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The Path to Peace: Conflict Theory and Northern Ireland's Troubles (1968-1998)

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by

Ruairi Wiepking

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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Abstract:

This paper is a qualitative historical analysis of Northern Ireland's Troubles. Over a period of approximately thirty years, sectarian violence in Northern Ireland dominated the headlines of newspapers in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. Despite this violent history, Northern Ireland has enjoyed relative peace and stability since the passage of the Belfast Agreement in 1998. This paper aims to better understand *why* and *how* Northern Ireland endured a generation of brutal sectarian violence and emerged into a new era of peace and mutual understanding. In doing so, this paper incorporates theories from peace and conflict studies and uses them to frame traditional historical analyses of Northern Ireland's Troubles. The ultimate goal of this paper is to integrate traditional history and contemporary theories in peace and conflict studies in order to explain the *transformation* of the conflict in Northern Ireland, thereby providing a basis to better grasp its current sociopolitical reality.

1. Introduction

“Conflict is never a static phenomenon. ...It is constantly changed by ongoing human interaction and it continuously changes the very people who give it life and the social environment in which it is born, evolves and perhaps ends.”

-- John Paul Lederach, 1997

On September 16th 2011, the British Newspaper, *The Guardian*, ran a story titled “BELFAST PARK OPENS DOOR TO PEACE.” The ‘door’ in question is actually a gate in one of the so called ‘peace walls,’ which were built throughout Northern Ireland during the violent period of conflict known as “The Troubles.” While this particular wall has only been in place since 1994, others have been in place since 1969. The article continues, “. . . for the first time since any of the barriers throughout the city were built over the past four decades, a breach will be made in one.” Local Justice Minister David Ford called the opening of the Gate in the Alexandra Park area of Belfast “an important day for Northern Ireland” which required “great courage [in taking] the first step to open up an interface barrier that has been a symbol of division and segregation for so long.”

In 1998, a groundbreaking peace agreement, known as the Belfast Agreement, was signed and approved by the British and Irish Government, which sought to finally put an end sectarian violence and political conflict in Northern Ireland. The Belfast Agreement was effective in greatly reducing sectarian violence and developing cross-community relations in Northern Ireland. But, often less talked about are the long-lasting implications of the Northern Ireland peace process. The opening of a gate in the Alexandra Park ‘peace wall’ some thirteen years after the Belfast Agreement shows that the peace process is still in effect in Northern Ireland. While cross-border councils were set up, paramilitary prisoners were released, and new

political system was implemented, the strongest indication that peace is thriving in Northern Ireland is that small-scale, community level peacebuilding continues to take place across the country.

The continuation of the peace process in Northern Ireland is particularly remarkable given that the majority of the country's population was alive to witness during The Troubles. Following the partition of Ireland in 1922, in which the Government of the United Kingdom split the island into two self-governing territories (Northern and Southern Ireland). While the Unionist majority in Northern Ireland expressed a desire to remain within the United Kingdom, the Republican movement in the South resulted in the Irish War of Independence. Southern Ireland won its sovereignty and with the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, became the Irish Free State. From this moment on, the island of Ireland became two separate countries with two competing notions of identity and Unionist hegemony dominated Northern Ireland's political system.

The Troubles came about in the late 1960s following generations of Unionist dominated politics in Ulster. A civil rights movement orchestrated by the predominantly Catholic Nationalist population of Northern Ireland caused consternation among the predominantly hard-line Protestant Unionists, who responded harshly to protesters. It was the harsh backlash in response to this movement that led to the tit-for-tat violent escalation known now as The Troubles. Brutal displays of violence tore Northern Ireland apart. Bloody Sunday in 1972, a massacre of civil rights protesters committed by British soldiers radicalized an already uneasy Nationalist population. Responses from Republican paramilitary groups such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) engaged in a violent campaign that was equally atrocious and condemnable. As The Troubles escalated during the 1970s and 1980s, they attracted increasing

international attention. Republican Hunger Strikes, assassination attempts on British political figures including Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher herself, and senseless acts of murder severely undermined the peace process, leaving many wondering what exactly they were fighting for. As violent conflict increasingly drew the ire of a population yearning for normalcy in day-to-day life, Northern Ireland began working towards developing a culture of peace. It was this ideological shift that allowed a fledgling peace process, which began with the failed Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, to finally take hold in the 1990s, and point Northern Ireland in the direction of cross-community understanding, peace, and prosperity.

With similar conflicts still raging across the globe, Northern Ireland's Troubles have largely come and gone. This research project is an exploration of *why* the conflict in Northern Ireland emerged, escalated, plateaued, and dissipated. Numerous works on Northern Ireland present a linear history of the country from partition to present, offering a time-line structured analysis, with dates and summaries of key events. Others offer qualitative studies of Northern Ireland during The Troubles, which further augment the body of literature by providing sociological and anthropological analyses of the conflict. This paper is an engagement of both styles of writing. A synthesis of two academic fields, this paper frames a political history with several theories presented in peace and conflict studies, with the ultimate goal of constructing a multi dimensional political history of Northern Ireland's Troubles. It is my position that by applying aspects of conflict theory to the political history of The Troubles, we can better comprehend the *transformation* of the conflict in Northern Ireland. In doing so, we can more accurately understand how the damage of three decades of violence is now giving way to peaceful, cross-community development and pragmatic politics in Northern Ireland.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

Interpreting the evolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland can be read as an open text. As the conflict is still evolving, subsequent historical analysis of The Troubles will too. Academics, journalists, politicians, religious leaders, and members of the public all see The Troubles through different lenses. Some see the violence of the period as a thing of the past—buried by the growth of a culture of peace and a fear of the resurgence of sectarian conflict. Some see the lingering effects of The Troubles as a problem for the present and future, while others view it on a spectrum, locating themselves and their opinions accordingly. In the following literature review, I will outline several tenets of conflict theory and will offer a brief history of The Troubles. The literature review will serve as both a theoretical and historical framework upon which the remainder of this thesis is built.

On Conflict

Conflict theorists John Paul Lederach and Johann Galtung sit at the forefront of the field of peace and conflict studies. Lederach's extensive examination of deeply divided societies provides a framework with which to approach the needs of key groups within a given conflict (Lederach, 1997). Galtung is widely known for his research on what he calls "structural violence," or the presence of institutionalized disadvantages for individuals or groups because of socioeconomic, cultural, racial affiliations. Galtung's concept of structural violence is found at the root of virtually all conflicts. Both theorists' ideas are integral to understanding the roots, outbreak, escalation, and dissipation of conflict, and in this case, The Troubles.

Lederach argues that conflict emerges out of "deeply divided societies" (Lederach, 1997:11) In itself; this idea is not exactly a groundbreaking concept. It doesn't take much critical

analysis to recognize that a society deeply divided along the lines of religious, racial, economic, and or political ideology is ripe for some degree of conflict. From Lederach's work on deeply divided societies, we can glean a theoretical understanding of what perhaps was (is) at the root of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. First, Lederach believes that in deeply divided societies there is a presence of distinct identity units (Lederach 1997:13). In Northern Ireland, there were essentially two: Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists (and still are to this day—though this is slowly changing). Over the course of The Troubles, these polarized communities increasingly sought security from non-governmental sectarian groups. Protestants often found themselves looking to the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Defense Association for protection that the state-sponsored Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) could not provide. Catholics, feeling marginalized and targeted by these groups as well as the RUC and British Army, were 'protected' by Republican paramilitary groups including the Provisional Irish Republican Army, Official Irish Republican Army, and the smaller Irish National Liberation Army. When paramilitary groups, not state-sponsored law enforcement officials, are given agency (on a large scale) it calls into question the legitimacy of the state. The development of this problem, in turn, lends credence to an idea which Lederach supports, that at the root of conflict ideology is a notion that "if we do not dominate, we will be dominated" (Lederach 1997:15). As we will see in chapter 4, the derailment of early peace agreements during The Troubles (early 1970s) was due in large part to the pervasiveness of this idea.

Ultimately, Lederach argues that conflict at any level is driven by "psychosocial elements— long standing animosities rooted in a perceived threat to identity and survival" (Lederach 1997:17). The conflict in Northern Ireland is no different. With a conflicting ideology dating back centuries, Northern Nationalists and Unionists have disputed their own self-interest

for generations, rarely seeing eye-to-eye. Lederach's conclusions might seem at times predictable, as he argues that "our challenge is to find strategic and practical approaches that help establish an infrastructure for sustainable transformation that takes seriously the immediate and deep rooted needs of divided societies" (Lederach 1997:152). While Lederach offers a discussion of identity and conflict in divided societies, fellow conflict theorist Johan Galtung discusses the institutions that *cause* a society to be deeply divided.

Johan Galtung is well known among peace and conflict theorists for his extensive work on the concept of "Structural Violence." A firm understanding of structural violence is important to the development of a history of The Troubles in Northern Ireland because the sociological implications of its presence are tremendous. In his work, Galtung expresses that power is not an abstract concept, but instead something that can be manipulated and distributed much like a natural resource (Galtung 1969:167-191). This manipulation and unequal distribution of power is the basic conceptualization of structural violence. Consequently, it makes sense that if a given society were to minimize or even erase the manipulation and unequal distribution of power, they would greatly reduce institutionalized structural violence, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict.

To give a pertinent example, we might examine a power imbalance present in Northern Ireland that loomed large until relatively recently. Given the presence of a Protestant Unionist majority in Northern Ireland, its government was composed predominantly of Protestant Unionist. Given Northern Ireland in the twentieth century was led by a predominantly Protestant Unionist government, its economic policies were generally favorable to Protestant Unionists. As a result of cultural and religious nepotism, Catholic Nationalists were often left with higher rates of unemployment than their Protestant Unionist counterparts. While no legislation existed

explicitly stating that Catholic Nationalists were second-class citizens, the power structure in place prior to and during The Troubles created a situation where many felt like they were. With the majority of senior positions in the corporate and political spheres occupied by Protestant Unionists, few Catholic Nationalists were left with a means with which they felt could achieve upward social mobility. Innocuous at face value, the government set up by a “democratically” elected majority implemented *structurally violent* policies, which magnified related conflicts of identity that had been (although somewhat precariously) lying dormant in Northern Ireland for nearly half a century.

While it may seem relatively obvious to recognize qualities of deeply divided societies and relatively straightforward to *transform* such institutions as the power imbalance Galtung calls structural violence, it is necessary to integrate recognition and transformation in the historical discussion of The Troubles. Without doing so, we would be doing a disservice to the continual development of peace and understanding taking place in Northern Ireland today.

On Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation theory differentiates itself from modern conceptions of conflict resolution. Conflict Resolution in its most basic form is just that. The word “conflict” means to clash with another individual or group in virtually any form. Resolution, from the word resolve, generally means that a series of actions has subsided for a particular reason. Conflict Resolution is a blanket term that encompasses all forms of the end of a conflict (be it temporary or permanent). Conflict Transformation serves to describe a much more difficult, novel mode of conflict resolution. The Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, a philanthropic organization that seeks to promote research and development for effective channels of conflict resolution,

offers a concise definition of conflict transformation on their website, stating that conflict transformation is

...[a] generic, comprehensive term referring to actions and processes seeking to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of violent conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. It aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict and deals with structural, behavioral and attitudinal aspects of conflict. The term refers to both the process and the completion of the process. As such, it incorporates the activities of processes such as conflict prevention and conflict resolution and goes farther than conflict settlement or conflict management (Berghof Foundation on Conflict Transformation, October 2011).

Conflict Transformation can effectively promote conflict resolution. But conflict resolution does not always mean that a conflict has been transformed. According to Ramsbotham et al (2005), the absence of war does not necessarily mean peace (p.42). This idea is perhaps the most significant concept shaping conflict transformation theory, as the basic problem Ramsbotham et al (2005) posits—that is, the absence of a parallel between lack of visible conflict and peace—reflects the reason why efforts at promoting peace have switched from traditional methods of conflict *resolution* to modern methods of conflict *transformation*. This type of approach to peacebuilding has been seen elsewhere in the world besides Northern Ireland. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation commission, and small-scale efforts in Rwanda and the Balkans have begun to make large-scale results. Rather than put an end to conflicts through new political legislation or physical force, "conflict transformation's field of view is intended to [address] the root causes of social conflicts... while recognizing that some conflicts are not resolvable unless fundamental arrangements are changed"(Coy, 2009:68). In doing so, conflict transformation

aims to reengineer what Michael Polanyi describes as our *tacit* knowledge of conflict. (Redekop, 2002:14). Tacit knowledge is knowledge in its most basic, reflexive form. It is a type of knowledge that people are largely unaware of, making it difficult for individuals to critically examine it and also transmit it. In essence, tacit knowledge is the knee-jerk reaction ingrained in both the individual and the whole. When a young child in school is hit by one of their classmates, they more often than not will try and hit back. This is tacit knowledge—our most basic understanding of checks and balances.

When applied to conflict, our tacit knowledge of social group interaction generally dictates that when one group imposes on another ideologically and or physically, it is important that the *other* reasserts its own to counteract this imposition. It is this physical and ideological interference that generates what we see as conflict. To highlight a brief example, I turn to the events of September 11th, 2001. An act of violence, the events of September 11th cannot be condemned enough. But it should also be underscored that a variety of wrongdoings were committed on **both sides before and after** that terrible day in 2001. When the United States invaded Afghanistan, it was seen as justified by the majority of the Western World (myself included), but the cost to non-affiliated Afghans has been tremendous. Countless civilians with no affiliation with or sympathy for the Taliban or Al Qaeda have been tortured and killed for a crime a group of radical extremists committed. Furthermore, the supposed concern of the Bush-Cheney administration that nearby Iraq was harboring like-minded terrorists involved our military to a greater degree in a conflict on foreign soil. It was the tacit knowledge of a national collective that generated the instinctual response of a stricken American Government to retaliate by invading Afghanistan to “even the score against a dramatically weaker, disorganized fringe group of terrorists. Playing off fears generated by the Bush administration’s knee-jerk reaction to

invade Afghanistan, the conflict then escalated when American coalition forces were sent to Iraq, where they remain, nearly a decade later. The American lives lost in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with the lives of innocent Afghans and Iraqis have far surpassed the death toll from the September 11th attacks, begging us to question whether our tacit knowledge guided us in the right direction, or the wrong direction.

Conflict Transformation demands that we understand, make explicit, and then question our tacit knowledge before we let it govern our interpersonal and political actions. So while the symptoms of deep-rooted conflict, such as the events of and subsequent fallout from September 11th, seem completely and utterly unfounded, they are usually the product of generations of misunderstanding (Redekop, 2005:23). Traditional notions of conflict resolution suggest that an adequate approach to a resolution to an armed conflict include 1. Defense, 2. Mitigating the onslaught of the opponent, and 3. Terminating the conflict by coaxing the opponent to surrender or accept a truce through military force and or political maneuvering. *Conflict Transformation* acknowledges that conflict is an undeniable way humans will interact. Conflict, like all other human interaction, is part of the human *relational system*. Redekop defines a relational system as a “context—such as a family, a workplace, or a region in which parties have to deal with one another” (Redekop, 2005:12). Because these settings are essentially inevitable in our daily lives, it would be foolish to say that conflict is **completely** avoidable. David Augsberger further explains that humanity operates under the preconditions of its culture. In simple terms, Augsberger believes that since we are born into a social world, we will always experience parallel emotions and interactions to others, i.e. conflict, loss, greed, anger, pleasure, et cetera. Solidifying his argument Augsberger cites Foucault, who argues

...the Fundamental codes of a culture—those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques its values, the hierarchy of its practices-- establish for all of us, from the very first, the empirical orders with which we will be dealing and within which we will be at home (Foucault, 1970:xx as cited by Augsberger 1992:16).

With a background in cultural anthropology and a firm belief in evolutionary anthropology I have a predisposition to agree with the notion that conflict is a part of human nature.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz once paraphrased in his *Interpretation of Cultures*, the ideas of sociologist Max Weber, “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he, himself, has spun” (Geertz, 1973). The scope of human interaction, in its many variations, is engineered through a process of inevitable social learning. As Michel Foucault argues (and Augsberger embraces), there will certainly be ‘codes,’ learned or innate, that human beings will adhere to. However, like Redekop and others I believe our natural inclination to *conflict* can be mitigated to a great degree by our ability to think critically. That’s where Conflict Transformation re-enters the picture, incorporating an ultimate goal of what Rambsotham et al. (2005) citing Wehr (1979) argues is “not to win, but to achieve a fresh level of social truth and a healthier relationship between antagonists” (p. 64). In essence, Conflict Transformation leads us to question the *naturalness* of Polanyi’s *tacit knowledge*, Redekop’s *relational systems*, and Foucault’s fundamental codes of culture. Because the aforementioned concepts are accepted as innate and human, they can be plausibly altered.

Take for example the tried-and-true example of Gandhi’s non-violent movement in India during the 1930s and 1940s. Despite countless civil rights violations and atrocities committed under British rule, Gandhi, the political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement, sought purge the notion of an eye-for-an-eye from the consciousness of his people.

Instead of advocating retaliation, which had been up until then a traditional form of conflict, he advocated non-violence. Through Gandhi's nonviolent struggle he proved that conflict through nontraditional pathways is possible. A group can alter the way they participate in a 'natural' action such as conflict by critically engaging the impact of their participation in it. It could be argued that if the entire nation of India armed itself against the British Empire and settled in for a long war it could have won, but the war might still be going on today—and millions of individuals could have died. Instead, Gandhi's nonviolent movement in India achieved the same results, in a fraction of the time, with minimal casualties (on either side). His ability to critically gauge the situation in India led to the development of a relatively novel and incredibly effective form of resistance. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* (his non-violent movement) was not a knee-jerk reaction to British oppression. It was the product of his critical analysis of the fallacies of a knee-jerk response to the British oppression. In Polyani and Redekops eyes, Gandhi's *Satyagraha* was a product of his critical engagement and subsequent rejection of the *tacit knowledge* of the *relational system* of British oppression.

