

Fighting Talk

Fighting Talk: The Statements of 'The IRA/New IRA' Accepted Draft: *Terrorism and Political Violence*, In Press

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Abstract

With the advent of the new violent dissident merger, ‘The IRA/New IRA’, the group and its affiliates have had to legitimise their new existence. They have utilised the maintenance of paramilitary activity to achieve this. However, they have also produced a number of organisational statements, justifying their position, tactics and strategies. This article analyses the evolution of these statements, both pre and post-merger from 2007 to 2015. 126 individual statements and 4 magazines are analysed using grounded theory. This analysis found that the statements have a dual strategy, aiming to foster trust in the movement and distrust in their perceived enemies. One of the dominant ways in which the group aims to foster trust, is by proposing their possession of an historical mandate from the republican forefathers of 1916, as well as the internally lauded paramilitaries from the Troubles era PIRA. The focus of the distrust narrative has been on the ‘constitutional nationalism’ of Sinn Féin. However, it also pours scorn on the PSNI, and capitalism, across the island of Ireland. The analysis of these statements can provide us with an understanding of the future direction of the group, as well as giving us insight, which can inform the development of any counter-narrative.

Keywords: IRA, Dissident Republicanism, Statements, Legitimation, Northern Ireland

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Introduction

Following extensive consultations, Irish republicans and a number of organisations involved in armed actions against the armed forces of the British crown have come together within a unified structure, under a single leadership, subservient to the constitution of the Irish Republican Army.¹

In July 2012 the Real IRA (RIRA) and Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD) announced that they had merged.² Alongside other previously unaligned violent dissident republicans (VDR)³ they formed a new group, under the all-encompassing title of ‘The IRA.’ In the years since their creation they have posed a ‘severe’ threat to the security of Northern Ireland, and Great Britain.⁴ This merger, often referred to as ‘The New IRA,’⁵ was responsible for the murder of prison officer David Black in November 2012.⁶ In the words of the group, Black was killed as a result of the perceived ‘torture and degradation’ of dissident republican prisoners, and in ‘direct response’ to the growing tensions within Maghaberry jail, the Northern Irish prison which houses the majority of VDR detainees.⁷ Since this murder their paramilitary activity has continued to target both national and local victims. This has seen them launch a letter and parcel bombing campaign against high profile politicians, police officers, MI5 and British army recruitment offices. These have been carried out in parallel to the continued day-to-day targeting of Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) officers. This is representative of the national strategy of the organisation, namely to carry out ‘armed actions against the armed forces of the British crown.’⁸ It lies in parallel with the local strategy, to ‘protect’ the republican communities from criminals and other anti-social elements. The manifestation of this can be seen in the on-going, and brutal, vigilante violence across Northern Ireland. Kneecappings, punishment beatings and assassinations of those labelled as drug dealers have once again become the norm.⁹ These attacks are justified by the IRA as the protection of the vulnerable citizens of the republican communities.¹⁰ However, their true purpose is to gain control, and power, within the communities. It is this control and power that can provide the platform on which they launch a more persistent, and violent, national strategy.¹¹

As with each of the VDR groups¹² the ‘IRA/New IRA’ is aiming to violently mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising. Their objective is to establish themselves as the

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true heirs to the revolutionaries of 1916. Much of this is demonstrated through their paramilitary and terrorist activity. However, the focus of this article is not on their violence, it is on their words. With the aim of justifying and legitimising the persistence of violence, the group, and their affiliates, has released a number of public statements since their inception. This article analyses the overarching purpose of these. The analysis of the statements of the 'IRA/New IRA' is complimented by a similar assessment of the RIRA, RAAD, the Irish Prisoner Welfare Association (IRPWA), the 'Republican Political Prisoners' in Roe 4 of Maghaberry and the 32 County Sovereignty Movement (32CSM), the political wing of the RIRA. This provides an understanding of the movement as a whole, both pre and post-merger. The RIRA, RAAD and a pre-July 2012 32CSM represent the pre-merger organisations. By also including their statements it allows for an assessment of the evolution of the wider narrative. This is part of a larger project,¹³ analysing the statements of each of the active VDR groups, their prisoners and political wings. This is the initial output from the project. Therefore it was deemed appropriate to focus on the organisation whose actions indicate that they pose the most significant modern-day threat to the security of Northern Ireland.

Terrorist Statements

As researchers of terrorism we face a variety of methodological difficulties.¹⁴ Gaining access to valid and reliable data has always been problematic.¹⁵ For some there has been an over-reliance on historical archival research, with only a small handful of field interviews.¹⁶ It has been proposed that these methodological difficulties, and a dearth of rigour, has led to a 'stagnation in terrorism research.' This perceived stagnation is said to be as a result of our failure to answer the 'simple' question of why an individual would turn to the utility of political violence.¹⁷ However, if we are to make significant advances in our understanding of terrorism, and the terrorist, our focus must broaden, in terms of the questions we ask and the methods we use. There is more to terrorism research than asking "what leads a person to political violence?"¹⁸ Likewise there is a range of data sources external from primary sources interviews and archival research, available to us. To highlight this fact Alex Schmid conceived a list in 2011 of *50 Un- and Under-Researched Topics in the Field of (Counter-) Terrorism Studies*. One of the topics listed by Schmid was the analysis of terrorist statements and internal writings.¹⁹

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It is oft stated that terrorism is a form of communication.²⁰ The violence, targets, group names and their chosen symbols all carry a message. They depict what the groups stand for, how they wish to proceed and what their end goals may be. The terrorists also provide us with a detailed understanding of their motivation, and intentions, through their public statements. These statements provide a wealth of information for researchers, as they show us how the groups wish to be publicly perceived. They provide the public legitimisation for their actions and their continued existence. At times they may also deliver a glimpse into the future trajectory of the groups. Holbrook's analysis of the evolution of Al-Qaeda leadership statements shows we can gain an insight into the evolution of a terrorist doctrine, and the tensions it faces. This research proposed that the discourse of the Al Qaeda leadership could be divided in relation to the problem diagnosis, proposed solutions and efforts to mobilise their membership and support.²¹ The understanding gained from the statements can resultantly assist us in developing a counter-narrative. This counter-narrative can be tailored to respond to each of these key themes, in accordance to how they are relevant at specific moments in time.²²

From the Provisional IRA up to 'The IRA/New IRA', modern day republican groups have consistently produced statements. These have ranged from the annual Easter and New Year statements, to the periodic claims or denials of responsibility. With the republican history of fragmentation,²³ they also intermittently serve the purpose of launching a new faction. This provides the opportunity to justify the necessity, and reasoning, for the groups' newly independent existence. These statements are directed at a range of audiences, both internal and external. They simultaneously serve the purpose of threatening the perceived enemies, while reassuring the membership and support that the movement's continued existence is both justified and potentially fruitful. It is not only the content of these missives, which give us an insight into the inner-workings of the organisations. The timing and language²⁴ similarly provides important information that can assist us in understanding the leadership's decision-making processes, and what they deem to be important to comment on. In her analysis of the broad 'dissident' discourse Whiting²⁵ analysed the newspapers²⁶ of both the 32CSM and Republican Sinn Féin (RSF).²⁷ The analysis provides an insight, into how the dissident republicans have aimed to legitimise their independent existence. For

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them it is important to provide a narrative that they are a victimised minority, who represent ‘true’ republicanism through a mandate bestowed upon them historically.²⁸ In their minds they stand apart from their former comrades in Sinn Féin, who have abandoned the republican cause. Building on this the present research narrows the focus by only analysing one movement within dissident republicanism. However, it broadens the focus, by including the statements of the paramilitary, political and prisoner wings of this movement.

