

Copying to be Different: Violent Dissident Irish Republican Learning

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Abstract

While the impact of the Troubles retains centrality within much of Northern Irish political life, the spectre of almost daily violence is becoming a more distant memory. Peace has come to the region. In spite of this, however, there are those who wish to maintain the utility of violence to achieve their stated aims. Most dominant amongst these are the violent dissident republican groups. No longer is their existence solely defined by their desire to bring about a united Ireland. In order to have any opportunity of longevity, they must first legitimise their continued existence, and in turn distance themselves from their former Provisional comrades. This paper assesses how groups, such as the Continuity IRA, Óglaigh na hÉireann and the IRA/New IRA utilise the lessons learned from their Provisional history to differentiate themselves from the politicised dominance of Sinn Féin. This evaluation is carried out through the analysis of interviews with leadership and rank and file members of both political and paramilitary dissident groupings, which is complimented by the analysis of the Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) events database. These sources are supplemented with the assessment of organisational statements, from 2007 to the present day. The article focuses on violent, and non-violent, learning.

Keywords

IRA, Learning, Dissidents, Sinn Féin, Northern Ireland

Introduction

*The coming period should...see a new stage in the national independence struggle, one in which the lessons of the past will have been studied and learned and which will carry the independence struggle to a successful conclusion by establishing in Ireland a united, democratic republic, politically and economically independent, and governed for the benefit of the people. (Sinn Féin, *The Lessons of History*, 1970) ¹*

In 1969/70 the Irish Republican Movement went through a movement defining change. With the tensions in Northern Ireland escalating it had its own internal battles on a variety of issues ranging from abstentionism² to socialism, to the continued utility of armed force. Coupled with the external political environment, these arguments and debates ultimately led to the split in the movement, that saw the birth of Provisional IRA (PIRA).³ While the division and the resultant re-emergence of paramilitary republicanism are pinpointed to single moments in time, these are in fact the results of extended processes of debate, fragmentation and organisational introspection. In the lead up to this and other splits, the leadership questioned the future trajectory of the movement and asked themselves what lessons can be learned from the past. In this particular split this is most clearly illustrated within the internal document *The Lessons of History*, that was first published in September 1967, and subsequently updated in February 1969, and reprinted by Official Sinn Féin in the immediate aftermath of the political split in February 1970. The present article opened with the closing words of the paper, calling on the members to learn from the lessons of history in this new stage of their revolutionary struggle. Within the document it states that the history of Irish republicanism has taken four distinct forms; theoretical thought, an organised „body of men“ willing to take up arms, the revolution of the „men of no property“ and

the disturbance of governable imperialism. Through the analysis of republican history, the authors argued that the absence of any of these four factors would render a revolution unsuccessful, but that the presence of each is no guarantee for success.⁴ This form of organisational introspection can be witnessed throughout the history of the Irish Republican Movement, and is often used as a means to legitimise the continued armed or politicised existence of various strata of the fragmented movement, while delegitimising republican rivals concurrently. The process of learning lessons from organisational history is continuously used to justify an individual organisation's independence from their republican rivals. While this was clearly witnessed at the dawn of the Troubles in 1969, it can once again be observed today. With the Provisional Republican Movement now at peace, the beginning of the twenty-first century has seen a range of organisations attempting to take on their mantle of paramilitary republicanism. Prominent amongst these have been the Continuity IRA (CIRA), Real IRA (RIRA), Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH) and more recently the „IRA/New IRA. Collectively these groups are referred to as the violent dissident republicans (VDR), due to their dissent towards and separation from the politicisation of the „mainstream“ Republican Movement embodied by modern-day Sinn Féin. The defining feature of these groups' existence is their attempt to spoil the peace process,⁵ and return Northern Ireland to the dark days of the Troubles. They have attempted to achieve this through the application of protest, localised violent vigilantism and, most prominently, nationalised terrorism. Every strata of Northern Irish society has fallen victim to their on-going paramilitary activity.⁶ Through their utility of violence and protest the VDR groups are acting as spoilers,⁷ while simultaneously attempting to outbid⁸ each other in order to achieve dissident prominence.

By acting as spoilers they are attempting to dismantle the politicised peace, which is now seen throughout Northern Ireland. They are attempting to do this through their murders, and attempted murders, of Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and prison officers, attacks on the security services, bombings of commercial properties, and the ever-present punishment attacks and vigilante murders within the nationalist and republican neighbourhoods of Northern Ireland. They are united in their division, from Sinn Féin and the peace process. However, they are divided in this unity. The sustained fragmentation of the dissident community, both violent and non-violent, has meant that they have seen themselves to be in competition with each other. This is a competition for legitimisation, to be the „true“ and most competent voice within the dissident community. This has seen the groups attempt to outbid one another, in order to show that they are the ones who will be able to achieve a united Ireland through paramilitary force. This is a competition for both membership and support, being fought within dissident republicanism but also against Sinn Féin.

The paucity of VDR actors, the continued fragmentation, and resultant internal competition for support has traditionally led to significantly weakened organisations. These groups have been weak across a range of fronts, most notably support, membership, paramilitary capabilities, financing and legitimacy. These weaknesses have unsurprisingly resulted in an inability to successfully spoil the peace process, or mount a significant challenge to the republican prominence of Sinn Féin. In reaction to this in 2012 it was announced that RIRA, Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD) and other disparate and previously unaligned dissidents had merged to form a new group, under the all-encompassing title of „The IRA“,⁹ otherwise known as the New IRA (hereafter IRA/New IRA). By merging they were attempting to provide a

unified dissident force, with the ability of mounting a significant paramilitary campaign and challenging Sinn Féin for support. In the years since their inception, they have become the most violently active of the VDR groups. Through their actions and statements, similar to the other remaining VDR groups, they are aiming to present themselves as the legitimate heirs to the armed republican traditions of the revolutionaries of the 1916 Easter Rising, and beyond. This pursuit for legitimacy has become particularly relevant, with the centenary of the Rising being commemorated in 2016.