At this point I feel it important to interject that for the sake of practicality, this research project will utilize the ideas of Lederach, Galtung, Redekop, and Augsberger in a historical context. I feel that doing this offers a concrete historical example of the relatively abstract concepts each author seeks to illuminate. No conflict is static. External influences, internal politics, and continual ideological evolution contribute to the dynamic nature of a conflict, and thus a history of a conflict should be written acknowledging it as such. The conflict that emerges from deeply divided societies, as Lederach posits, should be understood “analytically as a progression that moves through different stages” (Lederach 1997:71). The case of The Troubles is no different, and so their history should be analyzed through a lens of conflict theory and

ultimately Conflict Transformation. The following section of the literature review will examine previous histories of Northern Ireland and The Troubles. These histories rely heavily on a fact-based historical narrative to articulate the trajectory of one of the most violent internal conflicts in recent Western European history. They will serve as a juxtaposition of the transformational history of The Troubles, which creates the body of this thesis.

On The Troubles

In 1801, Ireland and Great Britain were formally joined as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. When this act was passed, the *Britishness* of the island of Ireland was questionable, but British socioeconomic hegemony was concrete (Hennessey 1997:1). With little success, Irish nationalists attempted to extricate themselves from the socioeconomic and geographic confines they felt the United Kingdom imposed on them. The establishment of Irish cultural organizations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884 and the Gaelic League (founded by Douglas Hyde) in 1893 marked the beginning of a revival of Irish nationalism, but it wasn't until Easter, 1916 that winds of change began to fill the sails of the nationalist cause. The nationalist rebellion known as the 'Easter Rising' in 1916 provoked an ill-planned reaction by the preoccupied (by WWI) British Government. By executing the Rising's nationalist leaders, the British catalyzed a phenomenal change in attitude amongst a formerly apolitical population. Kevin Kelley's historical analysis of the conflict in Northern Ireland supports this conclusion, arguing, "England, employing its usual vengeance against Irish traitors to the Crown, had this time made a gross miscalculation. Ireland was sullen, anguished, unbowed. In death, the Republican Volunteers were transformed from foolish extremists into martyred heroes of the Irish Republic." (Kelley, 1982:33). With growing support for the nationalist cause, militant ideological conflict began to develop. In 1917, wracked by the plague

of World War One, the British government sought to impose conscription in Ireland. This was met with tremendous opposition from a growing nationalist community. As their leaders were swiftly executed after the 1916 Rising, members of the nationalist movement found it difficult to see eye-to-eye with the British government on the subject of conscription. This disagreement carried over into the general elections of 1918, when republican Sinn Fein, a party whose name means “Ourselves Alone,” virtually swept the polls, earning a total of seventy three of Ireland’s one hundred and five seats in British Parliament. (Hennessey, 1997:8). In a seemingly monumental victory, Sinn Fein took a calculated risk by choosing not abstain from taking their seats in British Parliament and proclaiming a new Irish Republic, known in Gaelic as ‘*Dáil Éireann*.’

At this point, it appears Sinn Fein’s decision to abstain from taking their seats in Westminster was somewhat of a blunder. Recognizing the long-lasting implications of a direct affront to British hegemony, the British passed the Government of Ireland Act in 1920, which expanded the implications of the home rule legislation passed some years before. Because nationalist-minded Sinn Fein MPs refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the parliament they had been newly elected to, the subsequent parliamentary discussions at Westminster were left to the Unionists. As a result, the Government of Ireland act of 1920 was passed. This Act provided that there be two parliaments on the island of Ireland, one in Ulster, where a majority of Ireland’s Unionists resided, and the other in what would later (briefly) become known as ‘Southern Ireland.’ The subsequent Anglo-Irish war (also known as the Irish war of Independence) culminated in the passage of a treaty that acknowledged the sovereignty of both parliaments and gave both the autonomy to choose where their allegiance lay. The *Dáil* in the south, though unified on secession from the United Kingdom was split on the issue of partition. The parliament

in the North, dominated by Unionist MPs, opted to remain in the United Kingdom. This effectively split the island of Ireland along the lines of sociopolitical and religious ideology. In the South, the heavily Catholic, Nationalist majority became part of the Irish Free State. In the North, the presence of a British Unionist (Protestant) majority and Irish Nationalist (Catholic) minority in the North would eventually give rise to a bloody thirty year period of politico-religious conflict known colloquially as “The Troubles.”

In Northern Ireland, insurgency against the British Crown was not unheard of in the years after partition, however it was dealt with swiftly and went comparatively unnoticed until it erupted on the international stage in the late 1960s. While there is no set date as to when The Troubles commenced and when they finished (or even if they have finished), the colloquial title ‘The Troubles’ generally signifies a thirty-year period between October 1968 (The Derry Civil Rights March) and April 1998 (the approval of the groundbreaking Belfast Agreement). During this period approximately 3500 individuals (civilian, military, and paramilitary) were killed.

Irish historian and University College, Cork professor J.J. Lee (1989) offers an explanation for the development of a heightened state of conflict in Northern Ireland, highlighting economic downturn in the post-World War II years (1945-1963). As the rest of Great Britain enjoyed relatively steady growth during this period, Northern Ireland was not invited to the party. Catholics were hit hard during this period, mired in economic purgatory with an absurd 17.3% unemployment rate. Comparatively, Protestants maintained a lower rate of employment, with only 6.6% unemployed during the same period (1971) (Lee, 1989:412). Lee, writing in the late 1980s, acknowledges these statistics should be noted in a discussion as to what internal factors unique to the late 1960s catalyzed the onset of The Troubles. But he leaves any further speculation as to the significance of these figures to the reader.

As The Troubles progressed, they took a tremendous toll on the people of Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and mainland Britain. Paramilitary violence was all too common. Bombings occurred frequently and were to be expected on any day of any month, of any year. Political disagreements, riotous protests, sectarian discrimination, hunger strikes, and failed cease fires lasted for thirty years. But in 1998, a groundbreaking peace agreement, known as the Belfast Agreement, was voted on and passed into law. Save for a comparatively small amount of sectarian violence, The Troubles have largely dissipated in the years following this agreement. While the heyday of paramilitary violence has come and largely gone, stark political divides still exist in Northern Ireland. This is because Northern Ireland, like many other conflict zones, is a politico-geographic region whose existence is still hotly contested. Historically, the prevailing political discourse in Northern Ireland (Nationalist versus Unionist) is predicated upon conceptions of internal and external national allegiance and religious preference. (Hayward 2006). Contemporarily, the prevailing political harmony in Northern Ireland is predicated on a recognized commitment by these two conflicting ideologies to work together (power sharing agreement as set forth by the Belfast Agreement). The very foundations of the current system of government in Northern Ireland reify the presence of two conflicting ideologies while simultaneously acknowledging that they can work together in the interest of the people of Northern Ireland.

I have consciously chosen to omit individual historical analyses of each of the topics I will specifically discuss in chapter four in the literature review. This is because the historical discussion offered by the likes of Lee, Hennessey, Kelley and others will be synthesized with the theory set forth by Lederach, Augsberger, Redekop, Galtung, Foucault and others. In essence,

the body of this thesis will combine the two branches of academic discourse presented in this literature review— conflict theory and political history.

3. Methodology

This paper is qualitative in nature. The ‘data’ collected in the following chapter is an amalgamation of primary documents, newspaper articles, radio and television reports, and historical analysis. These sources are then framed with theories presented in conflict studies with the ultimate goal of explaining how Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland occurred over the course of The Troubles.

Method of Research: Textual Analysis

To build a ‘frame’ for the thesis of this paper, in this case the political history of the conflict in Northern Ireland through a lens conflict theory, I read a work on conflict theory, dealing with a spread of topics including peacebuilding, violence, Conflict Transformation, reconciliation, and divided societies. This was important because I needed to have a sound understanding of the various expressions of, reactions to, and theories behind conflict and Conflict Transformation. Using a basic framework of Conflict Transformation, I built upon my argument by reading and analyzing historical texts of The Troubles. Finally, I searched for newspaper accounts, official statements, primary documents, and television and radio broadcasts to fill in what the academic historical record leaves out.

Methodology

Gleaning information from historical texts, primary documents, newspaper articles, and various other media releases had a twofold importance to the project. First and foremost, each text contributed to a more complete understanding of The Troubles. In addition, the different presentation style of each text painted a different story of The Troubles. Historical texts often

came across as overly brief and unemotional. Conversely, primary documents (i.e. actual text of peace agreements) and official statements conveyed the aspirations of the upper echelons of the political realm, which ranged from disgust to hope and solidarity. Newspaper articles covered the spectrum as well, with pictures and bold lettered print that often sought to capture the emotions of a nation ranging from shock and condemnation to cautious optimism. As outlined earlier, the goal of this thesis is to provide a more three-dimensional analysis of The Troubles in order to better understand the evolution of the sociopolitical landscape in Northern Ireland.

In the following pages, you will be presented with almost thirty years of both primary and secondary reports of The Troubles. Each section is formatted the same. First, an introduction outlines the event or topic and how it pertains to the evolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland by using a specific dimension of conflict theory. Next a presentation of primary sources follows, unsurprisingly found under the title *Primary*. The content in this section varies from event to event, some with a wide range of primary documents and some with just newspaper headlines. The purpose of this section is to present raw data, more often than not, from within twenty-four hours of the event in question occurring. This information is valuable in helping to grasp the ebb and flow of emotions over the course of The Troubles, something that is often left out of traditional historical analysis. Then, there is an analysis of academic history of The Troubles, aptly titled *Academic*. This section compiles various excerpts from historical texts as they pertain to the event or topic in question. This information is used as a contrast to the primary sources, as it is often written months or years after-the-fact, with the benefit of hindsight. The next section *Synthesis*, integrates both *Primary* and *Academic* with conflict theory, in order to locate each event on the spectrum of Conflict Transformation. While the majority of the paper is written in a chronological fashion, section 4.3 is details events that occur in the midst of the events of section

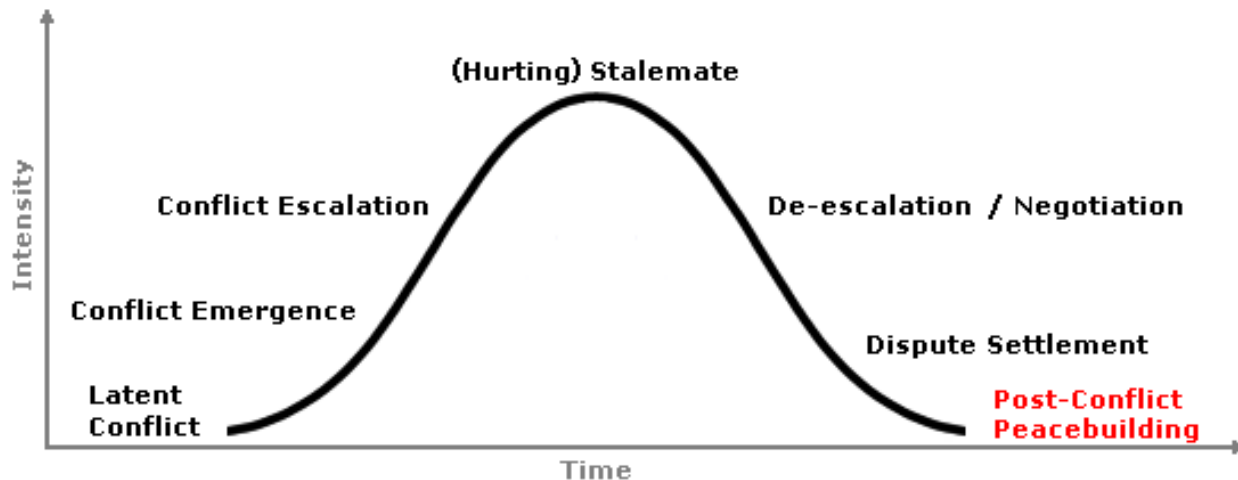
4.2. This is because this paper is designed to build off of the *theories* presented in the previous section. As you are reading, you will find that the conflict theory discussed in section 4.4 is predicated upon recognition of theories presented in 4.3 and so on and so forth.

Chapter IV

Data and Findings

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a growing body of work on conflict theory and more specifically Conflict Transformation Theory. While contemporary Conflict Transformation Theory generally serves as a framework for addressing future and continuing conflicts, this paper uses Conflict Transformation theory and applies it to a political history, in hopes of illustrating a process of conflict *evolution*—a process of gradual change over time brought about by changing political and social tides. This is a concept that I believe is important to understanding both the history and the future trajectory of all conflict.

Traditional histories of The Troubles read much like a timeline, with a focus on dates, politicians, and events. Anthropologies of The Troubles, though not unheard of, are relatively uncommon. This section of the research project examines numerous transformative events of The Troubles that span from shortly after their onset in 1968 to spring of 1998. The data in this section will be presented with a summary of the event or topic first, followed by a presentation of primary sources (including newspaper articles, personal testaments, interview transcripts, and government documents). These are juxtaposed by the use of an analysis of a range of political histories of The Troubles. From there, I will utilize concepts of conflict theory to illustrate how the conflict in Northern Ireland escalated, evolved, dissipated and ultimately transformed through active and passive internal and external forces.



Brahm (2003) uses a curve to model the trajectory of modern conflict

4.1 Conflict Emerges in a Deeply Divided Society: The Northern Ireland Riots of 1969, Internment, and Bloody Sunday

In the half century following partition, Northern Ireland managed to maintain a semblance of peace. However, as the last remaining part of the United Kingdom on the island of Ireland, the political system in Northern Ireland echoed the sentiments of the Ulster Covenant. Signed by Ulster Unionists in 1912, it expressed the desire of a large population of Ulster Protestants to remain in the United Kingdom and adamantly opposed Home Rule. Those who did not sign included a significant minority of Ulster Catholics, faithful to the idea of a sovereign, United Ireland. Over subsequent generations, discriminatory sectarian policies began to dominate the cultural and political arena in Northern Ireland, further entrenching the country's population in the narrative that Northern Ireland is, as Lederach (1997) describes, a *deeply divided society*, with distinct units of cultural, religious, and political identity. While comparatively small-scale civil rights protests and occasional acts of sectarian violence were not uncommon prior to in the half-century following partition, they became commonplace after the onset of the Northern Ireland Riots in 1969. Between January of 1969 and the months following Bloody Sunday in

January of 1972, the conflict in Northern Ireland erupted on the international stage, setting in motion a tumultuous thirty years that saw discrimination, violence, governmental change, and eventually ground-breaking peace agreements.

4.1a Northern Ireland Riots of 1969

In the late 1960s several civil rights movements sprung up in Northern Ireland to protest unfair housing legislation, police brutality, and sectarian discrimination. The civil rights movement was led by the appropriately named Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), which, beginning in 1969, launched a series of marches primarily in opposition to the absence of a one-man-one-vote policy in Northern Ireland. A somewhat outdated system of franchise, voters in Northern Ireland were required to be property owners. This was an issue for a large portion of Catholics in Northern Ireland, as they mostly fell in the lower-middle and lower class brackets of the socioeconomic ladder in Northern Ireland. Despite the fact that Catholics possessed nearly 40% of the overall population in Northern Ireland, they were blatantly misrepresented at Stormont, with Protestant hegemony drowning out calls for political reform. As riots broke out in 1969, the opposition's response was unexpectedly brutal, radicalizing much of the Catholic population across Northern Ireland and repulsing those in the Republic of Ireland.

Primary

Burntollet Ambush

When a Northern Ireland civil rights group called People's Democracy staged a march from Belfast to Derry in January of 1969, they were attacked at Burntollet Bridge outside of Derry. Controversially, the Royal Ulster Constabulary did nothing to intervene in the ambush. Conflicting reports suggest RUC members even partook in the assault on marchers. Following the assault on People's Democracy protesters at Burntollet Bridge, the Irish Times headline read:

“O’NEILL MAY CALL UP SPECIAL POLICE. PREMIER WARNS ‘WARRING MINORITIES.’ PARTISANSHIP OF R.U.C. BECOMES THE BONE OF CONTENTION”

(The Irish Times, January 6, 1969). People’s Democracy marchers were ambushed three times in the last 10 miles of their journey, and approximately three hundred people were injured. At the root of the Nationalist outcry, the article states, was that police forces following the march “were partisan in dealing with demonstrations.” Consequently, civil rights protesters declared an end to any form of ‘truce’ in Northern Ireland.

Battle of The Bogside

A Unionist march on August 12th near the Bogside neighborhood of Derry caused consternation amongst a large population of objecting Catholics who began attacking marchers as they approached the Bogside in Derry. Contrary to the Burntollet ambush, the RUC intervened this time, beginning a pivotal skirmish known colloquially as the ‘Battle of the Bogside.’ In describing the events of the day, the Irish Times went with the headline: “TEAR-GAS USED ON DERRY RIOTERS: 112 CASUALTIES AS POLICE BATTLE BOGSIDE BARRICADES” (The Irish Times, August 13, 1969). The article describes the general state of anarchy present in the Bogside during the riots. It continues, “[i]n Derry a force of 1,000 policemen charged and countercharged Catholic youths who rained stones and petrol bombs on them....” A neighboring article on the front page of the Irish Times cites RUC officials as stating that the riots in the Bogside appeared to have been premeditated by local residents who used “hundreds of petrol-bombs... [that] must have been prepared in advance” (Irish Times, August 13, 1969). News of violence towards Irish Catholics in the Bogside generated concern in the Republic of Ireland—concern, which Irish *Taoiseach* Jack Lynch famously articulated on national television in the Republic of Ireland.

Lynch's Response to the Riots in Northern Ireland

On August 13th Irish Taoiseach Jack Lynch delivered a televised address to the people of the Republic of Ireland directed at the British Government. The speech, colloquially referenced to now as Lynch's "We will not stand by..." Address, implores the British Government to apply for a United Nations peacekeeping force to manage the rapidly escalating conflict in Northern Ireland. In solidarity with the sentiments of Catholics and Nationalists in Northern Ireland, Lynch acknowledges, "the RUC is no longer accepted as an impartial police force..." (Lynch, 1969). Lynch's statements were seen as a direct affront to the decision making process in Northern Ireland, where Prime Minister James Chichester-Clarke had been contemplating requesting the deployment of the British military to resolve the situation in Northern Ireland.

