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DECENTRALIZATION AND VIOLENCE

by

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B.A./M.S. Florida State University, 2010

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Politics, Security and International Affairs
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Major Professor: Thomas Dolan

ABSTRACT

How does the political environment that a group operates affect whether they engage in terrorism? My research is concerned with how political opportunities, which I conceptualize in terms of political decentralization, affect how groups engage with the state, and whether they will engage in terrorism. Previous research has indicated that decentralization can reduce violence but can pose stability problems in other countries. I hypothesize that states with higher levels of decentralization will have lower levels of violence. I believe this works by allowing minority groups more access to power. Because they have access to political power, there is less incentive to use violence to achieve their political goals. This project is tested with a large-N study of democratic countries. I also engaged in two case studies focused on Northern Ireland and Spain, looking at the IRA and ETA, respectively. These two case studies trace the effect of changing levels of centralization on the behavior of minority groups. This study finds that political opportunities often lead to less violence in the long-term. Decentralization is one way of achieving this. However, sometimes decentralization may not work because it could take away rights from minorities; while in other cases, even after decentralization begins to take place, it can take a while for changes to take hold. Both the Northern Ireland and Spanish cases show that it is not always so simple as just saying decentralization will take place, or that it has begun.

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CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO DECENTRALIZATION AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

By studying political violence, we understand that violence is just one extreme of the continuum of tools groups have at their disposal in order to make themselves heard. Sometimes groups engage in terrorism. When is it that a group's rates of attack are determined by the political opportunities they can engage in? Are groups that feel aggrieved and left out of participating in local politics turn to terrorism?

Since the September 11th attacks terrorism research has increased dramatically. However, terrorism research still suffers from several debates such as how terrorism should be defined, how groups form and end, why groups engage in terrorism, and whether democracies face more or less terrorism than other countries. It is puzzling that in States where groups begin to see opportunities for participation open up to them, there are groups that still engage in terrorism as opposed to non-violent forms of dissent. Sometimes this occurs in democracies under certain conditions such as those that are more centralized. In fact, some scholars are still divided whether democracies provide opportunities for some groups to engage in more or less terrorism. My research is concerned with how decentralizing and opening up political opportunities for more groups may decrease terrorism incidents. Specifically, whether particular branches that make up the political process model in social movements theory can help explain the groups' attack rate. I argue that political opportunities are important and may help understand a group's turn to more lethal attacks (Della Porta 2013). I will focus on the political process model, mainly political opportunities, or the openness a State provides its citizens to participate in. One of the issues is determining how political opportunity structures impact a group and how they engage in

violence within a particular State. This problem can be situated anywhere we have seen groups like ETA in Spain that have – both a political wing and violent arm – and are part of a broader independence movement. This research then will have a focus on domestic terror groups.

Domestic terrorism according to Enders, Sandler and Gaibulloev (2011) is “the premeditated use or threat to use violence by subnational groups against non-combatants for a political or social objective by intimidating an audience beyond its victims”. By looking at the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) it is clear that there are many more domestic terror incidents, however, transnational terrorism gets more attention. I argue however, that engaging with the political opportunity structure literature may help understand why a group’s perceived frustrations may push the group towards the need to engage in terrorism as their choice of extreme political violence. Why some groups engage in violence is a topic that has received a lot of attention over the years, but more recently, social movements and terror research has begun to engage with one another to come up with clearer answers. Islamic activism (Wiktorowicz 2004) for example has become a large focus over the last decade; with social movements, and violence – like terrorism – being researched to address questions like why some groups choose violence. From a policy perspective engaging with the social movement research and those on terrorism may lead to better ideas about the groups that do engage in terrorism and how to counter their choice of violence. Although political violence will always exist on the spectrum of tools available to oppositional groups or some social movement participants; figuring out ways for mitigating this problem would be useful, in order to avoid groups that feel left out from becoming even more aggrieved and turning to violence.

Terrorism

There are several variations on how terrorism should be defined (Tilly 2004; Kydd and Walter 2006, 52), and arguments about group tactics and strategies of groups (Findley and Young 2015; Fortna 2015; Chenoweth 2010; Kydd and Walter 2006). There has also been work done on suicide attacks (Pape 2003), interactions with electoral processes (Chenoweth 2010), and also on whether terrorism works or is effective (Abrahms 2012; 2011). In defining terror, researchers have addressed it with respect to the means used, its aims, as well as its effects (Della Porta 2013). Ultimately any shared definition of terrorism still ends up focusing on the impact it has (instilling fear/terror), the targets selected (civilian/government/military), the nature of the group (revolutionary/secessionist) and the effect the group may be trying to exert (regime or policy change for example). This is problematic because it makes it harder to consolidate one conceptual definition that can provide for an accurate description of all occurrences. For example, the State Department defines terrorism as “politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (Ruby 2002). However, some academics like Tilly (2004) have indicated that “no useful generalization covers all the different sorts of political interaction” with which the many researchers both academic and policy oriented have used the terms terror, as well as terrorist and terrorism (9). Aside from the real harm inflicted directly, terrorism can serve as a strategy, able to bind itself to struggles of several kinds like redress, autonomy, or transfers of power (Tilly 2004). So, while terror can refer to a tactic that groups may be able to employ in a campaign, it may also serve as a short or long term strategy employed by the group among other violent or non-violent tactics. Additionally, not only can terrorism serve as a tactic and as a

strategy to engage in political violence, but it can serve to communicate and send costly signals by different state or non-state actors (Kydd and Walter 2006, 50). In this situation for example Kydd and Walter (2006) define terrorism as “the use of violence against civilians by non-state actors to attain political goals” (52). For those engaged in policy, terrorism serves as another tool for use by groups that wage asymmetrical warfare against a stronger opponent (Stewart 2014). Fortna (2015) defines it in the context of rebel groups in civil wars and indicates that terrorist rebel groups as those “who employ a systematic campaign of indiscriminate violence against public civilian targets to influence a wider audience”, with the ultimate goal of coercing the government to make concessions, including announcing defeat (522). While this is a situation where terrorism overlaps with civil war for example; the previous research discusses terrorism with respect to the tactics that some rebel groups engaged in a civil war employ. Without a more general agreeable upon definition scholars will continue to have to work on definitions that fit their work. (Hoffman 1998; Crenshaw 1981). Furthermore, most definitions have tried to define particular characteristics of terrorism such as “means, aims and effects”; and creating shared definitions have also led to different elements being defined such as a focus on the targets, audience and actors themselves (Della Porta 2013). In this case my definition will come from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and is the “threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation”. Further following their definition, the acts focused on here would need to be intentional, entail some level of violence or immediate threat of violence and the persons or group are sub-national actors.

Terrorism research has also referenced work on group dynamics such as “ideology, size, age, state sponsorship, alliance connections and control of territory” in asking why some groups are more lethal than others (Asal and Rethemeyer 2008). And although that work broke new ground, they also indicate that variables “like grievances or organizational structure” that have been used in explaining political mobilization previously are not widely available for terror studies (Asal and Rethemeyer 2008). However, by more closely focusing on the groups and their perception of their participation as societies become more open or inclusive, a better picture may emerge of the relationship between intensity of their attacks and the political opportunities around them. It has been suggested that some researchers tend to conflate collective action of a social movement with the actual organizations supporting the action, or the process leading to action (Tilly and Wood 2016; Della Porta 2013); the notion as other researchers have suggested is that terror organizations engaged in terrorism have become looser and more decentralized, better able to operate within social movements and not just a group that may or may not be part of the process.

Terrorism and Political Inclusion/Exclusion

In attempting to investigate and research terror groups and their initiation and evolution inside and outside of social movements, it would be useful to discuss some of the literature that scholars are writing about with respect to terror groups and political opportunity structures. Typically one would associate social movements as attempts by “outsiders” to gain influence in politics, which could lead one to believe that more democracy would also lead to less social movement activity as there are legitimate ways for outsiders to participate in typically; however,

“social movements and protest tactics are more often part of a portfolio of efforts by groups to influence politics” (Goldstone 2004, 333).

Social Movements are “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” which are also considered part of the broader area of contentious politics (Marsden 2016, 753; Tarrow 1998, 4). Social movements sometimes are known by the alternative forms of action they engage in. Within this area of contentious politics we begin to see that violence is a key component available to all groups and organizations, whether they engage in it or not. For example, Hazen (2009) indicates that “Violence represents the upper extreme of protest options available to organizations”. In this case it is important to note the connection then that terrorism is a form of political violence. By linking domestic groups and the violence they engage in we can start to get a better idea of how some groups perceive their existence inside or outside political opportunity structures, reacting differently or similarly to the contentious nature of their environment. Political violence involves mixing several actions that are concerned with [trying] to inflict “physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property” to the effect of exerting influence over different groups/governments in order to affect or resist “political, social, and/or cultural change” (Bosi and Malthaner 2014). Before proposing the relationship between intensity of attacks and political openness, it is best to define what is meant by intensity of attacks and what open political opportunity structures are. First I look to level of violence or what can also be called violence intensity. The intensity of violence could be low-level, moderate, or high based on the number of incidents in a given year. I propose that the relationship of these level of violence will be different depending on the level of openness of the

political opportunity structures that a terror group or organization may encounter in a particular state.

The relationship I am describing would look something like an inverted u. On the Y-axis we have the level of violence from low level violence to high levels of violence at the top. And on the X-axis having little openness as we move right on the axis we should see more openness. The upside-down u-shape then would indicate that at levels of less openness – like may be expected in more authoritarian regimes – we would see little to no attacks and thus less intense attacks. This could be the case because the State in one way or another such as using repression or lack of legitimate means of representation for its citizens – may lack the avenues for its citizens to properly participate. As groups begin to perceive their opportunities to open up there are more options with which groups have to operate and signal grievances or communicate. For example, as groups may perceive their chances of being more included through more chances at representation or perceive that their chance of inclusion will get better they may – at least until a certain threshold – consider different options, both legitimate – like social movements or protests – and non-legitimate – such as threats of violence or actual violence. As political opportunity structures become the most open, violence and violence intensity may begin to wane. In this case there is this concept of imperfect inclusion, where groups may be able to participate somewhat, but may be limited in different ways from fully being able to participate in political opportunities. So in different political opportunity structures, not every group is treated the same. This is the relationship – upside-down U-shape – that connects intensity and openness of political opportunity structures. As groups perceive more inclusiveness, they are able to engage in different forms – through violence and sometimes non-violence – however, as groups begin to

be included more and more, others may begin to emulate those that have had success which may come from signaling grievances and communicating their lack of perceived representation or inclusion in politics, but through less violent means. Some researchers have indicated that while democracies experience less terrorist attacks, they are more intense, while in other types of regimes, it may be that they see more frequent attacks but not as intense.