The present article aims to assess how learning has helped shape the strategies, tactics and the ultimate legitimisation of the VDR groups wishing to maintain the armed struggle. It does so by amalgamating the data and analysis from three separate on-going projects. The first of these analyses splits in paramilitary and political republicanism from 1916 to the present day. Within this research 43 leadership and rank and file members of the Irish Republican Movement, both dissident and mainstream, were interviewed to assess their understanding of why and how the splits took place, as well as detailing their own personal choices during these processes. Their interviews were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).¹⁰ The second research project relates to a database of VDR activity and personnel. This database was developed and maintained using exclusively open source data, and displays the demographic details of those who have been convicted and charged of VDR activity from 1994 to the present day. It also hosts event specific information, in relation to VDR activity across the same period.¹¹ Both of these are complimented by the final project, that relates to the collection and analysis of VDR statements from 2007 to the present day. These statements are analysed using grounded theory.¹² Each of these projects are analysed to assess the role which learning has played for the

modern-day VDR groups. By pooling the findings from each of these three projects, it allows for the assessment of learning in relation to tactics, strategies and organisational evolution.¹³ The majority of this article focuses on the process of internal learning within Irish republicanism. However, prior to this analysis there is firstly an introduction to the broader republican history of both external and internal learning

External Learning

Throughout the history of Irish republicanism learning has played a significant role, in the evolution of the movement. This relates to the simultaneous political and paramilitary campaigns. Groups have learned from internal experiences, as well as the history of the movement, as is clearly illustrated in with the publication of *The Lessons of History*.¹⁴ This internal learning has repeatedly been supplemented, through the external learning from international political and paramilitary revolutionaries. It is repeatedly referenced that the French Revolution, which was coming to a close, heavily influenced the 1798 Rebellion, led by Theobald Wolfe Tone.¹⁵ This tradition of learning from, and being inspired by, external groups has continued across each generation of Irish Republican groups since. This is most apparent during the Troubles. The need for expanding tactical expertise led the Provisional IRA, and other republican groups, to seek direct training from international allies to compliment their own internal training. This saw the PIRA receive training, as well as weapons and explosives, from Libya.¹⁶ In the 1970s it is also widely believed that both the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), and the PIRA, received training in Palestine from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).¹⁷ These training camps helped the members to develop their skills of guerrilla warfare, as well as learn new techniques. The internationalisation of the armed struggle, and their training,

was not only used to acquire skills. It was also utilised as propaganda material, to promote the professionalism and connections the groups were forming. In their seminal analysis of the INLA, Holland and McDonald discuss how the group carried a front-page story in their publication *Starry Plough*, detailing and displaying INLA members in training across Northern Ireland. One of the pictures showed a member preparing himself to throw a hand grenade brought back through PLO contacts in the Middle East. This article was juxtaposed with another expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause. These articles combined displayed to readers the importance of the international dimension of their campaign, both from a training and supply perspective but also in terms of international solidarity.¹⁸

This international influence did not always come directly from the source. Irish Republicans regularly learned from their own interpretations of international conflicts, and armed rebellions. This was evident during the imprisonment of republican paramilitaries,¹⁹ as well as within their external training camps. Historically republicans have used their incarceration as an opportunity to learn, about their own and other's experiences. This is most readily seen during the Troubles, where the prisoners used their custody as a time to attend classes and training sessions.²⁰ This was designed to prepare them for their release, when they would return to their roles with the IRA and/or Sinn Féin. Former Provisional prisoner Richard McAuley details this:

“So part of the camp dealt with training people in the use of weapons, or engineering, or whatever. Other parts of the camp dealt with political lectures, much of it drawn from the international experience as well as from the Irish experience, Cuba, Algeria, The Israelis and the Palestinians, the Israelis and the Brits in 47, Vietnam, all of that was thrown into the mix as we tried at one level to understand what the Brits were at particularly around

criminalisation, Ulsterisation and normalisation and what that actually meant and how it applied and how they were copying from other situations and then what we needed to do about it.”²¹

As is displayed above, the tactical learning was complimented by the invocation of the leadership for their members to also learn from external political campaigns. As it was clear that the Provisional movement was gradually politicising, and moving away from their paramilitary campaign, these lessons not only concentrated on traditional revolutionary campaigns. Members were also called upon to assess how Irish republicanism could also utilise the lessons of purely political struggles for independence. In the lead up to the August 1994 PIRA ceasefire influential leaders were entering the prisons, to „sell“ the importance of a politically led campaign to the prisoners. In doing so they called upon the prisoners to use their time inside, to learn from the then burgeoning Scottish campaign for independence. Joe Doherty explains.

“I remember even McGuinness saying „look at Scotland. Scotland is going to have an impact in the future.“ Look now the SNP have taken power and they reckon that maybe within the next ten years Scotland will be independent. That’s going to fragment. McGuinness was saying „look at that, read into it lads. Youse are in prison, youse are republicans youse are not blind, youse are open. Study it, analyse it.“ And that’s what we did. You know then there is other people who don’t go down that road. They think going down that road is going to be total reformist.”²²

Internal Learning

This externally focused learning was always complimented by an introspection of their own former, and current, campaigns. This related to the tactics and strategies promoted by the groups, as well as the policy positions taken. During the evolution of the Irish Republican Movement, from a paramilitary organisation to the politicised movement, we see a continued emphasis on learning the lessons of the past. This can be seen both pre and post 1969. In the lead-up to the Troubles in 1969, the IRA and Sinn Féin was going through a time of transition. They were emerging from the „Border Campaign“²³ of the late 1950s and early 1960s, that was widely deemed to have been a failure. In its aftermath the new leadership had to assess what lessons could be learned from this. It was deemed that the movement had become too „elitist,“ and had resultantly failed to garner significant degrees of support. They resultantly applied this lesson, in their attempt to transform the organisation into a political movement of the people. This was carried out in parallel to the dismantling of the armed campaign, as is described by „Paul“ a former member of the PIRA, OIRA and INLA.²⁴

“One of the first lessons that we learned in the Republican Movement was the failure, why the 56 campaign was such an abysmal failure, it was driven home to us in the 60s and the early 70s. Why the 56 campaign failed is because the Republican Movement had become isolated from the people, had become divorced from the people, had become elitist, had become obsessed with ending partition and had turned a blind eye to issues like unemployment and poverty and emigration and bad housing. They had turned their eye towards this abstract notion of a 32 County Republic with no idea what that society should offer the Irish people. The Republican Movement of the 1960s was addressing that failure

on the part of the Movement and addressing it very effectively. But at the same time the military wing was being diluted to such an extent that they were not able to defend the nationalist people in August 69.”²⁵