Lynch also proposed that the British Government and Stormont actively consider reassessing the constitutional status of the six counties in Northern Ireland, stating because "the reunification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution for the problem, it is [the Irish Government's] intention to request the British Government to enter into early negotiations with the Irish government to review the present constitutional position of... Northern Ireland" (Lynch, 1969). To some Unionists in Northern Ireland Lynch's speech was viewed as a threat of invasion of Northern Ireland by the Republic of Ireland. While it contained strong words of disapproval, it can be assumed Lynch understood that an invasion of Northern Ireland by an underprepared and numerically inferior Irish military would be highly impractical. (A complete transcript of Lynch's speech can be found in appendix 1.1)

1969: A Year That Changed Everything

A December 31st, 1969 article in the London Times eerily prophesized the forthcoming Troubles in Northern Ireland. The article, titled, "OLD QUARRELS IN A NEW GUISE," leads

with a somewhat ominous opening sentence, the article argues “[n]othing will be the same in Northern Ireland after 1969, one of the most critical of all the crisis years in Irish history” (London Times, December 31, 1969). The article describes the escalation of the conflict in Northern Ireland from bricks to bullets in a matter of months. Almost like dominos, the riots of 1969 led to the collapse of any semblance of order in Northern Ireland. The tone of the article is relatively subdued, as it aims merely to summarize the events of the year in Northern Ireland, rather than necessarily lead its readers towards any conclusions other than their own. If anything, the article highlights the uncertainty that dominated the political arena in Ulster at the time. Following a brief description of the resignation of minister of commerce, Brian Faulkner, Prime Minister Captain Terrence O’Neill held a general election, which, though dominated by Unionists, displayed massive ideological fragmentation in the Unionist population. The fragmentation of the Unionist population was juxtaposed by the growing coalescence of the Nationalist cause. As civil rights were continually violated, demands were not met, and the RUC continued to turn the other cheek, political unrest grew in Catholic areas, culminating in the Battle of the Bogside in August of 1969 and the subsequent arrival of British troops. The Troubles had officially begun.

Academic

Much like the ‘year in review’-style article in the London Times, the historical literature on 1969 in Northern Ireland suggests that the events of the year *did* change everything. Civil rights marches in early 1969 greatly exposed the sectarian nature of the RUC. They also placed the plight of Catholics in Northern Ireland on the international stage to a degree unmatched by efforts in years prior. The events of 1969 saw an increase in paramilitary recruitment and thus paramilitary violence, thereby generating international concern evidenced by Lynch’s assertion

that Great Britain should apply for a U.N. peacekeeping force, Chichester-Clark's refusal, and the eventual arrival of British troops in Northern Ireland for the first time since the 1920s.

Irish historian J.J. Lee offers a candid explanation of the tumultuous developments of 1969. While he highlights the legitimacy of the cause of the People's Democracy march in January of 1969, he makes note of their decision to march through protestant territories in Derry during the last ten miles of the march for which they were "duly assaulted at Burntollet, with the complicity of the police, and apparently the participation of individual policemen" (Lee, 1989:422). Not only was the RUC was an overwhelmingly Protestant police force, Lee (1989) notes that the RUC was also the only *armed* general police force in the United Kingdom. General police forces in England, Wales, and Scotland were (for the most part) unarmed. Additionally, the *Garda Síochána* of the Republic of Ireland was also an unarmed police force. As they were responsible for patrolling a hotly contested geographic region, the RUC being the only armed general police force in the United Kingdom is relatively unsurprising. What should be acknowledged at this juncture is the amount of power entrusted to a firearm-carrying police force. The RUC was under intense pressure from all sides of the sociopolitical arena. To Stormont, they were responsible for maintaining law and order so that Westminster would not have to intervene in the day-to-day operations of Northern Ireland. To Unionists, the RUC was a police force tasked with a difficult job of protecting the interests of the people of Northern Ireland in the name of the Queen. To Nationalists, the RUC was the was a biased police force that turned a blind eye when it came to protecting Catholics from violence in Northern Ireland.

As violence escalated, a slough of bombings occurred on April 23, 1969. Originally thought to be the work of the IRA, the bombings were later attributed to the Ulster Volunteer force (UVF), a Loyalist paramilitary group. These bombings were part of the UVF's somewhat

cannibalistic political goal of destabilizing the Government of Northern Ireland, led by Terrence O'Neill, whom they felt was too reform-minded for Protestant Ulster. It appears as though O'Neill was stuck between a rock and a hard place as his reforms were viewed as meaningless to disenfranchised Catholics (Hennessey, 1997:161-162). The riots of 1969 generated internal fragmentation in the Unionist camp as Prime Minister O'Neill's decision to investigate the abuses at Burntollet triggered the resignation of dissenting cabinet member Brian Faulkner. With a call for general elections, the fragmentation in Northern Unionism became readily apparent. Lee writes, "little at this stage could have prevailed against a resurgence of sectarian sentiment and the virtually total polarization of the two ethnic groups in Northern Ireland" (Lee, 1989:424). With both Catholics and Protestants failing to see eye to eye, as well as internal disarray among a conflicted Unionist population, the political environment in Northern Ireland rapidly heated up in 1969, ultimately exposing for the first time in decades, the truly divided nature of Northern Ireland's sociopolitical landscape.

Synthesis

The events of 1969 suggest that the political system in Northern Ireland was far from perfect during the years following partition. Still, why was it that 1969 was the year in which a relatively dormant conflict became quite active? Lederach's work on deeply divided societies offers some suggestions, in the form of *characteristics* of deeply divided societies like Northern Ireland.

The most noticeable marker of the divided nature of the sociopolitical realm in Northern Ireland is the fact that the conflict in question (in 1969) was "lodged in long-standing relationships" (Lederach, 1997:14). Opposing parties of the conflict in Northern Ireland had lived side-by-side for generations. In fact, the Apprentice Boys march that provoked the Battle of

the Bogside was to commemorate the Relief of Derry, which occurred some three hundred years earlier. Catholics and Protestants have shared the geographic territory in Northern Ireland for centuries, and while clashes were not uncommon, they were often accepted as an inevitable part of Northern Irish life. Like a volcano lying dormant, calls for political change and equal rights falling on deaf ears meant that frustrations were *bound* to erupt into violent conflict—and they most certainly did in 1969.

Furthermore, increasing fragmentation of social groups in Northern Ireland along ethnic and sectarian lines of identity exposed of the fallacies of the state's political system. While Catholic civil rights protesters began to unite against disenfranchisement by Stormont, Unionist hegemony began to crack. Lederach argues that in deeply divided societies, "people seek security in increasingly smaller and narrower identity groups" (Lederach, 1997:13). The assault on civil rights marchers at Burntollet exemplifies this phenomenon quite well. As unified Catholic indignation unsettled the Protestant-favorable status quo in Northern Ireland, the supposedly impartial but virtually entirely Protestant, RUC acted along sectarian lines as rather than honoring professional obligations (even though they may have not seen it that way at the time). Viewing the Catholic march as a direct affront to their Protestantism, on duty RUC members turned a blind eye while their fellow off duty compatriots participated in the Burntollet assault.

What came in the following months was an escalation of violence by paramilitaries on both sides of the conflict and the emergence of the mentality that Lederach (1997) describes as, "if we do not dominate, we will be dominated" (p.15). The battle between Bogside Catholics and the RUC during the Battle of the Bogside represented another turning point in 1969, as the inability of Northern Ireland to assume control of its warring people provoked two key events.

The first was Jack Lynch's stern statement of the Irish Republic's disapproval of the inability of Northern Ireland security forces to stop the violence. In his statement, Lynch also reasserted the firm belief of the Republic of Ireland that the reunification of the island of Ireland was the proper solution to the violence in the North. Furthermore, Lynch appealed to the British government to request a neutral UN peacekeeping force to be deployed to conflict areas in Northern Ireland in an attempt to restore order.

Northern Ireland's penultimate Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark was relatively unmoved by Lynch's demands, acting in line with Lederach's assertion that "the international community's ability to respond [to *intranational* conflict] is limited" (Lederach, 1997:18). Consequently, Chichester-Clark requested that the British Government deploy troops to Northern Ireland to settle the situation in the Bogside—they did so, temporarily. An unforeseen consequence of the presence of British troops' arrival was the creation of Nationalist controlled "no-go" areas, which were patrolled by Nationalist paramilitaries who forcibly blocked the entry of British patrols. These no-go areas in Derry further support Lederach's claim that in deeply divided societies, individuals (in this case nationalists) seek security from within. In just a matter of months the political divide in Northern Ireland had evolved from stone throwing to what was essentially a war zone. The disturbances of 1969 were not a product of IRA or UVF provocation, but a complex mix of "communal disturbances" arising from a "complex political, social, and economic situation" in Northern Ireland (Scarman, 1969:2.4). While Unionists have remained in power to this day, the fragmentation of their political platform in 1969 stoked the flames of the Catholic civil rights movement. As we will learn in the next section, the emergence of the Catholic civil rights movement in 1969 would contribute to a new wave of marches, conflict, and controversy, culminating in one of the most pivotal events of The Troubles—Bloody Sunday.

4.1b Internment and Bloody Sunday

Despite a ban established by Northern Ireland's Parliament at Stormont on all forms of protest marches, civil rights protesters (mostly nationalists) gathered for a march on January 30th, 1972 in the Bogside area of Derry city. The march was organized to protest a controversial security measure enacted by Stormont called *Operation Demetrius*, known colloquially as 'Internment,' which had been implemented four months prior in August of 1971. A matter of hours after the march began, 13 civilians were dead (a fourteenth died some months later due to injuries sustained that day). All fourteen individuals were shot dead by the high-powered rifles of the 1st Battalion of the British Army's Parachute Regiment. While bystanders reported hearing only the sound of British Army gunfire, initial reports and statements released by the British Government maintained that the "Paras" (British Paratroopers) were fired on first. The events of Bloody Sunday should be highlighted not simply because they were shocking, but because they serve as a barometer of the degree of destructiveness of The Troubles during their early years. Bloody Sunday, because of the sheer volume of international and domestic support for the Nationalist cause in Northern Ireland it drummed up, is the foremost polarizing event of The Troubles in the early 1970s.

Primary

In the days and months following Bloody Sunday, numerous testimonies and statements were released as to how the events of January 30th transpired. The following is a collection of what I have termed "Primary Reports" or non-academic primary sources that detail the events of Bloody Sunday. It is important to acknowledge the presence of personal or media bias in these sources.

Video

A January 30th, 1972 BBC News clip shows a montage of the events of Bloody Sunday. The first portion of the video depicts marchers moving slowly en masse along the road. At one point, protesters appear to throw stones. Shortly after explosions, the sound of live rounds being discharged can be heard over quiet, whirring audio interference. Around midway through the video, an unidentified individual can be heard shouting “Murderers! You Bastards!” The video cuts to footage of what became an iconic image of Bloody Sunday, that of Father Edward Daly and several others carrying the lifeless body of John “Jacky” Duddy (one of the fatalities of the day) through an alleyway while simultaneously waving a blood stained white flag. Following this, more gunfire is heard as well as footage of British troops maneuvering about the Bogside. The footage then cuts to interviews (See appendix 1.2 for full transcript of the news clip)

Presented in the film are two narratives of the events of Bloody Sunday. The first is that of Catholic priest, Father Edward Daly. Daly’s testament is at the very least representative of the perceived innocence of the civil rights protesters. A photo of Daly and a cohort of presumable bystanders carrying the lifeless body of Jacky Duddy is one of the most prominent images of the day, having been reproduced quite frequently. Today, the image has been replicated on a wall of one of the homes in the Bogside, adding to an already rich collection of nationalist artwork in Northern Ireland. Daly’s testimony that the actions of the British army were “outrageous” and “disgraceful” quite accurately represents the feelings of numerous observers sympathetic to the nationalist cause.

Conversely, statements made by General Robert Ford, commander of British Land Forces in Northern Ireland, paint a much different picture, suggesting that the environment was an incredibly dangerous one for the highly armed British soldiers. While Daly questions how the *Paras* can call themselves an army, General Ford calmly and confidently asserts that his men

acted responsibly and “did not open up until they had been fired at.” He goes on to further establish that the British army would not have had to “restore law and order” if the “hooligan element” didn’t take over the order of the protest.

In the weeks and months following Bloody Sunday, the contrasting stories of Father Daly and General Ford remained major points of contention, with Nationalists and even some Unionists calling the events of the day a massacre. Of course, how individuals viewed Bloody Sunday was often directly correlated to their political views. To make matters worse, official statements further served to polarize both angry and fearful citizens of Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom in general, and the Republic of Ireland.

Audio

The following is an official UPI (United Press International) audio service transmission, presented by William L. Rukeyser, which detailed the events of Bloody Sunday. Rukeyser was an American freelance reporter living in Belfast in the early 1970s. Rukeyser narrates,

...a number of civilians have been killed by the British army during the city’s (Londonderry) worst day of violence. The day started with a peaceful, but illegal march in which about 20,000 people took part. When the march reached an army barricade near the city center, troops used tear gas and a water cannon. The shooting started while the marchers were retreating. The army claims snipers started the shooting but army fire was far heavier and was directed at civilians. Besides those killed, many more people were injured.

--William L. Rukeyser, Londonderry, Northern Ireland
Wednesday, February 2nd, 1972.

Statements

Stormont, the British Military, the British Legal System, the Irish Government, and local politicians released official statements addressing the events of Bloody Sunday. The following is a collection of excerpts from official statements released following Bloody Sunday.

The 'Widgery Report' was among the most controversial of official statements formally released after Bloody Sunday. Lord Widgery was appointed by the British Government to oversee an investigation of both the actions of the British army and the deceased civilians on January 30th, 1972. After weeks of investigation, including the testimony of 114 eyewitnesses (Rucker, 2002:97), Widgery's report was released on April 10th 1972. Controversially, it exonerated all British soldiers of any wrongdoings, which infuriated Nationalist sympathizers and undermined the credibility of the British government's management of the quickly escalating Troubles. Widgery's report was lambasted by both nationalist and non-nationalist supporters alike, who felt that the report was hastily compiled and did little to place guilt upon the shoulders of those who fired live rounds into crowds of protesters. Widgery concludes with several key points, which I have included in appendix 1.3

Widgery's report was not well received by Nationalists, who felt it severely downplayed the atrocities of the day. While prior injustices of The Troubles could be attributed to paramilitaries on both sides, deaths on Bloody Sunday were attributed to a recognized, state-sponsored, military force. The British army entered Northern Ireland in some years earlier in an effort to restore order to a region where anarchy was beginning to take control. The events of Bloody Sunday changed the mindset of many Nationalists from a position of ambivalence towards the British army to radical opposition. To pour salt on an open wound, the government-directed Widgery inquiry produced questionable conclusions as to where guilt lay, further provoking an already deeply concerned nationalist population in Northern Ireland.

On the Nationalist side, political figures in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland expressed disgust at the actions of the British troops. Bernadette Devlin a nationalist, and then the youngest MP at Stormont voiced her sentiments about Bloody Sunday, decrying “[n]o body shot at the paratroopers but somebody will shortly, ... I have a right as a representative in this house who is an eyewitness to ask a question of that of a murdering hypocrite” (Coogan, 1997:136). Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland Jack Lynch issued an immediate statement of disapproval (to put it lightly), echoing the feelings of Nationalists across the Island of Ireland. The statement read:

...I’m appalled and stunned that British soldiers should shoot indiscriminately into a crowd of peacefully demonstrating civilians, resulting in the deaths of (ten) young men [Lynch had been misinformed of the total number of casualties at the time he released the statement.] (Lynch, *Statement Following Bloody Sunday*, Jan 30st, 1972).

Newspapers

Newspapers were quick to release reports of the events of Bloody Sunday, many of which included eyewitness accounts and personal testimonies. The following are excerpts from two separate reports on Bloody Sunday, one by Simon Winchester of The Guardian, a UK-based publication. The other report is by Dick Grogan and Martin Crowley of The Irish Times. Both excerpts are from the January 31st edition of their respective papers and unilaterally deplore the actions of British troops but also acknowledge the presence of potential nationalist paramilitary involvement, highlighting heightened tensions in Northern Ireland that had been lingering since the outset of the 1969 riots some three years earlier.

Upon immediate examination of both papers, the most striking difference to me is the leading headline of both papers. The Guardian, a British paper leads with “13 KILLED AS

PARATROOPS BREAK RIOT.” (The Guardian, January 31st, 1972) At first glance, word selection is already readily apparent in framing the Winchester story. Despite the fact that Winchester’s piece does not seem to be slanted in either direction, when compared with the leading headline of Irish Times story “SOLDIERS KILL 13 IN BOGSIDE” (Irish Times, January 31st, 1972), Winchester’s headline does, in fact, frame the story differently. By using the words “break riot” The Guardian implants an initial impression that the British army was acting, though recklessly, in line with their orders—after all the civil rights march had been deemed illegal by Stormont. It must be made clear however, that the *content* of Winchester’s article does not appear to be biased in anyway towards either side, merely projecting the events of the day as he felt they unfolded. Instead, it is the initial wording of the *headline* that shines a more favorable light on the British army.

Both newspapers project a general feeling of disapproval of the actions by British soldiers. Next to Grogan and Crowley’s article is a short blurb titled “The Sharpeville Massacre.” This piece, while not explicitly calling Bloody Sunday a massacre, describes the events of two prominent massacres of the twentieth century, Apartheid South Africa’s Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and India’s Amritsar Massacre in 1919. These two events dramatically altered the course of civil rights movements in South Africa and India, and both are commonly referenced as turning points in conflict. Winchester goes as far to mention Sharpeville in his story, marking that “the streets had all the appearance of the aftermath of a Sharpeville.”

Regardless of their intention, official statements by government officials and legal investigators, television reports, radio broadcasts, photographs, and newspapers were integral in shaping public opinion of the events of Bloody Sunday. For many previously politically neutral or apathetic individuals, Bloody Sunday was a polarizing event. For those already firmly

entrenched in either encampment of the nascent Troubles, initial reports by the media, government officials, and subsequently released legal inquiries simply fomented an already blatant political divide between Nationalists and Unionists as well as Catholics and Protestants, further fueling escalation of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

Academic

By implementing a policy of Internment, the government of Northern Ireland drew heavy criticism from its Nationalist population. While the outwardly stated goal of Internment was to combat a growing trend of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland that had been steadily increasing since the late 1960s (Hennessey, 1997:193), the reality of Internment was quite different. Aside from the questionable authority it gave the RUC to raid nationalist (although Coogan 1997, notes that this essentially meant Catholic) homes at all hours of the day, it also enabled law enforcement officials to hold prisoners for an extended period of time without trial. In addition to implementing Internment, Brian Faulkner, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, had announced heightened security measures that gave British troops and RUC members special authoritative powers. As the civil rights march that took place on Bloody Sunday was expected to go on as planned (despite its illegal nature), British troops and law enforcement officials were dispatched to the area in droves, armed with both rubber and lead bullets, the stage was set for what would be arguably the most divisive day of in the thirty year history of The Troubles.