With relation to terrorism, social movement literature is able to provide some context to the collective action of some groups. For example, terror groups as has been noted are essentially collective actors or cells part of a much broader network such as a group attaching itself to some movement or terror network. Collective actors then may “also be responding to grievances, using institutional and organizational resources to muster support, and produce mobilization frames rooted in symbols, discourse, and practice, often designed to evoke a sense of injustice to encourage activism” (Wiktorowicz 2004, 3). Della Porta (2013) has noted that some sort of physical force is still possible from collective actors that may not necessarily be violent per se, however, the actions seek to damage a more or less visible adversary – the adversary being the state, or elements of the state. Some critiques from social movement scholars state that a lot of terrorism scholars are more counter-insurgency focused, trying to figure out how to come up with antiterrorist responses, while avoiding trying to understand the issue (Della Porta 2013; Schmid and Jongman 1988; Goodwin 2004). Most social movement organizations¹, identify their goals with those ideas of some social movement or counter-movement and tries to go forward with those goals (Hazen 2009). In this sense domestic terror groups may act much like

¹ A Social Movement Organization is a formally organized group that ‘identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals’ (Hazen 2009).

social movement organizations and another reason to look at terror group dynamics through the lens of the political process model.

Furthermore, it is possible that as political opportunities – such as wider representation or just the appearance of more participation such as inclusion or consideration in local elections – begin to open for groups/organizations, the State or even the groups themselves begin to build up expectations of what those opportunities should and will look like. However, they may be setting themselves up to be let down when more “openness” does not lead to more opportunities but only imperfect inclusion. This imperfect inclusion where groups in a particular state are treated differently, and some groups may be seen as having full access to political opportunities while others are either sidelined or only have access in limited ways reach a level of frustration for the group that may lead them to turn to forms of extreme violence like terror attacks. Not only has some research indicated it is the case that some groups that are maligned more likely to engage in violence Kitschelt (1986), but that countries discriminating against minority groups tend to experience more domestic terror attacks as the political systems of a State open up (Ghatak 2016). This would signal their displeasure with what appeared to be more opportunities for participation in their State. As noted above though, the relationship goes from mostly no violence due to State repression on the group to more violence as the group begins to actually be included – however imperfectly. The violence begins to wane again as the levels of openness reach levels where the group can see that non-violence may be more effective for airing their grievances, especially if they see other groups either not gaining concessions by using terror tactics or realize that they may be more effective now that the group may begin to be more equally accepted. Just as several scholars have noted, Asal (2008) among them indicate that “organization age is

important for lethality and effectiveness”, that it allows for “learning and adaptation” (440). This leads terror groups to reach a point in their organizational life, and a level of participation in their state where they learn and adapt to realize that their violence is no longer leading to the lethality and effectiveness that they previously had, irrespective of the resources available to them. This is because they can then focus the resources at their disposal to the other non-violent tactics that may be more effective in a State where “openness” is high enough where the group is no longer imperfectly included but equally included.

Asal provides several hypotheses touched on in the terrorism literature that may indicate several factors for a group’s lethality from ethnonationalism to religion, ideology, as well as the ability to hold territory, and choice of audience. While these factors surely play a role in group lethality according to Asal (2008), there is something missing. There is a focus in some cases with regards to resource mobility and “capacity” as well as connectedness. However, how important are resource mobility and capacity or connectedness if the group perceives they are unable to participate – at least in some fashion – in meaningful, non-violent ways. It may be the case that those organizations repressed by their home State will also be more likely to use violence (Asal 2014, 812); however, just as groups are able to change and evolve, so too are the home State of the organization. What I mean here is that groups will adapt and evolve based on their particular situation. So depending on the State’s repressive capacity, as well as their bureaucratic capacity some political opportunities may open up to organizations, that were previously not. Supporting this is Enders and Sandler (2006) indicating that minimizing a terrorists’ political engagements may be counterproductive, discouraging non-violence and leading to more violence (9). Specifically, Enders and Sandler (2006) note that terror groups

have to shift resources around between those meant for terror attacks and their legitimate means of gaining political points, and actually achieving political goals. After all terror attacks are in many cases the most costly ways to signal displeasure or grievances. Asal, Schulzke and Pate (2014) write that with respect to organizations and the State, that terror research has shown (Enders and Sandler 2006) that groups want power and achieve this through bypassing regular political channels. I argue differently here. It is not that groups are ‘bypassing’ regular channels of dissent, but that the very channels that are open to most other for dissent are either not available to them, or do not work for them as they do for other organizations that take care to use those regular channels.

In general there is contention on which regime types may lead to more violence by a group or not. In some cases the argument goes that democracies may be more vulnerable to terror attacks in particular situations (Enders & Sandler 2006; Kydd and Walter 2006; Art and Richardson 2007). While other scholars note that with more open opportunity structures, democracies become less vulnerable to attacks (Crenshaw 1981; Schmid 1992). This is important to my research, because I believe that regime type plays an important role. It may be different for particular groups depending on the type of regime, but also the strength of that regime type. In a State for example, where a certain regime type is weaker – less bureaucratic capacity and possibly less repressive capacity than previously held, an organization may be more willing to use violence as opportunity structures become more open. However, even in regime types that have fairly open opportunity structures a group may still engage in violence if they are not included as equally as other organizations. Furthermore, if opportunity structures reach certain openness levels then there may be more circumstances where the group has no need to engage in

violence or resists using it, because they do have available to them regular channels of dissent that they may not have had access to previously.

Previously research has alluded to the links between political opportunity structures to the number of attacks (Ghatak 2016); my goal is to compare the intensity of lethality between groups that do engage in violence based on the opportunity structures that they are faced with as well as the capacity of the state – repressive and bureaucratic. Gleditsch (2010) takes social movement theory apart some to focus on political opportunity structures, democracy and civil war. Additionally, Marsden (2016) creates a typology more closely related to my topic combining social movement theory and terrorism. Marsden’s typology incorporates both organizational characteristics and wider political context, highlighting the importance of ‘militant group’ context in their ‘socio-political settings’ (750). Some of the social movement literature – which more purely focus on collective action and those engaged in it, but not always the violence that comes from some extreme groups, highlights good ways forward to enhance the security studies and terror literature. Scholars may not typically connect terror studies with social movement literature and vice versa, but in terms of engaging both literatures: terror studies may be missing the larger picture while getting bogged down on individual details, while social movement researchers seem to focused on the details but not stepping back enough to see the larger picture. From the latter examples I note that a concept that could be central is the role that political opportunity structures play.

Political Process Model

Political opportunity structures are one branch of what is known as the Political Process model or political process theory. While the other branches – resource mobilization and framing may play a part in mobilizing a social movement. For this particular project and to better enhance work on terror groups I will focus on political opportunity structures. This is helpful to get a better understanding at the initiation of groups and the nature of open or closed opportunities or spheres that these groups encounter. This is also helpful to see how these groups evolve within States with open political opportunity structures as well as those with limited or no opportunities. These ideas were cemented by works from McAdam (1982) connecting three factors: political opportunities, indigenous organizational strength and cognitive liberation; with political opportunities translating to “any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured” (41). In this regard political opportunities may not necessarily work directly, changing the level of power between the target and the oppositional group. Discussing political opportunity structures Della Porta and Diani (2006) note that “even narrow interest groups face the problem of adapting their strategies and tactics to changing environments, as the context in which they operate may become more or less favorable”. In choosing to focus on the political opportunity structures or openness it is important to focus on the continuum from closedness to openness of States (Rootes 1999,2; Kitschelt 1986, 59). In fact Kitschelt (1986) indicates that these political opportunity structures function as “filters” for the mobilization of the movement/group and its choice and capacity to engage to change the social environment; what Crenshaw (1981) may be call preconditions and precipitants. Referring to political opportunities structures as “structures” has

been problematic according to Roots (1999), however, some scholars have tried to further clarify this by distinguishing between the formal structures of the state, informal procedures and strategies used to deal with opposition, and configuration of power in the system (Kriesi 1995; Kriesi, Koopmans, et al. 1992, 1995). Other scholars have gone further at least in security studies to address some shortcoming like addressing distinguishing political opportunity structures as phases (Gleditsch 2010, 302).

Political opportunity structures – specifically their openness or closedness – may well explain their turn to more lethal terror tactics or strategies. These are the types of factors that provide context in the rise, life and ending of terror groups. It is, I argue, the openness and limitedness of these political opportunities that pull or push on a groups behavior – in their attacks to try and be more deadly or less. For example Kitschelt (1986) notes that “access to the public sphere and political decision-making are governed by institutional rules,” these rules are what mold and permit demands of groups that are not [yet] “accepted as political actors” (61-63). The influences acting on the group here are the openness or limitedness of the political opportunities and whether groups perceive themselves as being able to participate in them or not. A closer look at these conditions and availability of opportunities for different groups would be helpful in understanding how these groups engage with states, which opportunities are available or limited, and whether those groups feel they are able to participate or they are less favored. Some may say resources are also part of the puzzle – resources are – however, it is the “elements in the environment that impose certain constraints on political activity or opens avenues for it” (Eisinger 1973). For terror groups their behavior is not made up of only resources they may have but of the “openings, weak spots, and barriers of the political system itself” (Eisinger 1973). I

argue as Kitschelt (1986) has noted that political opportunity structures may not completely shape the path of movements but can explain different elements about groups with similar demands and different settings (58). Some groups may have some ability to participate in political opportunities in the state but even if those opportunities are open, limited, or closed off, the group may take different approaches as the opportunities become open or closed. The openness/closedness of these political opportunity structures, as well as their visibility to groups may help put into context the violence that they engage in.

Two factors stand out as important throughout the political process model. One, is the openness or closedness of the political opportunity structures that groups face. The other, is the participation of that group in their States' political processes. One way of looking at political opportunity structures could be through the mechanisms in a state that allow for more or less participation of different groups. This may be related to the role that devolution – political and administrative – that are present in a state. For example in certain democracies such as the United States, the level of devolution may vary slightly in each state from to the local level; however, from the federal to the state level, it is safe to say that there is a high level of devolution. On the other hand some other democratic countries may experience more varying levels of devolution. For example in India, their constitution provides for devolution from the center out to the respective states, however, at a more local level not so much. Another form that political opportunity structures can take may be the party structures that some states have, whether that is a two-party system, or a multi-party system.

Terror groups do not just exist in a vacuum. Terror groups also operate in states with different environments and those environments sometimes involve participation in political

processes, social movements, etc. Some groups engaged in terrorism sometimes are part of a broader movement – such as ethnonationalists, while others have no movement to be a part of or may choose to separate themselves from any movement. Some groups may experience allies in the forms of other groups and individuals that may have differing levels of influence. Social movements are a vehicle for messages to get carried out. For example a domestic group engaging in terror tactics may provide the signals or messages non-violent groups in society cannot or will not engage in. These signals or messages come in the form of terror attacks and the intensity of those attacks. At the same time, being part of a broader movement may act as a filter for some domestic groups willing to engage in violence to get messages or policies changed their violence would not otherwise do. These kinds of considerations really affect group incentives and frame their behavior in some ways. While being a part of a broader movement may provide incentives to hold off on engaging in violence since there may be several actors trying to reach the same goals or attempting to make some kind of change in a particular arena. There may be outlets of participation within broader movements that may satisfy a group or individuals enough to avoid engaging in violence, especially terrorism when political opportunities are most open to them. It may be that without the helpfulness of other organizations or groups which are not completely excluded from participating, some groups may become frustrated at their access – or lack of – to political opportunities.