By changing so much at the one time, both in their political and paramilitary strategies, this was one of the key factors which led to the ultimate split in 1969/70, which saw the formation of the PIRA. This itself in turn became a future lesson, from which the future Provisional leadership themselves learned from. They acknowledged that the 1960s leadership had tried to change too much too soon, in their quest for politicisation. They applied this lesson by being more gradual in any changes they made. Therefore they maintained the armed struggle of the PIRA, as Sinn Féin in parallel was gradually becoming a more politicised party. This is a point acknowledged by those in favour of the politicisation, as well as those opposed to it, such as deceased dissident leader Ruari O’Bradaigh.²⁶

“Number one the Provos²⁷ had learned from the mistakes the Stickies²⁸ had made and they didn’t put forward the three parliaments they put forward the one, number two they insisted that they were keeping the war going, and that was regarded by many people, including the lady I was speaking to this week as the engine of the whole thing.”²⁹

Through the application of these lessons, the Provisional Movement has now reached the fully politicised position it is now in. The success of these applied lessons can be seen in the fact that, unlike those leaders of the 1960s, the Provisional leadership has successfully brought the vast majority of the membership and support along with them on their political journey. They avoided major splits similar to 1969/70. However, along the way they did lose small groups of individuals, who now form the most significant threat to peace in Northern Ireland. Those small few who split away now form the VDR groups, who like their Provisional predecessors are learning the lessons of the past.

The Bombs Heard Around the Globe

The process of terrorist learning is not a one-way street. Across time, there are numerous examples of international terrorist organisations learning from Irish Republican groups, either directly or indirectly. One of the most famous cases of this can be seen with the alleged involvement of three PIRA members in the training of FARC guerrillas in Columbia in 2002.³⁰ However, it is not only the traditional left-wing ethno-nationalist groups who have learned lessons from Irish republican terrorists. At the beginning of the on-going insurgencies in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) being used by the Taliban and others displayed a distinct similarity to those that had previously appeared on the streets of Northern Ireland. It is believed that the devices and bombing techniques were transferred to the Taliban through Al-Qaeda in Iraq, who themselves had learned the techniques through groups such as the PLO and Hizbollah, who had previously trained with the PIRA in Lebanon.³¹ It appears that this trend is now being reversed. No longer are the Middle-Eastern insurgents

learning from the PIRA. The VDR groups now appear to be learning from their contemporaries in the Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere.

In early 2015 the Assistant Chief Constable of the PSNI, Will Kerr, warned that there had been a recent upsurge in the capabilities of the VDR groups. Their weaponry and bomb-making techniques were becoming more advanced. It is believed that much of this growing expertise was due to the re-engagement of expert bomb-makers from the Provisional campaign of the Troubles. But this was now being supplemented by the online learning of IED skills, obtained from Islamist movements across the world.

“Some of this technology has been tried and tested in Afghanistan and Iraq as there is some open source material you can see as to how these devices are constructed. There is no doubt that some of these dissident groups have looked at the IED development internationally. In terms of either meeting others in Iraq or Afghanistan or simply looking along the Internet I would say it was more the latter.”³²

In his interview Kerr made particular reference to the advanced capabilities of the VDR groups’ explosively formed projectiles (EFPs), which had been used to target PSNI officers. It was noted that these EFPs were ‘far more effective’ than the PIRA equivalent, the projected recoilless improvised grenade (PRIG).³³ In November 2014 the IRA/New IRA, in their targeting of a PSNI patrol in north Belfast, used one such EFP. No one was injured or killed in this attack, but it demonstrated the group’s growing capabilities. The homemade EFP was designed as a shoulder held ‘drop and go’ weapon, to allow for ease of escape from the scene of attack. While this could

be considered as a „failed attack,“ it did demonstrate the growing sophistication of the arsenal available to the group.

The development of these and other weapons are being used not just for devastation. They are also propaganda and recruitment tools. By demonstrating the advancement in not just their weaponry, but their weapons-making techniques, the dissidents are saying to potential and existing members that they have the capability to launch a significant armed campaign. They are saying that they can be trusted, to bring the fight to the security forces in Northern Ireland. They are both willing and able to reignite the armed campaign against the British presence in Ireland. As much was stated in the claim of responsibility after the November 2014 attack.

“Volunteers from our Belfast Brigade fired a homemade rocket launcher striking an armoured PSNI military vehicle. Despite being heavily armed the PSNI fled the scene. The IRA will continue to increase its military attacks on state forces. Our capacity to target state forces is increasing and developing. As a result we will continue to target them at a time of our choosing.”³⁴

This was further emphasised by the subsequent picture of a member of their organisation posing with the weapon. The utility and promotion of these weapons can and does endorse the military capabilities of the organisation, as was similarly observed by Jackson in his analysis of organisational learning in the PIRA. He similarly noted the use of pictorial evidence, to promote the advancement of PIRA weaponry, with particular reference to the PRIG.³⁵

Copying to be Dissident

While there are many lessons being learned from international conflicts, the majority of the dissidents' strategic and tactical decisions have developed through their analysis of their own history. The lessons of their Provisional past are being applied to their dissident present. Some of these internal lessons, tactical, strategic and organisational, will be analysed here. Throughout the assessment it is important to question what the groups are attempting to achieve at each stage. The VDR groups are not just carrying out attacks in order to achieve maximum destruction, or to bring them closer to a united Ireland. As was intimated above, the groups are constantly aiming to legitimise their independent existence from mainstream republicanism. They are aiming to demonstrate that their campaign is worth supporting and joining. In order to do this groups have had to differentiate themselves, from both the Provisionals and their dissident rivals. They need to show how their approach, in seeking a united Ireland, will be different to their ideological rivals. This was emphasised by a leading member of the RIRA, describing the aspirations of the leadership at the birth of the group in the late 1990s.

“We urged members that they must kill a British soldier face to face, no sniper, with a gun as the Provos hadn't done that in years and this would prove that they were different.”³⁶

In the aftermath of a split, the new dissident organisation must differentiate themselves from the parent group they are moving away from. It is only when they achieve this that they can justify their independent existence. This is exactly what is being proposed in the above quote. The leadership acknowledged that they needed to differentiate themselves from the Provisionals, from whom they were splitting. This differentiation was not to create a whole new way of waging a terrorist war against „British occupation“ of Northern Ireland. Their aim was to reach

into the past, to a time when they believed that the paramilitary republican campaign was more effective and popular than it was at the end of the twentieth century. They were copying to be different. Different from the politicised Provisionals, and different from their dissident rivals.