Internment and Bloody Sunday

The riots of 1969 proved that Nationalists and Unionists were clearly at odds, divided along the lines of religious affiliation and political ideology. Already underrepresented in Stormont, Catholics found themselves being unfairly targeted during midnight arrest raids geared

at arresting and interning (without trial) Republican paramilitaries. Robin Eveleigh, former Colonel in the British Army and author of *Peace-keeping in a Democratic Society: Lessons from Northern Ireland*, describes the social and psychological impact of these raids on the catholic community in Northern Ireland, explaining that "... a mother who has had soldiers breaking up her home and incidentally terrifying her children at 3 am is unlikely to wish to help the government" (Eveleigh, 1978:70). These raids were not entirely uncommon either, as Faulkner's Internment policy led to 17,262 home searches and or raids in 1971 alone" (Lee, 1989:433). The raids were relatively unfruitful in achieving their established aims, according to Lee (1989), as much of the information used by the British military and the RUC was speculative at best. One thing these raids were incredibly effective at was antagonizing a Catholic population.

Consequently, enraged Nationalist paramilitary organizations escalated their armed campaign following the implementation of Internment in August of 1971. While the total number of Troubles-related casualties in 1971 prior to the beginning of Internment on August 9th is 32, 154 people were killed during the remaining months of the year (Fay, 1999:136). In the midst of the violence, calls for civil rights became louder and more unified. Even the more pragmatic, progressive of the Nationalist parties in Northern Ireland, the Social Democratic Labor Party (SDLP), called for Catholics to remove themselves from public life in protest of Internment.

Civil rights protesters began organizing a march in Derry to voice their opposition to Internment. The date was set for January 30th, 1972. By sunset on January 30th in Derry numerous civilians were injured, thirteen were dead and a fourteenth would die several months later, all killed by British Paratroopers. Much of Bloody Sunday's history revolves around the events of the day and the subsequent sociopolitical implications of what many viewed as a state-orchestrated massacre.

Lee's (1989) discussion of Bloody Sunday offers a somewhat slanted view of the events of the day. He discusses Bloody Sunday and the subsequent fallout of January 30th 1972 under the subheading "The Fall of Stormont." Lee's analysis places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the British Army. Since the beginning of Operation Demetrius, all marches were banned in Northern Ireland. However, Lee highlights the impotency of this policy, stating that the civil rights march on January 30th was "yet another illegal march, like all marches since 9 August" (p.440). Despite this, other civil rights marches had gone on without incident since August, "including five in January" (p.440). To Lee, the marching ban was all bark and no bite until Bloody Sunday. He makes few concessions in the defense of British soldiers, whom he believes acted *entirely* out of line in carrying out pointless arrests as the march was dispersing. Furthermore, he argues that neither the RUC nor the British army acted in accordance with this marching ban, failing to prevent it from happening in the first place. Sardonicly mocking the British Paratroopers, Lee interrupts his history and injects a bit of literature by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, "PARAS THIRTEEN, the wall said, BOGSIDE NIL" (Heaney, 1979:22 as cited in Lee, 1989:440). Perhaps in an effort to further acknowledge his own opinions in his writing, Lee frequently makes reference to both Nationalist and Loyalist belligerents scoring 'kills' over the course of The Troubles. Juxtaposing Heaney's sport allusion with a short critique of what he clearly feels to be a massacre committed by British soldiers, Lee explains, "...the professionals gave an amateur performance"(441). In giving this performance, the British Army made drastically worse the problem they were brought to Northern Ireland to mitigate.

Hennessey's (1997) history of Northern Ireland echoes Lee (1989) in that it frames Bloody Sunday as an aspect of The Troubles that led to the imposition of Direct Rule. Yet it differs in that it presents a much more neutral tone than Lee's. As a traditionally articulated

history, Hennessey's explanation offers little content that might sway readers. His summary of the events of Bloody Sunday is relatively straightforward and uncontroversial. Hennessey states that "the shooting began...when part of the crowd tried to climb over a street barrier and were forced back by the British army using rubber bullets and spray from a water cannon," but, he posits, "... it was never established who fired the first shots" (p.206). Other than referring to Bernadette Devlin expressing her outrage in the British House of Commons, Hennessey does little to underscore just *how* "[t]he events of Bloody Sunday created a wave of anger throughout the Catholic community" (p.206). A paragraph later, Hennessey proceeds to the subsequent months after Bloody Sunday, arguing that they "were to be no less violent" (p.206). Then, he quickly moves on to the suspension of the Stormont Parliament for one year. Hennessey's scant explanation of Bloody Sunday is somewhat explained by the fact that his book attempts to pack seventy-six years of history in Northern Ireland into approximately three-hundred pages, but nonetheless offers little in terms of analysis.

In *This Troubled Land*, Rucker (2002) uses a hybridized form of historical analysis, using first hand recollections, personal anecdotes and somewhat ambiguous back-stories to explain the impact of the events of Bloody Sunday. Rucker's history diverges from Lee and Hennessey primarily in style of delivery, as well as overall aim. If placed on a spectrum, Widgery's Inquiry would be on the Unionist end, Lee's would be found towards the Nationalist terminal and Hennessey's would be somewhere in the middle. Rucker's, however, would be found across the spectrum, as he attempts to provide the rationale for all sides involved. Rucker also provides individual background stories to better illustrate the sentiments of Nationalists in the Bogside in the months following Internment and preceding Bloody Sunday. Rucker uses the same tactic to underscore the perspective of the Paratroopers, specifically an unnamed Para he calls Private

027, who discusses in detail pervasive attitudes among British troops deployed in Northern Ireland. As if he had collaborated with Lee, Private 027, frequently mentions an inexplicable desire to see combat and achieve “kills” during his time in Northern Ireland. Rucker makes no attempt to justify the actions of the 1st Battalion of British Paratroopers, but he provides extensive evidence that better explains their mindset heading into the civil rights march that became Bloody Sunday.

In reference to the controversial Widgery Report, Rucker argues that, at the time, “...the Widgery report was the final word on Bloody Sunday and hung over Catholics like a badge of ignominy” (Rucker, 2002:96). However, the inaccuracy of Widgery’s report is likely due to its hastened release, as well as the relatively contentious political environment it aimed to address. Rucker’s interview with Bloody Sunday eye-witness Leo Young tells us that “Widgery was an arrogant, cheeky bastard. He did not want to know nothing, he only wanted to get the whole thing through” (p.135). Expressing outrage at this, Young continues, “... I had to get my thoughts across [during the inquiry]... there was no way... they dismissed me as insignificant” (p. 135). As for Private 027, his opinion of the Widgery report was nearly as skeptical, though for his own sake he decided not to stir the pot. Rucker writes:

...Private 027 had planned to tell the truth, or as much as he could without implicating his colleagues. But when he described indiscriminate shooting towards the barricade, the lawyer stood up from his chair and looked down at the private with surprise. ‘We can’t have that, can we, Private?’ he asked. ‘That makes it sound as if shots were fired into the crowd’ (p. 135).

As Private 027 illustrates, Rucker’s interest lies not in the primary actors involved in Bloody Sunday (like Young and Private 027), but instead in the sociopolitical constraints that generated

an environment conducive to producing an atrocity like Bloody Sunday. Rucker's history is valuable in that it attempts to provide perspective and context for events preceding, during, and after Bloody Sunday.

Synthesis

While the deeply divided nature of Northern Ireland was made painfully obvious by the turmoil of 1969, Internment and Bloody Sunday exposed just how easily human malignancy can blow a conflict wide open. By examining primary accounts and historical depictions of Internment and Bloody Sunday through a lens of conflict theory, we can better understand how The Troubles further worsened due to a range of political, social, and environmental instigators.

As we have already established, Internment, supposedly implemented to combat rising paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland, was ineffective at carrying out its original goals. Instead, Internment took an already uneasy population of Catholics, and put them further at odds with the three institutions that were theoretically supposed to protect them: the Government of Northern Ireland (Stormont), security forces (the RUC), the military (the British Army). The anger and tension generated by Internment contributed greatly to creating an environment of fear and uncertainty in Northern Ireland that transcended political allegiance. As a result, when civil rights protesters in Derry staged their march on January 30th, 1972, shots fired by British paratroopers broke the conflict wide open.

Bloody Sunday represents a catastrophic step backwards in the path towards conflict reconciliation. In terms of polarizing effects on the population of Northern Ireland, if the riots of 1969 were a thunderstorm, Bloody Sunday was a category five hurricane. The shootings and ensuing political controversy radicalized throngs of previously apathetic Nationalists and Unionists. Appalled Nationalists, already having lost faith in Stormont and the RUC, and now

the supposedly neutral British Army, turned to paramilitary groups like the IRA and began to embrace them. Former Nationalist MP, Bernadette Devlin, who was heavily involved in both the 1969 riots and Bloody Sunday, offered the following statement in retrospect, which perhaps best sums up the lasting impact of Bloody Sunday,

...The key impact of Bloody Sunday was that a whole generation made a similar analysis and this fuelled some 25 years of violent political conflict, at least tolerated by the majority of the "minority population" and actively pursued by a significant but sustainable minority. It is responsibility for this legacy that sets Bloody Sunday apart from subsequent atrocities on all sides. (The Guardian, June 15th, 2010).

4.2 Escalation and the Long War: “Negative, Destructive,” Conflict. (1972-1987)

Introduction

The fallout of Bloody Sunday in 1972 was dramatic. In the months and years after, Northern Ireland’s Troubles escalated from small-scale political upheaval to an international, cross-border conflict that took countless lives. Section 4.2, “Escalation and the Long War: Negative, Destructive, Conflict,” is devoted to an analysis of the development of “negative destructive conflict” in Northern Ireland over a span of fifteen years. The Bergof Foundation’s definition of Conflict Transformation posits that the purpose of Conflict Transformation is to “transform negative, destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict” (“Bergof Foundation” on Conflict Transformation, October, 2011). Before analyzing *how* and *why* The Troubles were transformed into positive, constructive, conflict, it is necessary to understand the *how* and *why* that made them incredibly negative and destructive. This period of “negative, destructive conflict” during The Troubles is known as ‘Escalation.’ In this time, paramilitary membership and activity were at all-time highs, and so were sectarian killings. Additionally, I

will highlight the mechanics of negative, destructive, conflict by examining the following five key paramilitary attacks that occurred between 1972 and 1987:

- 4.2a. Bloody Friday (1972)
- 4.2b. Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (1974)
- 4.2c. Warrenpoint Ambush and Mountbatten Assassination (1979)
- 4.2d. Brighton Hotel Bombing (1984)
- 4.2e. Enniskillen Bombing (1987)

But first, it is important to establish criteria for what “Negative, Destructive, Conflict” really is. According to Augsberger (1992), “a conflict is destructive—has destructive consequences—if the participants are dissatisfied with the outcomes and all feel they have lost as a result of the conflict” (Augsberger, 1992:47). Augsberger acknowledges that his assertion is essentially a value-laden judgment, but it can readily be applied to conflict. This is because conflicts, at their core, are value-laden interactions, with one party’s values conflicting with an opposition’s values. The righteousness of these values is unimportant, as evidenced by the atrocious actions of Loyalist and Nationalist paramilitaries during The Troubles.

Paramilitary organizations may have often felt satisfaction following a strategic victory such as a successful ambush or a massive bombing, their stated desires were rarely if ever were *satisfied* by concessions from the political realm. In other words, their violent actions rarely, if ever, contributed to the achievement of their political goals. If paramilitary organizations were ever truly *satisfied* with the results of their violent campaign, they would not have a reason to conflict, unless they were anarchists (though some might go so far as to argue this point).

Expanding his analysis of destructive conflict, Augsberger (1992) argues,

...[d]estructive conflict is also characterized by four tendencies. In this case, the individuals or groups tend to: (1) expand the number of issues, participants, negative attitudes, and self-justifications. (2) Emancipate the conflict from its initiating causes so it can continue

after these are irrelevant or forgotten; (3) escalate into strategies of power tactics of threat, coercion and deception; and (4) polarize into uniform opinions behind single-minded and militant leadership (p.47).

During the protracted violence of the 1970s and 1980s, these four tendencies played out quite visibly in the form of paramilitary escalation. As a result, violence of The Troubles spilled over the border of Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland and England.

4.2a. Bloody Friday (1972)

On July 21st 1972, twenty-two bombs rattled Belfast, killing eleven people and injuring 130. The bombs were planted by the Provisional Irish Republican Army, or 'Provos,' as a part of their military action plan (now called the *Long War*) to rid Northern Ireland of British rule. With the PIRA growing at a staggering rate following the atrocities of Bloody Sunday several months earlier and their demands not being met by the British Government, the PIRA felt it was time to mount a massive offensive against what they perceived to be an oppressive and violent British presence in Northern Ireland. While the PIRA gave numerous warnings as to the locations of the bombs shortly beforehand, they also gave hoax warnings, which generated tremendous confusion among security personnel and civilians. Over the next hour and a half, bombs exploded throughout Belfast, and many began subscribing to the notion that PIRA had officially discredited itself as a viable political entity by saturating itself in a campaign of excessive political violence. In an effort to quash further similar attacks, the British Government implemented *Operation Motorman*, designed forcibly retake control of Nationalist paramilitary controlled *no-go* areas in predominantly Catholic areas of Belfast and Derry. Bloody Friday, much like Bloody Sunday, further drew in individuals to both sides of the conflict, and is consistent with Augsberger's assertion that negative conflict "expand[s] the number of issues,

participants, negative attitudes, and self-justifications” (Augsberger, 1992:47) in a given setting of conflict.

Primary

Irish Times

The Irish Times published a series of stories in the days following the bombings, but perhaps the most valuable sources are the headlines from the day after Bloody Friday, July 22, 1972. Choosing to focus on the aftermath of the bombings as opposed to the bombings themselves, the *Irish Times* led with “GUNBATTLES FOLLOW BOMBING WAVE. MORE TROOPS BROUGHT IN TO SEAL WHOLE AREAS OF BELFAST” (Irish Times, July 22, 1972). The second-most prominent headline for the day described the bombings in detail however, reading in large print: “PROVISIONALS ADMIT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAY OF TERROR”(Irish Times, July 22, 1972). The vast majority of this article is devoted to painting an image of the day’s events. It includes a statement released by the PIRA, which reads: We accept full responsibility for all explosions in the Belfast area today. In accepting responsibility we point out that the following organizations were informed of bomb positions at least 30 minutes to one hour before each explosion—the Samaritans, the Public protection agency, the rumour service, and press.

The Irish Times makes no qualms about expressing the vulgarity of the attack, citing “scenes of panic, horror, and confusion” and the presence of “unanimous condemnation” specifically criticizing the PIRA’s decision to release numerous hoax warnings, which severely undermined efforts of security personnel and the public to mitigate the looming damage.

London Times

While the Irish Times chose to lead with a story about British crackdown in Northern Ireland following the Bloody Friday, the London Times bluntly led with “ELEVEN DIE, 130 ARE INJURED AFTER BOMBS EXPLODE ALL OVER BELFAST” (London Times, July 22, 1972). The details that surface in this article are much more unnerving than those in the Irish Times. The article lambasts the PIRA and then describes the bombings of the day as “their most savage and ruthless bombing attack in Belfast” with “pieces of flesh and broken bones, bearing no resemblance to the human body, [lying] on the road.” Echoing the Irish Times however, this story describes the general chaos that filled Belfast during and after the bombings. The concerns of Protestants are also voiced who claimed that if the British Army did not take action “...the majority community might take the law into their own hands.” Furthermore, the article forecasts a rapid military escalation “against the IRA inside Catholic housing estates.”

Academic

The general attitude toward Bloody Friday in historical texts generally mirrors that of the newspapers in the Republic of Ireland and England on July 22, 1972. Lee, Taylor, and Hennessey all draw similar conclusions from the bombings of Bloody Friday in that they feel they were integral in further distancing Nationalists and Unionists from one another. First, that the warnings given by the PIRA were “hopelessly inadequate” (Taylor, 1998:150). Second, that the images displayed on television depicting the aftermath of the bombing were a testament to the horrific nature of these bombings (Both Hennessey, 1997:212 and Taylor, 1998:149 note television coverage). Lee returns to his sardonic use of ‘score’ once more, stating that the “PIRA scored eleven kills and wounded another 130, many maimed for life.” (Lee 1989, 442.) Several other historical texts offer virtually the same chronology and content of the events of Bloody Friday, offering little more than a paragraph on the subject before moving on to the next event.

The academic consensus on Bloody Friday was that it was simply another event in the somber historical timeline of The Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Synthesis

It is my assertion that understanding Bloody Friday is integral to locating social, religious, and political attitudes in Northern Ireland, the greater United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland on the timeline of Conflict Transformation. Without question, both primary documents and academic discourse attempt to highlight the disturbing nature of the Bloody Friday bombings. However, the difference between leading headlines of the Irish Times and London Times is indicative of the way cultural and political biases framed violence during the early 1970s of The Troubles. The Irish Times' decision to lead with the subsequent crackdown by the British Army following the Bloody Friday bombings is curious as neither headline directly involves violence in the Republic of Ireland. Whether intentional or not, the decision to display the violence that took place *after* the Bloody Friday Bombings more prominently than the incredibly violent bombings itself places symbolic importance on post-bombing violence. In doing so, this detracts from the illaudable actions of an unapologetic PIRA who had just blown 11 individuals to bits in Belfast and places the emphasis on the reactionary violence of the British Army and RUC.

Furthermore, the actions of the PIRA on Bloody Friday are in line with Augsberger's 'first tendency' in negative conflict, which is to "expand the number of issues, participants, negative attitudes, and self-justifications [for conflict]" (Augsberger, 1992 p.47). As PIRA membership grew in Northern Ireland, violence increased. Short-lived cease-fires were broken repeatedly by the PIRA because they claimed the British Government refused to acknowledge the validity of their demands. The breakout of bombings in Belfast on July 21st, 1972 was not

simply another penny in the jar of paramilitary violence. Instead Bloody Friday marked a transition to escalation in Northern Ireland—a transition to negative, destructive, conflict.