The Present Study

Through the application of grounded theory,²⁹ this study assesses the evolution of the ‘New IRA/IRA’, and its wider movement’s, narrative and legitimisation. In doing so the analysis focuses on the statements of the relevant pre- and post-merger paramilitary and political groups. All of the statements analysed are open source. They have been accessed through organisational websites, newspapers and magazines. While the majority of statements come from internal republican media sources, there is a significant minority that appeared in the national and local non-partisan media. This is especially apparent with the example of RAAD, who consistently released statements and interviews through the *Derry Journal* newspaper.

This analysis focuses on statements from January 1st 2007 to August 31st 2015. The start date has been chosen, as this is perceived to be the genesis of the modern-wave of VDR activity.³⁰ It was then that Sinn Féin historically declared their support for the PSNI, and agreed to sit on the policing board. With this expression of mainstream republican policing support, there was a rise in the violent and non-violent activity of the VDR groups. This reached a peak in 2010. During this surge in activity the most dominant violent groupings were the RIRA and RAAD.³¹ ‘The IRA/New IRA,’ post-merger, has similarly echoed their VDR dominance.

Group Name	Number of Statements
Real IRA	22
32CSM	18
RAAD	42
‘The IRA/New IRA’	15
Republican Political Prisoners	29

Total	126
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Table 1: Number of Individual Statements Analysed by Organisation

As Table 1 shows, 126 individual statements were analysed. This includes 82 pre-merger and 44 post-merger statements. External from these individual statements was the assessment of the first four issues of the IRPWA magazine *Scairt Amach*.³² This magazine, first published in August 2014, contains writings from IRPWA prisoners in Maghaberry (Roe 4), Portlaoise (E3/E4) and Hydebank prisons.³³ The prisoners in these wings, represent the majority of the ‘IRA/New IRA prison population. While each issue primarily focuses on prison life, some of the editorials and articles also provide an insight into the prisoners’ assessment of external VDR activity. Both sets of narratives are considered in the present study.

Throughout the analysis there was one central research question:

1. How does the movement legitimise its continued violent existence?

Guided by this question the analysis went through a multi-stage process. Firstly, each statement was analysed individually. Within this stage individual tables were developed for each statement. Contained in these were the general themes observed line by line in each statement. When the initial analysis of each statement was complete, a master table of themes was compiled. These initial themes were then grouped together into tables of master themes. This was followed by a return to the statements. Accompanied by the tables of themes and master themes, each statement was re-analysed to firstly assess whether the initial theme allocated to sections of the text accurately represented the sentiment being portrayed. The understanding gained from the completion of the first influenced this second stage of analysis. With the results of the first stage considered, each statement was analysed to assess whether any tacit or layered meaning had been missed. This stage was also used to check the validity of the master-themes in comparison to the source data. The final stage of the analysis once again saw a return to the original data. This time the analysis focused on assessing where the statements were used to attempt to foster trust in the groups, and their actions, and where they were used to develop a narrative of distrust in others.³⁴

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These had been identified as the two predominant purposes of the statements. The micro and master themes were also once again validated.

Analysis

The analysis found that both pre- and post-merger the process of legitimisation took a dual approach. The statements aimed to foster trust in the groups and their actions. Parallel to this they aimed to promote a public distrust in the actors, actions and concepts that they claimed to be standing apart from or fighting against. They were therefore aiming to simultaneously legitimise themselves while delegitimising their opposition.

It was observed that the development of trust in the in-group was carried out across six micro themes:

1. British Occupation
2. Historical Mandate
3. Community Protectors
4. Promotion of Tactics
5. Prisoners
6. Introspection of Dissidence

Parallel to this the process of fostering distrust in the out-groups was carried out over a separate three micro themes:

1. PSNI/RUC
2. Sinn Féin: 'Constitutional Nationalism'
3. The 'Free State' Capitalist Establishment

As will be shown across the analysis there was continuous overlap across a number of themes. Similar to Holbrook,³⁵ it was observed that the statements could also be divided across the headings of problem diagnosis, proposed solutions and efforts to mobilise. There are elements of each of these issues across the themes identified here. With respect to the problem diagnosis, this is most vivid in the discussion of *British Occupation*, *Community Protectors*, *PSNI*, *Sinn Féin* and the *'Free State.'* The

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proposed solutions are primarily witnessed in the discussion of *Promotion of Tactics* and *Introspection of Dissidence*. The mobilisation of membership and support is apparent across all the themes. However, this is most obvious in the invocation of the *Historical Mandate* and the critical analysis of *Sinn Féin*.

Trust

When any organisation, terrorist or otherwise, splits away from their parent group they strive to justify their independent existence. They must gain the trust of their potential membership and support. The same is expected in relation to organisational mergers. The leadership must ‘sell’ the necessity of the new group, and resultantly gain the trust of individuals to stay with them. As will be shown in a later section, much of this is attempted through the delegitimising of, or garnering of distrust in, the out-group(s). However, for the sustained independent existence and growth of the organisation, it is imperative that the groups also promote the positives of the in-group. This is carried out in order to develop and maintain faith, in the organisation’s goals, ideals and abilities. Without first of all gaining this trust the organisations are always in danger of losing support.

‘British Occupation’

The primary legitimisation for any Irish republican group is the British ‘occupation’ of Northern Ireland. In light of the politicisation of Sinn Féin, it is imperative that the dissidents convince the broader republican population that nothing has changed with respect to the British presence in Northern Ireland, and that the need for an armed campaign still exists. This depiction is a thread that ties many of the themes together.

The necessity of armed struggle in pursuit of Irish freedom can be avoided through the removal of the British military presence in our country, the dismantling of their armed militias and the declaration of an internationally observed timescale that details the dismantling of British political interference in our country.³⁶

From their opening statement, the ‘IRA/New IRA’ contends that the central purpose for their continued utility of violence was due to ‘British political interference in (their) country.’³⁷ Unsurprisingly, this position was consistent with those of the RIRA

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and 32CSM prior to their merger with RAAD, and has been retained beyond the initial inception of the group.

The IRA remains fully committed to genuine Republican objectives, and where Britain denies the Irish people the right to live free from foreign and undemocratic interference, the IRA will use military force to assert these rights. A failure to do so and failing to support those building a political Republican alternative to the status quo would be an abandonment of Republican principles.³⁸

Even though the retention of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom provides the central mandate for the existence of armed republicanism, this criticism of ‘British occupation’ does not take prominence in the narrative. However, this should not be considered as the equivalent as a suppressing of import. It is proposed that there is not as much concentration on this issue, as by the very definition of the group it is self-evident that they are opposed to Northern Ireland remaining as part of the United Kingdom. By concentrating on this, the group is not establishing any new legitimacy. It has been deemed more beneficial for their development to concentrate on other new, and sustained, grievances in post-Troubles Northern Ireland. As will be demonstrated, this has primarily focused on the perceived roles of the PSNI and Sinn Féin in maintaining the partition of Ireland.