The second factor mentioned above as being important is the idea of openness of political opportunities for groups. Before moving on it would be useful to have a definition of political opportunity structures before discussing something like their openness and closedness. Political opportunity structures are “consistent – but not necessarily formal; permanent or national –

dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action” (S. Tarrow 1994). This may be the regime as noted earlier, where we would expect more authoritarian States to be more repressive and quash any sort of participation by groups they do not want included. Tilly (1978) suggests national comparisons, recognizing changes in opportunities over time and that the opportunities themselves would help explain generally the selection of tactics from a spectrum of possibilities within a “repertoire of contention” (Meyer 2004). This fortifies my attention at looking at the openness and closedness of the political opportunities that groups may or may not encounter. Open political opportunities would be had when groups can have access to formal state institutions like the judiciary. When policies are such that they are inclusive for groups or at least neutral versus being exclusive. For example routine and meaningful avenues for success tend to dampen down protest because more direct routes to influence are available (Meyer 2004, 128). So the opening of opportunities is potentially good for groups in that there may be more opportunities to engage in politics that benefit them. These groups should see avenues for influence with less roadblocks than those groups facing imperfect inclusion. More open avenues for success in their wants is helpful in pushing groups towards more diplomatic forms of participation. The rockier the avenues become to access or traverse for the groups as a State becomes more open, then groups may become not just more willing to attack but more lethal in their attacks. In this context, closed opportunity structures are important as well. Groups experiencing closed opportunities would experience less access to institutions. But also, the groups are likely more encouraged by the lack of avenues for participation to engage in more extreme forms of protest, possibly reaching extreme violence.

Some groups may be so excluded or prevented from gaining access to opportunities or such a rough time navigating them that they may turn to more dramatic means of airing their grievances. There are some indications from social movement literature that political opportunities have been operationalized in different ways. In this case, I think it would be possible to relate the opportunity structure that groups face as the level of decentralization or devolution a state engages in. Typically and throughout most of the literature on devolution indicates that this can be separated into three branches: administrative, political, and financial devolution. This is important because the more decentralized a state becomes, the more opportunities at subnational levels for different groups to participate and engage in politics. The three branches are connected and as a whole they may provide a picture as to whether there is a good level of representation of different kinds of groups that may tend to be more excluded from participating in their state in more centralized states.

The main theme of decentralization among definitions is that it “includes the transfer of power and resources away from the central government” (Schneider 2003). For example, political decentralization refers to the degree to which central governments allow non-central government entities to undertake the political functions of governance, such as representation” (Schneider 2003, 33). Although all three concepts: administrative, fiscal and political decentralization are related in one form or another, the larger focus is on administrative and political decentralization, which tend to give a more accurate picture of policy control and representation at more local or sub-national levels. Though, I believe this concept of decentralization may capture the openness or closedness of political opportunities that groups encounter in a state and may help explain when there are more or less attacks as well as the

intensity of those attacks. By decentralizing, communities can exert greater influences on their local governments. In a way decentralizing helps to empower people at the local level. Either through creating local elections which allow them to either run as candidates or vote for those local representatives that are familiar with the issues and grievances some communities may experience. For example, the World Bank indicates that decentralization allows citizens at local levels to have a greater voice, and more of a choice when it comes to local decisions that will ultimately affect them². An example of this can be seen in some of Lijphart's work where he argues that "for a democracy to function well, it is critically important that a minority, particularly a sizeable one, can expect to be included in the majority at some point" (Lijphart 1977). By decentralizing a State is giving those at a local level, ways of being able to place emphasis more appropriately on needs and preferences important to them. This is so because them local communities may have more opportunities to control political, administrative and fiscal functions, which allow them to allocate money and services to those issues they prefer most. This decentralizing is also important because it would allow groups to feel like they are being represented where otherwise they would most likely ignored or not given as much access to these functions – administrative, political and fiscal – had they been done by the center, or central government. According to Lijphart (1977) if a minority group does not think it has an opportunity or chance of being included as part of the majority, it will not be able to be part of the decision making, leading that minority to appear as if it were becoming permanent; the only defense for this from their perspective to defend their interests may be to fight in the streets, leading to social instability. While the minority group(s) are not necessarily part of the center,

² <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment/brief/Decentralization>

they are still able to make some decisions, at least those important with respect to them. I expect this is the case because the center will be focused on the center or as a whole focused on national issues as opposed to more localized concerns. At the local level there may be communities that feel maligned or in fact are such as some ethnoterritorial communities like the Basques or Catalans for example. With regard to terrorism, decentralizing in a country may allow local communities to assuage their grievances and avoid taking to more violent forms of protest. Decentralizing may help with political stability, as well as bringing more efficiency to services at the local level³. For example, as it relates to political stability decentralization may be helpful – especially where there are ethnic or geographic divisions – because it allows oppositional groups into formal, rule-bound bargaining processes (The World Bank Group 1999/2000). One example of how this may help with a related situation is that decentralizing became an “instrument of deflating secessionist tendencies in Ethiopia and Bosnia and Herzegovina” (The World Bank Group 1999/2000).

Decentralization may then be an instrument that has helped tamp down terrorist violence in places like Spain with regards to ETA and the Basques. Moreover, as mentioned above decentralization – at least in democracies – allows sub-national levels of States to take control of issues that locally are important to those communities and areas or regions. They become more involved, by being able to participate in these now more open opportunities for access to government and involvement locally with influencing preferences that affect their needs. This is not to say that decentralization is some sort of silver bullet. Lijphart, also does not treat the

³ With the latter point I should point out that this is one of the more classic arguments for decentralization. However, there is little evidence of this, not because of contrary evidence but because the relationship between these concepts is complicated and difficult to prove.

emergence of consociational democracy as deterministic. Decentralization moreso brings slow success rather than one broad solution that is an end all be all but does more to bring favorable conditions for peace. For example, in the case of Spain decentralization didn't in one swoop bring down ETA completely, but over time may have helped undercut their successes, to the point that ETA is no longer functioning as it once did and has been dissolved⁴.

There has to be a level of freedom, or freedom of operation locally, or regionally in order for this to be effective. For example, in China decentralization has been has had “spectacular” performance on the one hand; under the supervision of the central government “they initiate, negotiate, implement divert and resist reforms, policies, rules and laws” (Xu 2006, 2). These decentralized regional governments “drive, influence, or hamper regional/national economic development and social stability, etc.” (Xu 2006, 2). However, the central government’s control is always substantial going so far as to appoint regional officials, which serve as instruments of the central government to induce regional officials to follow the center’s policies (Xu 2006). This is much different than decentralization where local leaders and government officials are elected locally and are supposed to be representing and be accountable to their local constituents. Politically, decentralization allows for more representation, as smaller groups or minority groups need less votes locally than they would nationally and are able to get seats and be able to participate and influence more at that local level.

⁴ ETA’s dissolution was made public – Wednesday May 2nd, 2018. A letter dated April 16th, published by Diario online newspaper declared ETA had “completely dissolved all its structures and ended its political initiative”.

Politically, decentralization allows for more representation, as smaller groups or minority groups need less votes locally than they would nationally and are able to get seats and be able to participate and influence more at that local level. Therefore, I contend that:

- ***Hypothesis:*** As the level of decentralization increases in a state, the number of terror attacks in that state are more likely to decrease.

In order to test my hypothesis I will take two different approaches that I will present over three subsequent chapters. First, I will try to test how the relationship between decentralization and the terror attacks exists in a quantitative way. The chapters that follow will involve case studies reflecting the relationship that I am describing. The case studies will first focus on terror groups like the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or New IRA in Northern Ireland, and also a focus on Euskadi Ta Atkatasuna (ETA) in Spain. These cases are selected for various reasons. One reason being that the groups were purportedly representing the voice of maligned communities. In the case of the IRA, nationalists who insisted on their own rule in Northern Ireland and incorporation with Ireland and away from London. In the case of ETA, a nation-state competing for self-rule, a nation-state with its own language and culture distinct from the center, and at odds with center over the decisions being delegated from the center. In the case of Spain, the delegation and decisions from the center were technically at odds with what the constitution had implemented in the comunidades autonomas created in the 1978 constitution. These “comunidades autonomas” or autonomous communities were established in order for their will to be expressed by and through the respective inhabitants of the communities or their political representatives. While the constitution in the Spanish case was considered an instance of

“devolutionary federalism” with local intermediate and central aspects, the model that has guided Spain has been more of a top-down federalism (Moreno 2010).

In the latter chapters I will trace the role devolution has played in opening up political opportunities and participation – or not – and how we may encounter terror where there are lower levels of devolution and less terror where devolution was increased. Specifically, looking at how decentralization affects terror group decisions on using violence in a qualitative way.

In the qualitative section I will attempt to test these cases by beginning to look for time periods when devolution was established or set up. However, I will also be looking for changes from that moment in time to see if over time these cases became more or less devolved. For example in the case of Northern Ireland, the state was devolved in 1921 through 1973 when home rule or direct rule took over from 1973 through 1997 where another change occurred and devolution was set up again after the Good Friday Agreement. I expect that at those moments where devolution is restricted or direct rule took over, that there will be greater instances of violence or terrorism than at those times when devolution was restored. Just as in Spain the 1978 constitution established “comunidades autonomas” or autonomous communities, I will look for changes over time where Spain’s “devolutionary federalism” turned into more of a top-down federalism. One way of doing this may be to look at policies by the central government taking over or taking more of a strong role in administering policies over these communities versus the communities administering themselves or restrictions placed on their ability to administrate. For example, we may be able to point to policies or decisions that normally would be taken in Northern Ireland or in one of Spain’s autonomous communities and determine whether they were made there or taken either by Westminster in the case of Northern Ireland or by the center

in Madrid in the case of Spain, respectively. Typically, “administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government” (The World Bank Group 1999/2000). There are three main forms of administrative decentralization, these are deconcentration, delegation and devolution. By trying to conceptualize these three forms as well as identify which of these administrative decentralization forms occurs and when it may be useful to trace the levels of administrative decentralization. So as one variable I would use administrative decentralization. However, this would be further broken down into the three forms above. The breakdown would be as follows:

Deconcentration: “often considered the weakest form of decentralization and used most frequently in unitary states – redistributes decision making authority and financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the [*central*] government”. So here we could be looking for control from the center, but moved out of the center and into a more local level. However, control would still be administered by the center. Delegation: A more extended form of decentralization; here the central government transfers responsibilities for decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not fully controlled by the center, but still held accountable to it. This would be something similar to a housing authority or transportation. Some of these authorities may be created through passed laws, or are authorized to provide services through legal means, but may have a lot of discretion in decision making.

Devolution: the most robust form of a government decentralizing administrative capabilities. In devolving powers, governments transfer authority for decision making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of a local government. This type of administrative

decentralization transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities which typically elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have authority to make their own investment decisions. Counties within States in the United States can be a form or example of this because they have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries where they exercise authority and where they perform public functions.

Conceptualizing these forms of administrative decentralization would be helpful to trace where in the cases selected, functions that would normally be taken on by the center are devolved or not.