4.2b Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (1974)

May 17th 1974 marked another devastating escalation of the conflict in Northern Ireland, as violence spilled over the border into the town of Monaghan and the Irish capital, Dublin. The bombings occurred round 5:30 pm on a Friday—rush hour. In total, 33 people died and approximately 300 were injured. The fact that there were no warnings given before the blasts is likely a major contributing factor in the incredibly high casualty total. The Dublin and Monaghan bombings were a direct attempt by loyalist paramilitaries to escalate The Troubles. This is made evident by Loyalist paramilitaries who, according to UDA spokesperson Sammy Smyth, now felt they were at “war with the free state” (UDA Response to Dublin and Monaghan bombings, 1974). By bombing civilian targets in the Republic of Ireland, it is clear that Loyalist paramilitaries were trying to “...emancipate the conflict from its initiating causes so it can continue after these are irrelevant or forgotten” (Augsberger 1992 p. 47).

Primary Sources

Irish Times

The Irish Times unsurprisingly expressed disgust over the incidents, leading with the headline “28 KILLED, OVER 100 INJURED IN BOMB BLASTS IN DUBLIN, MONAGHAN” with a subscript reading “Many women, children among victims; nationwide alert on danger of further bombs” (Irish Times, May 18, 1974). The article also mentions that no warnings were given before the bombs exploded and then goes on to cite Irish *Taoiseach* Liam Cosgrave who issued a formal statement on the matter:

...what has happened today will help to underline the criminal folly and utter futility of violent action as a means for furthering political ends. It will also help to bring home to us here, in this part of our island, what the people of Northern Ireland have been suffering for five long years. Today's evil deeds will only serve to strengthen the resolve of those, North and South, who have been working for peace.

The article proceeds to acknowledge that all main paramilitary organizations have either denied responsibility for (UDA and UVF) or condemned (PIRA) the bombings.

London Times

The London Times headline for May 18th was quite similar to that of the Irish Times, reading: "28 KILLED, HUNDREDS HURT BY EIRE CAR BOMBS: RUSH HOUR DEVASTATION IN CENTRAL DUBLIN" (London Times, May 18th, 1974). The article makes note of the fact that both the PIRA and UDA denied responsibility for the bombing. This article also focuses on the general confusion that plagued Dublin and Monaghan after the bombings, claiming, "people were running and screaming aimlessly." The second-leading story discusses the political response by both Northern Irish officials as well as the Republic's government. This article does, however, make mention of the PIRA's insistence that the bombings were "an SAS-type operation," in other words, a product of British collusion. The London Times employs Chief Executive Faulkner's response to the bombings, quoting "whatever the differences of opinion which may exist on other matters, I believe the responsible people in Northern Ireland and the Republic alike want to see this island rid forever of the evil forces which are guilty of such acts" (London Times, May 18th, 1974).

Academic

The Dublin and Monaghan bombings are especially interesting in a historical context because they play a large role in the history both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In purely academic works like Hennessey and Lee, the Dublin and Monaghan bombings are framed under the fallout of the Ulster Worker's council strike and the subsequent collapse of the Sunningdale agreement (this will be discussed in section 4.4). Lee and Hennessey present the attacks as a knee jerk reaction by loyalist paramilitaries to the impotent cross-border Council of Ireland (which gave the Republic say in matters such as cultural preservation, tourism and agriculture). Both Coogan (1987) and Taylor (1998) cast doubts as to any collusion by the British Government in either bombing, but Coogan goes as far as saying the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings were the "Republic's Bloody Friday" (Coogan, 1987:26). This is true insofar as it raised paranoia and increased the vigilance of security forces on both sides of the border.

Synthesis

The real impact of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings is open to interpretation, but for the purposes of this thesis, these bombings are best historically understood when contextualized in Augsberger's four qualities of negative conflict. As I have outlined, Augsberger posits that actors in negative, destructive conflict seek to escalate the conflict to a point where its initiating causes become irrelevant, thus allowing it to continue indefinitely (Augsberger, 1992: 47). The Dublin and Monaghan bombings did exactly this. While many in the Republic of Ireland had opinions on the conflict in Northern Ireland, the majority did little to influence it one way or another. Newspapers in the Republic of Ireland and England recorded the terror of the days' events, helping external observers generate their own political opinions as such. If the goal of Loyalist paramilitaries was to rid the North of Republican Governmental cooperation (the

Council of Ireland) as Lee (1989) and Hennessey (1997) suggest, logic dictates that they would not bomb its unaffiliated civilians in the Republic—a move that would seemingly draw the Republic of Ireland further into the conflict. A slough of bombings directed at non-military targets, later owned up to by Loyalist paramilitaries, is an example of negative conflict escalation. It attempted to expand the conflict to something it physically wasn't—what UDA spokesperson Sammy Smyth called a “War with the Free State.” It again conjured up feelings of anti-British sentiment across the island of Ireland and further stoked the flames of the IRA's Long War, escalating the conflict to new levels of violence.

4.2c Warrenpoint Ambush and Mountbatten Assassination (1979)

August 27th 1979 was one of the most costly days for the British military in Northern Ireland but was simultaneously one of the most “successful” days for the PIRA in the history of The Troubles. PIRA regiments carried out two successful attacks. The first was the assassination of Lord Mountbatten, former Admiral of the Fleet in the British Royal Navy, in Sligo, Republic of Ireland. The second was a PIRA ambush on British troops at Warrenpoint, which took the lives of 18 British soldiers. Viewed as two major victories for the PIRA and their Long War, these two events caused the British Government to seriously reconsider their intelligence strategy in regards to a PIRA that, to return to Augsberger, was now clearly making use of their dubious ability to use threat, coercion, and deception to inflict harm and thrive in an atypical war.

Primary

Irish Times

The day after the Warrenpoint and Mountbatten attacks, the Irish Times led with “BOMB ON BOAT KILLS LORD MOUNTBATTEN” (Irish Times, August 28, 1979). The article notes PIRA responsibility and underscores growing international demands for peace and an end to

violence in Northern Ireland. Irish Minister for Justice Mr. Gerry Collins voiced his concerns stating that the Government of the Republic of Ireland's reaction is "one of revulsion and deep shock" and that "any changes which might be necessary to deal with terrorist would be considered by the government." Furthermore, Collins expressed his "hope that this incident would have no impact on Anglo-Irish relations." The second most prominent article on the front page of the *Irish Times* details the Warrenpoint Ambush. The PIRA's claim of responsibility is again included, with a transcript of an official statement by PIRA leaders saying they "admit responsibility... for landmine explosions' and would continue their campaign until there was 'a declaration by Britain of intent to withdraw from the North'" (Irish Times, August 28, 1979).

London Times

There was a suspension of operations for the London Times for nearly a year (December 1, 1978 to November 12, 1979) due to a labor dispute. As a result, there was no newspaper published immediately following the PIRA attacks of August 27th, 1979. When the paper returned in mid-November of that same year, it published a News Review of the events that occurred during the work stoppage. The news review contained an article with titled "GROWING AUDACITY OF IRA ATTACKS BLIGHTS HOPE OF BRINGING ULSTER CLOSER TO PEACE" (London Times, November 14, 1979). Above the title is a smaller headliner that announces "TERRORISTS BECOMING MORE PROFESSIONAL AND LESS VULNERABLE." The article describes the bombing assassination of Mountbatten in Sligo as well as the ambush bombing of British troops at Warrenpoint as "terrorist coups" which "precipitated a hurried review of ... security policies and in particular [inter-governmental] cooperation in the area of border" (*London Times*, November 14, 1979).

Academic

Both the assassination of Lord Mountbatten and the ambush killing of 18 British Soldiers at Warrenpoint are looked upon as major contributing factors to the growth and support of Sinn Fein. Furthermore, Lee argues that Mountbatten's death and the Warrenpoint Ambush directly influenced perceptions of the PIRA (Lee 1989:455), giving them more credibility as a legitimate politically minded military entity amongst Nationalists. Coogan lends credence to the notion that the heavy military loss inflicted by the PIRA at Warrenpoint, was far more important to rallying Nationalist support than what was perceived by many as a merely symbolic assassination of Lord Mountbatten. But according to Alfred McClung-Lee's *Terrorism in Northern Ireland* (1983), the celebrity status of Lord Mountbatten as well as the tactical superiority displayed by the IRA at Warrenpoint made August 27th simply an all-around major "victory" for the PIRA (p.188). PIRA leadership thought the attacks, especially Warrenpoint, would demoralize British troops. However, the effect the events of August 27th actually generated, however, was quite the opposite. Increased security and surveillance were added to an already massive laundry list of day-to-day conflict management policies in Northern Ireland and the Republic Ireland.

Synthesis

The events of August 27th, 1979 had both symbolic and concrete political consequences. Mountbatten's assassination and the Warrenpoint ambush highlighted that the British Government was dealing with a very real foe, not simply a disorganized paramilitary opponent. The decisive PIRA victory at Warrenpoint displays that they were well versed in combat operations and were not to be taken lightly. In essence Warrenpoint showed that the PIRA had adapted to the constraints of the given conflict, characterized by their inability to wage a full-scale traditional military engagement, to create a viable, destructive action plan through the use of threat, coercion, and deception (Augsberger's 3rd tendency of negative, destructive conflict).

This adaptation further involved both sides in the conflict, as intelligence and security in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland had to be reexamined and fortified in order to counteract escalating paramilitary violence.

4.2d Brighton Hotel Bombing (1984)

In an audacious attempt to assassinate Margaret Thatcher and her entire cabinet on October 12th, 1984, PIRA militants bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton, England where Thatcher and her cabinet were staying for the 1984 Conservative Party Conference. Neither Thatcher nor any member of her cabinet was harmed in the blast that killed five individuals and injured upwards of thirty. The PIRA claimed responsibility and expressed no remorse. The attack was representative of the ultimate struggle of Republican paramilitaries—a small, but powerful group (the PIRA) waging war against a seemingly insurmountable opponent (the “interfering” British Government). This direct attack on the British Government by the PIRA exemplifies Augsberger’s fourth tendency, which argues that conflicting groups (in this case the PIRA) are “polarized into uniform opinions behind a single minded and militant leadership” (Augsberger 1992, 47).

Primary

Irish Times

The Irish Times made it a point to convey the destruction that was caused by the previous days bombings, leading with: “Thatcher escapes death by minutes: FOUR KILLED AS IRA BOMB BRIGHTON HOTEL.” Mentioned is the fact that this was a no-warning blast that appeared to be an “IRA mass assassination attempt on the British cabinet [which] demolished part of the Grand Hotel.” The remorseless PIRA issued a statement that was run in the paper. It read:

The IRA claims responsibility for the detonation of 100lb of gelignite in Brighton against the British Cabinet and Tory Warmongers. Mrs. Thatcher will now realize that Britain cannot occupy our country and torture our prisoners and shoot our people on their own streets and get away with it. Today we were unlucky, but remember, we only have to be lucky once—you will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no war.

The article describes a response by Thatcher in which she called the attack “inhuman,” a statement that echoed widespread international condemnation of PIRA actions. (*Irish Times*, October 13, 1984).

London Times

The *London Times* went with a somewhat bolder headline, titled: “THATCHER DEFIES IRA BOMBERS.” Which describes how the British Prime Minister kept her cool and maintained firm opposition to the use of paramilitary violence as a means of achieving political gains within the United Kingdom. The article does however note that Thatcher was somewhat surprised that she was targeted by the PIRA, stating, “you read about these things happening, but you never believe it will happen to you” (*London Times*, October 13, 1984).

Academic

The Brighton Bombing is similar to the Mountbatten Assassination and Warrenpoint Ambush as they were viewed as ‘spectacular’ acts of violence. Small-scale, local PIRA attacks were slowly being replaced by large scale ones in what seemed to be an attempt to generate attention and support for their cause. In fact, in an examination of several historical texts, the word ‘spectacular’ is used in most all descriptions of the Brighton Hotel Bombing, including Coogan (1987), Lee (1989), Hennessey (1997), and Fay (1999). Exemplifying the IRA’s struggle

to be perceived as a legitimate opponent, Fay (1999) makes the point that “the IRA was convinced that ‘spectaculars’ outside Northern Ireland, typified by the Brighton Bombing, an attempt to kill the entire British Cabinet, would be more productive than local violence” (p.154). Despite this, the PIRA made very few attempts to bolster their credibility to support their political wing, as the revolving door between PIRA hierarchy and Sinn Fein remained painfully obvious. Hennessey (1997) supports this conclusion arguing, that the “Brighton Bombing reiterated that, despite the recent electoral success of the IRA’s political wing, Sinn Fein, the armed campaign still held priority” (p.263).

Synthesis

Augsberger’s fourth tendency, when applied to the Brighton Bombing, explains why the conflict began to enter a period of stalemate. While paramilitary violence continued on either side, the frequency and intensity at which it occurred began to stabilize (see Brahm’s chart at the beginning of chapter 4). While the PIRA was united behind “single-minded and militant leadership” (Augsberger 1992, p.47), so was the opposition. Thatcher’s militant opposition to terrorist activity (as made famous by her assertion that there is no such thing as political violence), made it clear that the single-minded opposition of the PIRA and their Long War would accomplish little in cracking Unionist hegemony, pushing forward the idea that an armed campaign was a no-win strategy. As the 1980s pressed on, it became clear that the PIRA’s violent tactics appealed to radical Nationalists, not a more moderate Nationalist crowd that subscribed to a more pragmatic, water-on-stone school of political change. And while the armed campaign continued for some years on, it began to dissipate after the Enniskillen Bombing in 1987.

4.2e The Enniskillen Bombing (1987)

As the tumult of the 1980s wore on, attitudes toward paramilitary violence became increasingly negative. People were growing tired of hearing about the same violence on the news day in, day out, with little or no progress to discuss in the political arena. While there is no set point as to when The Troubles began to turn in the favor of peaceful progress, a bombing during a November 8th, 1987 Remembrance Day parade in Enniskillen deeply shook Northern Ireland. In total, twelve individuals were killed. Among the initial dead was one RUC officer and ten civilians. A final casualty occurred thirteen years later in 2000, when a victim passed away after being in a coma since the bombing. The fact that it was mostly civilian deaths and injuries was devastating for individuals on both sides of the conflict. As a result, the PIRA in Fermanagh was dismantled and PIRA higher-ups found themselves reconsidering their armed campaign. While numerous bombings occurred the following decade, the late 1980s and 1990s were predominantly characterized by a major campaign for peace.

Primary

Irish Times

The Enniskillen Bombing made front-page news in the Irish Times with the headline reading: “11 CIVILIANS KILLED IN ENNISKILLEN WAR MEMORIAL BOMBING.” The article asserts, “the bomb, which caused carnage among a crowd assembling for a Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen, was intended to kill civilians, the RUC Chief Constable, Sir John Hermon, said last night.” Among the injured were children as young as two years old, and one child lost both parents in the blast. The article continues to highlight the damaging effects this bombing was bound to cause, quoting Northern Ireland Secretary Mr. Tom King, who called the bombing “a scar on the face of the whole island of Ireland.” Mr King continues, “...it is difficult to conceive a more callous and appalling outrage than has been committed here today... In any

civilized society there is no place for people who can commit outrages of this kind” and that the perpetrators had a “depraved mentality.” (Irish Times, November 9th, 1987)

London Times

The London Times highlights that the Enniskillen Bombing was a major blunder on the part of the PIRA. The headline read “11 DIE IN POPPY DAY MASSACRE: CONDEMNATION FOR IRA BOMB AT ULSTER WAR MEMORIAL.” As it had in the past, the London Times highlighted that the bomb exploded without warning, but this time it went further, stating “the outrage was immediately condemned by leaders in Britain, the Irish Republic, and around the world as the most disgusting ever perpetrated by the IRA.” This article also offers substantial clues as to how the tide was turning against the PIRA in The Troubles, explaining:

Yesterday's explosion was clearly a retaliation by the Provisional IRA, which has suffered a series of setbacks to its terrorist campaign this year. The most notable reversal came in April when eight of its members were killed in a shoot-out with security forces at Loughgall, Co Armagh. More recently one of the top IRA bomb makers, Gerald McNamee, was convicted at the Central Court and was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment.

(The *London Times*, November 9th, 1987)

Academic

The abhorrence expressed in both Times stories is reflected in historical texts. Both Hennessey (1997) and Fay (1999) point to the Enniskillen Bombing as a turning point for Republican paramilitaries as a whole. Fay (1999) posits that the IRA was shaken to its very core in the aftermath of the bombing as evidenced by their “express[ing] deep regret for the bomb.” (p.154). As the bombing occurred on Remembrance Day, a day to remember fallen soldiers in the British military (independent of religion), many felt this bomb was a grotesque

miscalculation by an already suffering PIRA. Further, criticisms from the international community “gave the Republicans cause for serious reconsideration of IRA strategy”(p.154).

Hennessey (1997) outlines how a general trend of strategy reassessment by the Republican camp was further bolstered by solidarity talks between the moderate SDLP and Left Wing Sinn Fein in 1988.

Synthesis

In the aftermath of Bloody Friday, the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, the Mountbatten assassination, the Warrenpoint Ambush, and the Brighton Hotel Bombing, neither Loyalist nor Nationalist paramilitaries admitted any wrongdoings, let alone apologized. Enniskillen was different in that the subsequent backlash was *not* characterized by a noticeable escalation in the conflict. It is at this point that we see the negative conflict phase of The Troubles begin to collapse on itself. The conflict became *so* negative that many of the very actors carrying out the atrocities began to question the morality of their campaign.

Conclusion

The violence that plagued Ireland and Great Britain during the escalation period of The Troubles is an example of negative, destructive conflict. While an isolated analysis of each of the events of the escalation period (1972-1987) would yield a confusing array of violence, anarchy, and sociopolitical turmoil, a sequential analysis framed by Augsberger’s four tendencies of negative conflict, culminates in the validation of Augsberger’s assertion that conflict is negative and destructive when “participants are dissatisfied with the outcomes and all feel they have lost as a result of the conflict” (Augsberger 1992, 47). In other words, Augsberger’s theory that negative conflict produces an a feeling of loss on both sides would be disproved by a singular examination of an event like the Warrenpoint Ambush—where the PIRA emerged jubilant and

the British army questioning itself. However, when a one-sided event such as the Warrenpoint Ambush is contextualized within the bigger picture— as a part of a series of events that ultimately led to the PIRA reassessing itself internally— we see that the escalation period (1972-1987) is actually a *process* of negative, destructive conflict. It is a process within a bigger process of Conflict Transformation.