Historical Mandate and Prisoners

As observed by Whiting, the legitimisation for all Irish republican groups comes from their utility of their perceived historical mandate.³⁹ They aim to position themselves as the true heirs to the forefathers of Irish republicanism. This is most evident in the annual pilgrimages to Bodenstown, to commemorate Theobald Wolfe Tone and the yearly memorials to mark the anniversaries of the 1916 Easter Rising. These events, and the speeches that accompany them, provides each group with the opportunity to demonstrate why they believe that they are closest to the revolutionaries who have gone before them.

The leadership of the Irish Republican Army remains committed to the full realisation of the ideals and principles enshrined in the Proclamation of 1916.⁴⁰

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With the approach of the centenary of the 1916 Rising, this historical legitimisation has been evident across each republican group, both dissident and mainstream. With respect to the 'The IRA/New IRA' this was apparent both pre and post-merger, in all of the groups with the exception of RAAD. With the announcement of the new merger in 2012, this mandate provided the cornerstone for the justification of the new group. The groups have publicly stated that they aim to use the unusually high level of attention being given to historical republicanism as an opportunity to re-assess their strategies and tactics with the hope of re-energising what many believe to be an irrelevant campaign.⁴¹ For them, this may be considered as a last chance to reignite the armed campaign. If they are unable to gain a strengthening of support during the commemorations of their most noble forefathers they fear that they may never have as fruitful an opportunity again. As will be discussed when analysing the 'introspection of dissidence' the groups saw the necessity to put forward a strong and united dissident front, hence the necessity of the merger. They are therefore not just saying that 'you can trust us because of our historical mandate.' They are saying that 'we have a historical mandate and we are a united movement.'

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.⁴²

While much of the mandate has been drawn from 1916 this historical legitimisation also comes from more recent times. In their minds they are also maintaining the armed struggle that many of them fought during The Troubles. They use the deaths and sacrifice of the generations past as a tool not just to legitimise themselves to external observers but also as an internal reminder to the membership of their place in this lineage. Central to this is the reverence in which past and present Irish republican prisoners are held. Being able to paint themselves as the heirs to Bobby Sands and his fellow hunger strikers now plays as significant a role within their historical legitimisation narrative as the memories of Pádraig Pearse, Tom Clarke and others. In

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the eyes of republicans the hunger strikers of 1981 made the ultimate sacrifice for ‘the cause.’ They purposefully laid down their lives for the furtherance of their goals. This sacrifice is regularly recalled in order to further motivate the resurrection of the armed campaign. However, more recently their memories are being employed to draw parallels with the modern day campaign. They are being used to raise the arguments that thirty-five years of ‘British occupation’ in Northern Ireland still exists and that republican prisoners are still in prison campaigning for their political status.

Special mention must be made of the republican POWs in Maghaberry and their continued resistance to the torturous prison regime in place there. To those who say that the British occupation of Ireland has changed we say why, 30 years after 10 brave comrades died in British jails in Ireland, are Irishmen still fighting for political status and still being brutalised for doing so?⁴³

In the early 1980s the Provisional IRA and Sinn Féin succeeded in mobilising significant levels of support, around the hunger-strike campaign. This demonstrated to them the levels of potential support that they had, and in turn played a significant role in their strategic revision.⁴⁴ Within the modern wave of VDR activity there has been a concerted effort from the groups, to reinvigorate support for their cause through the highlighting of the prisoners’ struggle. Their aim is to present the prisoners, and by association the wider dissident community, as being victims of an oppressive regime. In their minds the victimisation of prisoners and their families gives the continued existence of the IRA even greater legitimacy.

Returning to the 2012 murder of prison-officer David Black, it is instructive that they used an attack on a prison officer to launch the new group. This demonstrates that they portray this as a cause worth fighting for. However, for this to be chosen as a high-profile launch of the group, it also demonstrates that they believed that this chosen aspect of Irish republicanism was one that could mobilise both membership and support. As will be developed in future sections, it has also provided them with an opportunity to disparage their former comrades in Sinn Féin, and the wider Catholic and nationalist community. This has most recently been emphasised by the prisoners themselves and the IRPWA.⁴⁵

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*The silence of the Catholic Church on this issue is both deafening and disgraceful. Politicians who were once Political Prisoners themselves and who suffered equal brutality in British Jails should be as vocal about this cruelty as they were when their party leader was arrested. A young Irish Republican has endured 1500 days of solitary confinement; it is time to let your voices be heard.*⁴⁶

Historically, the prisoners have been among the most trusted and revered actors with the Irish Republican Movement. They have at times led both the mobilisation of recruits and the critical introspection of the armed campaign. The campaigns and debate within, and emanating out of, the prisons have played a significant role in shaping the strategies and tactics of the Movement.⁴⁷ It is evident that this is being attempted once again. Through their statements and publications the prisoners are not just emphasising their own internal issues, they are also passing judgment on the external issues surrounding the wider paramilitary and political campaign. They acknowledge that the prisoner campaign can give a lift to wider republicanism. However, they state that this should only be used as a jump-start for the campaign, something to draw the interest in before dealing with the broader issues of ‘British Occupation.’⁴⁸

Promotion of Tactics and Community Protectors

*The struggles for freedom and to defend and strengthen our communities are intertwined. Whether in the streets of Derry and Belfast, or in the rural communities of Armagh and Tyrone, it is these communities from which Republican activists have, time and again, derived shelter, support and solidarity.*⁴⁹

While the role the historical mandate of the group can and has been played upon, this is not enough to provide a sustained network of membership and support. For any terrorist or paramilitary organisation to achieve a significant level of support, they need to also demonstrate their ability to oversee a successful and competent modern-day armed campaign. Much of this comes from the armed actions themselves. However, it has been deemed as imperative for the groups to further emphasise their capabilities and intentions, through their words. Even though these messages are

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positioned as internal statements, they are also intended for external audiences. As with all terrorist statements they hold a dual purpose, to simultaneously draw support and generate fear. The groups have used their claims of responsibility, as well as their New Year's and Easter statements, to promote their tactical capabilities to take the armed campaign directly to the British, while also emphasising the value, worth and threat of these actions.

Actions by volunteers of Óglaigh na hÉireann in the last year have proved that the tactical use of armed struggle can, and does, bring results. As was witnessed in Antrim, British soldiers and the colonial police will continue to lose their lives as long as the issue of national sovereignty remains unresolved. Óglaigh na hÉireann will continue to strike at the British occupation forces wherever and whenever we decide.⁵⁰

They make little to no differentiation between those who they identify as the 'occupying force,' and those assisting them in any way. Both are portrayed as viable targets. It is not just those who are assisting in investigations, or providing intelligence. It represents those who are providing any service, no matter how insignificant they may seem. One of the most striking examples of this can be seen in the shooting of the pizza-delivery man, who was shot during the Massereene Barracks attack in 2009. The justification of this is similar to the specific targeting of Catholic and Nationalist PSNI officers, an issue discussed later.

