirty odd years of the Union, there was very little nationalist activity in Ireland. Catholic Emancipation was the only issue to produce significant unity among the Irish population. Daniel O'Connell emerged as the leader of the movement, founding the Catholic Association in May 1823, which promoted rights for Catholics and worked to defend and forward their interests in all aspects of life (Beckett, 1966). O'Connell successfully rallied widespread support by lowering the membership fee for the Association to one penny a month, allowing the Catholic poor (the majority of Catholics at the time) to join. With overwhelming support in the Catholic community, though many could not vote because they were not property-owners, Emancipation candidates stood for the Westminster election in 1826. O'Connell ran for a seat in county Clare in 1828 and won easily (Beckett, 1966). With the pressure mounting, the government passed the Emancipation Act in 1829, allowing members of all Christian faiths to sit in Parliament. O'Connell became the first Roman Catholic to sit in Parliament, while simultaneously improving the lives of Catholics throughout the United Kingdom. After achieving emancipation, O'Connell spent much of his long career fighting for the repeal of the Union between Ireland and Great Britain. During the push for repeal, O'Connell came into conflict with the "Young Ireland" movement, romantic nationalists that clashed with O'Connell's pragmatism and willingness to compromise. Young Ireland would suffer from their clashes with O'Connell and faded into obscurity by the 1850s, however their

spirit would live on to inspire the militant nationalists of the 1916 Easter Rising (Beckett, 1966). O'Connell's push for repeal never came to fruition, with the Union still firmly in place at the time of his death in 1847. O'Connell will forever be renowned in Irish history for effectively using the power of mass opinion, teaching the Catholic majority to regard itself as the Irish nation, and building a foundation for the future push for Irish independence (Beckett, 1966).

In 1846, the potato blight hit Ireland with tremendous force, causing a total crop failure. Four million people faced starvation, yet the government did little to prevent the devastation. Although, in theory, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, most politicians viewed it as a separate entity and refused to offer significant aid (Beckett, 1966). However, by January 1847, the government realized they had to act and set up programs that were feeding three million people daily by August. Accompanying the famine was disease and emigration. With little available land, non-eldest children emigrated en mass, while disease ravaged many of those who stayed behind. In the end, approximately one million people would die due to effects of the famine and Ireland's population would be in continuous decline for the rest of the 19th Century (Beckett, 1966). The Great Famine, besides its physical impact, forged a new bitterness among the Irish towards the entire political system, for the British government exported grain and beef from Ireland throughout the famine, while hundreds of thousands died of starvation. This bitterness was particularly strong amongst the Irish diaspora, who would subsequently provide financial backing for Irish nationalists throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The Home Rule movement rose to prominence in the late 1860s under the leadership of Isaac Butt. Butt helped found the Home Government Association (changed to Home Rule League in 1873) in 1870 and would lead the Home Rule Party at Westminster after they won a surprising 59 seats in 1874 (Beckett, 1966). The Home Rule party advocated the devolution of powers to the Irish people and the repeal of the Act of Union of 1800 that united Ireland with Great Britain, but supported the British monarch as head of state. Butt's conservative nature and willingness to work with the government caused a decline in his popularity. Charles Stewart Parnell rose to prominence at his expense. Parnell used obstructionist tactics in Parliament. He attempted to prevent the government from functioning until it addressed the Irish issue. These tactics were overwhelmingly popular. After Butt's death in 1879, Parnell would quickly assume the party's leadership (Beckett, 1966). After the murder of the Chief Secretary and Undersecretary for Ireland in Dublin by radical Irish nationalists, Parnell briefly retired from politics in 1882 and openly condemned the murderers in his last parliamentary session. His brief respite greatly raised his prestige in both Britain and Ireland and after he was convinced to return to political life, he commanded greater popular support than before (Beckett, 1966). Despite the efforts of Parnell and William Gladstone, the Liberal Party leader, a Home Rule bill was defeated by a combination of the Conservatives and Liberal dissenters in the summer of 1886. By 1890, Home Rule seemed inevitable, with Parnell's popularity continually on the rise. However, the Home Rule effort collapsed after Parnell was caught up in a scandal involving the wife of one of his subordinates. Both the

Liberals and his party called for his resignation, but he refused and started a vigorous campaign across Ireland. Parnell overworked himself and collapsed in October 1891. He died a few days later, at age 45. The Home Rule party disintegrated soon afterwards opening the way for more radical, militant nationalists, who remembered Parnell not for his career in Parliament but his last campaign, when he turned his back on the British political system (Beckett, 1966).

For the next 15 years Parliament continued to debate Home Rule, but failed to pass a bill prior to the start of the First World War. During this period militant organizations began forming in the Protestant dominated Ulster region. The Protestants of the Ulster province adamantly opposed the Home Rule movement and prepared to fight to defend the Union. In response, nationalist groups began to arm themselves and tensions almost broke into civil war, but the start of World War 1 pushed the Home Rule decision off the government's agenda (Beckett, 1966). Militant nationalists saw the war as an opportunity to free Ireland from a distracted British government. The insurrection took place on Easter Monday, 1916 in Dublin. It lasted less than a week and the British Army arrested, court martialed, found guilty and executed its leaders. Prior to the executions, there was very little support for the rebellion; however, the leaders quickly became martyrs in the eyes of most Irish, creating a resurgence of opposition to the government (Beckett, 1966). In December 1919, the recently elected Irish Members of Parliament met in Dublin and declared an Irish Republic. Soon, a full-scale guerilla war broke out between the newly formed

Irish Republican Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary, composed of mainly ex-army officers. The conflict was extremely brutal. Both sides lacked discipline and used terror tactics. By July 1921, Prime Minister Lloyd George convinced Eamon de Valera, the leader of the rebellion, to meet and discuss peace. The talks continued through December, but de Valera left in October, leaving the discussions to subordinates. Lloyd George successfully pressures the Irish delegation to sign a treaty on 6 December 1921, which established the Irish Free State, a self-governing dominion within the British Empire (Beckett, 1966). Six counties of the province of Ulster were excluded from the agreement, reflecting their desire to remain part of the United Kingdom. After intense debate, the Irish parliament approved the treaty by a slim margin. The opposition, led by de Valera, rearmed and a civil war broke out between the new forces of the Irish Free State and their former comrades who opposed the treaty. The Irish Constitution came into force in December 1922, officially transferring power to Dublin. The six counties of Ulster executed their ability to opt out of the Irish Free State, creating the self-ruling Northern Ireland and a division that continues today. In May 1923, de Valera called for a ceasefire, ending the civil war (Beckett, 1966). For the next 50 years, the Protestant-controlled Parliament of Northern Ireland ran the country, until the Troubles broke out in the late 1960s. The British government assumed direct rule of Northern Ireland in March 1972.

Background and Comparison of the Three Agreements

The Sunningdale Agreement emerged from the turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Following the introduction of the Civil Rights movement in 1968, violent clashes took place between protestors and police. In an early attempt to quell the violence, the British political parties, Conservative and Labour, agreed to form a bipartisan policy towards Northern Ireland, stressing the promotion of 'moderate' forces (Dixon, 2008). The two parties also contemplated radical action, including a united Ireland as a solution to the increasing violence, but agreed that it could only happen with the consent of the people (Dixon, 2008). After it quickly became evident that government reforms were failing and violence was still on the rise, the British government deployed the army to maintain order. The army's presence produced an *escalation* in violence, particularly after they began patrolling nationalist neighborhoods (Dixon, 2008). In August 1971, the government implemented an internment policy, permitting the arrest and indefinite internment of anyone suspected of association with paramilitary groups (Dixon, 2008). The police used the policy to discriminate against nationalists, evident by the fact the first loyalist paramilitary was not interned until February 1973 (Dixon, 2008).

Following the "Bloody Sunday" incident on January 30, 1972, during which 13 protestors were shot and killed by British troops, the British government dissolved the Northern Ireland government and instituted direct rule from London (Dixon, 2008). The government faced a number of new challenges at this time, including: the rise in political standing of loyalist extremists like Ian Paisley, the

leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP); a *radicalization* of the nationalist community; a resurgence of Irish Republican Army (IRA) violence and a continuation of loyalist violence; and a worsening of relations between nationalists and the British army (Wolff, 2001). The initial peace process began shortly after the implementation of direct rule, when the British government entered into secret talks with the IRA; however, the IRA was convinced that 1972 was the 'year of victory' and little came from the talks (Dixon, 2008). The government went ahead with the peace process, publishing a White Paper, *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals*, in March 1973 acknowledging the Republic of Ireland's legitimate interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland and laying the groundwork for a new Northern Ireland Assembly, with plans for elections in June 1973 (Dixon, 2008). The election results demonstrated that the government's promotion of the moderates failed, with the majority of the votes split between pro-White Paper and anti-White Paper unionists and the newly emerged nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)[2] (Dixon, 2008).

The Sunningdale talks took place December 6 through December 9, 1973, to decide the nature of the Irish Republic's role in Northern Ireland and to establish the political structure of the power-sharing executive (Dixon, 2008). The talks concluded in an agreement to establish a Northern Irish Assembly, with the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Alliance Party forming a coalition and serving as the first power-sharing executive (Wolff, 2001). The Alliance Party is the only party in Northern Ireland that attracts significant cross-community support. They denounce the sectarian politics, refuse to designate themselves as nationalist or

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[2] See Appendix 3 for graph of the 1973 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections

unionist, and believe there can be no constitutional change without the consent of the people (Dixon, 2008). The Alliance Party has had limited success at the polls, never attaining greater than 20 percent of the vote. Much of the party's support comes from the middle class and its principal electoral rivals have been the SDLP and UUP (Dixon, 2008). The Alliance Party also represents business interests; part of the reason they advocated the cessation of the violence was it hurt Northern Ireland's business development. The agreement went into effect on January 1, 1974, but was quickly undermined by a vote to reject the agreement by the governing body of the UUP, the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) (Dixon, 2008). Reaction to the agreement reflected the sectarian divide, with nationalists generally in favor and unionists opposed. Unionist opposition continued to grow throughout the early months of 1974, ultimately bringing down the power-sharing executive in May, when the Ulster Worker's Council (UWC) called for a general strike that lasted 14 days paralyzing Northern Ireland. The executive possessed little power to put down the strike, forcing the British government to reinstate direct rule, officially ending the power-sharing experiment.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement developed in the early 1980s when the Conservatives, now securely in power in the British Parliament, saw an opportunity to halt the rising influence of Sinn Féín and increase political stability. After the collapse of the Sunningdale Agreement, formal discussion about power-sharing halted until 1979. In the 1979 general election, the Conservatives won a large majority in the British Parliament, ending the need to gain the support of the UUP at Westminster and allowing power-sharing talks to

start again (Dixon, 2008). The new Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, started the

Atkins Initiative shortly after the election, which promoted power-sharing and

devolution in Northern Ireland; the talks also considered an Irish dimension,

which was subsequently promoted through the Anglo-Irish process from 1980

onwards (Dixon, 2008). The Atkins Initiative collapsed in November 1980, but

the following month Thatcher led a delegation of British politicians to Dublin for

an Anglo-Irish summit. Thatcher sought to improve the security situation and

cross-border cooperation between the two states in the fight against terrorism and

she publically acknowledged the Republic's interest in Northern Ireland. The

rapid growth of support for Sinn Féin in the north scared the Irish government

because if the support spread to the Republic it had the potential to undermine

their authority. To halt Sinn Féin's advance and demonstrate the advantages of

constitutional nationalism the Irish government participated in the talks. The

central idea behind the Anglo-Irish Agreement was a firm and official recognition

of the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland by the Irish government

as a foundation from which they could be given systematic and institutionalized

influence on British decision-making without compromising British sovereignty

(Dixon, 2008).

The governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement on November 15, 1985. It formally established

inter-state cooperation, was a formal notice to the unionist community that the

consent policy remained intact, but they had no veto over policy in Northern

Ireland, and formalized the strategy to bind the Republic to a constitutional mode

of reunification (O'Leary, 2004a). The AIA also established the British-Irish

Intergovernmental Conference, to meet regularly, in which the Republic's

delegation would represent and advocate the positions of the nationalists in the

north (Dixon, 2008). This served as an official channel for the nationalists to

negotiate with the British government. Like the Sunningdale Agreement, reaction

to the AIA was generally positive among nationalists and negative among

unionists. The republicans condemned the AIA because the increased security

measures meant to destroy the IRA, but the nationalist community at large

welcomed it, especially since the SDLP played a leading role in its creation

(Dixon, 2008). Unionist reaction was extremely negative for three main reasons:

(1) the AIA did not define the "current status" of Northern Ireland as part of the

United Kingdom; (2) it discouraged the SDLP from engaging in power-sharing

because all their demands were met; (3) and the unionists were not consulted by

the British government prior to the signing of the AIA (Dixon, 2008). The

Unionist MPs, in protest of the AIA, resigned their seats at Westminster, forcing a

by-election for the Northern Irish seats in the U.K. Parliament. The election

would indirectly be a referendum on the AIA; anti-AIA candidates received 43

percent of the vote (Dixon, 2008).

By February 1986, the leaders of the UUP and DUP were in talks with

Thatcher over the AIA. The leaders agreed to contemplate devolution if Thatcher

suspended the AIA and reached an understanding that the government would

consult them in the future about policies in Northern Ireland. However, after

returning home, radical supporters of the UUP and DUP forced the leaders to

retreat and proclaim an end of discussions with Thatcher until the destruction of the AIA (Dixon, 2008). The unionist leaders struggled to maintain order and riots broke out in the spring of 1986; this backtracking revealed the immense constraints under which unionist politicians were operating (Dixon, 2008). A 1989 review of the AIA reported 'disappointing progress', with no marked improvement in general security or intercommunal relations (Dixon, 2008).

The origins of the Good Friday Agreement date back to the late 1980s when Sinn Féin and the SDLP started engaging in secret talks to outline the nationalist and republican views of the 'road to peace' (Wolff, 2001). By 1993, after five years of secret talks with the SDLP, it appeared republicans were on the verge of giving the non-violent path a chance. The IRA declared a "complete cessation of all military activities" on August 31, 1994, which was quickly recognized by the Irish government as legitimate. Within days, the leaders of the Irish government and the SDLP formally welcomed Gerry Adams (leader of Sinn Féin) into the 'pan-nationalist' movement with a three-way handshake in Dublin (Dixon, 2008). Former U.S. Senator and Majority Leader George Mitchell, who would act as one of three moderators during all-party talks, published a report on decommissioning in January 1996, recognizing that the paramilitaries would not decommission prior to all-party talks, but must make a clear commitment to do so once talks began. Decommissioning or disarmament of paramilitary weapons was a crucial talking point of the peace talks. The most contentious topic after the signing of the GFA was when paramilitary groups had to demonstrate their commitment to decommissioning. The Independent International Commission on

Decommissioning, chaired by Canadian General John de Chastelain, was created to assist the signees of the GFA in the disarmament of all paramilitary organizations (O'Leary, 2004b). I will discuss the conflict over the deadline for decommissioning in greater detail later in the paper. Committing to the 'Mitchell Principles' of democracy and non-violence became an essential first step for a party to enter the formal peace process (Dixon, 2008). The 'Mitchell Principles' emerged in early 1996 International Body of Decommissioning first began meeting. The body was composed of former U.S. Senator and Majority Leader George Mitchell, John de Chastelain, the retiring chief of the Canadian Defense Forces, and Harri Holkeri, the former prime minister of Finland (Mitchell, 2001). The body formulated the principles of democracy and nonviolence (later coined as the 'Mitchell Principles'), to which any party wanting to enter negotiations would have to commit itself (Mitchell, 2001). This step barred Sinn Féin from entering the talks after the IRA ended its ceasefire on February 9, 1996, setting off a bomb in London, accusing the British government of intransigence. All-party talks began in June 1996; since the IRA failed to resume its ceasefire, the talks started without Sinn Féin (Dixon, 2008).

The entire peace process changed on May 1, 1997 when Tony Blair and the Labour Party won an enormous majority in the British House of Commons. Blair brought a dynamic team into office with him, committed to securing peace in Northern Ireland. Shortly after taking over as Prime Minister, Blair made a speech directed at Sinn Féin in which he made clear that the "settlement train was leaving" and it was not going to wait for them (Mitchell, 2001). The republicans

took Blair's message to heart and on July 20, 1997, the IRA restored its ceasefire. Shortly after, Sinn Féin signed the 'Mitchell Principles' and was allowed to enter the all-party talks, causing a walk-out by the DUP and the UK Unionist Party (UKUP), a small, unionist party that championed direct rule (Wolff, 2001). Blair then had to focus his efforts on the UUP and its leader David Trimble. Hard-line unionists, like Paisley, put Trimble under extreme pressure not to sit with Sinn Féin. However, without the UUP, the peace talks could not progress. In what many commentators agreed was a brave gamble, Trimble returned to the talks in mid-September 1997, leading the UUP in talks with Sinn Féin for the first time in 75 years (Dixon, 2008). The talks continued through April 10, 1998, when eight Northern Irish political parties and the governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland signed the GFA (Wolff, 2001).The nationalist community embraced the GFA, with a few exceptions from radical republican groups. The unionist community was split over the GFA. However, most unionists fell into the pro-agreement camp. The people of Ireland, north and south, voted to approve the GFA in referenda in May, with 71.1 percent in favor in the north and 94 percent in favor in the south (Dixon, 2008). Although there have been significant setbacks, the GFA still holds today and Northern Ireland is enjoying relative peace for the first time in thirty years.

Moving from the background and reception of each agreement, I will now present a comparison of the three settlements. The three agreements have numerous similarities, illustrating the consistent nature of the issues over thirty years. The desired outcome for the AIA was not the same as

Sunningdale and the GFA. The AIA was widely conceived as a stepping-stone or first step towards peace, not a full-fledged peace settlement (Dixon, 2008). However, all three agreements share sections related to Northern Ireland's future. For example, the principle of the consent of the majority in regards to all constitutional changes in Northern Ireland is a consistent aspect of all the agreements, reassuring the unionist community of its firm place in the United Kingdom (Wolff, 2001). All three agreements also included an institutional role for the Republic of Ireland. Recognizing the 'Irish Dimension' was an essential step to persuading the nationalists to participate in the discussions; by including the Irish government in the deliberations and continually working with the Irish outside the talks, the British government ensured the presence of at least part of the nationalist community during the creation of all three agreements.

An important piece of the agreements, particularly the AIA, is security cooperation along the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland. Successive British governments wanted the Republic's help in stopping the IRA from moving men, arms, and supplies between the two states, believing this would severely undermine their base of operations and dramatically decrease violence in the North (Dixon, 2008). The Sunningdale Agreement and the GFA share additional similarities because the end goal of both agreements was peace based on the creation of a power-sharing body and an Irish dimension (Dixon, 2008). These additional similarities include reforming the police system, creating a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, steps to release political prisoners, commitments to abandon violence, and devolution of powers to a Northern Irish

government body (Wolff, 2001). The three agreements clearly share several commonalities, yet only the GFA succeeded. To help explain this, I will next examine important differences between the agreements.

The desired outcome of the AIA compared with Sunningdale and the GFA is a fundamental difference that distinguishes it from the other two. The British and Irish governments signed the AIA to undermine support for Sinn Féin, improve security cooperation in the fight against the IRA, and take a step towards a lasting peace (Dixon, 2008). Certainly, the AIA contained many features similar to the other two agreements, but the fundamental idea behind it differs. Contrasting certain elements of Sunningdale and the GFA, such as the creation of a Northern Ireland Assembly, with the AIA is not possible because they were not discussed during the deliberations for the AIA.

A key difference relevant to all the agreements is the actors who signed them. The first two agreements did not include key actors from the conflict in the negotiations, strongly contributing to both ending in failure. Five groups took part in designing the Sunningdale Agreement, the governments of the UK and Ireland, the UUP, SDLP, and the Alliance Party (Wolff, 2001). The British government did invite the IRA to participate in the talks, however, they refused to do so because of a strong belief in the early to mid 1970s that victory was imminent and participating would only hinder it (Dixon, 2008). The radical loyalist parties, despite their recent surge in the polls, were not invited to participate for fear they would disrupt the negotiations (Dixon, 2008). Without IRA and loyalist participation no agreement could guarantee a lasting peace.

The British government excluded all unionists, including moderates, and Sinn Féin from participating in the AIA talks. Technically the SDLP did not participate because the discussion was between the British and Irish governments, however the Irish government stayed in constant communication with the SDLP throughout the process (Dixon, 2008). The British excluded the unionists because of their staunch opposition to the Republic of Ireland having influence on the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. The government felt they would refuse to reach an agreement and disrupt the negotiations. Thatcher's Cabinet was very skeptical about the authenticity of the unionists' 'moderation' policies and believed they would misinterpret an improvement in security as a design for unification (Dixon, 2008). The governments barred Sinn Féin from participating because they were the force the governments were attempting to undermine by signing the AIA. Without the inclusion of the unionists, their reaction was predictably negative. The AIA gained approval from the nationalists, but winning over the unionists was half the battle. Their support would be necessary in order for any agreement to experience success.