4.3 The 1981 Hunger Strikes: Failure to Recognize Oppositional Legitimacy

The most troublesome years of the conflict in Northern Ireland were undoubtedly the 1970s and 1980s. As we have seen, these years were marred by countless acts of senseless violence directed at military targets, political figures, and civilians. But among the most widely scrutinized and preventable deaths of The Troubles are the deaths of ten Republican Paramilitary hunger strikers, who starved themselves to death while serving jail time in 1981 in an attempt to put pressure on the British Government to improve conditions in the prisons for paramilitary, or as they saw themselves, political, prisoners. The Hunger Strikes of 1981 occurred following a series of failed protests known the Dirty Protest and Blanket Protest as well as the first hunger strikes in 1980. Throughout the duration of the 1981 Republican Hunger Strikes, the British Government refused to reinstate political status for *all* paramilitary prisoners (although there were special exemptions). When demands were softened by Republicans and reduced to five basic privileges, the British Government stood pat, continually denying paramilitary prisoners the right to:

1. Not wear a prison uniform;
2. Not do prison work;
3. Free association with other prisoners;
4. Increased mail and external interaction;
5. Restoration of remission lost through protest.

Patrick Coy argues that empowerment and recognition are at the heart of transformative mediation (Coy, 2009:68) but as the conflict in Northern Ireland plunged into its darkest period in the late 1970s and 1980s, it was clear that neither Nationalist nor Unionist was making concrete steps in moving towards developing mutual understanding and recognition. For every step toward conflict resolution taken during the 1970s and 1980s it seemed that paramilitary violence forced Northern Ireland and its people to take two backward. The Hunger Strikes of 1981 represented extremes of both Nationalist and Unionist ideology, indicative of the fundamental disconnect present in Northern Ireland during the height of The Troubles.

When framed by Coy's theory on transformative mediation, the Republican Hunger Strikes of 1981 illustrate just how divided a society Northern Ireland was. As paramilitary violence continually escalated during the early 1980s the Hunger Strikes of 1981 made it clear that Republican paramilitaries and the British Government were seeing a completely different conflict. Over a period of seven months, ten Republican prisoners took their *own* lives by refusing food in protest of the British Government's continued refusal to recognize the political nature of their cause. When the strike ended in October 1981 there were only informal indications that any of the five demands would be met. There would be no reinstatement of *political* status. There would be no empowerment and there would be no recognition.

Primary

Irish Times

The following five Irish Times articles describe the sequence of events that transpired between March and October during the 1981 Republican Hunger Strikes. As continued demands for acknowledgement of political status for paramilitary prisoners fell on deaf ears, Republican prisoners turned once more to hunger striking in March of 1981. The outset of the strike is noted

by the Irish Times: “DIRTY PROTEST ENDED BY 400 REPUBLICAN PRISONERS” (Irish Times, March 3, 1981). The article quotes that the strike is, “a move which, it seems certain, will increase the pressure on the Provisional hunger striker, Bobby Sands, to carry his fast through death if necessary. The article continues that Sands “must now feel that not just the Provisionals outside the prison but also his colleagues inside are now entirely dependent on him to win concessions from the British Government.” As the British Government refused to acknowledge Sands and his fellow hunger strikers, Bobby Sands starved to death on May 5th, 1981, and the Irish Times led with: “SANDS DIES ON 66TH DAY.” The front-page article mourns “Mr. Bobby Sands, the 27 year old Republican Hunger Striker and Westminster MP, [who] died in the hospital wing of the Maze Prison, Long Kesh, early this morning.”

The strike carried on throughout the summer and on August 25th, the Irish Times again led with a hunger strike article: “SIXTH IRA PRISONER JOINS HUNGER STRIKE.” This article highlights that ten hunger strikers have died since April and also cites Republican prisoners who issued a statement reading, “with ten hunger strikers dead and even more innocent civilians we ask when is the Dublin Government, the SDLP and the Church going to end their respective postures of inactivity and act vigorously and decisively to save any further loss of life?” An unflinching political response by the British ultimately led to the end of the protest in early October, as it was clear to Republican prisoners that they would have to approach their demands differently. The Irish Times on October 5th, 1981 released a statement authored by Republican prisoners in the H Blocks, titled “WHY THE PRISONERS ENDED THEIR PROTEST.” The statement cites British reneging on concessions to prisoners following first Hunger Strike (1980) as the reason for second hunger strike and also claims that Bobby Sands was “murdered by British Callousness and vindictiveness.” It further criticizes the “Dublin Bloc

of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, and Labour [as] accessories to legalized murder of 10 committed Irishmen who died heroically in the long tradition of Republican resistance to British Occupation, oppression and injustice in Ireland.” Furthermore, the statement questions the hypocrisy of the Republic of Ireland’s official stance toward the Hunger Strikers, as jails in the Republic of Ireland maintained a policy consistent with their demands. The prisoners concluded by reaffirming their “commitment to the achievement of the five demands by whatever means... necessary and expedient, rul[ing] nothing out.”

Following the cessation of the strikes, the British Government announced that small changes were forthcoming in the prison system, and the Irish Times led with: “PRISON CHANGES TO BE KNOWN SHORTLY” on October 6, 1981. Still the article notes that “any changes in the prison regime may fall far short of the demands made by the protesting prisoners, and Northern Ireland office sources were indicating that changes would be of a minor nature rather than a radical switch in prison policy.” Furthermore, indicating the blanket-nature of any concessions to prisoners in Northern Ireland, the article reads “any changes announced will automatically apply to *all* prisoners in Northern Ireland prisons, so that there can be no suggestion that the Republican prisoners in the Maze achieved the concessions for themselves through their protest.” Still, Unionist organizations felt their government had let them down, noted by the DUP who “sent a telegram to Mrs. Thatcher saying that concessions to the Republican prisoners would sully the memory of the 64 people killed since the hunger strike in March, and would condemn more people to death by giving the PIRA a reason to carry on.”

London Times

The London Times followed the course of the 1981 Hunger Strikes closely, publishing updates on the prisoners and on the governments monitoring them. The article that marks the

beginning of the 1981 strike highlights the ideological gap between Maze prisoners and the British Government. The March 2nd, 1981 headline for the London Times reads: “IRA PRISONERS’ LEADER BEGINS HUNGER STRIKE” and notes that “the prisoners contend that the [British] government has failed to carry out verbal promises given at the time [following the 1980 hunger strike] about living conditions of terrorist inmates.” It is interesting to note here the use of the word ‘terrorist’ instead of ‘paramilitary,’ ‘republican,’ or even ‘Provisional’ (in reference to the PIRA). Upon Bobby Sands’ death on May 5th, the Times read: “SANDS DIES IN MAZE PRISON AFTER 66 DAYS.” This article, while titled nearly identically to the Irish Times story, portrays Sands’ death as “needless and pointless,” noting, “too many have died by violence in Northern Ireland.” The article notes that Sands even ignored his mother, who eventually stopped appealing to him to end his hunger strike.

A little less than a month later, the London Times ran an editorial piece begging the question “SHOULD THE TERRORISTS BE GIVEN AIRTIME?” (June 4th, 1981). As the hunger strikes were an international media sensation that negatively portrayed the British Government, the article highlights the danger of potentially putting wind in the sails of the IRA by publicizing them (either negatively or positively). The editorial asserts that the IRA is not only seeking to undermine [British] society, but they are pursuing their ends by violence...” and furthermore, “they are seeking to either frighten or exasperate the British people into pulling out of Northern Ireland.” Additionally, the article quotes Prime Minister Thatcher, who reiterates media “can give convicted criminals on hunger strike the myth of martyrdom they crave, but... nothing would be more damaging than misinformation and lack of balance.”

In the June 8th article “FIFTH MAN JOINS HUNGER STRIKE AT THE MAZE” the London Times makes note of the IRA’s desire to keep at least one prisoner near death at all times

to apply pressure to the British Government, stating “the period of respite since the last hunger striker death is seen as a tactical error; the next death is not likely until late this month.” Toward the end of the strike, an October 3rd article titled “END OF MAZE HUNGER STRIKE IN SIGHT” highlights how the combination of family intervention and lack of any real pressure on the British Government to resolve the strike are very likely to bring an end to the strike. The Strike finally ended on October 3rd, 1981, and an article two days later titled “FOUR HUNDRED STAY ON BLANKET PROTEST” summarized the events of the strike. It read: “...in the 216 days since Bobby Sands started the hunger strike, the two communities in Northern Ireland have become more polarized than ever.” As a result of this, there was a marked increase in casualties on either side of the conflict. The hunger strikes “whipped up support among people who had grown tired of the IRA... recruits flocked to join.” And while the article notes that Sands’ “death brought demonstrations to the streets of New York, Paris and Rome” the failure of the hunger strikes to achieve the stated demands of Republican prisoners “usefully deflates the myth of invincibility of the IRA.”

Academic

The Republican Hunger Strikes at Maze Prison in 1981 made apparent, through their protracted run, the British Government’s unwillingness to recognize political legitimacy claimed by Republican prisoners during The Troubles. Much like Bloody Sunday a decade earlier, the hunger strikes of 1981 revived the Republican movement’s political fortunes by inflicting severe emotional trauma on the Catholic-Nationalist community in Northern Ireland (Hennessey 1997:260). Bell’s 1993 work, *The Irish Troubles* posits that the 1981 Hunger Strikes, like Bloody Sunday, once again involved a previously apathetic population in a conflict that had violently escalated during the 1970s. Once again a “nation’s history of denial and suffering

because they were Catholic and Irish was recalled and refashioned” (Bell, 1993:609). Also contributing to this escalation of anger was Prime Minister Thatcher’s staunch refusal to consider the idea that ‘Republican’ prisoners were anything but common criminals. Hennessey (1997) makes note of Thatcher’s statement that the British Government is “not prepared to consider special category status for certain groups of people serving sentences for crime. Crime is crime is crime, it is not political” (p.261). Also making mention of Thatcher’s perceived callousness in managing the hunger strikes is Fay (2009), positing that Thatcher’s stance was integral in further escalating animosity on the Republican side (p.62). While Sands and his compatriots saw themselves as political prisoners, Thatcher reiterated (upon Sands’ death) that “Mr. Sands was a convicted criminal, he took his own life... a choice his organization did not allow many of its own victims” (Hennessey 1997:261). J.J. Lee (1989) feels that the British Government’s “handling of the whole H Block situation was inept to the point of criminality. It threatened to endanger the political stability of not only Northern Ireland, but the Republic” (p.154) as well—consequently risking a dramatic expansion of the conflict.

Synthesis

The discord between Republican prisoners and the British Government represents the very core of The Troubles. On one side were the Republican Hunger Strikers, imprisoned individuals who didn’t *believe* that they were political prisoners, they *knew* they were political prisoners. On the other side was the British Government, who didn’t just *believe* Republican prisoners were criminals; they *knew* Republican prisoners were criminals (echoed quite clearly by Prime Minister Thatcher). If there is one thing we can take away from the hunger strikes, more clearly than any other event during The Troubles, it is that both Republican paramilitaries and the British Government viewed the relationship they had with each other through a

completely different lens. Bell (1993) supports this, arguing that the prisoners “... in Maze or the Kesh, whether criminals or patriots did not matter as long as no one made the other acquiesce in the opposing reality” (p.627). To both sides of the conflict, the Republican Hunger Strikes of 1981 were about **refusing** to acknowledge the legitimacy of the opponent. Ten Republican Prisoners did so by starving themselves to death while the British Government did so by failing to recognize prisoners’ demands, thereby letting them starve to death.

The Republican Hunger Strikes of 1981 embody the antithesis of Coy’s (2009) theory on transformative conflict mediation. The lack of recognition of legitimacy by either side is integral to understanding why violent conflict continued throughout the duration of The Troubles. As the participants on both sides of the conflict were far from recognizing the legitimacy of the other, they were just as far from moving toward transformative conflict mediation. During and following the hunger strikes, the conflict in Northern Ireland was seen essentially as a violent clash of cultural and political ideologies, where two sides refused to mutually acknowledge the others’ narrative.

Conclusion

It might seem to be an anachronistic error to place the Republican Hunger Strikes of 1981 after the end of a discussion about escalation (which I suggest ends in 1987—six years after the strikes ended), but it is with good reason. The Hunger Strikes of 1981 undoubtedly were an integral part of the escalation of The Troubles in the 1970s and 1980s, but they have a more significant contribution to make to the overall understanding of The Troubles than violent events like Bloody Friday and the Brighton Hotel Bombing (among others). The Republican Hunger Strikes were *not* an example of paramilitaries attacking political, military, and civilian targets. They were an embodiment of the ideology that drove individuals to commit these acts of

violence. The fact that ten individuals were willing to sacrifice their *own* lives in hopes of providing legitimacy to their cause shows that The Troubles were not simply about the perpetuation of violence and anarchy. The fact that the British Government refused to grant political status to these protesters despite worldwide attention for the strikers, shows how firmly they believed these individuals were criminals. The Republican Hunger Strikes of 1981 show just how far the Northern Ireland still had to go in pursuit of peace.

4.4 Building Peace: Conflict Transformation and the Northern Ireland Peace Agreements.

I have outlined some of the more acrimonious aspects of The Troubles of Northern Ireland in previous sections. This section is devoted to an exploration of the evolution of positive conflict, and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Between 1973 and 1998, four unique peace agreements and declarations illustrate how a society torn apart by paramilitary violence, ideological differences, and fear, attempted to reconcile the wrongdoings of the past in an attempt to create and sustain peace. The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 was the first such attempt at peace, lasting less than a year only to be dismantled by Unionist opposition. The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 marked the second significant attempt by both British and Irish camps at forging peace during The Troubles. The ideologies pushed forward in this agreement set the table for the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, which laid the framework for the groundbreaking peace deal known as the Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement). With each subsequent agreement, each side conceded more to the other, representing a mutual commitment to transforming “negative destructive conflict into positive conflict [by dealing with] structural, behavioral, and attitudinal aspects of conflict” (Berghof Foundation’s definition of Conflict Transformation). The peaceful progress signified by these four agreements, when framed by the incredibly violent, negative events of The Troubles

discussed in sections 4.1 through 4.3, articulates the overall importance of Conflict Transformation (as defined by the Berghof foundation) in engineering sustainable conflict resolution.

4.4a The Sunningdale Agreement (1973): A Motion Towards Peace

The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 was an early attempt to establish a powersharing Northern Ireland executive. As discussed earlier, the years prior to 1973 were among the most tumultuous ones of The Troubles. Internment, 1969 Riots, and Bloody Sunday were major contraindications against the legitimacy of the existing sociopolitical environment in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s. When the Sunningdale Agreement was approved, it proposed numerous solutions to problems plaguing Northern Ireland. Among them was a Council of Ireland, composed of ministers from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, whose primary function was to cooperate on matters of cultural and economic importance. Other stipulations highlighted the importance of cross-community support of the police force and a desire to create a cross-border jurisdiction for an all-Ireland court. Though the Sunningdale Agreement was eventually rendered ineffective by widespread opposition (though primarily Unionist), it sought to address root causes of The Troubles. Sunningdale created a Council of Ireland and pushed for a reexamination of the RUC, thereby marking the first step in a lengthy and uncertain journey towards peace.

Primary

Summary of the Text of the Agreement (Document text provided by Cain.ulst.ac.uk)

The Sunningdale Agreement is divided into twenty paragraphs detailing the aspirations of both the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister both individually and as a whole. Paragraph three articulates, “the people of the Republic, together with a minority in Northern Ireland as

represented by the SDLP delegation, continue to uphold the aspiration toward a United Ireland.” However, it also recognizes that “the only unity they [want] to see [is] a unity established by consent.” Placing faith in the prospective success of the agreement, the British Government subscribed to the idea that an overhaul of security policy in Northern Ireland could be addressed “as soon as the security problems were resolved and the new institutions [set forth by the agreement] were seen to be working effectively, they would wish to discuss... normal policing and how this might be achieved.” The agreement also sets forth ground rules for the return of executive powers to Stormont.

Irish Times

The Irish Times ran a story following the approval of the Sunningdale Agreement with the December 10th, 1973 headline: “COUNCIL OF IRELAND IS AGREED: DUBLIN ACKNOWLEDGES THE STATUS OF THE NORTH UNTIL MAJORITY EXPRESSES DESIRE FOR CHANGE.” The article makes note that the Irish Government recognizes that it is up to the people of Northern Ireland to decide on any change to their constitutional status. Also discussed is the importance of fair policing, and that prospects of an all-Ireland court are incredibly unlikely due to conflicts over international jurisdiction.

London Times

Across the Irish Sea in Britain, the London Times led with “AGREEMENT ON A COUNCIL OF IRELAND, FOUR DAY TALKS END IN DEAL ON POLICE, INTERNEES” (December 10, 1973). The article suggests that the Sunningdale Agreement was designed to “change relations substantially between Belfast and Dublin.” Making note of the statement released by Brian Faulker, then Chief Executive of Northern Ireland, the article quotes “we now have a very considerable achievement... which can lead to greater cooperation between North

and South.” Cautious optimism is expressed by The Times, but it also highlights opposition from both sides of the political spectrum, especially the Unionist camp.

Academic

The Unionist outrage noted by the London Times the day after the passage of the Sunningdale Agreement snowballed in the following months, ultimately leading to the Ulster Worker’s Council (UWC) Strike and the eventual collapse of the powersharing executive in Northern Ireland. Unionists opposed the agreement primarily on the grounds that it was predicated on ‘interference’ by a foreign government (the Republic of Ireland) on the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. This opposition was made blatantly obvious by the subsequent UWC strike (Porter, 1993:46-47) and the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (section 4.2b). Fay (1999) agrees, arguing that the UWC strike rendered the powersharing executive useless (p.64). Lee (1989) expresses a similar belief, casting doubts on the strength of the executive, stating that it was “brutally clear that the executive had no mandate” (p.444). Furthermore, the Council of Ireland began to be perceived as largely symbolic and parties in British and Irish camps began to stop supporting it. Sunningdale was, according to Lee (1989) “dismantled out of mistrust and fear of the opposition” and “a lost opportunity for a new start” (444-445).