We also reserve the right to execute anyone providing services, in any shape or form, to the enemy. Those who assist the occupiers have placed themselves in harm's way. They know what they need to do to extricate themselves from a situation of their own making. There will be no further warnings.⁵¹

These statements are developed in order to promote the groups as fighting against the British occupation of Ireland, through their disruption of the normalisation of politics. However, both pre and post-merger the paramilitary forces have similarly focused to a large extent on their complimentary role as community protectors. This dual focus demonstrates the parallel local and national strategies of the group. Throughout their history the IRA in its many guises has promoted itself as the only legitimate guardian

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of the Irish republican communities. In their minds the PSNI, and their predecessors in the RUC, are unrepresentative forces that have neither the ability nor the right to police the republican communities of Northern Ireland. The self-assigned role as community protector has historically been used by paramilitaries, to gain power and control within the communities. This has in turn been used to justify a campaign of punishment beatings, kneecappings and assassinations of those deemed to be criminals and/or anti-social influences on the communities.⁵²

This role as community protector is most notable when one analyses the statements and actions of RAAD. In their pre-merger existence it was their sole stated aim to drive drug dealing out of the republican communities in Derry and north Donegal. Of all the groups analysed here, RAAD demonstrated more than any other the faith they placed in the power of statements. Throughout their violent existence they regularly gave interviews and released statements to their local newspaper the *Derry Journal*. They did this to promote the threat they posed and their justification for it. However, throughout their short but vocal existence they promoted themselves simply as protectors of the communities. They stated that they had no national political agenda.

*Our only aim is to eliminate drug dealers from our society and put an end to them destroying our community. Our only concern is to end the threat posed by the supply of both illegal and prescription drugs, a threat which has already claimed the lives of a number of young people, ruined other lives and torn many families apart. There is no political agenda whatsoever within our organization.*⁵³

While RAAD is no longer in existence as an independent entity, their tactics are still employed by 'The IRA/New IRA.' The statements and interviews in relation to paramilitary vigilantism are not as frequent. But when they do emerge they are carrying the same message. This is most clearly emphasised in a 2013 statement, claiming responsibility for the murder of suspected drug dealer Kevin Kearney. The paramilitaries' claim was used to legitimise the murder, as well as their wider vigilante strategy. They stated that the attack on Kearney was to protect the young people of the community from the dangers of drug addiction.⁵⁴

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As a direct result of Kearney's drug dealing many of our young people have developed drug addictions, and some have lost there [sic] lives. The IRA will not allow this to continue.

The overall purpose here is to gain trust within the communities, that they are protecting them in a way that no one else is. This trust is essential if these groups are to survive, let alone succeed. However, with the recent proliferation of the VDR prisoner statements, the employment of vigilantism to achieve this aim has been called into question. In the Summer 2015 issue of *Scairt Amach*, the anonymous author questioned the maintenance of paramilitary vigilantism. While they did not bring into question the legitimacy of the tactic, they did question its true effect. For them its continuation may be counter-productive, in the development and maintenance of support. They question whether it may actually be driving support away, rather than strengthening it.⁵⁵

*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.*⁵⁶

This critical sentiment of punishment attacks has only been observed in one statement or article during the period of analysis, from 2007 to August 2015. However, in the first issue of *Scairt Amach* in a post-analysis period, in the August 2015 edition, the tactic was once again called into question.⁵⁷ This is a debate, which must be watched closely to assess its development. As was intimated in the previous section, the prisoner community has a history of leading the critical analysis of the wider republican strategy. It is only with this internal debate, that an organisation can truly move away from long-fostered strategies. By opening up the debate on the utility of punishment attacks, the prisoners are providing a platform on which a distancing from punishment beatings and other forms of vigilante violence could be a possibility. This is reminiscent of the 'Brownie Letters,' that appeared in the Belfast based newspaper

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Republican News the 1970s. These were prisoners' letters, widely believed to be written by Gerry Adams, which actively questioned the external strategies of the Provisional Movement in relation to the policy of abstentionism, amongst other issues.⁵⁸ With the presumed nobility of the prisoners, they are often the most trusted people within republicanism, and therefore can have more clout than others whilst questioning the direction of the movement.

Introspection of Dissidence

*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.*⁵⁹

To date the analysis has demonstrated that the aims of the statements have been on legitimising the retained utility of paramilitary violence, in the pursuit of a united Ireland. This is accompanied by an active delegitimisation campaign, against a range of external actors and entities. The primary purpose of the legitimisation campaign is to develop and maintain the trust of their membership and support. One of the most dominant ways they have sought to do this, both pre- and post-merger, has been through the introspection of their own tactics and strategies. This was already alluded to above, in the discussion of the utility of punishment beatings. However, the introspection has been much broader than this. Through the process, they are admitting to strategic mistakes of the past and are inviting trust in them to bring about the necessary changes.

Irish republicanism is a traditionally splintered movement.⁶⁰ Splits have formed for a variety of reasons, some political, others strategic and many personal. However, the modern-day incarnation of republicanism has seen one dominant force, that of Sinn Féin and the remnants of the Provisional IRA. Those dissidents in opposition to them are small in number, yet have retained their fragmentation. In the lead-up to the 2012 merger, it was this fragmentation that was repeatedly presented by the RIRA and 32CSM as suppressing any possibility of dissident success.⁶¹ In their Easter and New Year statements, both groups continuously emphasised the importance of presenting a united dissident movement. From the start of the modern-wave of VDR actor activity,

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and even prior to that, the RIRA presented this as the key objective for the movement. One could argue that they were attempting to delegitimise the organisational make-up of dissident republicanism.

In their calls for unity, they put forward their opinion that without unity they were providing ‘succour’ for their enemies.⁶² This reference to their ‘enemies’ could be considered as referring not just to the British but also to their former comrades in Sinn Féin.

In order to combat the forces of repression and partition republicans must think strategically and pragmatically. Republican unity must remain a key objective and aspiration for all republicans, for our part the IRA have worked closely with other organisations in every way and we will do so in the future. A united republican base is much more able to withstand the onslaught of the united forces of occupation.⁶³

With these consistent calls for unity the dissident merger should not have come as a surprise when it finally arrived in 2012. In the aftermath of the split, the new organisation has not actively referred to the pre-merger organisations. They are just promoting their unity as a movement. However, even since 2012 violent dissident republicanism is far from a united front. The ‘The IRA/New IRA’ has now become the dominant VDR group, yet they are not the only ones claiming the moniker of *The IRA*. Still active are ONH and multiple factions of CIRA. Resultantly the calls for unity have not dissipated post-2012. However, individual dissidents and the prisoners have most recently taken up the mantle. This is most clearly demonstrated in the former RIRA prisoner Gary Donnelly’s 2015 Easter oration, that he gave at an independent commemoration in Derry City. In this he openly criticised Irish republicans, for failing to realise the ideals of the 1916 Rising.