The origins of the RIRA did not see the group kill a British soldier „face to face.“ The organisation was almost decimated in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing of 1998. This attack on the nationalist market town was the most lethal attack of the entirety of the Troubles. A total of twenty-nine people were killed, and more than two hundred were injured. In the aftermath the leadership of the new organisation were arrested, and many others disengaged as a result of counter-terrorist crackdown on VDR actors. But many also left due to their disillusionment with the trajectory of the new group.³⁷ The early twenty-first century was a time of sporadic activity for the group. Their campaign of dissident violence was never able to take hold, and resultantly they deemed it necessary to restructure and reassess the strategy of the organisation.³⁸ When they decided to re-launch their campaign in 2007, they once again aimed to prove that they were different. In 2009 they did just that. They did something that the „Provos“ had not done in years. They killed two British soldiers, face to face in the Massereene Barracks attacks. Through this attack they were saying to their enemies, but also their membership and support, that they were to be taken seriously. They were capable and willing, to once again take the „war“ directly to the British security establishment. By carrying out this attack they were no longer only suggesting that they were different from the Provisionals. They were also now demonstrating that this new incarnation of the RIRA was different from the original organisation. In doing so they were once again trying to attract the support of those republicans, who had either left the organisation, or whose support and faith in the political solution of the Provisionals was dwindling. They were

now saying that they were not only doing things differently from Sinn Féin, but that they were different from their former selves. They had learned from the mistakes and failings of their past.

Localised Learning

Upon assessment of the tactical choices of the VDR groups the re-emergence of some significant forms of attack, which have not been utilised since the Troubles, are apparent. Two of the most striking of these are the proxy and letter/parcel bombing campaigns of recent years. The proxy bomb was also utilised in a short-lived PIRA campaign, of the early 1990s. This involved paramilitaries forcing non-members to drive to army checkpoints, and other PIRA targets, with bombs in their cars. Often times this was taking place, while their family members were being held hostage. Upon reaching the target destination, the bombs were remotely detonated by members of the PIRA. The most regular victim of these bombings was not the security services targeted, but the „human bombs,“ who were often times tied into the vehicle. The selection of these people, all from the Catholic nationalist communities, was justified as they were accused by the paramilitaries as being collaborators with the security forces. The Provisionals brought this brutal form of violence to an end, after the Catholic Church and the wider nationalist community put them under significant pressure.³⁹

This ruthless tactic has seen a re-emergence in recent years. Between 2010 and 2015 there were seven high profile cases of attempted proxy bombings, carried out by VDR groups. None of these resulted in fatalities, for either the proxy bombers or the target they were ordered to drive to. However, it does demonstrate the intent of the groups to utilise this method to attack their intended victims. This tactic has been most widely used by the IRA/New IRA. Unlike the

Provisionals of the 1990s, the dissidents are not justifying the selection of proxies by accusing them of being collaborators or informers. The people they are forcing to carry the bombs are citizens, working within the republican areas of Northern Ireland. They are bus, van and taxi drivers whose vehicles have been ambushed by the paramilitaries. This suggests that the proxies themselves do not represent a symbolic target. They are being used merely as a tool of the attack. By using them as a transporter, this allows the terrorists to be distant from the location of attack. This in turn lessens the risk of arrest.

What is most significant about the resurgence of the proxy bomb is the location and target of the violence. Of the seven attempted attacks that have taken place since 2010, four targeted the Strand Road PSNI station in Derry city, one of the most consistently attacked targets of VDR groups, through a variety of methods.⁴⁰ This suggests the localisation of tactics, targets and learning. It appears that the decision was made for this form of attack to be used against this particular station. It does not suggest a nationalised adoption of the tactic. This indicates that when we are assessing the activity of a terrorist organisation, that we must not only analyse the national and international activities. We can achieve a more significant insight, by analysing the localised activity. From that localised analysis a greater understanding can be achieved. What it means to be a member of the IRA, and what they learn, in Derry can be very different to members in Belfast, Dublin, Limerick or Armagh. Resultantly what the individuals and groups are immediately trying to achieve through their violence and illegal activity, may also be different. This in turn can be manifested in significantly different forms of activity and targets of violence, judging by the locality. This localisation of violence and learning needs to be analysed further if we are to gain a more complete understanding.

Nationalised Learning

Parallel to the localised proxy bombings, there has been a nationalised parcel and letter bombing campaign by the IRA/New IRA. The VDR data demonstrates that between 2012 and August 2015 there have been nineteen individual letter and parcel bomb attacks. This includes both detonated and undetonated devices. As is displayed in Table 1 the targets of these attacks have been generally high profile political and security targets, in relation to both personnel and facilities.

This has included the targeting of, amongst others, Chief Constable George Hamilton, former Chief Constable Matt Baggott, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers and Palace Barracks, the Northern Irish headquarters of MI5. Once more these attacks are being used to illustrate the intent and capabilities of the organisation, as is demonstrated in the claim of responsibility issued by the group in March 2010, after the targeting of two Maghaberry⁴¹ prison officers.

"The IRA has the intelligence, capability, weaponry and volunteers at its disposal to take further actions against prison staff and management... We will not be found wanting in that regard."⁴²

The utility of letter and parcel bombs, against high profile targets, is not a new innovation. From Black September's killing of an Israeli diplomat in 1972,⁴³ to the Animal Rights Militia's attempted attack on Margaret Thatcher in 1982,⁴⁴ this has been a weapon of choice for a range of terrorist groups, aiming to attack otherwise hard to reach targets. The history of the PIRA has also witnessed the utility of this method, to attack prominent individuals and places. In the early

1970s, during the tenure of Edward Heath, they sent one such viable device to 10 Downing Street.⁴⁵ Similarly in late 1979 a Provisional cell, based in Western Europe, was blamed for the letter bombing campaign targeting „prominent Britons.“⁴⁶ In their claim of responsibility the PIRA stated that the letter bombs were intended for “members of the establishment.”⁴⁷ The purpose of the campaign was to highlight the prisoners’ protests for political status in the Maze prison,⁴⁸ protests which would in turn lead to two separate mass hunger strikes by the prisoners the second of which saw ten participants pass away.