Synthesis

While Lee (1989) feels Sunningdale was a lost opportunity for a new start, it was more than just that. Sunningdale is the first semblance we see of Conflict Transformation during The Troubles. Implemented as The Troubles were ‘leaving the gate’ so to speak, Sunningdale was dismantled because its goals did not match those of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. While British and Irish politicians may have outwardly stated that they were seeking a peaceful solution to the violence in Northern Ireland, the sociopolitical environment in which it was

implemented in was hardly ready for reconciliation. On Brahm's curve of conflict intensity, Sunningdale is located right after "Conflict Emergence" (section 4.1) and during "Conflict Escalation" (section 4.2). Furthermore, doubts exist as to whether Faulkner and Cosgrave actually felt as if they were conceding *anything* to the opposition. Faulkner Felt that Sunningdale diminished the Republic's territorial claim to Northern Ireland, while Taoiseach Cosgrave felt he had ceded nothing of the sort to Faulkner. Sunningdale failed not only because it lacked sustained support from moderate platforms, but also hard line Nationalists and Unionists. Furthermore, it was born in an era of 'deeply dividing' events in the Northern Irish community, such as Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday, and the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings. Still, what is often forgotten is the importance of Sunningdale, despite its rapid collapse, as the first attempt to address root causes of The Troubles through peaceful political means. In doing so, it became the symbolic first step toward Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland.

4.4b The Anglo Irish Agreement (1985): Legitimacy of the 'Other' Grows

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was a 1985 peace agreement between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which, like Sunningdale, stipulated that the Government of the Republic of Ireland be given an advisory role in the administration of the Government of Northern Ireland. The document was somewhat ambiguously worded to provide a platform for open dialogue between the British and Irish Government. Despite the agreement's failure to garner the support across the spread of the Unionist camp and inability to bring an immediate end to political violence in Northern Ireland, the Anglo-Irish Agreement represents yet another step forward in the process of Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland by virtue of the fact that it was engineered to set a precedent of sustained engagement pursuing peace.

Primary

Summary of the Text of the Agreement (Document text provided by Cain.ulst.ac.uk)

The Anglo-Irish agreement set forth provisions quite similar to Sunningdale, but they were more loosely worded so as to promote constructive dialogue. Additionally, the tone of the agreement is more expressive of a desire to *continue* the peace *process*, suggesting that the architects of the agreement recognized that conclusive, direct wording would likely dismantle the peace process as it did in the wake of the Sunningdale Agreement. The document recognizes “the need for continuing efforts to reconcile and to acknowledge the rights of the two major traditions that exist in Ireland.” It also reaffirms both Britain and Ireland’s “total rejection of any attempt to promote political objectives by violence or the threat of violence” and an unending commitment to “work together to ensure that those who adopt or support such methods do not succeed.” The document also expresses the importance of genuine recognition and acceptance of the “rights... and identities of the two communities in Northern Ireland.” In a nod to a historical tradition of Nationalist abstention (a trend that was just beginning to disappear in the 1980s), the agreement conveyed a desire “for two communities to participate fully in the structures and processes of government—living in peace.” In addition to the calculated wording of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the actual content of the agreement provides a framework for the development of a cross-community cohesion. It sets forth guidelines for the new Intergovernmental Council to be set up between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, but also recognizes that this Council will have no operational responsibilities in the internal bureaus of Northern Ireland’s government. The document also stresses the importance of a review of all aspects of life in Northern Ireland, especially in the realm of equal opportunity employment and cross-community recognition of police authority in Northern Ireland.

Irish Times

On November 16th, 1985, the Irish Times headline highlighted passage of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, reading: “ROLE IN NORTH FOR REPUBLIC AGREED: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND PLEDGE FOR US AID.” The Times notes that the new peace agreement is much like Sunningdale, but “without its provision for a devolved power-sharing administration.” Still, the Times makes mention of the fact that the lack of a new devolved power-sharing executive is actually compensated for by “other mandates of the agreement regarding fair governance.” The article reminds readers of the significance of the new peace agreement, quoting Taoiseach Fitzgerald, “nationalists [can] now raise their heads knowing their position is, and is seen to be on an equal footing with that of members of the Unionist community.” Still, the article notes, numerous parties including the UUP, Sinn Fein, and Fianna Fail did not support the agreement.

London Times

The cautious optimism expressed by the Irish Times is not matched by the London Times. The headline for November 16th, 1985 read “THATCHER AIMS FOR ULSTER PEACE IN HISTORIC DEAL.” A sub-headline follows “MINISTER QUILTS IN PROTEST.” Much like Sunningdale, the Times notes that protest is widespread in Northern Ireland over the involvement of a foreign power, which was the impetus for the resignation of Mr. Ian Gow, Minister of the State at the Treasury. The article continues, “Unionist leaders have withdrawn all cooperation with ministers and are to boycott official bodies.” In an attempt to further clarify the issue of the Intergovernmental Council of Ireland, the article makes note that security matters in Northern Ireland and Great Britain will never be devolved.

Academic

There is a general consensus in academic literature is that the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 failed to directly achieve its stated goal of achieving peace in Northern Ireland. However, the overall impression of the agreement is that it was merely a stepping-stone in the path to peace. Lee (1989) expressed doubt about the agreement (keep in mind he was writing just a few years after the agreement), arguing that the Intergovernmental Council “fell far short of forum aspirations, but nevertheless gave the Republic a voice in Northern Ireland affairs” (p.456). Writing several years later, Hennessey (1997) highlights that the Anglo-Irish Agreement came about as a result of increasing legitimacy of the other, arguing that in the early-to-mid 1980s, “the British Government... was confronted with the problem of ... increasing electoral support for Sinn Fein” (p.270). It is important to remember the widespread impact that the Republican Hunger Strikes (section 4.3) had on drawing worldwide attention to the legitimacy of the Nationalist cause. Even Thatcher herself acknowledged that at the time, “the present dialogue with the Irish Government represented the best hope of improving co-operation,... security,... peace and stability in Northern Ireland (Hennessey 1997, p.272). While the Anglo-Irish Agreement was far from a perfect peace agreement, Porter (2003) argues that it had far more staying power than Sunningdale, as its stipulations remained in place until they were replaced by those set forth by the Belfast Agreement in 1998.

Synthesis

The Anglo-Irish Agreement is notable in an analysis of Conflict Transformation primarily because its chief purpose was to create a constructive dialogue between two parties who had failed to see eye-to-eye for decades. While Sunningdale collapsed due to Unionist opposition, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was worded so that it allowed room for opposition. If

anything, it embraced opposition (peaceful, political opposition), and in doing so, it represented the acknowledgement of “the other” by both sides.

Still, the agreement was met with mixed reaction, especially from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) who felt they, according to UUP Leader Ian Paisley, “had been betrayed by Margaret Thatcher.” Paisley’s disgust with the Anglo-Irish Agreement was largely due to his belief that Thatcher was trying to appease Nationalists, when in fact she claimed the agreement was actually an attempt to turn pragmatic Nationalists against the IRA by paving the way to peace through political means. This recognition ceded to Nationalists, though designed to undermine the IRA, in many ways, legitimized the Nationalist cause (and somewhat ironically the IRA), and alienated Unionists. However, the agreement did not alienate either side to the point of a derailment of the peace process. Peace was beginning to take hold. In the eyes of many the agreement “marked in principle a deeper recognition than ever before by the British Government of the legitimacy of the Republic’s concern with Northern Ireland, and of its potential contribution to the resolution of the Ulster question” (Lee 1989:456-457). The Anglo-Irish Agreement did *not* cause an end to the violence in Northern Ireland, an unfortunate outcome that might make it seem like another failed attempt at building peace in a deeply divided society. However, the cross-community dialogue it sought to foster was integral in creating an environment conducive to peace, changing the *relational system* of conflict in Northern Ireland. Lee (1989), writing without the support of over two decades of subsequent history, feels that the agreement was “a modest, but not insignificant concession to reality”(457). Briefly returning to the Enniskillen Bombing of 1987 (two years after the agreement was signed) we can now more completely understand just why widespread reaction, even within the most Republican circles, was so negative. As Fitzgerald was quoted in the Irish

Times the day after the agreement was signed “Nationalists can stand shoulder to shoulder and be seen on an equal footing as Unionists in the community” (Irish Times, November 16, 1985). As the community in Northern Ireland moved towards peace and equality, brutal acts of violence such as the Enniskillen Bombing, became more widely condemned, signifying that a transformation was occurring and the a culture of peace was developing.

4.4c The Downing Street Declaration (1993): “A New Era of Trust”

In 1993, John Major and Albert Reynolds, heads of government from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, respectively, issued a joint statement now known as the Downing Street Declaration. This was a twelve-point document, which summarized the desires of both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to achieve peace in Northern Ireland within the decade. Peace Agreements in 1973 and 1985 had varying degrees of success, but both indicated a mutual commitment by Britain and Ireland to engineering peace in the contested region of Northern Ireland. For the first time ever, the Downing Street Declaration stated that parties linked with paramilitaries would be allowed take part in talks if linked paramilitary groups abandoned violent conflict. This statement represented a unique turning point in The Troubles, suggesting that both sides were willing to recognize the legitimacy of the *cause* of formerly violent organizations by holding talks with their political wings so long as violence ceased. The declaration was made around the same time SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams were developing a new political strategy for the Republican community in Northern Ireland, characterized by peaceful political progress. The declaration, coupled with the results of the Hume-Adams Talks was enough to produce a brief PIRA ceasefire in 1994. The new era of trust promised by the Downing Street Agreement further entrenched Great Britain,

Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland in the notion that peace could be achieved in Ulster.

Primary

Summary of the Text of the Declaration (Document text provided by Cain.ulst.ac.uk)

The Downing Street Declaration recognized that the “most urgent and important issue facing the people of Ireland, North and South, and the British and Irish Governments together, is to remove the conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions...” resulting from The Troubles. The Declaration reasserts the right of the people of Northern Ireland to self-determination and the British Government’s desire to “see peace, stability, and reconciliation established by agreement among all the people inhabiting the island.” Furthermore, Reynolds and Major cite a renewed desire to “work to create a new era of trust... in which every effort must be made to build a new series of trust between [nationalist and unionist] communities.” Echoing the wording of the Anglo-Irish agreement eight years prior, Taoiseach Reynolds “recognizes the need to engage in dialogue which would address the honesty and integrity of the fears of all traditions.” Most importantly, the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister are “determined to build on the fervent wish of both their peoples to see old fears and anomalies replaced by a climate of peace.” In the statements that followed the release of the actual declaration itself, Reynolds said “I was not prepared through inaction to condemn the people of Northern Ireland to another 25 years of violence. They deserve better” The Taoiseach continues “...let December 1993 be the moment we begin to resolve the conflict in Northern Ireland... no one should be afraid of peace. Here is the opportunity for peace. Here, let us all make our stand” (December 15, 1993).

Irish Times

Recognizing the incredible significance of the Downing Street Declaration, the Irish Times hailed the declaration, leading off with “PROSPECT OF IRA CEASEFIRE IN THE BALANCE AFTER JOINT DECLARATION. SINN FEIN PLANS TALKS WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS” (December 16, 1993). Once again, the article makes note of Unionist opposition, as the UUP “expressed deep misgivings of yesterday’s statement.” The Times embraces the declaration as a “historic affirmation that the British Government would uphold the democratic wish of ‘a greater number of the people’ of Northern Ireland to support the Union.” Of greater significance is the mention of the prospect of Sinn Fein once again entering the fold in government peace talks.

London Times

The London Times chose to highlight the uncertainty it felt that prevailed throughout Northern Ireland following the release of the declaration reading “ULSTER HOLDS ITS BREATH ON PEACE ACCORD” (December 16, 1993). The article describes John Major and Albert Reynolds as standing “shoulder to shoulder” challenging “the men of violence to put down their weapons and negotiate a permanent peace in Northern Ireland.” Again, “... hardline Unionists were left isolated with cries of treachery” but Major encouraged them to “grasp the opportunity for peace” because “another might not come their way.” In a powerful statement, the article quotes Major as saying “we cannot go on spilling blood in the name of the past.” An important analysis presented in the Times article discusses how both Reynolds and Major found a way to appease the majority of concerned parties in the release of the declaration. Still, Mr. Ian Paisley expressed his disgust with being “told that in three months’ time the IRA who had butchered, slaughtered, and murdered his constituents would be invited to sit down as constitutional politicians if they ceased their violence.” In a stern defiance to Unionist-bloc

opposition Prime Minister Major responded “I wish to take action to make sure there’s no bloodshed of this sort, no more coffins carried away week after week because politicians will not have the courage to sit down, address the problems and find away through.”

Academic

Contrary to Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Downing Street Declaration was not a legislative document. It was instead a reassertion of a commitment to conflict resolution. The Downing Street Declaration reminded the population of Great Britain and Ireland that peaceful progress would be the only path forward for *all* parties hoping to gain from the peace process. Perhaps most importantly, the declaration (and the Hume-Adams Talks) put increased pressure on the IRA to cease its armed campaign (Hennessey 1997:288). While the cessation of the IRA’s armed campaign was vital to the peace process, Coakley (2002) argues the mandate of a referendum in the Republic of Ireland into any future peace agreements in Northern Ireland was equally valuable in developing mutual trust between both governments and both communities (p.25). Viewing Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreements as essentially impotent peace agreements, Fay (1999) remarks that the Downing Street Declaration was “the beginning of the peace process” (p.64).

Synthesis

Fay’s (1999) assertion that the Downing Street Declaration was the ‘beginning’ of the peace process is valid, but fails to recognize Lederach’s position that conflict is best analytically framed as a **process**. As positive Conflict Transformation (concentrated efforts at peacebuilding) is both a process *and* an end result (Berghof definition of Conflict Transformation), it seems incorrect to say that the Downing Street Declaration marked the *beginning* of the peace process in Northern Ireland. The peace process, though in fledgling form, began shortly after the conflict

erupted, through dialogue—both positive and negative. This paper locates the Downing Street Declaration as *part of the process* of Conflict Transformation. The foundation of the Downing Street Agreement was built on top of years of conflict and patchwork peace agreements. Its primary purpose was to bury the violence of the past and fill in the gaps of prior peace arrangements by displaying an even stronger commitment to mutual recognition and understanding. Unlike Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Downing Street Declaration gave political parties and also paramilitary groups time to digest its stated goals. There was no immediate legislation to vote on—simply just a renewed commitment to peace in Northern Ireland. The Downing Street Declaration represented a renewed commitment to peace that would ultimately lead to the most groundbreaking and successful peace agreement in the history of Northern Ireland.

4.4d The Belfast Agreement (1998): A Conflict Transformed

In 1998 British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern held peace talks between eight political parties in Northern Ireland. Included were Sinn Fein and the UUP, two parties who for the duration of The Troubles had adamantly opposed each other. What emerged from these talks was the Belfast Agreement, or Good Friday Agreement, which is the most comprehensive peace agreement to date in the history of Northern Ireland. Provisions of the agreement included: the removal of the Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim to Northern Ireland, the decommissioning of paramilitary organizations, the creation of a new executive, the creation of a new North-South Ministerial Council, and most controversially, the release of paramilitary prisoners whose respective organizations upheld their promise to abide by an indefinite ceasefire following the agreement. The passage of the Belfast Agreement is indicative of a definite transformation of the conflict in Northern Ireland. With both sides conceding more

than could have been imaginable in 1968, 1978, or 1988, it is evident that a culture of peace has truly taken root in Northern Ireland. And while occasional violence still occurs throughout the region, it has decreased drastically from the years of The Troubles.

Primary

Summary of the Text of the Agreement (Document text provided by Cain.ulst.ac.uk)

The Belfast Agreement reiterated the positions of both governments on the peace process in Northern Ireland as the only solution to continued conflict. It contains a legal agreement between the Irish and British Governments, as well as a second document discussing the agreements between the eight parties involved in the talks.

The legal section of the document sets forth four provisions that support peace “partnership, equality, and mutual respect” as the tenets of sociopolitical progress in Northern Ireland. It also stresses the need to oppose the use of political violence through intra-governmental cooperation and a commitment to democratic and peaceful means of resolving political differences. The agreement makes official the recognition that both Unionist and Nationalist views regarding the constitutional position of Northern Ireland are legitimate and that the United Kingdom is merely upholding the wish of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom. Additionally, it reaffirms the birthright of citizens of Northern Ireland to obtain Irish citizenship in addition to their given British citizenship. Most prominently, the first section of the agreement repeals Article 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution that claims the island of Ireland is one national territory.

Following the legal section, the agreement is divided into three strands. Strand one calls for the creation of new laws for cross-community legislation, which require both majority and minority approval. It also stipulates that issues to be voted on by cross-community legislation

will be designated in advance. If the assembly feels that a certain issue not designated for cross-community legislation should be subjected to cross-community legislation such a decision can be triggered by “petition of concern by a significant minority” (30 members of 108). Furthermore, strand one calls for the creation an equality commission “to investigate individual complaints against public bodies.” The strand also deals with the operation of the new assembly, where delegates will “register a designation of identity” as Nationalist, Unionist, or ‘other’ for the purposes of cross-community legislation. Strand two outlines the creation of a new North-South Ministerial Council devised to promote and support “consultation, cooperation, and action within the Island of Ireland... on matters of mutual interest.” Strand three expresses the desire for the creation of a British-Irish Council to support “harmonious and mutually beneficial development of relationships among the people of Great Britain and Ireland” and recognize the “Irish Government’s special interest in Northern Ireland.”