Learning from the failures of the previous agreements, the governments did not exclude any party from participating in the GFA deliberations, so long as they signed and adhered to the 'Mitchell Principles' (Dixon, 2008). The inclusion of Sinn Féin led to the voluntary exclusion by the DUP and the UKUP. However, the final tally of actors that signed the GFA included both governments; the UUP; the SDLP; two political wings of loyalist paramilitary groups the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) and the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP); the Northern

Ireland Women's Coalition, a pro-peace party with no allegiance to either side; the Northern Ireland Labour Party; the Alliance Party; and Sinn Féin (Wolff, 2001). A larger range of political actors, compared to the previous agreements, signed the GFA, contributing strongly to its wider acceptance in the nationalist and unionist communities. It has thus far produced a fairly stable peace throughout Northern Ireland for the past 14 years.

Another key difference between the agreements is the maintenance or removal of Articles II and III of the Irish Constitution. The constitution came into force in December of 1937 and can only be amended by referendum. Prior to 1999, when the Irish people voted to amend Articles II and III as a condition of the GFA, Article II claimed that the island of Ireland formed a single national territory and Article III asserted the right of the Irish judiciary to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of the island (Dixon, 2008). These claims outraged the unionist community, reinforcing their fear of a united Ireland. A fundamental reason why Sunningdale and the AIA failed was the Irish Republic's refusal to amend the two articles. This provoked unionist opposition and subsequently led to the collapse of both agreements. The Irish agreed to amend the two articles as a condition of the GFA, helping to prevent a repeat of unionist opposition from the previous settlements (Dixon, 2008).

When examining Sunningdale and the GFA alone, it is evident that a number of disparities exist between the two peace processes, helping to explain the failure of the former and success of the latter. One key attribute in the GFA not featured in Sunningdale is the development of an 'East-West' relationship

between the UK and Ireland to promote "the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands" (Dixon, 2008, p 266). This inter-island cooperation was an essential contribution to the peace process, with both sides hoping that it would help maintain the peace well into the future. The GFA also promotes a more dynamic and fair Executive for the Northern Ireland Assembly; the d'Hondt method of forming the Executive gives parties with adequate support a guarantee of some Executive power if they decide to take it (Dixon, 2008). The d'Hondt method, named after Belgian Viktor d'Hondt, is a proportional technique for allotting offices to parties according to the number of seats they hold in the legislature. The method employs a simple series of divisors, 1, 2, 3, etc. The party with the largest number of seats gets its pick of the ministries available, and then its seat share is divided by two. The party with the next highest number of seats gets the next ministry, and so on (O'Leary, 2004b). The Sunningdale Agreement allowed for the complete exclusion of republicans from the power-sharing Executive, whereas the GFA ensures that republicans will have a share of the power (Dixon, 2008). This dynamic Executive prevented any possible discriminatory or prejudice legislation from passing, common practice under the unionist controlled Parliament of Northern Ireland prior to the imposition of direct rule in 1972. The GFA also implemented complex voting procedures for the newly created, unicameral, 108-seat Northern Ireland Assembly. The voting procedures grant virtual veto rights to both communities (Wolff, 2001). To further assure the unionist community that no decision can be made without their consent, the GFA stipulates that all decisions taken by the North-South

Ministerial Council are subject to the approval of both the Irish government and

the Northern Ireland Assembly (Wolff, 2001). After comparing the Sunningdale

Agreement with the GFA, it is clear that the GFA is a far more sophisticated

document. The GFA has remained in place for almost 14 years, while the

Sunningdale Agreement fell apart in less than six months. The prolonged

existence and wide acceptance of the GFA in both Northern Ireland and the Irish

Republic superbly illustrates the improvements made in the second agreement.

The Three Agreements through the Lens of the Contentious Politics Thesis

Examining the three agreements through the lens of the contentious

politics thesis enhances our understanding of how each agreement came into

being and why the GFA was the only one to succeed. Identifying the mechanisms

and processes present in the buildup and aftermath of each agreement allows us to

study interactions among various elements involved in an episode of *contention*

and how the mechanisms and processes altered previously established

connections (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Let us first examine the

Sunningdale Agreement to identify the causal mechanisms and processes present

during the events before and after the signing of the agreement.

Sunningdale Agreement

Several causal mechanisms and processes are recognizable in the build-up

and aftermath of the Sunningdale Agreement. *Category formation* is evident

during the 1968 civil rights marches. According to McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly

(2001) *category formation* creates identities by means of three different sub-

mechanisms, through invention, borrowing, and encounter. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) borrowed the identity of civil rights movements active in the United States and the United Kingdom. The original sentiment of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland was to create a united Protestant and Catholic working class to confront the discriminatory Parliament of Northern Ireland (Dixon, 2008). The movement originated under socialist leadership hoping to secure equal rights for Catholics; however, an *identity shift* occurred in January 1969 after the student group People's Democracy defied a NICRA moratorium and organized a march from Belfast to Derry (Dixon, 2008). *Identity shift* is the formation of new identities within challenging groups (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007). The march indicated a shift in focus by the marchers. Their attention and the purpose of the marches moved from raising awareness about civil rights to raising awareness about the state security apparatus and sectarian divisions. Marches continued throughout the spring of 1969, most ending in riots between protestors and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Derry, in particular, was home to numerous clashes between police and marchers, leading to the 'Free Derry' movement, which attempted, using local vigilantes and barricades, to keep the RUC out of nationalist neighborhoods (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007). According to Niall Ó Dochartaigh (1997), by Easter 1969 "there had been a distinct resurgence of basic nationalist feeling in Derry" (p. 45)

To deter the increasing violence and rise in nationalism, the British government deployed the army to Northern Ireland August 14, 1969. The army's policies became increasingly oppressive when the Edward Heath-led

Conservative Party won the U.K. parliamentary election in June 1970. Shortly after the Conservative victory, one can identify the mechanisms of *repression* and *boundary activation*, notably during the Falls Road Curfew, from July 3-5 1970. *Boundary activation* is the creation of a new boundary or crystallization of an existing one between challenging factions and their targets (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007). The army imposed the curfew on the predominantly nationalist Falls Road neighborhood to search homes for arms and arrest suspected paramilitary members. Enforcing the curfew distinctly on a nationalist neighborhood entrenched the notion that the Falls Road was home to only nationalists and indicated a clear dividing line between the two opposing communities. By the end of the curfew, five people died and over 60 were injured, but *repression* can be identified well after that. The implementation of an internment policy in August 1971 allowed police to arrest and intern anyone suspected of paramilitary activity for an indefinite amount of time without trial (*BBC News*, 1971). The policy targeted only the nationalist community.

This police discrimination, along with the memories of the Falls Road Curfew, leads us to two new identifiable processes that emerged at the time. The first process is *upward scale shift*, defined as the change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions leading to broader *contention* involving a wider range of actors and bridging claims and identities (McAdam et al., 2001). This occurred after the Falls Road Curfew when the IRA deemed previously excluded British soldiers as acceptable targets for IRA violence (Dixon, 2008). The IRA's change in policy brought the violence in Northern Ireland to the homes

of many families throughout Britain and marked the beginning of a guerilla war against the army.

The other process is *polarization*. After the curfew and internment, the nationalist community felt alienated by the security forces, particularly the army. The purpose of the initial army deployment was to maintain peace. However, after soldiers began patrolling nationalist neighborhoods, the Falls Road Curfew, and the implementation of internment, nationalists firmly believed the impartiality of the army was over (Dixon, 2008). Exemplifying this *polarization* is the acceleration in IRA recruitment and the growing support for extreme unionists, like Ian Paisley. The animosity towards the army increased in the nationalist community after 'Bloody Sunday', when British soldiers shot and killed thirteen unarmed Catholic civilians in Derry. Shortly afterwards, Prime Minister Edward Heath demanded the transfer of security powers to Westminster, forcing the British government to impose direct rule on Northern Ireland (Dixon, 2008). The IRA renewed its violent campaign following the imposition of direct rule. Combined with 'Bloody Sunday', internment, and the Falls Road Curfew, direct rule increased IRA recruitment and strengthened its resolve to rid Northern Ireland of the British. The repressive activities of the security forces created an *opportunity spiral* in which the IRA resumed its 'armed struggle' against the British 'occupation' of Northern Ireland. The IRA thoroughly believed they were on the verge of victory, especially after the imposition of direct rule, regularly declaring every year from 1972 to 1977 the "Year of Victory" (Dixon, 2008).

This firm belief resulted in the refusal of the IRA to participate in the Sunningdale peace process.

Following direct rule right through to the Sunningdale Agreement, the British government focused most of its effort on bolstering the prestige of moderates in Northern Ireland. This attempted *convergence*, the coming together of moderate groups of conflicting viewpoints in opposition to the radicals of both sides (McAdam et al., 2001), emphasized the government's hope that the 'silent majority' were far more moderate than the politicians who represented them (Dixon, 2008). The government hoped to alienate extremists on both sides and recruit the general population into the 'moderate' UUP, SDLP, and Alliance parties. The British wished to use the 'moderate' parties to facilitate their desire to coerce the Northern Irish electorate towards the middle ground and form a base for a power-sharing agreement. In addition to *convergence*, *brokerage* between the British and Irish governments played a key role in the creation of the Sunningdale Agreement. Beginning in 1971, the British began meeting with their Irish counterparts, recognizing the Republic's legitimate interest in the affairs of the North (Dixon, 2008). The relationship prospered throughout the early 1970s, culminating in Heath's visit to Dublin in September 1973, the first visit by British prime minister since 1921 (Dixon, 2008). The emerging Anglo-Irish relationship bolstered the prospects for creating an agreement supported by the nationalists. However, it alienated unionists, who were deeply suspicious of British intentions (Dixon, 2008). Unionists feared and suspected the government was seeking a quick exit from Northern Ireland and the developing relationship with the Irish

Republic furthered their suspicions. The emphasis on 'moderates' and the revived Anglo-Irish relationship created the framework for the Sunningdale talks in December 1973 and the eventual implementation of the Sunningdale Agreement in January 1974.

The power-sharing experiment established in the Sunningdale Agreement collapsed in May 1974. The various unionist groups that brought down the power-sharing executive utilized both mechanisms and processes identified in McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001). The anti-Sunningdale unionists displayed *object shift*, the alteration in relations between claimants and objects of claims, when they created the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) in December 1973. The UUUC brought together numerous factions of unionists, all opposed to Sunningdale. The effects of this *object shift* were felt almost immediately when the anti-Sunningdale unionists, running on the UUUC ticket, won a majority of seats for Northern Ireland in the British General Election of 1974[3] (Dixon, 2008). Despite the election result, the newly installed Labour government refused to call an election for the Northern Ireland Assembly, ignoring a clear message from many unionists in Northern Ireland who believed the government was imposing the settlement without their consent (Dixon, 2008).