In the quantitative portion the variables that will be looked at are decentralization as a form of political opportunity openness. The main point of these concepts is the moving of power away from the central government to more localized areas or governments. The connection comes where participating especially at local levels are important to feel represented and that political opportunities are open to underrepresented groups. When these groups are able to participate in this fashion the groups may alleviate the grievances they may have perceived or even feel that meaningful change can be had. This is possible in different ways at the local level depending on the kind of and amount of decentralization a State has. Different types of decentralization – administrative, political, and economic – provide for different kinds of participation by society and decision making that feels closer to home, and as if they can actually make a difference. For example, politically devolved systems are those “in which political actors and issues are significant at the local level and are at least partially independent from those at the national level” (Schneider 2003; Fox & Aranda 1996). Some of the ways this is accomplished is through participation and articulation among others, however these can be described in terms of

representation which helps capture how political institutions map citizen's interests onto policy decisions (Schneider 2003; Litvack et al. 2000). These kinds of interests are made clear to the State through the participation and articulation in institutions. In political science some of those systems representation exist through political parties through elections. The main point is that different forms of representation are bound by institutions of the State itself, which shape what issues get more attention and how (Schneider 2003). As a State becomes more politically decentralized, citizens are the ones who define interests and form identities based on the local issues they face, and have more opportunities to participate locally and compete over those issues they deem important. While I will be looking at decentralization as one concept as a whole, I will also look to break down this concept into more distinct concepts like political, administrative and economic. While there have been some qualitative forms of tracing decentralization, it is much more difficult to quantify a concept like this, however, some scholars (Schneider 2003) have made some inroads and have been able to provide a closer look at some variables that may indicate how the concept can be captured when broken down into the three distinct sub-concepts. After some factor analysis testing, Schneider (2003) points to at least two indicators for each of these sub-concepts, which would be helpful in capturing each. In the case of administrative decentralization those indicators are taxation as a percentage of sub-national grants and revenues, and transfers as a percentage of subnational grants and revenues. For political decentralization the indicators are the existence of municipal elections, and state elections. While for economic decentralization the indicators are subnational expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, and subnational revenues as a percentage of total revenues. I hope to include these measurers for testing the levels of decentralization. Additionally, I hope to

use each individual measure for each respective concept but also try to find a way of bringing each set for each concept together, in order to test them as one variable.

Terror incidents will be the dependent variable in this section. The way terror will be captured will be the number of incidents of domestic terrorism in a state. This information will come from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and will indicate the number of incidents in a given year in a particular country. This incident information will be presented in a way that aims to remove any ideological attacks that occur domestically, or those attacks that are considered international in nature.

I will have three independent variables which will have more than one indicator for each. The first independent variable will be administrative decentralization. This variable will be observed as two different indicators: taxation as a percentage of sub-national grants and revenues, and transfers as a percentage of subnational grants and revenues. This data will come from World Bank group data. The second independent variable will be political decentralization. This will be observed with two indicators as well. The indicators are whether state elections exists, and whether there exists municipal elections as well. This information will come from two sources at the moment. First the Global Elections Database (Brancati 2011), I will also be gathering data from the Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) (Kollman, et al. 2018). The third independent variable will be economic decentralization. This variable will be observed with two indicators as well. The first indicator for economic decentralization will be subnational expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, and the second indicator will be subnational revenues as a percentage of total revenues. This information will also come from the World Bank group.

I will also include several control variables. First I will include population as one of the control variables. This will be observed as the total population calculated in hundreds of thousands. The data will be gathered from the World Bank dataset for the years 1975 through 2005.

Political systems that score higher on the democracy scale have witnessed less social movement activity (protests, strikes) as there are institutionalized ways for outsiders to participate in politics⁵; however, “social movements and protest tactics are more often part of a portfolio of efforts by groups to influence politics” (Goldstone 2004, 333). Typically, social movements are “outsiders” attempting to gain influence in politics. With relation to terrorism, some research is able to provide context to understand the collective action of some groups. For example, terror groups are essentially collective actors or cells, part of a much broader network such as a group attaching itself to some movement or terror network. Collective actors then may “also be responding to grievances, using institutional and organizational resources to muster support, and produce mobilization frames rooted in symbols, discourse, and practice, often designed to evoke a sense of injustice to encourage activism” (Wiktorowicz 2004, 3). When structures or institutions are such that they are inclusive for all groups or at least neutral versus being exclusive routine and meaningful avenues for success tend to dampen down protest because more direct routes to influence are available (Meyer 2004, 128). The rockier the avenues become to access or traverse for the groups as a State becomes more open to the participation of

⁵ To be clear, social movements are legitimate, but not institutionalized ways of participating.

those marginalized groups, they may become - not just more willing to attack but more lethal in their attacks.

The research design and findings will follow in chapter two. Chapter three will follow discussing the case of Northern Ireland. Chapter four will then discuss the Spanish case and its findings, while chapter five will conclude the study and present a look forward for future research.

CHAPTER 2: QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

Design

To test this hypothesis, I will take two different approaches. First, I will try to test how the relationship between decentralization and the terror attacks exists in a quantitative way. Following the quantitative portion, the chapters will consist of case studies analyzing in detail the relationship between decentralization and terrorism. The case studies will focus on Northern Ireland and Spain. Terror groups like the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or New IRA in Northern Ireland, and a focus on Euskadi Ta Atkatasuna (ETA) in Spain. The groups were purportedly representing the voice of maligned communities. In the case of the IRA, nationalists who insisted on their own rule in Northern Ireland and incorporation with Ireland and away from London. In Northern Ireland, it is important to note that through the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement, one of the key points was that Northern Ireland Assembly would have a devolved legislature. This would force both unionists and nationalist to engage in voting for major decisions. While the devolved legislature ensured agreement by both sides, it also ensured both had a voice.

In the case of Spain, the Basques had a nation-state competing for self-rule. This nation-state had its own language and culture distinct from the center, and at odds with the center over the decisions being delegated from the center. The delegation and decisions from the center were technically at odds with what the constitution had implemented in the comunidades autonomas created in the 1978 constitution. These “comunidades autonomas” or autonomous communities were established in order for their will to be expressed by and through the respective inhabitants of the communities or their political representatives. While the constitution in the Spanish case

was considered an instance of “devolutionary federalism” with local intermediate and central aspects, the model that has guided Spain has been more of a top-down federalism (Moreno 2010).

Typically, “administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government” (The World Bank Group 1999/2000). There are three main forms of administrative decentralization, these are deconcentration, delegation and devolution. By trying to conceptualize these three forms as well as identify which of these administrative decentralization forms occurs and when it may be useful to trace the levels of administrative decentralization. So as one variable I would use administrative decentralization. However, this would be further broken down into the three forms above. The breakdown would be as follows:

Deconcentration: “often considered the weakest form of decentralization and used most frequently in unitary states – redistributes decision making authority and financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the [*central*] government”.

Devolution: the most robust form of a government decentralizing administrative capabilities. In devolving powers, governments transfer authority for decision making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of a local government. This type of administrative decentralization transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities which typically elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have authority to make their own investment decisions.

In order to select countries, I will focus specifically on Europe, looking at the post-Cold War period. For instance, I would begin looking at European countries beginning in 1990

through at least 2005. Today as we know them many countries champion democratic values. However, in the period beginning at the end of the Cold War we start to see the transition from more authoritarian control and single party rule into a shift towards more open opportunities for several groups, including those that may have been in the minority or not had much of a voice in the policies that affect them the most. In order to have a good sample, I think it is best to select countries that were shifting towards more democratic values if not already solidifying some democratic concepts. Here I think the Polity IV/V data provide some good way to select the countries for this quantitative analysis. By looking at the component variables⁶ for political competition and opposition represented by regulation of participation (PARREG) and the competitiveness of participation (PARCOMP) respectively. Both of these component variables are summed up in the concept variable⁷ of political competition (POLCOMP). The two dimensions of political competition measured look at the degree of institutionalization, or regulation of political competition, and the extent of government restriction on political competition. Participation is “regulated” to the degree that there are rules on “if, when, and how” political preferences are organized and expressed (Marshall & Gurr, 2020). For example, western democracies and one-party states regulate participation, but do so differently. One-party states through hegemonic political organization, placing sharp limits on diversity of opinion. On the other hand, western democracies do so by allowing mostly stable and lasting groups to compete

⁶ Participation as defined by Eckstein and Gurr involves subordinates not merely being passive recipients of direction which they rarely are. But some of these subordinates attempt to influence the directive activities of superiors; with acts by which subordinates try to wield such influence being acts of participation (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 60).

⁷ According to the Polity IV/V manual, concept variables represent a preferred approach for understanding the authority characteristics of polities as they include more information which help facilitate coding but also comprehension.

non-violently for political influence and power. On the totally opposite side of these, exists unregulated participation, where there are no enduring national political organizations, and no regime controls on political activity. In this latter case, political competition is fluid and characterized by contentious interactions and shifting coalitions of partisan groups. With the second component variable of competitiveness what is referred to is the extent to which alternative preferences for policy formation and leadership roles can be pursued in the political arena (Marshall & Gurr, 2020). The political competition variable breaks down into 10 broad patterns scaled to correspond with the degree of “democraticness” of political competition within the polity. For my particular project I would focus on the sixth through the tenth pattern. Beginning with the sixth pattern because I believe this is where there is enough “democraticness” in a polity where there is potentially, some political competitiveness and regulation, but with restrictions. For example, the sixth broad pattern reflects factional/restricted competition. The way this is coded is that PARREG is Sectarian (3) and PARCOMP is factional (3). This pattern is described as:

“Polities that oscillate more or less regularly between intense factionalism and faction-based restrictions: that is, when one faction secures power, it uses that power to promote its exclusive interests and favor group members while restricting the political access and activities of other, excluded groups, until it is displaced in turn. Also coded here are polities where the group or coalition in power maintains that power over time and uses central authority to exclude substantial groups from access to resources and restrict the identity/interest mobilization of groups that may, potentially, seek greater access.”

In the quantitative portion I will use variables identifying administrative, political and economic devolution to identify whether a country is de/centralizing more or less. While there have been some qualitative forms of tracing decentralization, it is much more difficult to

quantify a concept like decentralization, however, some scholars (Schneider 2003) have made some inroads and have looked at some variables that may indicate how the concept can be captured. These can be broken down into the three distinct sub-concepts. After some factor analysis testing, Schneider (2003) points to at least two indicators for each of these sub-concepts, which would be helpful in capturing each. In the case of administrative decentralization those indicators are taxation as a percentage of sub-national grants and revenues, and transfers as a percentage of subnational grants and revenues. For political decentralization the indicators are the existence of municipal elections, and state elections. While for economic decentralization the indicators are subnational expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, and subnational revenues as a percentage of total revenues. I hope to include these measurers for testing the levels of decentralization. Additionally, I hope to use each individual measure for each respective concept but also try to find a way of bringing each set for each concept together, in order to test them as one variable.

Dependent Variable

Terror incidents will be the dependent variable in this section. The way terror will be captured will be the number of incidents of domestic terrorism in a state. This information will come from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and will indicate the number of incidents in a given year in a particular country. When the information is presented in my spreadsheet, I will separate the incidents into those being considered ideological in nature and those incidents whose aim was separatism. To clarify, for these terrorist incidents I am only attempting to count separatist terrorism. I have made the effort to scrub by and large the data of non-separatist data

and only include the counts of separatist terrorism. I will also include the total number of deaths as another indicator. The terror deaths follow the number of deaths of domestic terrorism in a state. These numbers also come from the GTD. I try and remove any deaths that were of different nationalities where incidents were not domestic in nature.