Irish republicanism must abandon its obsession with parochial control and adopt with urgency a national concept of winning this struggle. As it stands, on the precipice of the Centenary of the 1916 Rising, republicans are united in failure...No matter which monument you stand at in 2016, no matter which banner or flag you gather under, the answer to the sole question emanating

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from our patriot graves, as to whether the ideals of the Proclamation are yet realised, the collective answer will be a resounding no.⁶⁴

The introspection has not purely been about republican disunity and punishment attacks. Recent statements have also called into question the overall delegitimising strategy, directed against the ‘constitutional nationalism’ of Sinn Féin. They are saying that it is no longer enough to be criticising others. If they are doing this, they must also be providing a viable and credible alternative.⁶⁵ It is not sufficient to have the maintenance of armed conflict as their ‘peak aspiration.’ This must not be all that differentiates them from mainstream republicanism.

The statement that ‘to fight is to win’ shouldn’t form the peak of aspiration for those who see revolution as their goal. All of those who dedicated and gave their lives to Irish freedom deserve respect and admiration; however, we cannot simply seek to replicate historic actions which, in the end, fell short of our final goal.

These statements of introspection play a number of roles. They are attempting to generate a message convincing membership and support, both existing and potential, that the groups can be trusted. They are saying that, unlike Sinn Féin, the dissidents are listening. These groups wish to portray that they understand the widespread discontent about the perpetual fragmentation and the utility of violence for violence’s sake. They say that they have learned from the mistakes of the past and that their strategic focus will achieve republican goals, without having to pass the armed struggle on to the future generations.⁶⁶ In providing these messages they are trying to obtain, and maintain, a dwindling support. They know that without this support, both passive and active, that any hope of survival, let alone ‘success,’ is impossible.

Distrust

In order to justify the necessity of their independent existence, the groups have continuously fostered the strategy of delegitimising their opposition. This has primarily focused on developing and fostering distrust in the PSNI and Sinn Féin. However, it also has seen the attempted delegitimation of the capitalist

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establishment across the island of Ireland. By focusing on the negative aspects of others, often more willingly than their own supposed positives, they are reaffirming their perceived necessity as a movement of protest. This is primarily aimed to function as a tool, to both recruit and maintain the existing membership and support.

'PSNI/RUC'

What we witness today is British Auxiliary police targeting those opposed to British rule in Ireland...Their mask has slipped and they are proving to be no different than the reviled RUC. This is political policing.⁶⁷

One of the primary goals of these organisational statements has been the condemnation and the attempted delegitimising of the PSNI. Both the paramilitary and political wings constantly equate the new police force, established in 2001, with their predecessors in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). In their presentation of the force, they are depicting them as upholding the British occupation of Northern Ireland. The aim of this is once again to portray that nothing has changed, since the advent of the peace process. This narrative has become particularly strong in the aftermath of Sinn Féin's decision to acknowledge the legitimacy of the PSNI in January 2007.

Their role is further 'legitimised' and enhanced by support from organisations and bodies...with historic links to Republicanism. However, an objective examination of the PSNI would reveal, similar to the RUC, an extensive paramilitary element comprised of branches which are deployed in specific instances, keeping them from public view and thus disguising the true nature of the entire force.⁶⁸

During the Troubles, the focus of such statements was not just on the police, but also on the British military's presence in Northern Ireland. However, with British soldiers no longer patrolling the streets of Northern Ireland the PSNI, and more recently MI5, have been the primary focus of this delegitimising narrative. This has been continuously utilised to justify the political opposition to, as well as the paramilitary targeting of, the force. The police are portrayed as the physical manifestation of British occupation, and are therefore the most visible 'enemy' for the dissidents to

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fight against. It is this visibility of an enemy, which is used to legitimise the continuation of violence.

By repeatedly equating them as equivalent to the RUC, they are painting the PSNI as being a purely Protestant police force whose role is to protect the Unionist population of Northern Ireland. The aim to maintain the alleged illegitimacy of the PSNI, due to this perceived unrepresentativeness, has therefore been a central aim of the groups. This has been seen through their statements, and their targeting of the police. As a result the group has specifically targeted Catholic and nationalist police officers, such as Ronan Kerr. These officers are being portrayed as ‘traitors’ to their communities. The intention of this tactic has been to deter others, of a similar background, from joining the police. More broadly the aim is to delegitimise the authority of the PSNI, within the republican communities of Northern Ireland. It is only through this delegitimising of the force, that they can have any success in legitimising the necessity of their own perceived roles as ‘community protectors.’⁶⁹

*It is irrelevant what religion the person is who wears the uniform of this force, when they are kicking in a door and arresting a father, brother, son, mother, sister or daughter it is the uniform of British policing in Ireland that is behind it.*⁷⁰

The statements continuously call into question the motives and actions of the PSNI. They attempt to transfer any blame for injuries caused from their attacks onto the police. Both the ‘IRA/New IRA,’ and their predecessors in the RIRA, have accused the police of applying calculated inaction with the aim of injuring civilians. They propose that the aim of this is to allow for death and injury, in order to discredit those who planted any bombs or carried out attacks. This is an attempt to say that it is the police, and not the paramilitaries, who are putting civilians at risk.

*These so called modern day heroes were brave enough to allow hundreds of non-combatants to pass a large IRA bomb in Newry, we do not believe that this was sheer incompetence of their behalf but a calculated action aimed at putting civilians in the danger zone to protect themselves and discredit republicans.*⁷¹

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The delegitimisation of the PSNI is heavily linked to the attempted legitimisation of the 'IRA/New IRA', and their paramilitary predecessors, as community protectors. It is only when the group successfully delegitimises the PSNI that they will have an opportunity to be accepted as their alternative. In order to achieve this, both the paramilitary and political groups repeatedly promote the idea that the PSNI purposefully 'abandoned' the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland.⁷² This is elaborated upon by accusing the force of exploiting members of the communities, to assist them in their work. Resultantly the permanent threat posed towards the police is mirrored in the threat posed towards those accused of assisting them. The purpose of this is to portray the belief that the paramilitaries are not just fighting against the forces of the state, but that informers from within their own communities also threaten them. As discussed earlier, thus providing further justification for their targeting of the very communities they claim to represent.

*Óglaigh na hÉireann advise political and community leaders to desist from the practice of assisting, and urging others to assist the RUC/PSNI, those who do so are clearly making the choice to align themselves with the enemy. The repercussions of assisting the enemy are clear and those who do so bear full responsibility for any action that may be taken against them.*⁷³

Sinn Féin: 'Constitutional Nationalists'

The aim across all of these statements is to insure the relevance of the group, and their armed campaign. Across each of the themes, they claim the peace process to have failed with no significant positive political changes. The majority of blame for this has been directed at their former comrades in Sinn Féin. They are depicted as having abandoning their republican principles, in exchange for 'constitutional nationalism.' Through their political engagement in Stormont and beyond they are described as being active servants of the British state. This in turn is utilised as a contrast to the dissidents' own retention of the armed campaign.