The parallels between the PIRA letter bombing campaign of the 1970s, and the modern-day campaign of the IRA/New IRA are clear. Once again the dissidents are reaching into the annals of history, and are copying a tactic used by their Provisional predecessors. The aim of this tactic is not just to cause harm to the intended victims, or create fear in a wider audience. As any definition stipulates an act of terrorism, such as this, through its choices of targets and methods is designed to also send out a specific message.⁴⁹ The targeting of prison officers is specifically designed to highlight what the dissidents classify as the on-going „prisoners struggle.“ In doing so they are attempting to draw parallels to the historic prisoner campaigns of the 1970s and 80s. The utilisation of this tactic, in conjunction with statements and protests, is the dissidents’ expression of their belief that the peace process and Provisional politicisation has failed. For them they are trying to portray that the justification of conflict of the Troubles is still present today. By returning to the tactics of the past they aim to illustrate the continuity of their grievances. This is an attempt to demonstrate their belief that the Provisionals have abandoned the republican struggle, and that they, the dissidents, are now obliged to carry it on.

The Prisoners' Voice

When terrorist learning is analysed it is important that the analysis does not just focus on the violence.⁵⁰ Assessing learning in relation to violence alone portrays only part of the process. Terrorist groups, the world over, utilise learning in the evolution of the non-violent as well as their violent strategies. The VDR groups are no different. Their central aim at this stage of their armed existence is to gain legitimacy. It is only through this that they can develop both their membership and support. Post-merger the IRA/New IRA have focused much of their attention on their prisoner population. This has already been highlighted through the analysis of the letter bombing campaign, and can also be observed with the murder of prison officer David Black in November 2012, and more recently the murder of Adrian Ismay in 2016. The murder of Black was chosen as the violent launch of the new organisation. This in itself demonstrates the centrality of the prisoners' struggle, to the attempted legitimisation of the new group. Their actions, policies and statements ever since have consistently emphasised prison brutality, political status, disrespect for prisoners' rights and the failure of those in power to adhere to agreements and conventions. This has resulted in external attacks and statements. However, it has also seen the return of less publicised hunger strikes and no-wash protests within the prisons. Through these actions the prisoners are seeking to emulate the strategic „successes“ of the PIRA and INLA prisoner protests of the 1970s and 80s. In the aftermath of those protests, especially the 1981 hunger strike, the PIRA and their political wing Sinn Féin received a significant rise in support.⁵¹ The dissidents are hoping for the same. They are seeking, once again, to portray the republican community as being unjustly victimised by the British establishment. It is their aim to

highlight, and fight against, this victimisation and in turn appropriate a significant proportion of the republican base.

One of the tools of this prisoner-focused strategy has been the strengthening of the prisoners' voice. This is especially apparent subsequent to the 2012 merger. In the aftermath of this unification the dominant voice, speaking on behalf of the IRA/New IRA, has been that of the organisation's imprisoned community. There have been frequent prisoner statements released, primarily by the Republican Prisoners in Roe 4 of Maghaberry prison.⁵² The principal aim of these statements has been to highlight perceived injustices taking place within the prisons. However, intermittently the statements also comment on key issues relating to dissident republicanism outside of the prison walls.

Since August 2016 these online statements have been supplemented by the creation of a new prisoners' magazine, *Scairt Amach*.⁵³ This is the official publication of the Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Associations (IRPWA). This organisation claims to represent the republican prisoners in Roe 4 Maghaberry, E3/E4 Portlaoise prison and the female republican prisoners in Hydebank jail; namely the IRA/New IRA prisoners.⁵⁴ The publication of this magazine follows in a long history of republican prison writings. Most famously in the 1970s the Belfast based newspaper *The Republican News* hosted the writings of a republican prisoner, widely believed to be Gerry Adams, with the penname *Brownie*.⁵⁵ At a time of significant strategic flux in the movement, the *Brownie* letters played a significant role in the debate on strategic change. These publications actively called into question the maintenance of the abstentionist policy;⁵⁶ a strategy that was eventually repealed in relation to Dáil Éireann, by both the PIRA and Sinn Féin in 1986. The articles also critically analysed the importance and necessity of merging the military and

political campaigns, while also examining the role of localised vigilantism.⁵⁷ The reverence in which the prisoner's are held within Irish republicanism allows for them to raise issues, considered too divisive by others.

In the final two issues of *Scairt Amach* in 2015, the anonymous authors call into question the sustainability of one of the most controversial paramilitary republican tactics of all, punishment beatings and wider violent vigilantism. This is a tactic, which has been sustained across the eras of paramilitary republicanism. The VDR groups have been no different. They have continued to target those believed to be, or at least portrayed as, criminals and anti-social elements within the republican communities. Each generation of paramilitary has stated that punishment attacks are carried out to protect the republican communities, from drug dealing and general crime and anti-social disorder. They portray themselves as doing the job that the police cannot and will not do. In turn they paint themselves as being the true community protectors. This is a tactic and message designed to strengthen their support, while simultaneously gaining power and control.⁵⁸ It is difficult to accurately measure the true rate of punishment attacks. However, in 2014 it was estimated that at least two were taking place in Northern Ireland each week.⁵⁹ These attacks have included both beatings and shootings, and have at times led to the deaths of the victims. The VDR data shows that between 2007 and 2015 there have been a total of twenty-one known fatalities as a result of VDR activity. Ten of those killed were known criminals, or were accused of criminality by the VDR groups. However, the prisoners are now questioning the viability and success of this form of violence.

“The division and discord which punishment attacks can engender within Republican communities, whether by accident or design, can sometimes further British crown forces”

counterinsurgency policies. Our young people in particular can be alienated as a result of an action which ironically was originally intended to protect the community of which youth are so crucial a part.”⁶⁰

“We agree that punishments are a brutal measure that will naturally desensitise a victim. We know that many victims of punishment attacks continue their criminal activities after a punishment has been meted out to them and we understand that when a Republican organisation has attacked an individual, that individual’s loved ones are liable to become hostile to the Republican cause. There must be an alternative created to this cycle but that alternative will not be delivered by British Police on Irish soil; this same British police force is inextricably linked to the very root causes of conflict in this Nation.”⁶¹

It is not every member who can openly question one of the predominant tactics or strategies of the organisation. However, the experiences of *Brownie* and others have demonstrated that the prisoners’ position, and the respect in which they are held, provides an opportunity to ignite debate relating to strategies, tactics and the overall campaign. It is likely that the views portrayed in *Scairt Amach* and elsewhere have been influenced by the lessons learned from their Provisional predecessors. The VDR prisoner debate on the utility of paramilitary vigilantism is only at its opening stages. It must therefore be watched more closely, to assess both its evolution and influence. The publishing of these articles and statements will not bring an end to punishment attacks. This would necessitate a wider organisational, and localised cell, debate. This debate requires a trusted, and influential, voice to be the instigator. The prisoner voice may once again prove to meet the criteria.