After the electoral process failed to dismantle the executive, the anti-Sunningdale unionists turned to the *social appropriation* process, which is the use of existing institutions to progress contentious claims (McAdam et al, 2001). The campaign used by the anti-Sunningdale unionists took the form of a general strike called by the UWC. The strike, precipitated by the Assembly's decision to ratify

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[3] See Appendix 3 for graph of the 1974 Westminster Elections in Northern Ireland

Sunningdale, lasted fourteen days in May 1974. It paralyzed Northern Ireland and

successfully brought down the power-sharing executive (Dixon, 2008). The

leaders of the strike were part of a new Protestant working-class. They were not

affiliated with any loyalist party and generally were suspicious of their political

representatives. With no organized political base, they appropriated the UWC's

network to plan and administer the strike. Loyalist politicians condemned the

strike and only began supporting it after it became evident it was gaining

significant popular support (Dixon, 2008).

Another mechanism evident in the Sunningdale saga is *boundary

activation*. Newly elected Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson demonstrated

boundary activation in his 'Spongers Speech' on May 25, 1974, in which he

emphasized British nationalist opinion, rallying 'us', the 'British' people, against

'them', the Northern Irish, whom he accuses of "sponging on Westminster and

British democracy and then systematically assaulting democratic methods"

(Dixon, 2001, p. 147). The 'Spongers Speech' illustrated an extreme shift in

Wilson's position from 1971, when he claimed the Northern Ireland conflict was

"within our house, within our national family" (Dixon, 2008, p. 147). Wilson's

speech was a symbolic end to the first power-sharing experiment. The British

government resumed direct rule in Northern Ireland shortly thereafter. Studying

the Sunningdale Agreement through the lens of the contentious politics thesis, it

becomes clear that a number of causal mechanisms and processes, notably the

failed development of *convergence* by the electorate and the *object shift* by the

anti-Sunningdale unionists, strongly contributed to the construction and collapse

of the agreement. The British government overestimated the appeal of the 'moderates'. The *object shift* by the anti-Sunningdale unionists, when they united to bring down the agreement, demonstrates this misinterpretation.

<u>Anglo-Irish Agreement</u>

Moving to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, multiple causal mechanisms and processes appear in both the origins and reactions of the agreement. Like Sunningdale, they provide further insight into how the agreement came about and why it was ineffective. The push to create the AIA began in 1981 shortly after the IRA Hunger Strikes. The Hunger Strikes are an example of *self-representation*, an actor's public display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007). After March 1, 1976, IRA prisoners lost their 'Special Category' status and received the same treatment as criminals. A variety of IRA prisoner protests took place throughout the 1970s to attain 'political prisoner' status, culminating in the Hunger Strikes in the early 1980s (Dixon, 2008). The second Hunger Strike, led by Bobby Sands beginning in March 1981, caused a stir in the international community and led to an overwhelming propaganda victory for the IRA in the early 1980s. The strikes were a serious blow to the government's efforts to remove the IRA prisoners' "Special Category" status because regular prisoners tend not to kill themselves on hunger strikes (Dixon, 2008). Sands' election to parliament on April 9, 1981 demonstrated a significant base of popular support for the IRA and caused the international community to turn its attention to the conflict. Sands' death by starvation on May 5 confirmed the prisoners' firm commitment to the cause.

Three processes developed in the aftermath of the hunger strikes.
International sympathy for the Hunger Strikers alienated the unionists, further
polarizing the community. This was reflected in the shift of the electorate towards
Ian Paisley's hard-line DUP party in local government elections of 1981. The
DUP narrowly beat the UUP, illustrating the frustration in the unionist community
over the Hunger Strikes and the more moderate policies of the UUP (Dixon,
2008). The nationalist community exemplified the increasing *polarization* in their
support for Sands, a man the unionists saw as a terrorist. First, the nationalists
voted him into parliament, and then turned out in the hundreds of thousands to
attend his funeral (Dixon, 2008). The Hunger Strikes also led to the *actor
constitution*, the emergence of a transformed political actor (Tilly and Tarrow,
2007), in Sinn Féin. Sands won his seat on the Sinn Féin ticket and to maximize
the support for the Hunger Strikers, at Sinn Féin's Ard Fheis (conference)
members voted to contest local elections and to take their seats if they won. The
party performed well in 1981, electing two candidates to Westminster and two to
the Dáil.[4] They performed even better in 1983, winning 13.4 percent of the vote
(Dixon, 2008). Sinn Féin's entrance and success in electoral politics created a
third process -- *competition* between itself and the SDLP for the nationalist vote
and role as the main nationalist party. *Competition* also developed in the unionist
community between the DUP and UUP. The DUP made enormous strides in its
electoral activities. The success of Sinn Féin and the DUP at the ballot box greatly

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[4] The Dáil Éireann is the lower house, but principal chamber of the Republic of Ireland's
Oireachtas (Parliament).

amplified fears that an accommodation between the two communities would never develop (Dixon, 2008).

The election of a Fine Gael/Labour coalition in Ireland in 1982 and the re-election of the Conservatives in Britain in 1983 produced an *opportunity spiral* in which an agreement could materialize. The Irish government pushed for an initiative in 1983, leading to discussions between officials from each government. Although many differences existed between the two governments, they shared a growing concern about the threat of Sinn Féin to security and political stability (Dixon, 2008). The Irish government's fear that Sinn Féin's political success would spread and undermine stability in the Republic pressed them into initiating talks with the British government. They hoped to improve the security situation and demonstrate to nationalists that constitutional politics worked (Dixon, 2008). This perceived opportunity by both governments expedited the signing of the AIA in November 1985. A series of mechanisms and processes, starting with the *self-representation* of the Hunger Strikers, are clearly recognizable in creation of the AIA. The Hunger Strikers' popularity led to Sinn Féin success at the polls, causing fear to spread in both Dublin and London, resulting in the signing of the AIA to quell Sinn Féin's advance.

The unionist community responded extremely negatively to the AIA, organizing a massive *collective action* movement to protest its implementation. The unionists opposed the AIA for three principal reasons. First, it failed to define the 'current status' of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. Second, the AIA represented a complete capitulation to the nationalist agenda and gave the

SDLP no incentive to enter a power-sharing administration. Third, the British government did not consult the unionists about the AIA (Dixon, 2008). A massive anti-AIA demonstration took place on November 23, 1985, involving 250,000 protestors (a quarter of the unionist population in Northern Ireland). The anti-AIA movement continued for several years. A demonstration on its first anniversary involved 200,000 people. A petition in January/February 1987 raised 400,000 signatures (Dixon, 2008). Within a year, the process of *escalation*, defined by Tilly and Tarrow (2007) as "the displacement of moderate goals and tactics by more extreme goals and tactics" (p. 216), emerged in the unionist community. The unionist leaders met with the British government in February 1986. At the end of the meetings, the leaders agreed to consider government proposals and discuss devolution if the government suspended the AIA. However, upon returning to Belfast, their supporters forced them to retreat from any concessions and maintain a firm opposition to the AIA.

Paisley and Molyneaux encountered the 'solidary incentive retraction problem' discussed by Duffy and Lindstrom. They use James Wilson's definition of solidary incentives, which is "the promise of relational goods that individuals derive from associating with others with whom they identify" (p. 76). The authors note a sociological problem with solidary incentives at settlement time. People who strongly identify with a group will feel any accommodation to their demonized enemy as a personal affront to their well-being. Thus, leaders who issue solidary incentives at mobilization time find their actions severely constrained when it is time to reach a settlement with their enemy (Duffy &

Lindstrom, 2002). The unionist leaders demonized nationalists and republicans for decades and denounced any possibility of a united Ireland. Therefore, any conciliatory action towards the nationalists symbolized an attack on unionist well-being. Thus, when they returned to Belfast after agreeing to consider government proposals for settlement the unionist community forced them to retreat. Removing the solidary incentives that had been in place for years is a monumental task and takes generations to accomplish. These events coincided with a loyalist strike on March 3 that led to rioting in which protestors shot at police twenty times and injured forty-seven RUC officers (Dixon, 2008). The political leaders struggled to regain control of the protests, which James Molyneaux, leader of the UUP, acknowledged in April 1986: "the reality is that Mr. Paisley and I…have been overtaken by the people of Northern Ireland" (Dixon, 2008, p. 204).

In the aftermath of the AIA, the *polarization* of the two communities grew. Within the UUP, the majority of members favored further integration into the UK against a minority that supported power-sharing, while in the DUP there was talk of moving towards independence (Dixon, 2008). On the nationalist side, the SDLP turned away from devolution and power-sharing and increasingly favored the development of the AIA into joint authority for the Republic. The SDLP also began to build common ground with Sinn Féin, opening talks with their old rivals in 1988 (Dixon, 2008). Also present in the events following the AIA are *boundary activation* and *deactivation*. The *boundary activation* occurred when Thatcher reiterated several of the views Wilson expressed in his 'Sponger's Speech' about the Northern Irish. A day after the signing of the AIA she referred

to herself as an 'English Nationalist' in a newspaper interview and many members of her cabinet believed she cared far more about the plight of 'our boys', meaning soldiers from Great Britain, in Northern Ireland than the conflict itself. The Prime Minister frequently mentioned the financial drain Northern Ireland was imposing on the rest of the UK, often implying that it was a separate entity (Dixon, 2008). The *boundary deactivation* took place in the republican camp after the British government 'faced down' the unionists to enforce the AIA, undermining republican ideology that the unionists were just a tool for British imperialism. Republicans, with encouragement from nationalists, began to reconsider whether Britain has any selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland (Dixon, 2008). Certainly, a boundary continued to exist between the British and republicans, however the prominence of the 'us-them' mentality began to fade.

By 1989, when a government review of the AIA reported 'disappointing progress' and both the nationalist and unionist communities were moving away from middle ground, the likelihood of a settlement between the two continued to diminish. As with the Sunningdale Agreement, causal mechanisms and processes enhance our understanding of the construction and failure of the AIA. Examples of these mechanisms and processes include the *opportunity spiral* in which both governments believed creating the agreement would hinder Sinn Féin's recent progress, while simultaneously improving the security cooperation. It also includes the substantial *collective action* movement by unionists in protest of the AIA that hampered its effectiveness. These two processes represent both the fundamental reasons for the creation and eventual ineffectiveness of the AIA. The

contentious politics thesis allows us to single out these key actions as critical processes of the AIA.