Outside of the Intergovernmental Councils, the Belfast Agreement outlines a desire to reexamine the sociopolitical landscape of Northern Ireland by establishing provisions for “reconciliation and victims of violence, decommissioning, security, police and justice, and prisoners.” With the establishment of the Northern Ireland Victims Commission, the agreement notes “it is essential to acknowledge and address the suffering of victims of violence as a necessary element of reconciliation” and that the most suitable tribute to victims of violence in Northern Ireland is the sustainable development of a peaceful society. Following a successful ceasefire, both governments will see to it that paramilitary organizations are successfully and smoothly decommissioned within approximately two years following the passage of the agreement. In response to demands for the reduction of British troops in Northern Ireland to normal appropriate peacetime standards the British Government conceded it “will make progress

towards... a return as possible to normal security arrangements in Northern Ireland.” This stipulation also included a British pledge to reduce the number and role of armed forces in Northern Ireland, the removal of checkpoints and the Emergency Powers Act. It additionally established the importance of “consultative cooperation with the Irish Government and respective political parties regarding response to any continuing paramilitary activity.” In the realm of the police service, the agreement was quite similar to prior agreements and declaration in stressing the importance of cross-community recognition for the police service and called for a widespread review and revamping of the police service. Finally, the Belfast Agreement was the first piece of legislation to officially recognize paramilitary prisoners as more than just common criminals so long as their organizations agreed to end their armed campaigns. “Both governments will put in place mechanisms to provide for an accelerated program for the release of prisoners... convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland.” Also stipulated was the necessity of governmental facilitation of the reintegration of prisoners by providing sustained support for them before and after their release “including assistance directed towards availing of employment opportunities, retraining or re-skilling, and further education.” In sum, the Belfast Agreement represents the most comprehensive and dynamic piece of legislation in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Irish Times

Being the most groundbreaking achievement to date in the history of the Northern Ireland peace process, the Belfast Agreement received international media attention. In the Republic of Ireland, the *Irish Times* wrote: “HISTORIC AGREEMENT MARKS NEW BEGINNING FOR US ALL” with a short sub-headline “LAST MINUTE INTERVENTION BY CLINTON TO REASSURE UNIONISTS” (*Irish Times*, April 11, 1998). The article makes mention that the

agreement is a culmination of almost two years of discussions, concluding with almost thirty-six hours of uninterrupted discussions. Quoting mediator and former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, the article reads “I cannot think of a comparable instance when two leaders of governments came and participated in a round the clock, hands on basis for several days as they have done. Leader of the SDLP John Hume is quoted as saying the agreement is a “once in a generation” type opportunity to resolve our deep and tragic conflict.”

London Times

Two London Times articles cover the Belfast Agreement and again express great hope for the future. The first article discusses the role of external support in sustaining the agreement, “CLINTON BACKS BEST CHANCE FOR PEACE IN A GENERATION” (London Times, April 11, 1998). Recalling Major and Reynolds’ efforts some five years prior, the article reads, “all parties and all the rest of us must stand shoulder to shoulder” in an effort to defy violent detractors of the agreement. The other article offers a much more sentimental analysis of the agreement, a major juxtaposition of the thirty years of violence reported in previous years. “ULSTER CHOOSES HOPE OVER HATE,” (London Times, April 11, 1998), the article reads triumphantly. Tony Blair further supports these emotions as he boldly states, “courage has triumphed.” The article also mentions that paramilitary prisoners are to be released within two or three years of the passage of the agreement provided their organizations abide by the ceasefire. Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams is also quoted: “Republicans and Nationalists will come to this document, some with skepticism, most with hope. They will ask whether it offers a chance for the way forward, and when we democratically have come to a conclusion, we will tell the world.” Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, co-architect of the agreement stated that the Belfast Agreement “marks a new beginning for all of us.”

Academic

Throughout the most recent academic histories of The Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Belfast Agreement is discussed as a major turning point in The Troubles. In most texts, it marks the end of The Troubles, and the beginning of a new, less violent, though still controversial era of Northern Irish politics. The Belfast Agreement was unique because it followed on the coattails of Unionists deciding to ‘confront’ Sinn Fein (Fay, 1999:65). The driving force behind the agreement was that it incorporated a wide range of political parties (eight in total), many of whom had been excluded for generations from the Northern Irish political system, in talks alongside “two sovereign governments” (Fay, 1999: 65). Furthermore, increased opposition to paramilitary organizations leading up to the agreement meant that the “IRA campaign ended in quiet disgrace in the mid-1990s” (Coakley, 2002:130). The end to the IRA campaign, coupled with “the Good Friday Agreement [Belfast Agreement] of 1998 recognized the interdependence of the two parts of Ireland and the necessity of their living in peace with each other” (Coakley 2002:130). The Belfast Agreement is generally perceived by scholars of Irish history as the benchmark of transformative legislation in the peace process in Northern Ireland. It is a “complex and far reach document that attempts to provide a reasonable balance between competing claims and aspirations of Unionism and Nationalism, it redefines relations within “North, North-and-South, and Britain-and-Ireland” (Porter, 2003:197). Most importantly, the agreement’s desire to decommission paramilitary organizations through recognition was integral to taking the gun out of Northern Irish politics.

Synthesis

The Belfast Agreement figures more prominently than any other act of protest, violence, and peace in the course of the transformation of conflict in Northern Ireland because it is the

most dynamic, comprehensive attempt at dealing with the “structural, behavioral, and attitudinal aspects of the conflict” (Berghof definition of Conflict Transformation). Additionally, it goes further “...than conflict settlement or conflict management” in that its basic tenets are structured to remove the root causes of the conflict by creating an open dialogue where conflicting parties can voice their concerns. The agreement voted on in 1998 and implemented in 1999 was “remarkable because of the fact that unlike any previous initiative, the negotiations that produced the agreement included political representatives of the main paramilitary organizations” (Porter, 2003:200). The Belfast Agreement not only had the support of the British and Irish Governments and numerous political parties in Northern Ireland, it had the support of the PIRA, the UVF, and the UDA. These three paramilitary organizations were responsible for some of the most violent, appalling moments of The Troubles. For decades, both camps of paramilitary organizations identified *themselves* as political actors. In accepting the Belfast Agreement, they accepted that they could act in a civilized political manner and as a result, the political realm conferred upon them, and many of their imprisoned colleagues, political status. While Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused to concede that any crime could be political, the Belfast Agreement made that incredibly difficult concession, and indicated to paramilitaries, political parties, and the people of Northern Ireland that peace, above everything else, was the only way forward.

4.4 Conclusion

The peace process in Northern Ireland very much mirrored the ebb and flow of The Troubles. An analysis of the peace process, when placed on top of a thorough exploration of The Troubles (4.1-4.3) produces an image of Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland. Sunningdale (1973) attempted to bring together a deeply divided society without providing a clear mechanism by which constructive dialogue could bridge the gap between Nationalist and

Unionist camps. Twelve years later, the Anglo-Irish Agreement once again attempted to promote peace, instead this time using loose wording so as to leave the agreement open to interpretation and constructive debate. The Downing Street Declaration of 1993 aimed to reaffirm a commitment to peace by both the British Government and the Irish Government. Five years later, the Belfast Agreement made good on that commitment, producing widespread reforms in the political and cultural relationships within Northern Ireland, and between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

5. Conclusion: A Conflict Transformed

I would like to briefly return to the definition provided by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, which defines Conflict Transformation as:

...[a] generic, comprehensive term referring to actions and processes seeking to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of violent conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. It aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict and deals with structural, behavioral, and attitudinal aspects of conflict. The term refers to both the process and the completion of the process. As such, it incorporates the activities of processes such as conflict prevention and conflict resolution and goes farther than conflict settlement or conflict management.

Between 1968 and 1998, The Troubles of Northern Ireland went from being a latent conflict to an incredibly violent, negative conflict. Yet somehow today Northern Ireland stands on the doorstep of peace. This is because a conflict, much like most all other dimensions of human life, can change and be changed. This change is the ultimate goal of Conflict Transformation.

In 1968 and 1969, a population of Nationalists (mostly Catholic) decided they had put up with enough and a civil rights movement was born. As Lederach so aptly described, Northern

Ireland was a *deeply divided society*, with distinct units of cultural, religious and political identity. As Nationalists clashed with Unionists over issues such as gerrymandering and equal representation, Unionists further tightened the stranglehold on the power structure in Northern Ireland, thus enraging the Catholic, Nationalist population even more. As riots raged throughout Northern Ireland in 1969, sectarian violence increased and the situation rapidly deteriorated, prompting Stormont to enlist the assistance of the British Army to restore order. Coupled with the new security policy of Internment, the presence of the British Army escalated the conflict to a new level, as it would ultimately bear responsibility for killing fourteen innocent civil rights protesters during the Bloody Sunday Massacre in 1972.

Following the events of Bloody Sunday, The Troubles rapidly spiraled out of control and a protracted period of violent, tit-for-tat escalation began—which I call “negative destructive conflict” which Augsberger argues culminates in a zero-sum gain where all involved parties emerged feeling they have accomplished little or nothing. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s violence continued, and while the history of individual events during this time lends credence to the notion that paramilitary violence may have achieved political progress, the Enniskillen Bombings in 1987 tell us otherwise. The sheer audacity and widespread condemnation of the ‘Remembrance Day Bombing’ as it is known now, caused the IRA to fracture and reconsider its position within the Republican movement. While individual events of the escalation period may have seemed like victories to conflict participants *at the time*, the ultimate result of escalation was more violence and more death on either side of the conflict. It did, in fact, produce a feeling of loss (as Augsberger posits) in both Nationalist and Unionist circles. The escalation period reminds us, that like Lederach (1997) argues, conflict is a *process* and must be analyzed as such rather than a fragmented case-by-case history.

Rewinding to 1981, an analysis of the Republican Hunger Strikes in Maze Prison gives us a better understanding of the degree of depth at which The Troubles divided Northern Ireland. If empowerment and recognition are at the heart of transformative mediation (Coy 2009), the Republican Hunger Strikes illustrate just how negative a conflict can become if these two ideas are ignored. The Republican Hunger Strikes are the embodiment of The Troubles: a clash of two different political narratives, and the failure of either side to legitimize the other. Framed through a Nationalist lens, ten hunger strikers died in an attempt to gain political status from a corrupt, oppressive British Government. When examined through a Unionist lens, ten ordinary criminals died on hunger strike, asking for something they were never entitled to in the first place. It is here the fundamental problem of The Troubles is uncovered: the unwillingness of either side of the conflict to empower and recognize the legitimacy of the other's concern.

This position enables us to understand why a fledgling peace process, beginning with the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973, blossomed into one of the most successful stories of Conflict Transformation in history. In 1973, a year after the British Army massacred 14 civil rights protesters on Bloody Sunday, and IRA retaliation was responsible for the indiscriminate slaughter of numerous civilians, the Sunningdale Agreement was signed. A supposed peace agreement that stipulated a power sharing executive and a cross-border Council of Ireland, it was rapidly dismantled by Unionist opposition and fear. While white-collar politicians *expressed* a desire for peace they could do little to achieve it, as the sociopolitical climate in Northern Ireland was wracked with fear and lack of trust and was clearly not prepared to constructively engage the opposition (as evidenced by the UWC strike). The Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985) took into account the pitfalls of Sunningdale, and produced a carefully worded, yet open-ended document that laid the groundwork for continued constructive cooperation at a cross-community and cross-

border level. It was around this time that Sinn Fein, the IRA as well as Loyalist paramilitaries began to reconsider the nature of their campaign. Public support was waning, enlistment was falling, and culture of peace was developing. The 1993 Downing Street Declaration reaffirmed that desire and also recognized the importance of having the Republic of Ireland on board with the peace process as well. Ultimately, the Belfast Agreement in 1998 represented the most comprehensive step forward in Conflict Transformation in the history of Northern Ireland, as both sides conceded recognition and legitimacy to the other. Most notably, this recognition came in the form of the early release of paramilitary prisoners belonging to organizations abiding by the ceasefire (PIRA, UVF, and UDA), as well as a constitutional change in the Republic of Ireland removed the Republic's claim to Northern Ireland.

Looking Forward

At the time this is being written (2011), Northern Ireland is still dealing with the horrors of the past. Just by reading the Belfast Telegraph every day, one gets a sense that the lines that divided the country during The Troubles still exist. Investigations are ongoing into the crimes of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Sectarian violence still occurs, though not on the same level as it once did, and the question remains: will The Troubles return to Northern Ireland? That is a question only time can answer. Yet it is worth recognizing that a proactive engagement by both Nationalists and Unionists and those in between has historically produced a genuine transformation. While the stipulations of the Belfast Agreement may not be perfect, they represent a commitment by both sides of the conflict to work together and even integrate in the interest of economic development, security, and genuine peace—all of which are crucial to preventing the growth of negative destructive conflict.

6. Appendix

1.1 Lynch's Speech (August 13, 1969)

It is clear now that the present situation cannot be allowed to continue. It is evident also that the Stormont government is no longer in control of the situation. Indeed, the present situation is the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont governments. It is clear also that the Irish Government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse. It is obvious that the RUC is no longer accepted as an impartial police force. Neither would the employment of British troops be acceptable nor would they be likely to restore peaceful conditions, certainly not in the long term. The Irish Government have, therefore, requested the British Government to apply immediately to the United Nations for the urgent dispatch of a Peace-Keeping Force to the Six Counties of Northern Ireland and have instructed the Permanent Representative to the United Nations to inform the Secretary General of this request. We have also asked the British Government to see to it that police attacks on the people of Derry should cease immediately.

Very many people have been injured and some of them seriously. We know that many of these do not wish to be treated in Six County hospitals. We have, therefore, directed the Irish Army authorities to have field hospitals established in County Donegal adjacent to Derry and at other points along the Border where they may be necessary.

Recognising, however, that the re-unification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution for the problem, it is our intention to request the British Government to enter into early negotiations with the Irish Government to review the present constitutional position of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

1.2 Transcript of BBC Broadcast of Bloody Sunday (January 30, 1972)

Reporter: Can you tell me what happened when the Paratroopers came in Father?

Father Edward Daly: They came in firing. The people, there was no provocation whatsoever. Uhh

Reporter: Firing what? Rubber bullets?

Father Edward Daly: No, eh, it was Led Bullets they fired, they seemed to fire in all directions. Ah there's some rubber bullets too, they didn't even seem to fire at (Unintelligible)... It was just completely outrageous, disgraceful, I don't know... (Shaking head). They call themselves an army, it's utterly disgraceful.

Reporter: You're quite sure there was nothing fired at them first?

Daly: There was nothing fired at them, sir, I'm absolutely just certain of that I can speak of this eh, without any difficulty whatsoever because I was there. I was just standing at the flats when they started to the conclusion and there was nothing fired at them, positively nothing. Whatsoever. There weren't even stones thrown, people ran in all directions and they opened fire. Most people had their backs to them when they opened fire at the time.

Reporter: A short while ago we filmed you with a white, with a white handkerchief,

Daly: Yes

Reporter: and about four in your party with a boy who was dead or dying. How was he shot?

Daly: That little boy was shot when he was running away, he was just a little bit behind me when he fell. I heard the shot I looked around and...

Reporter: You know him?

Daly: Yes, he was shot

Reporter: He was a young man wasn't he?

Daly: He was a young boy I'd say of about fifteen, sixteen, thereabouts.

Reporter: He didn't have a weapon?

Daly: No, he was just a young boy, about 15, he was running... I was running too.

Cuts to interview with General Robert Ford

FORD: In fact they did not fire until they were fired upon and my information at the moment, and it is very, almost immediately after the incident, is that the Para battalion fired three rounds altogether, after they had something between ten and twenty fired at them from the area—the flats over there.

Reporter: They fired three rounds only?

FORD: From my information at the moment, they fired three.

Reporter: I believe there are more than three, I've seen three dead myself.

FORD: Well they may not have been killed by—by our soldiers.

Reporter: Unintelligible... Are you saying that the paras only opened fire because they were fired upon first? Because the people in the Bogside are saying that no shots were fired at the troops as they came in.

FORD: Most certainly absolutely no doubt at all that they were, the paratroopers did not open up until they'd been fired at.

You'll remember that the aim of the operation in fact was an arrest operation, against the hooligans who'd been attacking for a couple of hours."

Reporter: Yes well have any British troops been hit by gunfire?

FORD: Yes as the paratroopers went in, eh acid bombs were dropped from the (unintelligible) and two soldiers were injured, one I believe seriously. It was at this time in fact that the gunmen opened up

Reporter: Two Paras were hit by acid bombs, well have any British soldiers been hit by bullets?

FORD: None as far as I'm aware of at this moment.

Reporter: Why was it necessary for the paras to take aggressive action at all and to go into the Bogside instead of just snatching the people at the head of the procession who were causing the trouble?

FORD: The aggressive action was taken because quite apart from the march, incidentally I was watching the march and I saw the stewards stop it and indeed try and keep control to us, unfortunately a hooligan element took over and they came down to our position down here and uh started to attack the troops as you saw, they attacked them with bricks, stones, very sort of nasty implements, and including of course a couple of canisters of CS gas. This went on for some time and it was obviously necessary to restore law and order.

1.3 Widgery Report (10 April, 1972)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. There would have been no deaths in Londonderry on 30 January if those who organised the illegal march had not thereby created a highly dangerous situation in which a clash between demonstrators and the security forces was almost inevitable.

2. The decision to contain the march within the Bogside and Creggan had been opposed by the Chief Superintendent of Police in Londonderry but was fully justified by events and was successfully carried out.

3. If the Army had persisted in its "low key" attitude and had not launched a large-scale operation to arrest hooligans the day might have passed off without serious incident.

4. The intention of the senior Army officers to use 1 Para as an arrest force and not for other offensive purposes was sincere.

5. An arrest operation carried out in Battalion strength in circumstances in which the troops were likely to come under fire involved hazard to civilians in the area which Commander 8 Brigade may have under-estimated.

6. The order to launch the arrest operation was given by Commander 8 Brigade. The tactical details were properly left to CO 1 Para who did not exceed his orders. In view of the experience of the unit in operations of this kind it was not necessary for CO 1 Para to give orders in greater detail than he did.

7. When the vehicles and soldiers of Support Company appeared in Rossville Street they came under fire. Arrests were made; but in a very short time the arrest operation took second place and the soldiers turned to engage their assailants. There is no reason to suppose that the soldiers would have opened fire if they had not been fired upon first.

8. Soldiers who identified armed gunmen fired upon them in accordance with the standing orders in the Yellow Card. Each soldier was his own judge of whether he had identified a gunman. Their training made them aggressive and quick in decision and some showed more restraint in opening fire than others. At one end of the scale some soldiers showed a high degree of responsibility; at the other, notably in Glenfada Park, firing bordered on the reckless. These distinctions reflect differences in the character and temperament of the soldiers concerned.

9. The standing orders contained in the Yellow Card are satisfactory. Any further restrictions on opening fire would inhibit the soldier from taking proper steps for his own safety and that of his comrades and unduly hamper the engagement of gunmen.

10. None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb. Some are wholly acquitted of complicity in such action; but there is a strong suspicion that some others had been firing weapons or handling bombs in the course of the afternoon and that yet others had been closely supporting them.

11. There was no general breakdown in discipline. For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it. No order and no training can ensure that a soldier will always act wisely, as well as bravely and with initiative. The individual soldier ought not to have to bear the burden of deciding whether to open fire in confusion such as prevailed on 30 January. In the conditions prevailing in Northern Ireland, however, this is often inescapable.

WIDGERY

W. J. Smith, *Secretary*,
10 April, 1972

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