Independent Variables

As my independent variable I will look to capture decentralization. While there are many ways to try to capture decentralization, here I use a decentralization index. This index comes from Brancati (2006). I follow Brancati's example and include decentralization as a dichotomous variable where countries are either a 1 for decentralized and have regional legislatures with independent decision-making power in at least one issue area, and 0 if they are centralized. While Brancati uses two indexes to also capture decentralization, a four point and five-point index respectively. In this study I chose to go with the 5-point index. The five-point index follows Brancati's coding scheme where it is based on whether regional legislatures get elected and the kinds of issues that those regional legislatures have control over. In this case, tax authority, police, education. As Brancati and others have noted these kinds of issues reflect authorities that are important and at the center of all governments. These issues also are the sort of issues that would cause or lead to disruptions or secessionist movements. At local levels these issues and their control locally may be useful in curbing or dampening secessionist movements or of minor groups in a particular region/state. For example, control of education allows many minority groups to protect culture, language and histories, such as the Basques. The index then works by giving one point if they have regional legislatures that are democratically elected, a

second if these legislatures can control their own taxes. A third point is given if regional legislatures if they can control or direct education jointly. The fourth point is given if there is joint or complete control locally of police. The fifth point in this index is based on whether the regions need to approve constitutional amendments or constitutions in order for those to be recognized.

Administrative decentralization will be observed as two different indicators: taxation as a percentage of sub-national grants and revenues, and transfers as a percentage of subnational grants and revenues. This data will come from World Bank group data. The second independent variable will be political decentralization. This will be observed with two indicators as well. The indicators are whether state elections exist, and whether municipal elections are held. This information will come from two sources at the moment. First the Global Elections Database (Brancati 2011), and the Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) (Kollman, et al. 2018). The third independent variable will be economic decentralization. This variable will be observed with two indicators as well. The first indicator for economic decentralization will be subnational expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, and the second indicator will be subnational revenues as a percentage of total revenues. This information will also come from the World Bank group.

Control Variables

I will also include several control variables. First, I will include population as one of the control variables. This will be observed as the total population calculated in hundreds of thousands. The data will be gathered from the World Bank dataset for the years 1975 through

2015. This could be an important control variable as some studies have suggested that it could have explanatory power for terrorism levels, as well as that larger populations could negatively affect state capabilities and affect the extent to which a state could effectively govern its own territory (Lutz & Lutz 2017; Abrahms 2012; Conrad, Conrad & Young 2014; Robinson 2010).

Additionally, I will be including a regime type control variable. I will include this in two forms. First, a simple “democracy” or “non-democracy” will indicate the regime type of the cases. Second, I will break down each country into one of five categories. These categories come from the descriptions from the PolityIV dataset. The categories will be based on a scale from -10 to 10, where a full Democracy is a 10, Democracy a score of 6 to 9, open Anocracy from 5 to 1, a closed Anocracy from 0 to -5, and Autocracy from -6 to -10. This data will come from the PolityIV dataset (Marshall, Gurr and Jaggers 2017).

Another variable that will be used as a control will be state capacity. State capacity can mean different things to different people and sometimes may be difficult to capture in a single indicator. State capacity, or what some have called bureaucratic capacity is important because it indicates the levels at which a State can deal with situations such as “mitigating violence both by channeling dissent as well as providing the state the ability to organize a coherent response to dissent” (Hendrix and Young 2014, 7). This can be helpful because as states are more capable they are better equipped to deal with dissidents because they can follow through on their commitments (Hendrix and Young 2014). For this particular observation I will use one of the indicators from the Fragile States Index (The Fund For Peace 2018), specifically their Public Services indicator. This indicator refers to the presence of basic state functions that serve people. On one hand this can include provision of essential services but may also include the state’s

ability to protect its citizens such as from violence or terrorism. The indicator also considers to whom it is providing services, as well as the level of maintenance and general infrastructure to the extent that “its absence would negatively affect the country’s actual or potential development. The public services indicator ranges from 0 to 10, where 10 is the lowest level of public services and 0 indicating the highest levels of public services.

One researcher that has contributed to the area of study I am looking at is Brancati (2006). While my research is like her work there are some differences. First Brancati’s work is focused on why decentralization is more successful in reducing conflict and secessionism in some democracies than in others. While my study is focused on how decentralization – conceptualized as political opportunities – affects groups and their interactions with the State and whether they will engage in terrorism. Additionally, in her quantitative study Brancati’s data is set from 1985 through 2000, whereas I have data from at least 1985 through 2015. By being able to use the same 30 countries Brancati used it allows me to enhance the data that is there with new data that has been collected over the last two decades. There are some other differences between the two studies as well. For example, aside from the quantitative analysis I also include two case studies – Northern Ireland and Spain – in order to provide more context and show how the statistical results can be more complex. In our quantitative studies my dependent variable is also different. In my study the dependent variable is terror incidents, while in Brancati’s work she measured for intensity using two variables.

Table 1 Terror Incidents (Negative Binomial)

| | <i>Model 1</i> |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Decentralization Index | -.46** |
| | -.19 |
| Elections | 0.23 |
| | -0.24 |
| Revenue Share | -.02* |
| | -0.01 |
| GDP (log) | .71*** |
| | -0.15 |
| ELF | 3.9*** |
| | -0.54 |
| Presidentialism | .94** |
| | -0.3 |
| FPTP | -0.21 |
| | -0.42 |
| Mixed Electoral | -1.7** |
| | -0.59 |
| Internet Usage | -.10** |
| | -0.01 |
| <i>Log Likelihood</i> | -524.61 |
| <i>Pseudo R2</i> | 0.08 |
| <i>N</i> | 121 |

*Note: Standard Errors in parentheses. * $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$.*

Analysis

The analysis presented is a negative binomial analysis, due to the dependent variable being a count variable – number of terror incidents. Being tested is the effect of decentralization on the number of terror incidents, while also controlling for different economic, social and electoral system variables. According to this model, decentralization decreases the likelihood of

terror incidents, and its effect is statistically significant. Holding elections may decrease terror incidents, but not to a statistically significant level (.33). This finding may be consistent with Brancati who notes that some groups supportive of secession or of greater home rule may increase violent activity during times of elections to achieve concessions or considerations from political parties or the central government; other groups may increase their activities to prevent elections at all (Brancati 2006, 672). Other variables capture elements of decentralization. For example, subnational revenue as a percent of total revenue slightly decreases the likelihood of terror incidents ($p=.109$). Fiscal decentralization may reduce these incidents because the regions are able to raise their own revenue and minimize contributions to the national government. This should lead to less violence for a few different reasons. Among them regional and local governments are less dependent on the central government intervening and dictating where the revenue created should be spent. For example, the money could be spent on furthering education and cultural strengthening. If the central government were controlling local revenue the focus may be on a national agenda rather than focusing on local issues. Also, greater revenue generated by regions may also draw the central governments focus to that region and lead to more investment in that region which could help address any grievances by minority groups.

Economic development was measured using GDP measured as the log of a country's GDP in current U.S. Dollars, and an internet usage index. In this model GDP is significant ($p=.00$) and trends in a positive direction indicating a higher likelihood of terror incidents occurring for the growth in GDP. The internet usage index (eindex) gives the percent of the population using the internet, whether that be on a mobile phone, a computer, tablet, etc. The eindex was also significant ($p=.00$). A wealthier country may be able to dampen secessionist or

independence movement issues and potentially resolve these kinds of issues with possible considerations to further decentralization, even if slightly. This may be possible because the wealthier country has more money to organize programs geared toward aggrieved groups. It may also be that wealth can make an impact because more money is available to address not just aggrieved minority groups, but also the issues that are causing groups to seek change. However, Brancati (2006, 670) notes that at the same time a wealthier country with its more diverse economy is more likely to experience issues of secessionism.

The model above includes a control variable for ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF). This variable is significant ($p=.00$) and tells us that the more ethno-linguistically diverse a state is, the more likely to experience an increased number of terror incidents. Previous studies⁸ have shown that there is no significant relationship between heterogeneity and conflict. However, Brancati (2006) tests the effects of decentralization on antiregime rebellion controls for ELF. In Brancati's model, ethnolinguistic fractionalization increases anti-regime rebellion. This would fit with what Brancati has shown regarding anti-regime rebellions, but she also indicates that in her models there was evidence where both low and high heterogeneity reduced rebellion, while moderate levels increased rebellion. While we are looking at terror incidents not necessarily rebellion, this result matters because it still suggests that greater ethno-linguistic diversity leads to the likelihood of more terror incidents. This may indicate that areas that have many minority groups, especially those with grievances and not included in more formal ways of participation may be willing to turn to violence and potentially an increase in terror incidents.

⁸ Fearon and Laitin 2003; Brancati 2006.

I also included political factors which generally have an effect on terror incidents. This model shows that some electoral systems generally have a positive-effect (decrease) effect on the number of terror incidents while others do not. First past the post systems have a positive but non-significant effect ($p=.621$). This is surprising, as it would follow other indications that fptp systems often produce disproportionate results, usually favoring the largest party and those with strong regional support while dampening smaller parties; this would have fallen a bit more in line with my study. While mixed electoral systems appear to reduce the likelihood of terror incidents ($p=.003$). Presidentialism has a positive coefficient (.94), implying presidentialism would slightly increase the likelihood of terror incidents ($p=.002$). As Brancati (2006) notes, Presidentialism is thought to increase conflict and secessionism because executives are less likely to represent multiple ethnic groups (671).

Based on this model, decentralization has a role on decreasing the number of violent terror incidents, but so do other political and economic factors. Some like internet usage as a measure of wealth, revenue share as a percentage of total revenue, mixed electoral systems, and ethnolinguistic fractionalization are consistent with the general thrust of my theory, that more local political opportunities reduce violence. While secessionism may not be a fully realizable end, extensive home rule and autonomy may be a more realistic end, although the State will ultimately retain a level of control.

As noted above this project shares similarities with Brancati's (2006) work. The results for this project and Brancati's share similarities as well, but also some differences. For example, Brancati's analysis indicates that decentralization can be a useful tool for ending ethnic conflict and secessionism. My model above comes to a similar conclusion that decentralization can

decrease the likelihood of terror incidents. Similarly, Brancati's analysis and my model show that the ELF index and GDP both are significant but indicate that increases would increase the likelihood of terror incidents. Different than in Brancati's study I am not capturing regional party vote as a control which for Brancati is the key for decentralization to decrease ethnic violence and secessionism. There is also a difference in some of the electoral variables tested in the intercommunal conflict variable tested in Brancati's model. Her findings indicate that mixed electoral systems and presidentialism are not significant; my findings indicate that mixed systems and presidentialism are significant. However, mixed systems would slightly decrease the likelihood of terror incidents while Presidentialism slightly increases the likelihood of incidents.

CHAPTER 3: THE CASE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The following case on Northern Ireland highlights important parts of the devolutionary arrangements and violence that plagued Northern Ireland for many decades. These key points provide a good picture of two minority groups – Catholic Nationalists and Unionist Protestants – trying to keep each other from getting power in Northern Ireland. The Unionists sought to go with whichever devolutionary arrangement gave them the upper hand, while the Catholic Nationalists made certain that the Unionists will not maintain a majoritarian system even if that means dealing with direct rule from Britain. It is important to note that although the Northern Irish case has been studied previously, many accounts focus on the Good Friday Agreement and generally the period surrounding that moment in history. However, studying a much broader stretch of history – as I do here – is beneficial. The benefit of studying this broader period of Northern Ireland provides good insight into how access to political opportunities shaped attitudes and violence over many years and institutional configurations.