Dissident Introspection

It is clear that across numerous strategic, tactic and organisational aspects that the dissidents have learned from the Provisionals. They have utilised these lessons to differentiate their armed campaign, from the political strategy of Sinn Féin. By adopting the approaches of the past the groups are emphasising their distinctiveness in the republican quest for an independent Ireland. But, their internal learning does not stop with their assessment of the Provisionals. There has also been a significant amount of introspection of the dissident *modus operandi*.

“We will learn from past mistakes and will strive to expand the theatre of our operations in line with our strategy.”⁶²

This has already been addressed in relation to the on-going debate about punishment attacks. However, the topic of introspection that has engulfed dissident republicanism in the recent past has been in relation to organisational fragmentation. It has been acknowledged across the groups, that the plethora of competing factions has significantly debilitated each group’s quest for legitimisation and support.

“Óglaigh na hÉireann call for a realignment of the Republican forces around the defence of the Republican position. For too long we have allowed ourselves to be fragmented, marginalised and isolated. This has provided succour to our enemies and has allowed our position to be portrayed as weak.”⁶³

This internalised debate was particularly vocalised by the leadership of the RIRA and their political wing the 32 County Sovereignty Movement (32CSM). This was especially active from 2007 (the re-launch of the RIRA) to 2012 (the launch of the IRA/New IRA). The dominant

narrative, related to the assumption that the fragmentation of dissident republicanism had significantly contributed to the failure of any dissident organisation to gain a significant degree of traction, legitimisation or support. In the lead-up to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising there were continuous calls for there to be a realignment of dissident republicanism.

“We call on all republicans to realign ourselves around the securing of achievable aims.

We have set forth a programme to rebuild the republican movement through political

advancement. We have proposed that commemorating 1916 should be the annual

barometer by which we measure our success especially in the run up to its centenary in

2016. Irish republicanism must be in a position on the occasion of this centenary to tell the

Irish people that concrete political gains have been made toward making national

reunification an unstoppable reality. The Proclamation is too important a document to

condemn it to perpetual aspiration.”⁶⁴

“2011 must be a year of introspection and innovation. We must look at ourselves and

address our failings. What went before has reached its zenith. We need to explore and

devise new ways of getting our message across. We need to be more innovative in our

protests. We can no longer be satisfied that our protests simply happen: they must also

have meaningful effect.”⁶⁵

Through their organisational introspection, and the lessons they learned from this, 2012 saw the birth of the IRA/New IRA. The merger of the RIRA and RAAD was designed not just to develop a more effective terrorist movement. The conception of this group had its foundation in the need to legitimise violent dissident republicanism, and to present a more united voice for people to

trust and support. This merger brought two prominent VDR groups together, and has seen them launch a sporadic terrorist campaign against the PSNI, prison officers, the intelligence services and the wider population of Northern Ireland. Yet the VDR movement remains fragmented. ONH and CIRA have retained their independence. In fact as the IRA/New IRA was forming the CIRA was experiencing yet another splintering. This resulted in the development of a new group, also claiming the title of CIRA being led largely from Limerick, Fermanagh and Tyrone. This ostensibly took place as a consequence of debates over organisational leadership, strategic trajectory and opportunities for dissident mergers. However, during interviews leading members of both sides of this split have taken the opportunity to delegitimise the other group. The original CIRA took the opportunity to label those who broke away as criminals.

“No matter what they do they’re not Republicans, they’re only criminals and that’s what happened. They went further down that criminal road and there is no way that they will ever be affiliated with us or use our name.”⁶⁶

The breakaway group in turn accused the parent organisation of being controlled by an elite unwilling to expand the organisation.

“It’s being run by a clique of women. Kind of a Cumann na mBan⁶⁷ clique are running it and [Ruairi] O’Bradaigh had tolerated this, very much so. There was never going to be expansion.”⁶⁸

In their opening statement the breakaway CIRA accused leading members of the parent organisation of „attempting to subvert the military campaign“ and stated that they „had allowed elements with the Republican Movement to engage in corruption over an extended period of

time.⁶⁹ Ironically in the aftermath of the split both the paramilitary and political wings of the new breakaway faction have continued to call for dissident republican unity. They adhere to the same rhetoric, which justified the merger of the RIRA and RAAD in 2012.

“Surely for the sake of the dead all true Republicans should join forces and honour the volunteers as a united and dedicated Movement.”⁷⁰

Yet in spite of their calls for unity, their organisation appears to be the most isolated of all VDR groups. They are criminalised by their former comrades and ignored by the remainder of the VDR community. Even though the rallying cries for unity may exist across many strains of dissident republicans the history of fragmentation and competition, and the bad blood accompanying it, makes it close to impossible to apply all the lessons learned from their ineffective past. Consequently in spite of the acknowledgement of past failures dissident republicanism will remain fractured and isolated, unable to mount an armed campaign of any sustained significance. Their presence currently forms no significant threat to the republican dominance of Sinn Féin.

Conclusion

The case of the VDR groups demonstrates to us the heterogeneity of terrorist learning. Some form of learning has significantly affected every aspect of the groups’ existence. This learning has come from both internal and external sources. It has related to both the violent, and non-violent activities of the groups. The modern day dissidents are utilising violent tactics and strategies, which have been both adopted and adapted from their republican past. This has been supplemented, and modernised, by learning from the advances in paramilitary weaponry from

the Middle East and elsewhere.⁷¹ By combining these internal and external lessons, the groups are attempting to portray that there is still a legitimate need for an armed struggle and that they have the competency to make it a success. By adopting these strategies and tactics, they are distancing themselves from the politicisation of Provisional republicanism. Their violence is the manifestation of their belief that the rationale for an armed struggle in the 20th century is still present in the 21st. The case of the dissidents demonstrates to us that when assessing terrorist learning that both violent and non-violent learning is taken into consideration. The prisoners of the IRA/New IRA have most recently highlighted this through their questioning of paramilitary vigilantism.