The IRA has played its part in recent years by rebuilding, rearming and refocusing efforts to build a sustainable military campaign...At the same time

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Constitutional Nationalists and former Republicans that abandoned the IRA oath and constitution, dine with British royals and implement British rule.⁷⁴

Across each of the existing themes the dissidents aim to differentiate themselves from Sinn Féin. On a national level, their key condemnation of Sinn Féin is that their politicisation has brought a united Ireland in no way closer.

In recent years the establishment of a free and independent Ireland has suffered setbacks due to the failure among the leadership of Irish nationalism and fractures within republicanism. The root cause of conflict in our country is the subversion of the nation's inalienable right to self-determination and this has yet to be addressed. Instead the Irish people have been sold a phony peace, rubber-stamped by a token legislature in Stormont.⁷⁵

On a local level, they assert that the party no longer protect, represent or care for the working-class republican populations of Ireland.⁷⁶ In relation to the prisoners, they blame Sinn Féin for the ‘inflicting this degradation on republican prisoners.’⁷⁷ The overarching message they wish to put forward is that British occupation is strengthened by modern day Sinn Féin. They assert that in a post-peace process Northern Ireland that Sinn Féin has stifled any internal debate in republicanism. It is their opinion that this has led to the criminalisation of dissidence.

Óglaigh na hÉireann condemn the attempts by former comrades to intimidate and silence debate among Republicans on the policing issue and we further view their attempts to portray themselves as victims of Republican threats for what they are, an attempt to distract their own base from the inevitability of their eventual capitulation to British and Unionist preconditions.⁷⁸

They depict Sinn Féin as having abandoned any historical mandate they may have once had, in exchange for political power. They take their seats in a British parliament, support a British police force operating in Ireland, and dine and shake hands with a British monarch. This political engagement with Britain now provides greater credence to the dissident notion of historical legitimisation. In their eyes they are the only ones left carrying the torch.

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*History has shown us that compromise with the British on the issue of national sovereignty has always resulted in those who have compromised condemning those who continue to uphold and defend Irish sovereignty.*⁷⁹

If the 'IRA/New IRA' is to have any chance of surviving, let alone succeeding, they are aware that it is imperative that they differentiate themselves from the republican alternative in Sinn Féin. Without this differentiation from mainstream republicanism, their claims will continue to fall on deaf ears. For the most part the content of the modern day dissident statements is indistinguishable from those of the former Provisional comrades, who they now castigate. This is a very deliberate strategy. It is to reflect that recurring theme that nothing has changed since the peace process, that the political process has not brought the advent of a united Ireland any closer. This is to emphasize that the rationale for armed action throughout the Troubles, still exists today. The key difference with the modern day justification is that now the politicisation of Provisional republicanism is regarded as further justification of sustained armed action. This is reflective of the Provisional condemnation of the politicising Official IRA in the early 1970s.⁸⁰

When legitimising their own activity, the dissidents do not miss an opportunity to condemn the policies and actions of the Provisionals. In doing so they are attempting to extoll their own republican purity. For them it is an irrelevance that the vast majority of the republican community has long ago distanced themselves from the utility of force. In fact, they attempt to present this as a positive. They wear their lonesome adherence to armed activity as a badge of honour.

*A resurgent republicanism will demonstrate to both governments and the international community that the destruction of the Provisional movement was the liberation of Irish republicanism.*⁸¹

While the fostering of distrust in Sinn Féin is dominant across their narrative, it will be worthwhile to monitor whether this is retained in the coming years. Recalling the 'introspection of dissidence,' there is now a widening call for the groups to be

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focusing less on the negative aspects of their republican opposition and more on their own internal critique.

The 'Free-State' Capitalist Establishment

The disdain towards 'British occupation,' the PSNI and Sinn Féin is well documented. However, what is not as regularly acknowledged is the dissident opposition to both the Republic of Ireland and capitalism. In their statements the groups regularly refer derogatorily to the 'Free State,'⁸² or the 26 counties. For them the existence of the Republic of Ireland, alongside the attitude and actions of its politicians, continues to promote the partition of the island of Ireland.

The VDR statements depict an Irish state, actively assisting the British by 'interning' dissident republicans. As with the Catholic and nationalist PSNI officers, they are equally seen as being traitors to Ireland. However, the condemnation of the Republic does not just stop with its politicians. It is claimed that other members of the 'Free State establishment,' namely the media and the Catholic Church, assist in these attacks on dissidents. The claims are repeated time and again, that the media present lies about the dissidents so as to support the government's policies.⁸³ This is an attempt to further emphasise the perception of dissident victimisation. The narrative aims to develop a distrust of the institutions, north and south of the border, which condemn the retention of paramilitary activity.

This past year has also saw republicanism under a level of attack from the Church, State and Media that has not been witnessed for many years... Again the Catholic Church has entered the fray on the side of capitalism, conservatism and the status quo, this is to be expected. We would advise the church to clean up their own back yard before commenting on others. They should take the plank out of their own eyes before worrying themselves about the splinters in others. It is perhaps a small mercy that the church is no longer a major player in forming opinions in Irish society.⁸⁴

Due to the recent downturn in the Irish economy, this critique has been accentuated by what the groups portray as the ills of capitalism. The Irish recession has led to the necessity for the country to be bailed out, and extreme national budgetary measures to

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be taken. Through their actions and statements, the dissidents have attempted to capitalise on the resultant discontent and anger. This led to a number of attacks on financial institutions by the pre-merger RIRA. They justified this by claiming that it was to demonstrate that “while the Irish national and class struggles are distinct, they are not separate.”⁸⁵ This disdain for the ‘capitalist establishment’ has also seen them piggyback on a number of burgeoning protest movements across Ireland, most notably the anti-austerity and anti-water charge movements. They claim that these actions are to fight for the working class people of Ireland who have been abandoned by both the state and Sinn Féin.⁸⁶ They claim that their aim is not just to achieve a united Ireland, but a united socialist Ireland.

*The occupation of the six counties by an Imperialist power is mirrored now in the 26 counties by an administration that is directed by the IMF. The power wielded by both imperialism and capitalism in Ireland is an impediment to the Republic envisioned by Connolly, Lator, Pearse and Tone.*⁸⁷

While analysts regularly ignore these dissident criticisms of capitalism, they play a dominant role in the VDR narrative. It provides them with an opportunity to expand their appeal, beyond the traditional republican communities and into left-wing anti-capitalist populations. At a time of protest, both nationally and internationally, this may be seen as a cynical attempt to associate their movement with this rising tide of discontent.

Conclusion

If the ‘IRA/New IRA,’ and their affiliates, are to have any success in maintaining, or even intensifying, their paramilitary campaign it is vital that they build on their depleted support base. The statements analysed here play a key role in the development of this. Through their publication, the groups are attempting to foster trust in their existence, tactics and strategies, while simultaneously fostering distrust in those they define as their enemies. The assessment of these statements provides us with an opportunity to understand how the groups aim to develop. The insight gained can also assist any development of a counter-narrative, to deter engagement with these groups, and their armed action. These counter-narratives must be carefully designed and delivered, with a key understanding of the internal debate within the

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groups themselves. There must be an awareness of the importance not only of the message, but its delivery. If it is to be effective, it must be delivered through a medium that the intended audience both trusts and respects. One would expect that these trusted voices would not come from ‘mainstream’ republicanism. It is more likely that the trusted counter-narratives to VDR activity will come from the non-violent dissident republicans. It will not be their role to counter the narrative of dissent. What needs to be countered is the manifestation of this dissent in violence.