<u>Good Friday Agreement</u>

As in the two agreements discussed above, there are several recognizable causal mechanisms and processes in the buildup and aftermath to the Good Friday Agreement. They help explain the success of the GFA compared to the failure of the previous two. The origins of the GFA date back to 1988, when leaders of Sinn Féin and the SDLP entered into dialogue in an attempt to find common ground between the republicans and constitutional nationalists (Dixon, 2008). This *brokerage* between Sinn Féin and the SDLP marked major progress for the two rivals, who fought for years for the support of the nationalist community. The dialogue between the two parties indicated the beginning of an *object shift* in the nationalist community. This would culminate in the three main players, Sinn Féin, the SDLP, and the Irish government, working together to create a lasting peace. This new 'pan-nationalist' front would not complete this *object shift* until 1997, when Sinn Féin formally entered the peace process after signing the 'Mitchell Principles'. The strength of the 'pan-nationalist' movement, specifically the commitment of Sinn Féin, came under severe scrutiny when the IRA escalated its violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, followed shortly by an *escalation* of loyalist violence. *Escalation* occurred on the republican side because the IRA believed that an act of violence needed to accompany any offer or step towards peace to demonstrate clearly that they were not surrendering (Dixon, 2008). The loyalist paramilitaries escalated their level of violence because of an increasing

feeling of insecurity in the unionist community about their constitutional future. Loyalist paramilitary violence increased so dramatically that the paramilitaries were killing more people than the IRA (Dixon, 2008).

Despite the *escalation* in violence, the 'pan-nationalist' movement received a boost in support after President Bill Clinton granted Gerry Adams a visa to visit the United States on January 30, 1994 to speak at a conference in New York (Cockburn & Murdock, 1994). Clinton granted Adams a second visa in 1995, this time allowing Adams to raise money for Sinn Féin and speak about the conflict in Northern Ireland (Dixon, 2008). This act of *certification*, "an external authority's signal of its readiness to recognize and support the existence and claims of a political actor" (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007, p. 215), by Clinton increased the legitimacy of Sinn Féin, heightened their support back in Northern Ireland, and put pressure on the British government to open all-party talks. After the IRA resumed its ceasefire in July 1997, two mechanisms are identifiable -- *co-optation* and *defection*. *Co-optation*, "the incorporation of a previously excluded political actor into some center of power" (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007, p. 215), occurred after Sinn Féin signed the 'Mitchell Principles' and entered the peace process in September 1997. This differed from previous agreements because for the first time the republicans were at the negotiating table. Sinn Féin's entrance into the all-party talks caused the *defection* of two very different groups from two very different coalitions. The first *defection* took place when the DUP and the UKUP left the all-party talks in protest of Sinn Féin's participation. The second *defection* took place within the republican movement when an IRA splinter group, appalled

by Sinn Féin's signing of the 'Mitchell Principles', broke away to form the 'Real IRA' in the autumn of 1997 (Dixon, 2008). These *defections* illustrated the reluctance of hardliners on both sides of the conflict to enter into discussions with their counterparts and reflect a common problem community leaders encounter when trying to end a conflict. Burton (1985) refers to this difficulty as the "reentry problem." If leaders agree to settlement terms they must justify any community interests that may have been conceded in the negotiations. If leaders feel that their constituents will reject the terms of the settlement, they are often reluctant to "reenter" their community (Burton 1985). In the case of Northern Ireland, leaders from both sides failed to convince all their constituents that the GFA was in the best interest of all parties involved. Thus, we see the *defection* of the DUP, UKUP, and the 'Real IRA'.

Despite these *defections*, the peace process carried on and reached an agreement on April 10, 1998. On the evening prior to the signing of the GFA, Ian Paisley led a few hundred supporters onto the grounds at Stormont, home of the old Parliament of Northern Ireland and where the negotiations were taking place. Desperate to block the agreement, Paisley refused to disperse the crowd until he held a press conference. During the press conference, members of the loyalist parties participating in the negotiations, many of whom were once loyal followers of the DUP leader, continuously heckled Paisley and accused him of running away (Mitchell, 2001). This demonstration of the *disillusionment* process, "the decline in the commitment of individuals or political actors to previously

sustaining beliefs" (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007, p. 216), exemplified the predominant desire for peace among loyalists.

Contrary to the reactions of the previous agreements, nationalists and unionists majorities welcomed the GFA. Both were able to argue that it forwarded their cause. The GFA returned power and democracy to Northern Ireland, creating a Northern Ireland Assembly with legislative and executive powers over matters formerly the responsibility of the Northern Ireland departments (Dixon, 2008). An *identity shift* in the Republic of Ireland accompanied the *democratization* process in Northern Ireland. As of December 2, 1999, the Republic formally dropped its territorial claim to Northern Ireland; this illustrated the Republic's firm commitment to the peace process, ending a 62-year-old claim that irked unionists.

Despite the initial positive reaction from majorities on both sides, IRA stalling over decommissioning put the future of the GFA into serious doubt. Decommissioning or disarmament of paramilitary weapons was a crucial and necessary step for the success of the GFA because it demonstrated the IRA's commitment to non-violence. The new Assembly struggled to form an effective Executive. This became even more difficult after the 2001 British General Election, in which the SDLP lost a number of seats and Sinn Féin became the largest national party in the Assembly. This election result, plus new evidence that the IRA was still active, fueled unionists' discontent with the GFA. On July 10, 2001, the Ulster Freedom Fights and the Ulster Defence Association withdrew their support of the GFA (Dixon, 2008). This *defection* coincided with widespread *escalation* in loyalist violence in 2001-2002 that included 124 loyalist

paramilitary shootings and severe rioting in Belfast. Following the events of September 11, 2001 the IRA came under severe pressure to begin decommissioning. On October 23, 2001 it made its first act of decommissioning. This marked a pivotal step in the *identity shift* of the IRA, the origins of which date back to the late 1980s when republican leaders debated the future of the 'armed struggle' (Dixon, 2008). However, in early 2002, evidence that the IRA was still training, recruiting, and procuring arms became public. By September, UUP ministers threatened to resign if republicans did not demonstrate a commitment to peace.

On October 4, 2002 the 'Stormontgate' scandal broke. Police raided Sinn Féin offices in Stormont and homes of Sinn Féin officials over allegations that republicans were spying on the British and Irish governments. In the aftermath of the raids, all the unionist ministers in the Assembly resigned, causing the suspension of the power-sharing government (Dixon, 2008). The suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly lasted until May 8, 2007. During the suspension, two processes critical to the restoration of devolution are recognizable -- *identity shift* and *coalition forming*. The *identity shift* refers to the IRA's transition from the 'armed struggle' to a peaceful, democratic political program. The *identity shift* began in 2001 and culminated in the July 28, 2005 IRA declaration that the 'armed campaign' was officially over. The IRA prepared a final act of decommissioning (Dixon, 2008). Prior to this, the IRA faced intense scrutiny from not only unionists, but many nationalists as well. The organization's criminal activities, including the UK's largest bank robbery in 2004, discouraged

many nationalists, who began to see the IRA as criminal thugs rather than freedom fighters (Dixon, 2008).

With pressure growing within its community to end the violence, the IRA finally succumbed, making way for the next process, *coalition forming*. On October 13, 2006, the British and Irish governments announced the 'St. Andrews Agreement' after talks between the DUP and Sinn Féin in Scotland. The agreement set out guidelines that, following an election, would result in the participation of Sinn Féin and the DUP in power-sharing devolution (Dixon, 2008). The election was held in March 2007. They confirmed the dominance of Sinn Féin and the DUP. The UUP and SDLP underwent their worst-ever results.[5] On March 26, 2007, Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams met for an hour and appeared in public together to endorse the agreement. On May 7, 2007, the British government restored devolution to Northern Ireland, and Ian Paisley of the DUP and Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin were sworn in as First Minister and Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The two formed a coalition between long-time enemies, set on maintaining a lasting peace in Northern Ireland (Dixon, 2008).

A Comparative Case Study: The Bosnian War (1992-1995)

In this section, I will compare the Bosnian War to the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, illustrating how identifying causal mechanisms and processes allows us to draw parallels between two disparate political conflicts. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Balkans entered a period

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[5] See Appendix 3 for graph of the 2007 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections

of continuous conflict. Fighting broke out between the former units of Yugoslavia, which were divided over whether to remain a single entity. Large-scale fighting started in 1991 when federal forces of Yugoslavia attempted to crush a Slovenian independence movement. The Slovenians were successful and, along with Croatia, declared independence on October 8, 1991 (Benson, 2004). The following April, communist Yugoslavia officially ceased to exist and a Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. That same month, war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina between ethnic Croats, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims. The signing of the Dayton Accords ended the Bosnian War in December 1995 (Benson, 2004).

Similarities do exist between the two conflicts. For example, both conflicts fall into Tilly and Tarrow's deadly ethnic and religious conflict category. Nonetheless, the differences are more prominent. While the conflict in Northern Ireland centered on whether to remain a part of one state or join another, the conflict in Yugoslavia was the outcome of the dissolution of a large federal state, with the resulting entities fighting over disputed territory. The war broke out in Bosnia because of the contentious composition of its population: Catholic Croatians, Islamic Bosnians, and Orthodox Serbians. The Bosnian-Croats and Bosnian-Serbs were heavily influenced by their home states (Croatia and Serbia) and territorial disputes began, bringing Bosnia to the brink of disintegration. The style of fighting and the eventual outcomes of each conflict also differ greatly. The fighting in Northern Ireland generally consisted of paramilitary groups using clandestine tactics, targeting either the opposing community or the British Army.

The fighting in Bosnia was a full-scale war involving three different ethnic armies, a United Nations peacekeeping force, and eventually a NATO bombing campaign against the Bosnian-Serbs. For the majority of the "Troubles" the international community had very little involvement. The U.K. generally dealt with the situation in Northern Ireland on its own, collaborating on a significantly only with the Republic of Ireland. The first major role of the international community in Northern Ireland began in 1996 with the formation of the International Body of Decommissioning. In contrast, the international community, particularly the United Nations and the European Union, was deeply involved in Bosnia from the conflict's early stages. The most prominent distinctions between the "Troubles" and the Bosnian War are their outcomes. The Good Friday Agreement established a devolved, power-sharing executive within the U.K. The country of Northern Ireland remained in the U.K. and the two warring factions have started to work together in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Dayton Accords created a new state, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with two distinct regional bodies (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) based on ethnic identity. In Republika Srpska the Bosnian Serbs are the majority, while in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the Bosnian Muslims are the most populous ethnic group. The Dayton Accords also established a federal government for the new state, in which all three ethnicities have representation. The most important role of the federal government is to serve as a symbol of territorial integrity and sovereignty, while keeping the communication lines between two regional bodies open (Gow, 1997). The conflicts in Northern Ireland

and Bosnia have clear distinctions; however, the contentious politics thesis identifies numerous causal mechanisms and processes present in both cases.