This research demonstrates that the modern-day paramilitaries are adopting the strategies and tactics of their republican past. Consequently, those who are aiming to counter this terrorist threat must also be learning the lessons from the past. The VDR groups do not mount a unique threat. They are reminiscent of their Provisional predecessors. Therefore, the police and security services must utilise their in-depth understanding of Irish republican terrorism, to counter, prevent and predict the violent activity of the current incarnations of the IRA. It is vital that the security services do not lose their institutional knowledge of what worked in countering paramilitaries in the past, but also what did not work.

Even though the VDR groups are not demonstrating a sustained threat to peace, they still have the ability to cause significant harm to the citizens of Northern Ireland. Academics⁷² and practitioners⁷³ alike have acknowledged that 2016 especially may be the year that the VDR groups pose the most significant threat to Northern Irish security. Their statements and violent actions have indicated that they have been positioning themselves to mount a more significant

campaign to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising. Their recent activities suggest, that they may once again reach into the past to legitimise their present. This may come in the form of a one-day bombing blitz similar to Bloody Friday, or a protracted prisoner hunger strike designed to be evocative of the 1981 strike. Those countering the threat must be ready for the possibility of these, and other, forms of dissident activity. It is imperative, that the terrorists are not the only ones learning the lessons from the past.

Table 1: Targets of Letter Bombs (Detonated and Undetonated)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	Overall
Civilian	1	1	1		3
Prison Officer			2		2
Police and Intelligence Personnel and Facilities		3		2	5
Politician (British Government Minister)		1			1
Army (Recruitment Offices)			7		7
Civil Servant		1			1
Overall	1	6	10	2	19

NOTES

¹ Sinn Féin, *The Lessons of History (Second Edition)*, (Dublin: Sinn Féin, 1970), p.5

² The abstentionist policy is a traditional republican policy. It states that elected representatives of Sinn Féin would not take their seats in Westminster, Dáil Éireann or Stormont. This is due to the perception that by their very existence these institutions are promoting the maintenance of partition. Sinn Féin still maintains an abstentionist policy towards Westminster. However, they now take their seats in Westminster and Dáil Éireann.

³ For a detailed analysis of this split and others see John F. Morrison *The Origins and Rise of Dissident Irish Republicanism: The Role and Impact of Organizational Splits*. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2014)

⁴ Sinn Féin, 1970 (see note 1 above)

⁵ Sophie A. Whiting. *Spoiling the Peace? The Threat of Dissident Republicans to Peace in Northern Ireland*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015)

⁶ For an in-depth analysis of the modern-day VDR threat John Horgan, *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Martyn Frampton, *Legion of the Rearguard*. (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2010); Whiting (2015) (see note 4 above); Morrison (see note 2 above)

⁷ For an in-depth analysis of spoilers see Edward Newman and Oliver Richmond (eds.) *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers During Conflict Resolution*. (Tokyo: United Nations University, 2006)

⁸ Mia M. Bloom, “Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding.”

Political Science Quarterly, 119(1) (2004), p.61-88

⁹ “New IRA: Full Statement by the Dissident „Army Council,“” *The Guardian*, July 26, 2012,

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jul/26/ira-northern-ireland-dissident-republican-groups1>

(Accessed August 1, 2015)

¹⁰ Morrison, 2014 (see note 3 above)

¹¹ John Horgan and John F. Morrison, “Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23(4) (2011), pp.642-

669; John F. Morrison and John Horgan “Reloading the Armalite? Victims and Targets of Violent Dissident Irish Republicanism 2007-2015.” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 28(3) (2016), DOI 10.1080/09546553.2016.1155940

¹² John F. Morrison. “Fighting Talk: The Statements of “the IRA/New IRA,“” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 28(3) (2016), DOI 10.1080/09546553.2016.1155941

¹³ Further information relating to the methodologies of each of these three projects can be found in the citations listed above

¹⁴ Sinn Féin, 1970, (see note 1 above)

¹⁵ Nancy J. Curtin. “The Transformation of the Society of United Irishmen into a Mass-Based Revolutionary Organisation,” *Irish Historical Studies*, 24(96) (1985), pp.463-492.

¹⁶ A.R. Oppenheimer, *IRA The Bombs and the Bullets: A History of Deadly Ingenuity*, (Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2009), p.145

¹⁷ Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, (Dublin: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), pp.435-436

¹⁸ For a more in-depth analysis of international learning see Adrian Guelke, “Republican Terrorism and Learning from, and Teaching, Other Countries” in this issue.

¹⁹ See John F. Morrison, “A Time to Think, a Time to Talk: Irish Republican Prisoners in the Northern Ireland Peace Process”, in Andrew Silke (ed.), *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*, (London: Routledge, 2014)

²⁰ Tim Pat Coogan, *On the Blanket: The Inside Story of the IRA Prisoners “Dirty” Protest*, (Dublin: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p.69

²¹ Interview with Richard McAuley, Belfast, September 12, 2008

²² Interview with Joe Doherty, Belfast, February 1, 2008

²³ This is referred to as *Operation Harvest* by the Irish Republican Movement

²⁴ For an analysis of why individuals such as „Paul“ may choose their allegiances in the lead-up to or aftermath of a split see John F. Morrison. “Trust in Me: Allegiance Choices in a Post-Split Terrorist Movement.” *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 28 (2016), pp.47-56

²⁵ Interview with „Paul“, Belfast, August 10, 2008

²⁶ O’Bradaigh was president of Republican Sinn Féin (RSF) from 1986 to 2009. RSF is widely acknowledged as being the political wing of the CIRA.

²⁷ This is a colloquial name for the PIRA

²⁸ This is a colloquial name for the Official IRA

²⁹ Interview with Ruairi O’Bradaigh, Dublin, February 20, 2008

³⁰ Jeffrey Ian Ross, “The Primacy of Grievance as a Structural Cause of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Comparing Al-Fatah, FARC, and PIRA”, in David Canter (ed.) *The Faces of*

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Oppenheimer, 2009, p.347 (see note 15 above)

³¹ Jim Cusack, “Taliban Using IRA Bomb Techniques in Terror War,” *Irish Independent*, June 3, 2007. <http://www.independent.ie/world-news/taliban-using-ira-bomb-techniques-in-terror-war-26295038.html> Accessed December 8, 2015.