These VDR statements provide us with an opportunity to predict the next steps of the groups, and therefore allow us to prepare for these eventualities. This is most noted with respect to the merger itself. As was demonstrated when discussing the ‘introspection of dissidence’ the statements of the RIRA and 32CSM were pointing to the possibility of a merger, a number of years prior to its eventual manifestation in 2012. Throughout their statements the groups are continuously pointing out their intended strategies, tactics and targets. This should inform counter-paramilitary strategies both, locally and nationally. It can also direct us towards understanding the internal debates within the movement and therefore prepare us for any future strategic or tactical shifts, either positive or negative.

The analysis of the messages portrayed in the statements should only be considered as the first step. In order to achieve a better understanding, it is imperative to also assess their effect on internal and external audiences. Future analysis should find methodologically rigorous, and ethical, ways of assessing the power of these statements. This research should question whether the battery of statements has any effect in informing, or shaping, people’s opinions and actions. This research should question whether the statements succeed in generating trust in the ‘IRA/New IRA,’ and distrust in their opposition. Their effectiveness, or lack thereof, should never be taken for granted.

This research project will expand to include an analysis of the public narratives of the wider VDR community. This will include analysis of the statements of CIRA, ONH and their relevant partners. In order to gain the most complete understanding of the republican narrative this will all then be compared with the equivalent statements of Sinn Féin. This future analysis will take into account VDR statements pre-2007. This

will allow the assessment of whether the rhetoric of the groups had changed significantly in the aftermath of Sinn Féin's support of the PSNI.

The island of Ireland is in the midst of a decade of centenaries.⁸⁸ It is clear, that the VDR groups aim to take advantage of this time of remembrance, in order to legitimise their armed existence. Theirs is not a threat, which will dissipate with the passing of 2016. Their statements and actions indicate that they are here to stay. While they do not pose the persistent danger of their Provisional predecessors, they possess the intention and ability to both maim and disrupt. Academics and practitioners alike must not lose sight of this, and must continue in their endeavour to both understand and counter the threat.

¹ "New IRA: Full Statement by the Dissident 'Army Council,'" *The Guardian*, July 26, 2012, Accessed August 1, 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jul/26/ira-northern-ireland-dissident-republican-groups>

² John F. Morrison. *The Origins and Rise of Dissident Irish Republicanism: The Role and Impact of Organizational Splits*. (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014) 195-201

³ This article does not have the opportunity to discuss the VDR threat. For in-depth analysis see John F. Morrison (see note 2 above); John Horgan, *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Martyn Frampton, *Legion of the Rearguard*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010); Sophie. A. Whiting, *Spoiling the Peace? The Threat of Dissident Republicans to Peace in Northern Ireland*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); John Horgan and John F. Morrison, "Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23, no.4, 2011, 642-669

⁴ Henry McDonald, "Dissident Republican Terror Attack Highly Likely, say Northern Ireland Police," *The Guardian*, October 1, 2015, Accessed October 5, 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/oct/01/dissident-republican-terror-attack-likely-police>

⁵ For the remainder of the article the group will be referred to as 'The IRA/New IRA.'

⁶ "'The IRA' Claim Responsibility for the Murder of David Black," *The Journal.ie*, November 12, 2012. Accessed October 4, 2015 <http://www.thejournal.ie/the-ira-claim-responsibility-murder-david-black-671949-Nov2012/>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ *The Guardian* (see note 1 above)

⁹ Malachi O'Doherty, "Punishment Attacks: The Fear of Irrelevancy Drives Paramilitary Vigilantism" *Belfast Telegraph*, November 4, 2014, Accessed August 1, 2015 <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/debateni/punishment-attacks-the-fear-of-irrelevancy-drives-paramilitary-vigilantism-30714459.html>

¹⁰ "Statement Issued by the New IRA (13/10/13)," *YouTube*, October 13, 2013, Accessed May 1, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpXXQRkIRNE>

¹¹ Andrew Silke, "Rebel's Dilemma: The Changing Relationship Between the IRA, Sinn Féin and Paramilitary Vigilantism in Northern Ireland" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 11, no.1, (1999), 55-93

- ¹² The two other most active VDR groups are the Continuity IRA (CIRA) and Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH)
- ¹³ This project is self-funded and has at no stage received any external funding
- ¹⁴ May Beth Altier, John Horgan and Christian Thoroughgood, “In Their Own Words? Methodological Considerations in the Analysis of Terrorist Autobiographies,” *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(5), no.4, 2012, 85-98.
- ¹⁵ Andrew Silke, “The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 13, no.4, 2001, 1-14
- ¹⁶ Marc Sageman, “The Stagnation in Terrorism Research,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26, no.4, 2014, 565-580.
- ¹⁷ Ibid
- ¹⁸ Ibid
- ¹⁹ Alex P. Schmid, “50 Un-and Under-Researched Topics in the Field of (Counter-) Terrorism Studies,” *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 5, no.1, 76-78.
- ²⁰ Jonathan Matusitz, *Terrorism and Communication a Critical Introduction*, (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013) 1
- ²¹ Donald Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine: The Framing and Evolution of the Leadership’s Public Discourse*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014)
- ²² See Kurt Braddock and John Horgan, “Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counternarratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116277
- ²³ John F. Morrison (see note 2 above)
- ²⁴ See for example Laura Filardo-Llamas, “‘Committed to the Ideals of 1916.’ The Language of Paramilitary Groups: The Case of the Irish Republican Army,” *Critical Discourse Studies*, 10, no.1, 1-17
- ²⁵ Sophie A. Whiting, “‘The Discourse of Defence’: ‘Dissident’ Irish Republican Newspapers and the ‘Propaganda War,’” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24, no.3, 2012, 483-503
- ²⁶ The 32CM newspaper is *Sovereign Nation* and the RSF newspaper is *Saoirse*
- ²⁷ RSF is the political wing of the CIRA
- ²⁸ The importance of this historical mandate was particularly significant in relation to the publications in *Saoirse*.
- ²⁹ For a detailed introduction to grounded theory see Kathy Charmaz, “Grounded Theory.” In Jonathan A. Smith (ed.) *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods: Second Edition*, (London: Sage, 2008), 81-110.
- ³⁰ John Horgan and John F. Morrison (2011), (see note 3 above)
- ³¹ Ibid
- ³² This is the Irish for ‘Shout Out’
- ³³ Roe 4 in Maghaberry and E3/4 in Portlaoise are where the prisoners of the ‘IRA/New IRA’ are housed.
- ³⁴ This stage of analysis was carried out as these were seen to be the two over-arching tactics used by the groups in their legitimisation process
- ³⁵ Insert Holbrook reference
- ³⁶ New IRA: Full Statement by the dissident ‘Army Council’. July 26 (2012). Accessed July 23, 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jul/26/ira-northern-ireland-dissident-republican-groups1>
- ³⁷ See note 1
- ³⁸ Statement Issued in the Name of the Irish Republican Army (‘new IRA’) 2014 Accessed July 23 2015 http://republican-news.org/current/news/2014/04/easter_statements_2014.html#.VbDhxEJR2M4