Several causal mechanisms and processes are identifiable in both Northern Ireland and Bosnia. The most notable of these include *object shift*, *opportunity spirals, democratization*, and *demobilization*. As Tilly and Tarrow point out, these causal mechanisms and processes do not always produce the same result because of varying regime environments; however, they do allow us to draw parallels between disparate forms of contention (2007).

After the war in Bosnia started in 1992, each ethnic group gathered military forces and all three began fighting two-front wars. The Bosnian-Muslims suffered the most, losing a large swath of their territory to the Bosnian-Serbs. By 1994, the Bosnian-Serbs occupied 70 percent of Bosnian territory, while the Bosnian-Muslims and Croats continued to fight over the remaining 30 percent (Chollet, 2005). The fighting between the Muslims and the Croats broke out when Bosnian-Croats declared an independent Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia (later "Community" was changed to "Republic"). The Bosnian-Croats intended to unite their community with the Republic of Croatia, breaking away from the ethnically Muslim Bosnia. This led to clashes between Bosnian-Croat and Bosnian-Muslim forces, which lasted from June 1992 to March 1994 (Benson, 2004). In 1994, the Clinton Administration began lobbying the Bosnian-Muslims and the Croats (both the government of Croatia and the Bosnian-Croats) to cease fighting and begin working together politically, economically, and most importantly militarily to halt the Bosnian-Serbs' success (Chollet, 2005). By

March 1994, the U.S. successfully brokered an agreement (the Washington Agreement) between the two sides, forming the Muslim-Croat Federation, which, after the war, would control approximately half of Bosnian territory and co-exist with a Bosnian-Serb regional entity within a united Bosnian state (Chollet, 2005). The implementation of the federation would be settled at Dayton the following year and where it was re-named the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This *object shift* by both the Bosnian-Muslims and Croatians marked a turning point in the Bosnian War. The Croatians favored the *object shift* because they had recently suffered a series of defeats to the Bosnian-Muslims in the winter of 1993-4. In addition, they were not strong enough to continue fighting a two-front war and they wanted to put Croatia in the United States' diplomatic "good book" (Gow, 1997). Uniting with the Bosnian-Muslims allowed them to focus their war efforts on the Bosnian-Serbs and raise their standing in the international community. The Bosnian-Muslims supported the *object shift* for similar reasons. It allowed them to concentrate all their military efforts on the Bosnian-Serbs and outlined a plan for them (along with their new federation partner) to regain 20 percent of the territory they had lost (Chollot, 2005). The *object shift* by both the Bosnian-Muslims and Croatians increased the level of international support for their coalition and was a pivotal step towards ending the war. We can draw a parallel to the *object shift* by the nationalist forces in Northern Ireland that created a united nationalist front and led to Sinn Féin entering the peace talks in 1997. In both cases, the united groups presented a much stronger front and accelerated the peace process. The international support and renewed strength of the Muslim-

Croat forces leads us to a perceived *opportunity spiral* by the United States after a string of Croatian victories over the Bosnian-Serbs in the spring and summer of 1995, which caused the Bosnian-Serbs to consider negotiating a peace settlement.

In addition to the Croatian victories, three other events helped create the *opportunity spiral* that the Clinton administration used to open negotiations. First was the NATO bombing campaign against the Bosnian-Serbs beginning in late August 1995. The NATO campaign occurred in response to the Bosnian-Serbs firing mortar shells into a busy Sarajevo market place, killing 37 people, and wounding 85 others on August 28, 1995 (Chollet, 2005). The shelling indicated to the Clinton administration that the Bosnian-Serbs thought the West was capable only of empty threats. President Clinton wanted to send a clear message to the Bosnian-Serbs that he meant business, telling his staff "We have to hit 'em hard" (Chollet, 2005). The second was the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's agreement to speak for the Bosnian-Serbs. This allowed the U.S. to speak to one representative, rather than multiple members of the Bosnian-Serb leadership. This narrowed the number of parties involved in the negotiations to just two, the Muslim-Croat Federation and Serbia (Chollet, 2005). The third and final event was the continued work of the lead American negotiator, Richard Holbrooke. His resourcefulness and resolve in discussions with the various parties strongly contributed to the opportunity for peace the Clinton Administration believed existed in the summer of 1995 (Chollet, 2005). The NATO bombing campaign and the renewed Croatian offensive severely weakened the Bosnian-Serbs. Under Milosevic's leadership, ending the war became their primary goal. Holbrooke's

negotiating team seized this opportunity and brokered a ceasefire between all sides beginning October 11, 1995. In addition to the ceasefire, each side agreed to meet in the United States at the end of October for proximity talks, with Holbrooke's negotiating team, with help from the State Department representatives, serving as the go-between for the three ethnic groups (Chollet, 2005).

The talks convened on November 1, 1995 in Dayton, Ohio. After three weeks of negotiations, they produced the Dayton Accords, ending the war in Bosnia. Recognizing the *opportunity spirals* in Northern Ireland and Bosnia reveal that, although opportunities existed in both conflicts, they do not necessarily result in peace. In Northern Ireland, the *opportunity spiral* perceived by the British and Irish governments produced a *political opportunity structure* that expedited the signing of the AIA, which ultimately failed to cease the conflict. However, in Bosnia, the *opportunity spiral* created by the three events discussed above produced a *political opportunity structure* that accelerated the Clinton Administration's efforts and enhanced their ability to arrange the meeting in Dayton, where they would successfully brokered a lasting peace between the warring parties.

The Dayton Accords also laid the groundwork for the *democratization* of the future Bosnian state. The Dayton Accords dictate that a Parliamentary Assembly, a three-person presidency, and a Council of Ministers would all be established as part of the Bosnian central government, which has power over the two entities, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. All

three-government bodies have built-in features to prevent discriminatory policies being implemented against any of the three ethnic groups. A drawback of this policy is that it can hinder the government from functioning effectively, because often a consensus is needed for work to proceed (Gow, 1997). The Parliamentary Assembly consists of two chambers, the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. The former consists of 15 members, five from each national group, appointed from the legislative bodies of the two regional entities. The latter chamber has 42 members directly elected from the entities, with two thirds coming from the Federation and one third from the Republika Srpska (Gow, 1997). The Presidency is a three-person body, one from each national group that is directly elected from the entities, and serves as the head of state. The chair of the Presidency rotates between its three members every eight months. The Presidency is responsible for nominating the Council of Ministers, who then must be approved by the Parliament. The Council of Ministers is the executive branch of the central government, responsible for carrying out policies in a number of areas including foreign and monetary policy (Gow, 1997).

The *democratization* process in Bosnia is subject to ridicule by some because the U.N. maintains a representative in the government with the power to bypass the Parliament and remove elected officials. This High Representative was originally appointed to help implement the new constitution, while maintaining contact with important international actors (Gow, 1997). However, many Bosnians have grown to resent the High Representative because of his ability to undermine Bosnian institutions. Here we see again the same process in Northern

Ireland and Bosnia, but with different outcomes. Northern Ireland's

democratization took place when the British government implemented devolution

and created the Northern Ireland Assembly, which governs with minimal

supervision by the central government. *Democratization* in Bosnia was more

complex, for it established not only a regional governmental body, but an entire

federal institution as well. The international community played a significant role

to resolve the conflict in Bosnia and thus continued its presence there to ensure

the peace lasted. However, this inhibits the people of Bosnia from reaching true

democracy because the U.N. can interfere with their government's policies. The

democratization process is certainly incomplete in Bosnia, but one should not

overlook the important steps taken since Dayton towards creating stable,

democratic institutions.

The *demobilization* of the three ethnic groups began after the formal

signing of the Dayton Accords in December 1995. External pressure from the

international community forced the three sides to normalize relations, cooperate

with the War Crimes Tribunal, and end Serbia and Croatia's shipments of arms to

their ethnic communities within Bosnia. In addition, the international pressured

the Serb and Croat leaders to refuse recognition of any independent Bosnian-Serb

or Bosnian-Croat state. Duffy and Lindstrom argue that the Serb and Croat

leaders did not fully comply with these pressures. As in Northern Ireland, the

leaders struggled to convince their constituents (and themselves) that entering into

relations with their old enemies and adhering to international pressure were

beneficial. The leaders walked a delicate line, trying to satisfy both the

international community and domestic hardliners (Duffy & Lindstrom, 2002). The normalization of relations began in 1996. However, both the Serbs and Croats resisted arresting war criminals for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Croats struggled to detach themselves from the Bosnian-Croats because of internal pressure from hardliners (Duffy & Lindstrom, 2002). Like Northern Ireland, we see that the *demobilization* process is quite difficult. Removing solidary incentives used to rally support at the beginning of the conflict and reversing the demonic image of the enemy is a strenuous but crucial task to successfully ending conflicts. This process takes generations to subside completely. Fortunately, the *demobilization* in Bosnia was effective in creating peace, which continues to endure today.

This brief look into the Bosnian War of the early 1990s demonstrates how McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's causal mechanisms and processes allow us to compare a wide range of conflicts across a broad political spectrum. On the surface, the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Bosnia share only a few features. However, when analyzing the two conflicts through the lens of the contentious politics thesis, more similarities emerge that illustrate that mechanisms and processes are not limited to one specific conflict. Rather, they can be identified in a variety of contexts allowing us to comparatively study the actions of political actors around the world. Identifying *object shift, opportunity spiral, democratization*, and *demobilization* illustrate that, though the political situation in Northern Ireland and Bosnia may differ, the tactical approach of negotiating a peace settlement goes through similar steps regardless of context.