³² Henry McDonald, “Irish Dissident Groups Learning from Taliban and ISIS, Police Officer Warns,” *The Guardian*, 18 January 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jan/18/irish-dissident-groups-ira-learning-taliban-isis-police-officer> Accessed December 8, 2015

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Connla Young ““Drop and Go“ Launcher Used in latest Attack on Police Patrol.” *The Irish News*, November 19, 2014, <http://www.irishnews.com/news/2014/11/19/news/-drop-and-go-launcher-used-in-latest-attack-on-police-patrol-108486/> Accessed December 8, 2015

³⁵ Brian A. Jackson. “Provisional Irish Republican Army.” In Brian A. Jackson, John C. Baker, Kim Cragin, John Parachini, Haracio R. Trujillo and Peters Chalk (eds.) *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), pp.93-140

³⁶ Interview with „Conor“, January 12, 2009

³⁷ John F. Morrison, 2014 (see note 3 above)

³⁸ Suzanne Breen, „War Back On-Real IRA.“ *Sunday Tribune*, 4 February, 2008, http://www.nuzhound.com/articles/Sunday_Tribune/arts2008/feb3_RIRA_interview_SBreen.php Accessed December 1, 2015

³⁹ For a detailed analysis of the PIRA proxy bombing campaign see Mia Bloom and John Horgan, “Missing Their Mark: The IRA’s Proxy Bomb Campaign,” *Social Research*, 75(2) (2008), pp.579-614; A.R. Oppenheimer, 2009 (see note 15 above), pp.100-101

⁴⁰ John F. Morrison, 2014 (see note 3 above), pp.188-189

⁴¹ This is the jail where the majority of VDR prisoners are incarcerated.

⁴² Claire Simpson and Seamus McKinney, “IRA Claim Letter Bombs and Warn of More Attacks.” *Irish News*, March 10, 2014. <http://www.irishnews.com/news/2014/03/10/news/-ira-claim-letter-bombs-and-warn-of-more-attacks-85888/> Accessed December 1, 2015

⁴³ “1972: Parcel Bomb Attack on Israeli Embassy,” *BBC*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/19/newsid_2523000/2523027.stm Accessed December 3, 2015

⁴⁴ “1982: Animal Activists Bomb Downing Street,” *BBC*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/30/newsid_2525000/2525525.stm Accessed December 3, 2015

⁴⁵ Richard English, “Terrorist innovation and International Politics: Lessons from an IRA Case Study?” *International Politics*, 50(4) (2013), pp.496-511

⁴⁶ Ed Blanche, “Scotland Yard Blames IRA Cell in Europe for Letter-Bomb Blitz,” *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, December 24, 1979, p.3

⁴⁷ Leonard Downie Jr. “Letter-Bomb Campaign Fails in Britain.” *The Washington Post*, December 25, 1979. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/12/25/letter-bomb-campaign-fails-in-britain/f5580803-5ba7-436e-b599-06a28383245c/> Accessed December 2, 2015

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Anthony Richards, *Conceptualising Terrorism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

⁵⁰ This point is also raised in Louise Kettle and Andrew Mumford, “Terrorist Learning: A New Analytical Framework” in this issue.

⁵¹ Patrick Bishop and Eamon Mallie, *The Provisional IRA*, (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1987), pp.269-299

⁵² *Official Statements by Republican Prisoners in Maghaberry, Hydebank and Portlaoise*, <http://irpwa.com/about-us/prisoner-department/statements/> Accessed December 10, 2015

⁵³ The title means „shout out“ in the Irish language

⁵⁴ By the end of 2015 five issues of the magazine had been published.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the Brownie letters see Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*. (London, Penguin Books, 2002), pp.150-152 and 169-170

⁵⁶ Brownie, “Active Abstentionism,” *The Republican News*, October 18, 1975, p.8

⁵⁷ Brownie, “The National Alternative,” *The Republican News*, April 3, 1976, p.6-7

⁵⁸ Andrew Silke, “Rebel’s Dilemma: The Changing Relationship Between the IRA, Sinn Fein and Paramilitary Vigilantism in Northern Ireland” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 11(1) (1999), pp.55-93

⁵⁹ Chris Kilpatrick, “Two „punishment-style“ attacks carried out every week in Northern Ireland,” *Belfast Telegraph*, November 3, 2014.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/two-punishmentstyle-attacks-carried-out-every-week-in-northern-ireland-30712724.html> Accessed December 3, 2015

⁶⁰ “A Necessary Evil?” *Scairt Amach*, Summer 2015, pp.13-14

⁶¹ “Criminals and Crime,” *Scairt Amach*, Autumn 2015, p.4

⁶² *Full Texts of IRA New Years Statement (from The Sovereign Nation)*, January 8, 2011.

<http://www.derry32csm.com/2011/01/full-text-of-ira-new-years-statement.html> Accessed July 23, 2015

⁶³ *Oglaigh na hEireann New Year Message 2007 (RIRA)*, January 6, 2007, Author’s personal collection

⁶⁴ Marian Price, *Derry 32CSM Easter Commemoration: 32 CSM Easter Oration*.

<http://www.derry32csm.com/2009/04/derry-32csm-easter-commemoration.html> Accessed July 14, 2015.

⁶⁵ 32CSM, *New Year Statement 2011*. January 3, 2011

<http://jimlarkinrfb.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/32csm-2011-new-year-statement.html> Accessed July 20 2015

⁶⁶ Interview with „Kate“, August 24, 2012

⁶⁷ The female wing of the IRA

⁶⁸ Interview with „Derek“, August 23, 2012

⁶⁹ “New Leadership Elected by Continuity IRA,” *Saoirse Nua-The Voice of the Republican Movement*, October/November, 2010, p.1

⁷⁰ Joe Lynch, “Call for a Unity of Republicans-Appeal at Grave of Wolfe Tone,” *Saoirse Nua-The Voice of the Republican Movement*, September/October 2011.

⁷¹ Future research should consider analysing the extent of learning between republican and loyalist paramilitaries. This was outside of the remit of the present article. However, it would be a worthwhile topic of analysis

⁷² John F. Morrison, 2014 (see note 3 above); John Horgan, 2012 (see note 6 above)

⁷³ Henry McDonald, 2015 (see note 28 above)