³⁹ Whiting, 2012 (see note 24 above)

⁴⁰ New IRA (see note 1 above)

⁴¹ “Statement Issued in the Name of the Irish Republican Army (‘new IRA’) 2014”, *Irish Republican News*, Accessed July 23 2015 http://republican-news.org/current/news/2014/04/easter_statements_2014.html#.VbDhxEJR2M4

⁴² Marian Price, *Derry 32CSM Easter Commemoration: 32CSM Easter Oration*, April 13, 2009. Accessed July 14, 2015 <http://www.derry32csm.com/2009/04/derry-32csm-easter-commemoration.html>

⁴³ *IRA Easter Statement 2011*, April 25, 2011. Accessed August 23, 2015 <http://www.derry32csm.com/2011/04/ira-easter-statement-2011.html>

⁴⁴ For a range of accounts on the 1981 hunger strikes see Richard O’Rawe, *Blanketmen*, (Dublin, New Island, 2005); David Beresford, *Ten Men Dead*, (London: Harper Collins, 1987); Thomas Hennessy, *Hunger Strike: Margaret Thatcher’s Battle with the IRA: 1980-1981*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2014)

⁴⁵ Irish Prisoners Welfare Association, *Statement from Roe 4 Republican Prisoners Maghaberry 17/07/15*, Accessed August 2, 2015, <http://irpwa.com/statement-from-roe-4-republican-prisoners-maghaberry-170715/>

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ John F. Morrison, “A Time to Talk, a Time to Think: Irish Republican Prisoners in the Northern Irish Peace Process,” in Andrew Silke (ed.) *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. (London: Routledge, 2014, 75-86

⁴⁸ “Editorial”, *Scairt Amach*, Summer 2015, 1

⁴⁹ “A Necessary Evil?” *Scairt Amach*, Summer 2015, 13-14

⁵⁰ *Text of ‘real’ Irish Republican Army (RIRA) Easter Statement*, 13 April 2009. Accessed July 23, 2015 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/ira/rira130409.htm>

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² *Oglaigh na hEireann Easter Statement (2010)*. April 7, 2010. Accessed July 26 2015 <http://32csmfermanagh.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/oglaigh-na-heireann-ira-vows-to-step-up.html>

⁵³ “‘Only Way to Eradicate Drugs Scourge is to Remove the Dealers,’” *Derry Journal*, August 18, 2009, Accessed July 12, 2015 <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/only-way-to-eradicate-drugs-scourge-is-to-remove-the-dealers-1-2139827>

⁵⁴ *Irish Republican Army Statement*, October 13, 2013. Accessed August 1, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpXXQRkIRNE>

⁵⁵ This is also part of the overall introspection of dissidence

⁵⁶ *Scairt Amach* (see note 48 above)

⁵⁷ “Criminals and Crime,” *Scairt Amach*, Autumn 2015, 5

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the Brownie letters see Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*. (London, Penguin Books, 2002), 150-152 and 169-170

⁵⁹ *Oglaigh na hEireann New Year Message 2007 (RIRA)*, January 6, 2007, Author’s personal collection

⁶⁰ John F. Morrison (see note 2 above)

⁶¹ This was not an issue addressed by RAAD pre-merger as they were presenting themselves as a non-political entity

⁶² *Oglaigh na hEireann New Year Message 2007* (see note 58 above)

⁶³ *IRA Easter Statement 2011*, (see note 41 above)

⁶⁴ Oration by Gary Donnelly for Easter Commemoration in Derry. Easter 2015, April 7, 2015. Accessed May 5 2015 <https://julianichim.wordpress.com/2015/04/07/oration->

[by-gary-donnelly-for-easter-commemoration-in-derry/](#) Last Accessed August 6, 2015

⁶⁵ *Scairt Amach* (see note 47 above)

⁶⁶ Suzanne Breen, "Former Provos Claim Kerr Murder and Vow More Attacks," *Belfast Telegraph*, April 22, 2011. Accessed July 1 2015

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/former-provos-claim-kerr-murder-and-vow-more-attacks-28610456.html>

⁶⁷ *32CSM Easter Statement*, April 26 2011. Accessed July 22, 2015

<http://thefivedemands.org/specials/pasqua-2011-easter-statements/#Bookmark6>

⁶⁸ "The Prisoners View: Selectivity-British Tactics and Targeting," *Scairt Amach*, Winter 2015, 16

⁶⁹ *IRA Easter Statement 2011*, (see note 41 above)

⁷⁰ *32CSM Easter Statement, April 26th, 2011*. Accessed May, 9, 2015

(<http://thefivedemands.org/specials/pasqua-2011-easter-statements/#Bookmark6>)

⁷¹ *IRA Easter Statement 2011*, (see note 41 above)

⁷² <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/law-or-masked-thugs-1-2961136>

⁷³ *Oglaigh na hEireann New Years Statement 2008*, January 7, 2008. Author's personal collection

⁷⁴ *Statement Issued in the Name of the Irish Republican Army ('new IRA') 2014*, April 26, 2014 Accessed July 23, 2015 http://republican-news.org/current/news/2014/04/easter_statements_2014.html#.VbDhxEJR2M4) Last Accessed July 23rd 2015

⁷⁵ New IRA: Full Statement (See note 1 above)

⁷⁶ "We will Defend our Community': RAAD" *Derry Journal*, July 13, 2011.

Accessed May 11, 2015 <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/we-will-defend-our-community-raad-1-2856060>

⁷⁷ *32CSM New Year Statement 2011*. January 3, 2011. Accessed July 7, 2016

<http://jimlarkinrnf.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/32csm-2011-new-year-statement.html>

⁷⁸ *Oglaigh na hEireann New Year Message 2007* (see note 58 above)

⁷⁹ *RIRA Easter Statement 2007* (see note 49 above)

⁸⁰ Morrison, 2014, 39-84 (see note 2 above)

⁸¹ *32CSM New Year Statement 2010*. January 1, 2010. Accessed May 17, 2015

<http://southarmagh32.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/32csm-new-year-statement-2010.html>

⁸² 'The Free State' refers to the 26 county state which was established under the Anglo Irish Treaty of 1921. It was in existence between 1922 and 1937 before the adoption of new constitution of Ireland in 1937. It is still used as a term by the dissidents today to portray that the Irish government has abandoned the six counties of Northern Ireland.

⁸³ *Oglaigh na hEireann New Years Statement 2009*, December 31, 2008. Accessed July 23, 2015 <http://saoirse32.dreamwidth.org/3891871.html>

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Henry McDonald. "Real IRA Admits Bomb Attacks on Northern Ireland Banks." *The Guardian*, October 25, 2011 Accessed August 7, 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/oct/25/real-ira-admits-attacks-banks>

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ *32CSM New Year Statement 2012*, December 30, 2011. Accessed July 14, 2015

<http://www.32csm.net/2011/12/32csm-new-year-statement-2012.html>

⁸⁸ John F Morrison (see note 2 above)