Conclusions

After comparing and contrasting the Sunningdale, Anglo-Irish, and Good Friday Agreements through the lens of contentious politics, several causal mechanisms and processes are identifiable, which help further explain the failure of the first two agreements and the success of the third. For example, anti-Sunningdale unionists successfully utilized the processes of *object shift* and *social appropriation* to force the collapse of the Sunningdale Agreement. By bonding together and employing the Ulster Workers' Council, they successfully made their claim against the Agreement and helped cause its downfall. In the aftermath of the signing of the AIA, the massive *collective action* movement organized by the unionists severely damaged the prestige of the agreement and caused further *polarization*. Once again, unionists' claim-makers auspiciously inhibited the effectiveness of a settlement and strongly contributed to the lack of improvement made after its implementation. Finally, learning from the failures of Sunningdale and the AIA, the *co-optation* of Sinn Féin into the peace process, the *identity shift* of the Republic of Ireland, and the overall *disillusionment* by the majority of actors towards violence helped create the long-lasting success of the GFA. Strongly contributing to that success is the coalition formed between the DUP and Sinn Féin in the Northern Ireland Assembly, which ensured the continuation of a democratic system of government in Northern Ireland. Identifying causal mechanisms and processes in Bosnia re-affirmed McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's point that parallels can be drawn from the ways apparently disparate forms of contention work. Recognizing a mechanism, for example *object shift,* in the two

conflicts, which both ended in relatively stable peace, indicates that this mechanism may be important to producing a lasting peace. The *object shift* in Northern Ireland brought the nationalist community together, creating a single 'pan-nationalist' front, which accelerated the peace process. Similarly, the formation of the Muslim-Croat Federation created one front against the Bosnian-Serbs and ended their dominance on the battlefield. An example of a process that may be important to producing lasting peace is the *democratization* in both conflicts. The government bodies created in Northern Ireland and Bosnia have built-in features to prevent the implementation of discriminatory policies against any community. Therefore, when studying other peacefully resolved conflicts, one should be aware that this mechanism or process may be present in the resolution process. This piece demonstrates the dynamic capability of the contentious politics thesis by identifying causal mechanisms and processes, which greatly enhances previous explanations for the failure of the Sunningdale and Anglo-Irish Agreements and the success of the Good Friday Agreement.

Reflection on the Contentious Politics Thesis

When starting this work, I wanted to know whether the contentious politics thesis could explain why the GFA endured while its predecessors failed. At the time, I believed the thesis would successfully explain this inquiry. Upon completing this paper, my belief was confirmed. The thesis furthered my understanding of the triumphs and failures of each agreement and helped explain why it took three decades to broker a lasting peace. In particular, when I was looking for causal mechanisms and processes in the build-up to the signing of the

GFA, I found that I could trace its origins with greater ease compared to simply examining the historical events. It became clear to me that the mechanisms and processes, starting with the *brokerage* between the constitutional and republican nationalists, combined to facilitate the signing of the GFA. The *brokerage* led to the *object shift* in the nationalist community. The *object shift* contributed to the *certification* of Sinn Féin by President Clinton, which pressured the British government to open all-party talks, leading to the *co-optation* of Sinn Féin. Subsequently, with the majority of the key actors taking part in the negotiations (the exception being the DUP), the Republic of Ireland chose to withdraw its territorial claims to Northern Ireland, indicating a significant *identity shift*. The contentious politics thesis allows us to string the events together and comprehend on a more analytical level how the GFA came into existence. With a greater comprehension of the chain of events that led to the cessation of a conflict, the thesis serves another purpose, which is to recognize similarities between apparently different forms of contention. After working with the contentious politics thesis for several months, I firmly believe that McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's work greatly advances the study of contention, and their thesis can better our comprehension of all varieties of conflicts. The authors successfully accomplished their goal of "identifying parallels in the ways that apparently disparate forms of contention work, and showing how their differences result from varying combinations and sequences of mechanisms in contrasting regime environments" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). Students across a wide spectrum of educational levels can effectively apply this thesis towards a greater

understanding of the conflicts that plague our world and, more importantly, a

greater understanding of how conflicts were resolved.

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Appendix 1: Glossary of Mechanisms and Processes

Mechanisms

Boundary activation/deactivation: the creation of new boundary or crystallization of an existing one between challenging factions and their targets.

Boundary formation: creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors.

Brokerage: production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites.

Category Formation: creates identities by means of three different sub-mechanisms, through invention, borrowing, and encounter.

Certification: an external authority's signal of its readiness to recognize and support the existence and claims of a political actor.

Co-optation: incorporation of a previously excluded political actor into some center of power.

Defection: exit of a political actor from a previously effective coalition and/or coordinated action.

Object Shift: the alteration in relations between claimants and objects of claims.

Opportunity Spiral: operate through sequences of environmental change, interpretation of that change, actions, and counteraction, repeated as one action alters another actor's environment.

Repression: action by authorities that increases the cost—actual or potential—of an actor's claim making.

Processes

Actor Constitution: emergence of a new or transformed political actor

Coalition Formation: creation of new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors.

Collective Action: all coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs.

Competition: pursuit of rewards or outcomes in mutually exclusive ways.

Contention: making claims that bear on someone else's interests.

Convergence: the coming together of moderate groups of conflicting viewpoints in opposition to radicalization.

Demobilization: decrease in the resources available to a political actor for collective making of claims.

Democratization: movement of a regime toward relatively broad, equal, and protected binding consultation of the government's subjects with respect to government resources, personnel, and policies.

Disillusionment: decline in the commitment of individuals or political actors to previously sustaining beliefs.

Escalation: displacement of moderate goals and tactics by more extreme goals and tactics.

Identity shift: emergence of new collective answers to the questions "Who are you?" "Who are we?" and "Who are they?"

Polarization: increasing ideological distance between political actors or coalitions.

Radicalization: shift of social movement organizations toward increasing analysis

Scale Shift: increase or decrease in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions leading to broader or narrower contention involving a wider or smaller range of actors.

Self-representation: an actor's or coalition's public display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.

Social Appropriation: conversion or incorporation of previously existing nonpolitical groups and networks into political actors.

Appendix 2: Abbreviations

AIA: Anglo-Irish Agreement

DUP: Democratic Unionist Party

GFA: Good Friday Agreement

IRA: Irish Republican Army

NICRA: Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

NILP: Northern Ireland Labour Party

PUP: Progressive Unionist Party

RUC: Royal Ulster Constabulary

SDLP: Social Democratic and Labour Party

UKUP: UK Unionist Party

UDR: Ulster Democratic Party

UUC: Ulster Unionist Council

UUP: Ulster Unionist Party

UWC: Ulster Workers' Council

UUUC: United Ulster Unionist Council

Appendix 3: Election Graphs
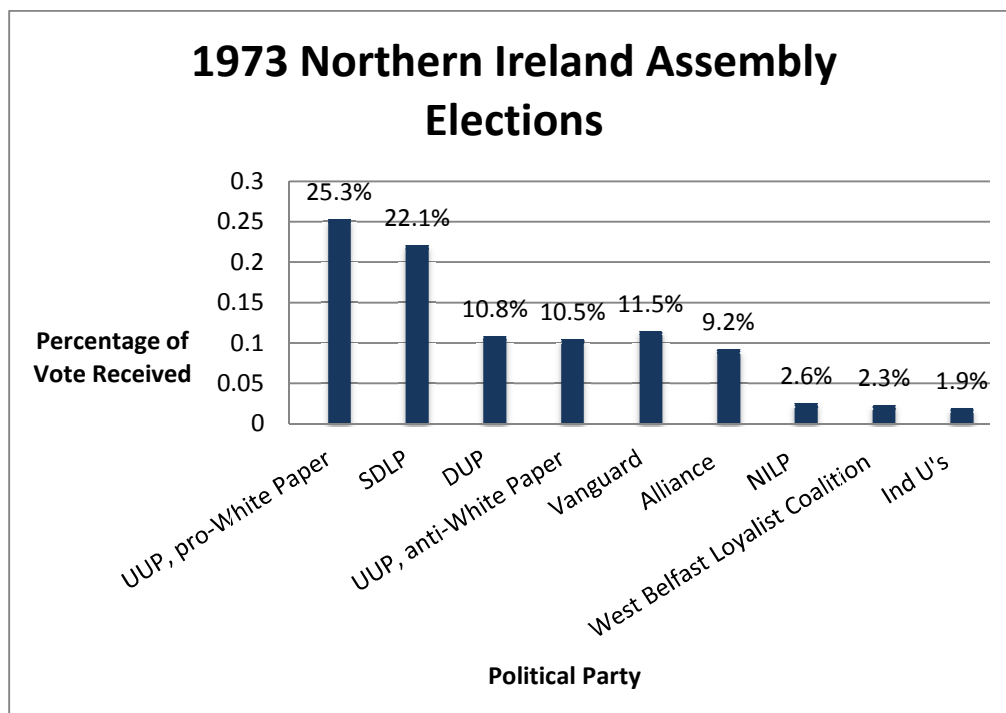

1973 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections

Figure 2: Northern Ireland Assembly Elections. Source: Economic and Social Research Council, "Northern Ireland Assembly Elections 1973." Note: Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP).
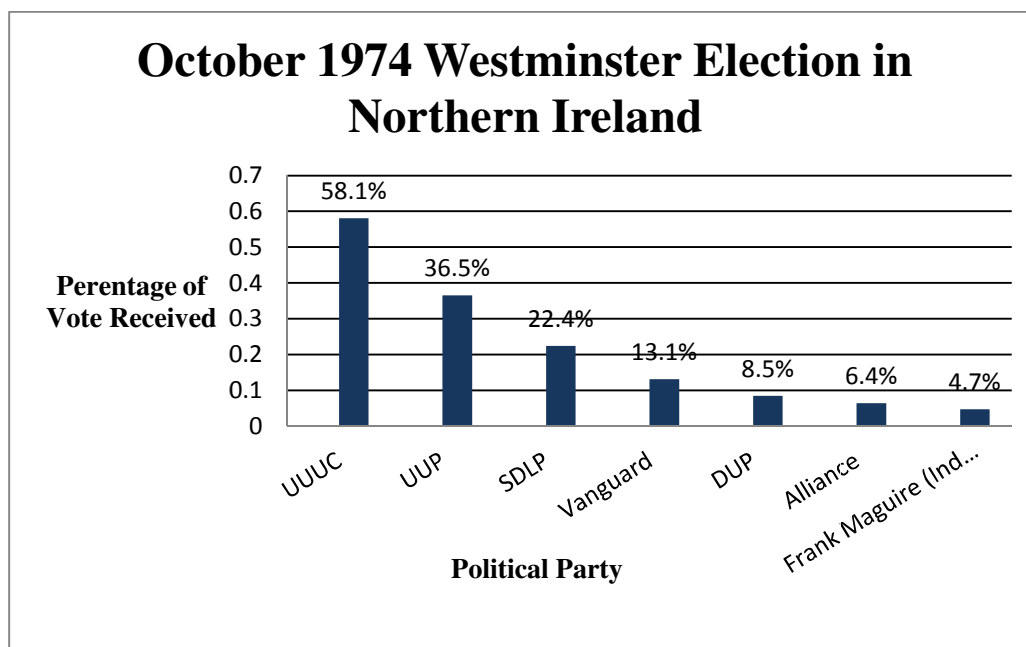