Partition and After

The Creation of Stormont and the Period of Majoritarian Rule

Northern Ireland experienced varying levels of violence between 1920 and 1972. Starting with a violent beginning, followed by relative calm where there is little to no violence, but then sinking into violence again. In this 52-year span, Northern Ireland is separated from the Irish Free State through partition and has its own devolved parliament – a supposed temporary solution; experiences a civil rights movement; sees “the Troubles” take form, and encounters the beginning of what could be a more peaceful time at Sunningdale. The violence I am attempting

to trace throughout this period is explicit and obvious violence, not coercion or intimidation, although those types of factors, among others, may play a role in inciting future violence. This time period in Northern Ireland is also a time of devolved government although ultimate control rested with Westminster. The Government of Ireland Act of 1920 provided for partition as well as a devolved legislature – a cabinet form of government. This 52-year period of devolved government can be split into three separate periods during which violence was high, followed by a lull, then growing into troublesome times for Westminster and Northern Ireland.

Religious sectarianism between Protestants and Catholics was one of the main issues fomenting tensions and violence. Initially there are high levels of violence until 1925. This violence led to the Special Powers Act of 1922. This act was explained by way of IRA activity and general Catholic Nationalist hostility towards Northern Ireland. While Ulster Catholics hoped to make home rule in Northern Ireland unworkable, just as Unionists had done the same for an all-Ireland home rule, violence in Ulster was just as much against Protestants as it was Catholics. Catholics were beaten into submission, more people died⁹ in Belfast in three months than the whole two-year period after partition. Violence in this early period by Protestants may have been twofold, first to cow the Catholic community, and second to keep them worn down – after all many which had been involved in and remembered the recently ended conflicts that had kept them fighting. Not only was exhaustion an issue, but the violence initially was a way to keep Catholics excluded from power going forward, as well as keeping them disinterested in continued fighting. This was a turning point in Northern Ireland and when IRA violence began to subside. Despite a drop in violence, Protestant Unionists kept a wall up when it came to Catholic

⁹ 232 Catholic victims in this time. (Mullholland 2002, 25).

Nationalists (Patterson 1996). Though this ebb in violence lasted decades – 1930 through 1960 - there were always some instances of built-up tensions such as sectarian riots in 1935 in Belfast.

This period of time provides insight into our main variables of openness of political opportunity structures and levels of violence. As it relates to political opportunity structures this period of time may appear to be more open for those in Northern Ireland since after partition a devolved government was established. Typically, this would be a good indicator of more opportunities where Westminster devolves more power to Northern Ireland. However, this devolved government was initially a temporary solution and was done at a time when Westminster wanted a break from dealing with the situation of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This new period of “openness” appeared to be a good thing at least for the Unionists. For a Northern Ireland that was mostly Protestant and loyal to the Union, Catholic Nationalists felt little comfort despite the ending of violence. The fear of “Rome rule” in Northern Ireland ensured that Catholic Nationalists would have a hard time being included in the new political opportunities that a devolved government in Northern Ireland could provide them. In fact, in 1922 through the two years after Northern Ireland was formed “11,000 were made jobless, and 23,000 made homeless; with 4,500 Catholic-owned shops and business burned, looted and wrecked” (Mullholland 2002, 25).

While Westminster moved to devolve government in Northern Ireland and provide more local control to those living there, the reality was that the new devolved government only benefit Protestant Unionists that were the majority in Northern Ireland. A devolved government that only provides access to power to only one group is not really an open political opportunity structure but one that is limited or imperfect. For this period openness would be low.

While I look for overt cases of violence throughout the period after 1925, it is helpful to trace the civil, social and political discrimination that occurred in Northern Ireland during this period of “devolved” government. In this case the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 had included provisions for devolved legislature and a form of cabinet government which appealed to Ulster Unionists. While some Unionists like O’Neill had originally preferred direct rule, the home rule advantage for the Protestant and Unionist majority in Northern Ireland began to look much better for them. The Act provided for extensive powers in areas such as “law and order, local government, representation, education, social services, agriculture, industry and internal trade; only taxation and ultimate sovereignty were in the hands of Westminster” (Patterson 1996, 6). With a Unionist majority in four of the six counties in Northern Ireland, Protestant Unionists maintained a strong hand against Catholic Nationalists. Throughout the calmer years, the divide between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists grew deeper, while the UK held Northern Ireland at arm’s length. Treatment of the minority in Northern Ireland was secondary to revulsion produced by Westminster and Whitehall in possibly having to be drawn back into the “Irish Bog”. This arm’s length behavior by the UK provided the Unionists with the upper hand they needed, and provided insulation to their behavior towards Catholic Nationalists. While some such as Sir Wilfred Spender were concerned that “continuing emphasis on sole Protestant nature of the Northern Irish state would eventually turn Catholic alienation into rebellion and lead to British Intervention” – it didn’t lead to meaningful action (Patterson 1996, 7). One example of this was the proportional representation that had been included in the Government of Ireland Act as one means of protecting minority rights, however, the Unionist response was to eliminate this type of representation (Patterson 1996, 8). The UK did nothing as it was not interested in taking

direct responsibility for Northern Ireland, at least until 1972. It appeared then that Unionist would have their way since Westminster wanted to keep its distance and Unionists wanted to avoid giving up their new found powers as the majority, after previously having disdain for home rule.

The hostility towards Catholic Nationalists in the calmer period of this era led to resentments and growing tensions that became evident in the Civil Rights Movement of Northern Ireland, and later turn to increased levels of violence. Stemming from the Ireland Act of 1949 – which recognized Northern Ireland’s right to self-determination – Stormont became the final arbiter as opposed to the people through referendum. This was important as control of Stormont was crucial to the Unionist which perpetuated their majoritarian state. Terence O’Neill who became Prime Minister in 1963 attempted to break the mold of sectarian politics. However, it seemed as though O’Neill wanted to “win over” Catholics instead of providing concrete reforms that would allow Catholics to more fairly integrate into Northern Ireland and the Union. O’Neill’s attempt at this kind of persuasion were evident in community festivals that were put on also known as “civic weeks” which Catholics resented. Catholics saw these attempts as weak incentives that were seen as brainwashing or “re-training”. As the Civil Rights Era emerged and later “the Troubles” in Northern Ireland, it drew on the models of civil rights agitation developed by blacks in the United States (Mullholland 2002, 49-50). Organizations like the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) were established which sort of changed the dimension of the sectarian tensions, by speaking about “British rights for British citizens”. This reframing of issues was seen as a way to embarrass Unionists, knowing well that very few Catholics were willing to depart from their Nationalist aspirations. Other groups that came up in the civil rights

movement such as the People's Democracy were considered radical and called the attempts by O'Neill to turn some to Unionism as "gimmicks".

Violence

While tensions existed on both sides – the Catholic Nationalists and the Protestant Unionists – it was the IRA that conducted much of the violence before 1922, and into and after partition. However, Protestant support for Unionists in Northern Ireland and their overreaction to the Catholic minority¹⁰ led to Unionist leaders incorporating elements of Protestant vigilantism in Northern Ireland's Security Forces. These "vigilante" elements included groups such as the Special Constabulary, and its part-time component the "B-specials"¹¹. Groups like these became a source of concern to members of the British government. These groups grew a reputation for lack of discipline and a propensity for sectarianism. Unionists allying themselves with these loyalist paramilitaries, in the newly created Northern Irish "statelet" indicate that they were creating a hostile environment even if the Catholics were minority (1/3) of the Northern Irish population. Over the two years between the passage of the Government of Ireland Act in 1920, and 1922, sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants would kill 428 people and wound 1,766. During this period while the IRA was stepping up its attacks, the British government recruited former British Army members to help the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). Those members the British recruited came to be known as the "Black and Tans" due to the uniforms they wore (Lynn and Melaugh 2019). These "Black and Tans" however, did not improve the

¹⁰Protestants were weary of allowing any give to Catholics fearing a Rome Rule situation, where the Catholic Church would be dictating policy should Catholic Nationalists take control of power.

¹¹The B-Specials were a paramilitary force drawn exclusively from the Protestant population to support the police.

situation in Ireland. The IRA was engaging in ambushes and arms raids, as well as assassinations, while the “Black and Tans” responded by attacking property and civilians (Lynn and Melaugh 2019). On November 21st 1920, the IRA killed 13 British Intelligence Officers throughout Dublin. In return, the Black and Tans opened fire on a crowd at a Gaelic Football match, this came to be known as Bloody Sunday (Lynn and Melaugh 2019). This violent back and forth came at the cost of many lives. Other violent events in this period include July 12th 1921, when 23 people were killed and 200 Catholic homes destroyed (Lynn and Melaugh 2019). The “twelfth” was and is a day where the Orange Order arranges parades and marches in support of Ulster Protestants, celebrating Protestants’ ascendancy in Northern Ireland. Levels of violence throughout this period were high. On the Protestant side some violence was overt. The incorporation of deputized vigilante groups within the police forces such as the B-Specials, Black and Tans and through the Royal Ulster Constabulary, led to more violence and not a tamping down as Britain imagined. For example, since the passage of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, through July 1922, 157 Protestants and 37 members of the security forces were killed compared to 257 Catholics (Mullholland 2002). While the violence appeared tit for tat, the numbers in this period indicate a one-sidedness against Catholic Nationalists. Violence is high in this period (1920 – mid-July 1922) with a total of 428 persons killed and 1,766 wounded in the violence. Violence became unbearable to the point that the Northern Ireland government introduces the Civil Authorities – Special Powers – Act.

It is important to look at both sides in relation to the theory and hypothesis put forward in the research. With respect to the Protestant Unionists, they engaged in violence against the Catholic Nationalists despite now being given power through a devolved government and control

of that government in Northern Ireland. The move from Westminster to devolve Northern Ireland provided even more political opportunities for Protestant Unionists to participate in government there, however, they still engaged in Catholic Nationalists. On the other hand, Catholic Nationalists being the minority in almost all of the counties in Northern Ireland engaged in violence against Unionists because the now devolved government, gave few opportunities to participate politically. The majoritarian Unionist Northern Irish Parliament passed the “Method of Voting and Redistribution of Seat Act” which abolished the use of proportional representation for local government elections and revised electoral wards (Lynn and Melaugh 2019). With little to no access to power within a devolved system, the Catholic Nationalists and the IRA engaged in high levels of violence. This is consistent with the theory proposed but less so with the hypothesis. In the case of the Protestant Unionists during this period, their behavior is more consistent with my theory and hypothesis whereas the government devolves power to Northern Ireland, the protestant Unionists are given access to power and control and also engage in less violence.

In 1925 with IRA activity going mostly underground, Catholic Nationalists continued to face difficulties in Northern Ireland. Although violence had diminished, sectarian tensions remained high. This is evident in riots like those that occurred in Belfast in 1935. These riots broke out during the Orange parades on July 12th, where Catholics were forced from their homes and workplaces. Many deaths occurred with the majority (11) being Protestant; 86% of those injured were Catholic (Dorney 2013). In the coming decades, through the mid 1960’s resentment was high, but violence was almost non-existent. While there seemed to be a relative calm,

discrimination in several aspects of life maintained the divide between the Protestant Unionist majority in Northern Ireland and the Nationalist Catholic minority.

The Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland relished “tightening the screw” on Catholic Nationalists on several fronts, such as elections, gerrymandering, and employment. After the passage of the Ireland Act of 1949, Unionists in Northern Ireland rested comfortably knowing that they would remain in the UK. Since the Unionists maintained a clear majority in Northern Ireland. Even so, the Unionists still made it a point to engage in electoral discrimination. One example of this is the Derry/Londonderry City elections. The election statistics from different wards show that even with a smaller number of voters in some areas that had Catholic Nationalist majorities, Protestant Unionists were able to win more seats (Mullholland 2002). For example, in two wards with a total of 10,000 voters the Protestant Unionists ended up with 12 seats, while in one ward with 15,000 voters total Catholic Nationalists ended up with just 8 seats (Mullholland 2002, 44-45). Economically, the Unionists were keeping pressure to maintain relative wealth disparities between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionist districts. Through the use of the rate payers franchise – which allowed those who paid the most to have the most say in local government – Unionist leaders could keep Catholic Nationalists on the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder. Unionist leaders made clear that Catholics needed to be treated as second rate, and advised employers to avoid employing Roman Catholics where Protestant could take their place (Mullholland 2002, 40). Catholics were also kept out of senior public employment, and subjected to unfair competitive testing for Civil Service jobs (Mullholland 2002, 47). In 1927 the Minister of Agriculture boasted about only employing 4

Catholics (Patterson 1996, 7). These kinds of policies generated alienation that only further divided Unionist Protestants and Nationalist Catholics.

Analysis

The four decades between 1925 and 1965 gave Northern Ireland some time to let tensions simmer. It was characterized by low to no violence and imperfectly open political opportunity structures in those four decades. Not much changed with regard to the devolved nature of the government. Stormont was still in charge in Northern Ireland, with Westminster continuing its posture of an arm's length relationship with Northern Ireland. Political opportunities remained very slim for Catholic Nationalists. Protestant Unionists tightly controlled positions of power in many facets of life, not just from Stormont, but in the local wards – through gerrymandering, schooling and public service work through competitive testing. Catholic Nationalists had a hard time breaking into any sort of public sector work, with some employers proud to say that they employed little to no Catholic Nationalists. This period reflected an open period of political opportunities but only for those Protestants loyal to the Union, while Catholic Nationalists were given the appearance of a government that would “let” them participate with no power, or voice to actually engage in government.

This was a period of time with little to no violence. Protests and strikes were common, but organized. Overt instances of violence by either side are rare from 1925 through 1965. So while the theory that devolving government and providing more opportunities to participate in politics would limit violence is satisfied to a degree, political participation by just the Unionists – at the exclusion of Catholic Nationalists – does not allow us to say it completely

satisfies it. The case is that there is only an appearance of being inclusive because devolved government would bring more local power. In this case it only gives this chance to the clear majority in the Protestant Unionists. Locally, Catholic Nationalists are maligned and really have no say. In looking at the hypothesis however, it appears to be satisfied as more devolution would lead to less violence. Here we can see that as devolved government came to Stormont, violence diminished to instances of protests, marches and labor strikes.

The Demise of Majoritarian Rule and the Renewal of Direct Rule

After decades with little violence, the devolved but Protestant-dominated Northern Ireland began to see violence increase daily in the mid 1960's. Riots in 1964 became a normal occurrence and agitated attempts to squash the civil rights movement – being used by Nationalists to give their plight more national attention. For example, there was a major riot in Belfast in 1964 when police tried to remove a tricolor flag from a Sinn Fein office (Dorney 2013). In 1966 the Ulster Volunteer Force¹² (UVF) – named after the 1912 group – tried to thwart NIPM Terence O'Neill's¹³ reforms and concessions to Catholics by imitating Republican violence. In May 1966 the UVF targeted a Catholic pub, mistakenly killing a protestant woman and a Catholic man, leading O'Neill to declare the UVF illegal. The UVF's idea was to destroy the illusion that Catholics could be loyal.

In 1968, the problems became somewhat more clear for Westminster as a rights march in Derry on October 5th spiraled out of control – with British police brutality, and insurrectionary riots (Mullholland 2002, 50-51). Manipulated by radicals looking for a confrontation they were

¹²The UVF was a shadowy paramilitary group, with connections to mainstream unionism.

¹³Terence O'Neill was the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1969.

dispersed violently by the baton-wielding Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) wielding batons. Embarrassingly for the authorities, TV cameras captured the police brutality. This event kicked off “50 day revolution” with additional civil rights demonstrations which were much more difficult to deal with than previous examples of counter-insurgency (Mullholland 2002, 50-51). The demonstrations called for a more subtle way to deal with public order, which was not well adopted by the RUC or the B-specials since their powers stemmed from the Special Powers Act¹⁴. The harsh and sometimes excessively severe acts of repression that came with this Act were not effective at squashing marches and other more peaceful forms of protest. Through the civil rights movement, Catholic Nationalists were able to depict themselves as citizens claiming rights. To this point in the civil rights era, it is the Nationalist Catholics which have been the agitators despite Unionist efforts to repress their concerns, and isolate and ghettoize them. The RUC began to fear a civil war when during a march from Belfast to Derry on January 1969 turned violent. Unionists attacked marchers on the last day of the march near Burntollet bridge. This period ushered in a new strategy where Loyalists to the Union began to engage in population violence; this was in contrast to the peaceful agitation being waged by Catholic Nationalists. The change in strategy came about in a concerted bombing campaign which imitated IRA tactics during this period. For example, in March and April 1969 loyalists set off several bombs that they hoped would be blamed on the IRA. The violence stemming from these marches and resentment on both sides – Nationalists and Unionists – led to a period where

¹⁴Included many fearsome powers from internment to flogging but could be excessive.

“direct rule by proxy”¹⁵ became the new experiment in Northern Ireland (Arthur 1996, 16).

Following several riots and violence, a change occurred in the political arrangements of Northern Ireland. Direct rule was imposed by London March 1972. This change from devolved Stormont to direct rule by Westminster presented a challenge to past unionism, ending its authority. This change also saw the resurrection Loyalist groups like the Queen’s Rebels¹⁶ and Ulster Defence Association (UDA). The UDA emerged with an emphasis as a “counter-terror organization”, indicating how far politics had devolved into the streets (Arthur 1996, 16). The move to direct rule by the British Conservative Government at the time, indicated that Northern Ireland’s institutions were inadequate to the task of government there. The Prime Minister of Northern Ireland stated in a speech that a Secretary of State would be appointed and transfers of vital and fundamental powers be turned over to Westminster (Faulkner 1972). More specifically, the move towards direct rule by the UK was that all “statutory and executive responsibility for law and order should be vested in the United Kingdom Parliament and Government (Faulkner 1972). Brian Faulkner the Prime Minister in Northern Ireland at the time also noted in his speech to the Cleveley Committee that these now transferred powers would also include criminal law and procedure issues – for example the organization and appointments to the courts; public order, prisons, penal establishments, special powers, public prosecuting power, and the police (Faulkner 1972). This speech provides some insight into the thinking of the Northern Ireland PM and possible bias. Through the speech Faulkner stated that he asked those at 10 Downing Street

¹⁵The Unionists resented that “two senior Whitehall officials now oversaw the conduct of government from offices in Stormont and reported directly back to London”, and that the British PM had become a puppet (Arthur 1996, 16).

¹⁶Group prepared to take all means necessary to preserve their place in the Union.

whether their motivation for direct rule stemmed from a perceived abuse of powers by Stormont? they replied “no” and indicated it was motivated by the criticisms of his opponents. Faulkner’s posturing appears to be evidence that he wanted to show loyalists in Northern Ireland that they would not be emasculated and that despite loss of several powers, he was fighting to maintain the Union and maintain a hold of power from Stormont. More violence ensued with several violent examples remaining etched into the minds of many. At this time in 1972, it became clear that clashes over civil rights among other animosities like religion and abuse of powers by the majority Protestant government had made it so that the British conservative government had come to view North Ireland’s institutions as inadequate to governing the province (Morrow 1996). These new troublesome times had brought Northern Ireland into its deepest crisis since partition. Not only were civil liberties for some becoming extinct due to the government exercising emergency powers such as arrest and interment without trial, but violence certainly spread carnage in the province again. 1972 became the worst year for political violence in Northern Ireland; 468 people were killed, including 323 civilians.

Sunningdale

Sunningdale was a pivotal attempt to provide an opportunity for all involved – the Catholic Nationalists, the Protestant Unionists and Westminster – to finally try and get to a solution. Some say this was just a way to appease Nationalist concerns. Gillespie (1998) argues this was an attempt to create a “consociational ‘power-sharing’ administration in Northern Ireland and link this with some form of cross-border body in order to provide a ‘confidence-building measure’ for nationalist opinion” (100). The divisiveness between Catholic Nationalists

and Protestant Unionists is seen as one of, if not the greatest hurdle in coming to an agreement. “Indeed, the entrenched nature of Protestant prejudices towards Catholics should not be underestimated if one desires to understand the course of Northern Irish history” (Rose 1999, 141). While some extremists like Ian Paisley feared “Rome Rule,” most Unionists feared power sharing. The objective being to break away from the Union and create a 32-county Irish Republic (Rose 1999).

To try and finally bring to an end the bloodshed and high tensions that had been witnessed in Northern Ireland the British government published a white paper in March 1973 – The Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals (Tonge 2000). The white paper built off of a previous “green paper” – The Future of Northern Ireland – which had been published six months earlier. The main themes between these two documents were those of devolution without dominance and a limited all-Ireland dimension (Tonge 2000). The agreement being attempted at the Civil Service College at Sunningdale in December 1973 called for (1) a power-sharing executive of Unionists and Nationalists; (2) a council of ministers which would form one tier of a Council of Ireland, to include seven from Northern Ireland and seven from the Irish Republic, and in which unanimity was required; (3) for decisions a 60-strong consultative assembly, half elected by the Dail, half by the Northern Ireland Assembly, forming the other tier of the council (Tonge 2000, 42). However, this agreement that was being negotiated by the UUP, SDLP and the Alliance Party (APNI) was extremely short-lived. While the new coalition government that had formed began working relatively well, the overall feeling was still contentious. The issue that appeared to be holding up the parties involved was the issue of the Council of Ireland (Mullholland 2002, 95-96). What appeared to be dooming the new devolved government was the

Irish dimension that was to be included. In January 1974 the Ulster Unionist Council voted to reject the Council of Ireland; this saw the exit of Brian Faulkner, as he was forced to resign leadership of his party, however, Faulkner maintained his assembly majority as head of the power-sharing executive (Mullholland 2002, 96). Faulkner's support for the Council of Ireland weakened his position. For example, Faulkner was unable to convince many in his Unionist party that the Council of Ireland was simply an agreement between two neighboring governments – this would later lead to a split in the UUP, forming the PUP. Additionally, the SDLP was not helpful in trying to promote the Council of Ireland, as one assemblyman noted the Council of Ireland “would be the vehicle that would trundle Unionists into a United Ireland” (Mullholland 2002, 96). These sorts of antagonistic comments helped fuel the demonstrations and ultimately the Ulster Workers' Council Strike which helped bring down Sunningdale. While the strike was coordinated by the Ulster Workers' Council and the Ulster Army Council, these groups also included Ulster Loyalist Paramilitaries such as the UDA and the UVF. By March 1974, Westminster was again in control of Northern Ireland.