October 1974 Westminster Election in Northern Ireland

Figure 3: October 1974 Westminster Election in Northern Ireland. Source: Economic and Social Research Council, "Westminster Election, 10 October 1074." Note: UUUC is combination of UUP, Vanguard, and DUP results.
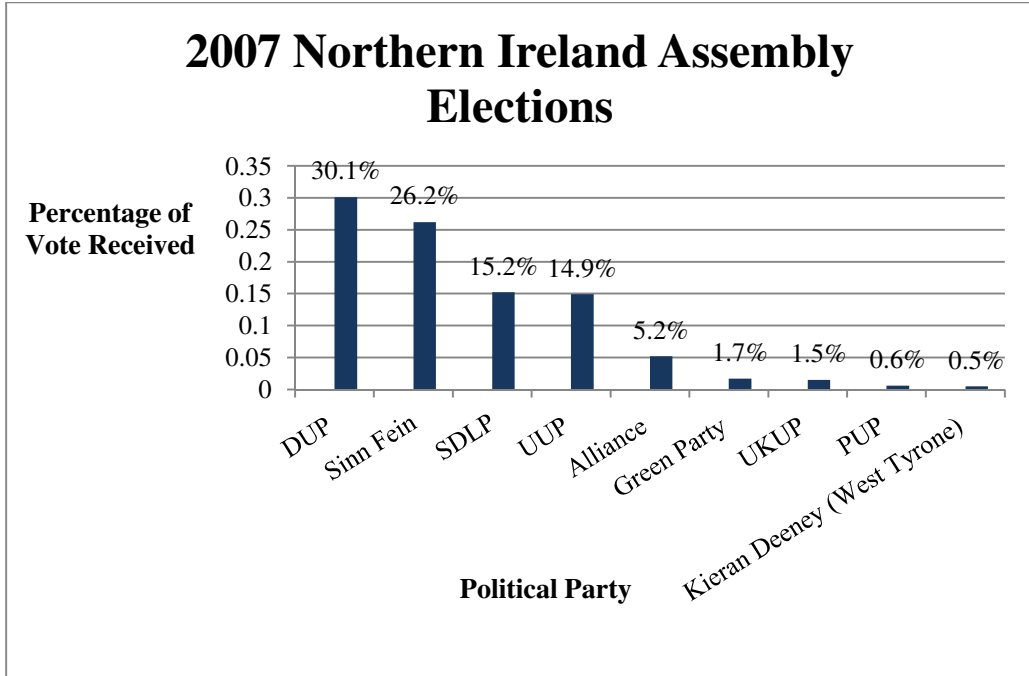
2007 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections

Figure 4: 2007 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections. Source: Economic and Social Research Council, "Northern Ireland Assembly Elections 2007."

Capstone Summary

Padraic Fiacc

Enemy Encounter

Dumping (left over from the autumn)
Dead leaves, near a culvert
I come on
     a British Soldier
With a rifle and a radio
Perched hiding. He has red hair

He is young enough to be my weenie
-bopper daughter's boyfriend.
He is like a lonely little winter robin.
We are that close to each other, I
Can nearly hear his heart beating.

I say something bland to make him grin,
But his glass eyes look past my side
- whiskers down
     the Shore Road Street.
I am an Irishman
    and he is afraid
That I have come to kill him

I chose to open this summary with the above poem because when first reading it I thought of how, in such a brief way, it provided a glimpse into the turbulent lives of those who lived in Northern Ireland during the "Troubles." The "Troubles" is the term often used to describe the conflict between nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland, starting in the late 1960s and concluding, for the most part, in 1998. The nationalists generally support a united Ireland, while the unionists favor keeping Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom. My Capstone specifically examines the Sunningdale, Anglo-Irish, and Good Friday Agreements that emerged over the course of the "Troubles" through the lens of Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly's contentious politics thesis. The overall argument of my Capstone is that the contentious politics thesis furthers our understanding of the triumphs and failures of each agreement and helps explain why it took three decades to produce a lasting peace.

My Capstone begins with a concise history of contentious events in Ireland from 1600 to the division of Ireland into North and South in 1922. It should be noted that contention between the people of Ireland and Great Britain dates back to the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169. However, for the purpose of this work I start with the 17th Century for this marks, particularly after Oliver Cromwell's invasion of Ireland, the origins of the conflict in Northern Ireland over 300 years later. Cromwell's conquest and subsequent colonization of Ireland brought Ireland out of a dormant stage and provided the spark that led to the political turmoil and upheaval in the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries, culminating in the push for independence and establishment of the Irish Free State in the 1921. In my history, I go into depth about key events and actors in the each century from 1600 to the fight for Irish independence in the early 20th Century. Included in this are Cromwell's invasion and colonization of Ireland; the 1798 uprising by the United Irishmen under the leadership of Wolfe Tone; the distinguished political careers of Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell in the 19th Century; the Easter Rising in 1916; the Irish War for Independence from 1919-1921 and the subsequent Irish Civil War from 1921-1923. The purpose of this historical background is to put the "Troubles" into context with the larger contentious history of Ireland. In addition, it serves to provide important information about how the "Troubles" came about and why such strong tensions exist between the nationalist and unionist communities in Northern Ireland.

The next section of my Capstone provides background information for the three agreements. This includes the key events that facilitated the signing of each

agreement and the reaction to each in both the nationalist and unionist communities. For example, the Sunningdale Agreement emerged out of the turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Notable events from this period include the Catholic Civil Rights movement, the deployment of the British Army to Northern Ireland, and the internment without trial of anyone suspected of association with paramilitary groups, which discriminated against nationalists. The final event that spurred the signing of the Sunningdale Agreement was "Bloody Sunday", when 13 Catholic protestors were shot and killed by British troops, causing the British government to subsequently dissolve Northern Ireland's government and institute direct rule from London. The Sunningdale Agreement came into effect on January 1, 1974 and created a power-sharing executive body, with the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the centrist Alliance Party forming a ruling coalition. The power-sharing executive lacked the support of the unionist community, which would ultimately undermine the agreement after only a few months, forcing the British government to reinstate direct rule. The rest of this segment provides similar details for the Anglo-Irish and Good Friday Agreements. It also includes a comparison of the three agreements to highlight the changes made to the later agreements in the effort to create a lasting peace and to help illustrate why the first two failed to do so.

The following section examines the three agreements through the lens of the contentious politics thesis. Prior to going into more detail, I must explain the thesis. McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow developed the thesis after continual frustration with the compartmentalization of studies concerning political struggle. In place of

the "static, single-actor models (including their own) that have prevailed in the

field," they identify causal mechanisms and processes that recur across a wide-

range of contentious politics and "shift the focus of analysis to dynamic

interaction" (2001). This is not a theory, for as Tilly and Tarrow state in their

book *Contentious Politics* "the contentious politics approach looks deliberately

for similarities in cause-effect relationships across the wide range of political

struggles without aiming for general laws that govern all of politics" (2007). The

purpose of the thesis is not to examine various forms of contention (i.e. coups,

civil wars, revolutions) one by one and make broad generalizations for each of

them. Quite the opposite; the goal is to "identify parallels in the ways that

apparently disparate forms of contention work, and show how their differences

result from varying combinations and sequences of mechanisms in contrasting

regime environments" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007). The thesis allows us to recognize

trends amid various types of conflicts. It argues that, though contentious situations

exist on a wide spectrum, similar causal mechanisms and processes are present in

all of them, helping to explain how contentious events occur. In this work, I use

the conflict in Northern Ireland as a case study to test the thesis and determine if

identifying causal mechanisms and processes in the buildup and aftermath of each

agreement can explain why the Good Friday Agreement was the only one to

experience relatively long-term success. To make clear what mechanisms and

processes are being discussed, I italicize them throughout the text. A full glossary

for the mechanisms and processes discussed is available at the back of the work in

Appendix 1. Tilly and Tarrow define mechanisms as "a delimited class of events

that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (2007). Mechanisms compound into processes, which "are regular combinations and sequences of mechanisms that produce similar transformations of those elements" (2007). As I illustrate in the paper, recognizing causal mechanisms and processes that occurred during the buildup and aftermath of the GFA does explain why it held up compared to the previous two agreements. The *object shift* by the nationalist community, the *co-optation* of Sinn Féin into the peace talks, and the *identity shift* by the Republic of Ireland are some examples of the causal mechanisms and processes that separated the GFA from Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA).

Following this, I include a comparative section with the Bosnian War (1992-95) to help illustrate how the same causal mechanisms and processes can be identified in two distinct conflicts. *Object shift*, *opportunity spirals*, *democratization*, and *demobilization* all recur over the course of the conflict in Bosnia and the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland. The road to peace certainly differed between the two; however, the comparison serves as an excellent example of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's point that parallels can be drawn from the ways apparently disparate forms of contention work. Within this segment, I provide a short history of the Bosnian War and then enter into detail about how each of the mechanisms and processes mentioned above played out in Bosnia, while drawing connections to the same mechanisms and processes in Northern Ireland.

I conclude by reaffirming my belief that the contentious politics thesis provides a more dynamic analysis of and further explains the failure of the first two agreements and the success of the third. I also touch on the lessons the negotiating parties learned after the failures of Sunningdale and the AIA that contributed to the success of the GFA.

<u>Methodology</u>

The main method used for this work is researching books and articles written on the subject. This includes primary source documents, in particular the memoirs of people participating in the events discussed and newspaper articles published at the time. Fortunately, this subject has been well documented over the years and many of these records were accessible. The books and articles generally fell into two categories: the historical record and material related to the contentious politics thesis. McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow's *Dynamics of Contention* and Tilly and Tarrow's *Contentious Politics* were essential for the identification of the causal mechanisms and processes. Paul Dixon's *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace* provided me with a highly accessible and detailed history of the "Troubles." With the large amount of information available on Northern Ireland, combined with the works of McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow, research was the best and most appropriate method for completing my Capstone Project.

<u>Project's Significance</u>

I believe my Capstone Project makes a significant contribution in support of the contentious politics thesis. I chose to use Northern Ireland as the case study for this project for many reasons. In term of academics, I am majoring in history and political science. My thesis allowed me to utilize the skills I have developed working towards my majors. On a more personal level, I come from an Irish background. Both sides of my family can trace their ancestry to Ireland. This connection drew my initial curiosity in studying Ireland and my interest has only grown since. In addition, in the fall of 2010 I studied abroad in London. Before arriving in England, I participated in a ten-day seminar in Ireland, five days in Dublin and five in Belfast. Prior to this, I had never studied Ireland formally in my academic career. This experience, especially in Belfast, with political divisions still evident, fueled my desire to study Irish politics, particularly the "Troubles." I believe the case study superbly exemplified the dynamic capabilities of the contentious politics thesis by identifying causal mechanisms and processes, which greatly enhances previous explanations for the failure of the Sunningdale and Anglo-Irish Agreements and the success of the Good Friday Agreement. I understand that the thesis that this paper is centered on is not my own, but the thorough analysis of the "Troubles" through the lens of the contentious politics thesis is an original work. One that I believe enhances the study of contentious politics.