While several issues coalesced to bring down this agreement, some would argue that this occurred because each side tried to sell Sunningdale to one another for different reasons. For example, the British government labeled it a balanced constitutional settlement; for Nationalists, there was a prospect for their first political stake in Northern Ireland; for Unionists there was a guarantee that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the UK for as long as a majority of its population desired (Tonge 2000, 43). While others thought that the influence of other parties such as the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) ensured the making and breakdown of the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement (McLoughlin 2009).

The breakdown of this power sharing agreement in 1974 is important because it indicates a return to a less devolved form of government for Northern Ireland and with it a continued wave of violence that witnessed several horrific bombings. The breakdown began when the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC)¹⁷ engaged in a political strike (Kyle 1975, 447). This strike closed down power stations throughout the province, which was devastating (Kyle 1975, 447). The signal to the UWC that the time for the strike had come was the endorsement of the Sunningdale Agreement by the Northern Irish Assembly, 44 votes to 28 (Kyle 1975, 447). Shortly after on May 28th the Sunningdale experiment collapsed. Kyle (1975) argues that two points became clearer to the Irish Republic afterwards. One being that Protestants had the will and determination to resist anything that resembled a possible United Ireland. The second point that impacted the breakdown was a realization by the Irish Republic. This realization was that – at the time – the British appeared irresolute. The Irish feared Britain was trying to get out of Ireland. The fear was not that the British would just leave, but that if they did leave, the Republic would have to take charge of responsibilities much larger than they could discharge (Kyle 1975, 448). Catholics “broadly speaking were prepared to countenance a political settlement well short of a united, independent Ireland” (Mullholland 2002, 93). Since Stormont was suspended the Ulster Unionist Party had boycotted talks with British officials. While Brian Faulkner tried to bring the UUP back to the table, the party ended up splitting. Overall, the coalition¹⁸ established after Sunningdale in January 1974, worked moderately well, despite its contentious nature. Oddly,

¹⁷A new organization of Protestant Trade Unionists (Kyle 1975, 447).

¹⁸This coalition was actually the “executive-designate”. The election in Belfast had shattered the “traditional Unionist Party” and produced a majority government that consisted of a “Protestant party (the Unionists), a ‘Catholic’ party (SDLP) and a moderate party (Alliance (APNI)). (Kyle 1975, 440).

after the end of the Sunningdale agreement and the re-imposition of direct rule, the government took steps to lift the bans on extreme groups such as Sinn Fein and the UVF “(the UDA was already legal)”, hoping that extremists could reimagine the partition settlement (Mullholland 2002). The political climate at this moment in time after Sunningdale in 1975 was at an impasse. On one side, the Catholic Nationalists insisted on power-sharing still and an Irish dimension, while on the Unionist side, there was a complete refusal to consider power sharing or an Irish dimension. Britain, already drained from previous animosities and at being forced to take control after suspending Stormont, still was not eager to force the issue with either side. “Provisions were made to adjust direct rule for the long haul” (Mullholland 2002, 99). These actions led to Westminster allowing for additional time to be given to review orders given to Northern Ireland and the numbers of the members of Parliament from Ulster increased from 12 to 18.

Politically, the Unionists at the time did not care too much for the devolutionary arrangements discussed at Sunningdale¹⁹. While Northern Ireland would have preferred to have more credible authority through Stormont, they would take the cold shoulder that came with Britain’s direct rule. For the Unionists it was more important to remain loyalists than to allow the Catholic Nationalists any sort of grab for power that would come with a devolutionary arrangement calling for power sharing. On the other hand, the Catholic Nationalists saw attempts like Sunningdale as a façade, made to only slightly placate Catholic Nationalists. Although Sunningdale itself was progress, Catholic Nationalists needed more assurances before they could go through with an agreement. Catholic Nationalists wanted the subject of a united, independent

¹⁹ While the Irish and British Governments met with the new Assembly, the fact was that there were also two other protestant parties as well as part of a third, in the assembly, but who rejected the Constitution and were not invited to Sunningdale.

Ireland included in the agreement. Without this dimension it would be difficult to get them to the table.

All the while the British government, although attempting a resolution to the North Irish problem, was tired of all the disagreeing between the parties. On the one hand Britain did not really want to involve itself; on the other, Britain needed to find solutions that would be amenable to both the Unionists and Catholic Nationalists. If it gave too much power to the Unionists, a potential situation would arise just like the one that led to “The Troubles” and to the Direct Rule situation it was currently in. If Britain gave too much power to the Catholic Nationalists it would be a slap in the face to loyalists Protestant Unionists that had fought to keep Northern Ireland a part of the United Kingdom and who could themselves engage in violence. At times it appeared Britain just wanted the issue to go away. Although Sunningdale provided a good step forward initially, trying to please all the parties and meet all “concessions” was not possible. This moment politically was important for all the parties involved because it would signal the last real attempt at a proper devolved arrangement that would curb violence in Northern Ireland, but it was not to be.

Britain’s ambiguity about what it wanted to do, was not helpful. Sunningdale was a moment to get something done that would finally bring an end to the Northern Irish issue. However, it appears as if Westminster wasn’t really listening to the Unionists or the Nationalists. It may have been that the British were trying to end violence more than actually deal with the messy and intertwined issues that plagued the Protestant Unionist and Catholic Nationalist relationship. However, it could also be that the British were not willing to force a relationship on the Unionists – which they might have done by engaging them when they engaged the

Nationalists. From the perspective of the Catholic Nationalists, nothing would change unless an Irish dimension could be agreed upon; what could be agreed upon is that Nationalists would continue to stymie any efforts without it. The Unionists continued to remain engaged despite their disappointment at Sunningdale and at Britain for appearing to ease up on the Nationalists. The Unionists were technically winning the fight at this time. Although they would much prefer a devolved agreement, in the Unionists' eyes it would need to be majoritarian for – possibly – misplaced fears of “Rome rule,” and removing them from the Union. The Unionists though were prepared to take direct rule for as long as they needed; typically Britain was more amenable to the Unionists than to the Nationalists.

1975 – 1998

At this point the Sunningdale had been cancelled and issues on a way forward continued to plague all those involved. The end of Sunningdale and the emerging 1980's saw the continuation of antagonisms between the Catholic Nationalists and the loyalist Protestant Unionists. The Tory Party in the Union appeared to favor the “entrenchment” of direct rule, however, while in power, the Thatcher Government switched its focus to co-operation with the Republic of Ireland. This began in 1981, through the establishment of an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental council. Yet, devolution was still not ignored. “Rolling devolution” would be the mechanism where the elected assembly might have powers re-introduced to them – though piecemeal, but this never developed passed “talks” (Patterson 1996, 25). These “talks” began in January but had their first round in March 1980 and then subsequent rounds in July and August 1980. During this period it was announced that Special Category Status would be coming to an

end and this status would no longer exist for paramilitary groups regardless of when the crimes were committed. Although this technically affected all paramilitary prisoners, those aligned with Catholic Nationalists were mostly affected. In 1972 one of the demands the PIRA had insisted on before they had committed to a truce and met with the British Government was that any prisoners convicted of “Troubles” related offences be given this status. With this Special Category Status came several benefits such as not wearing prison uniforms, housing with other paramilitary members, no prison work, as well as extra visits. The talks continued but could not reconcile British PM Thatcher’s reluctance to discuss any Irish dimension as part of a solution with what newly elected Taoiseach Haughey considered a three dimensional approach for Northern Ireland. Thatcher, among other political figures in Britain indicated that “the future of the constitutional affairs of Northern Ireland is a matter for the people of Northern Ireland, [10 Downing] and this Parliament, and no one else” (O’Kane 2007, 13-14).

Part of the failures of the Sunningdale agreement still stood on the antagonisms that existed between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists. The SDLP²⁰ were unwilling to get into bed with the Unionists, who were only prepared to offer less than what the Sunningdale agreement had tried to achieve (Mullholland 2002). Thatcher’s government was not willing to seek “new planes” for considering Northern Ireland throughout 1980, despite the Unionists 1979 election manifesto committing to a mostly integrationist approach for Northern Ireland. This commitment was dropped after the election. Thereafter, the SDLP Nationalists boycotted the proceedings. If devolution was to be the answer – and not Irish reunification – the Nationalists

²⁰ [Social Democratic and Labour Party](#). Moderate Social-democratic Irish Nationalist Political Party in Northern Ireland. Advocates peaceful Irish reunification, and further devolved powers while the North remains part of the United Kingdom.

wanted in. Throughout the 1980's the back and forth between the Nationalists and Unionists continued, trying to reach an agreement that would be acceptable to both, with violence a continued concern. Several high level meetings took place that year, beginning with the Atkins Talks and Constitutional Conference²¹ in January 1980, followed by the Teapot/Dublin Summit in December 1980. At this point in time a solution was still being drawn up for Northern Ireland. In July of 1980 the British Government published a document, *The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion*. This document provided two broad issues in need of solutions. One was the wider context about issues of security, the economy, reconciliation and stability. The second set of suggestions were in regards to much more specific devolutionary arrangements at the local level, including discussion of executive formation, minority participation among other more locally specific topics.

By 1981, nothing had been accomplished on any of the issues and goals that *The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion*. However, a key moment during this time was the hunger strike that occurred in 1981. This hunger strike was one of the keys to the later success of Sinn Fein. While Republican Nationalist paramilitaries such as the IRA had caused much suffering, those same prisoners now would engage in their own suffering to further their cause (Bew and Gillespie 1999). The hunger strike began when Bobby Sands, then leader of the IRA, at Maze Prison refused food. March 1st the beginning of Sands' strike was also a significant date – at least for prisoners – since it fell on the same date as the ending of

²¹ As part of the [Atkins talks a constitutional conference](#) was set up at Stormont involving the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Alliance Party (APNI). The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) did not take part. Atkins allowed for another conference to take place concurrently. This conference would allow the SDLP to raise issues, such as the 'Irish dimension'. The DUP refused to get involved with the parallel conference (A Chronology of the Conflict - 1980 2019).

Special Category Status in 1976. Important to note was that the strike Bobby Sands started was not seen favorably by the IRA leadership outside of prison. By October 1981, the hunger strike had ended, however, not before 10 Republican prisoners had starved to death in support of their demands – the return of special category status. This had become a huge propaganda victory for Nationalists over the British government and had attracted a lot of international sympathy. It also became a turning point for Sinn Fein and the IRA politically. After initiating the hunger strike but before his death after 66 days on strike, Bobby Sands had been elected as an MP at Westminster. Between the hunger strike and Sands’ election to Westminster and his death, it appeared that Republican ‘suffering’ had begun to bear fruit for Sinn Fein and their eventual success.

A few months later in April 1982, the British Government published the *Northern Ireland: A Framework for Devolution* white paper. This British proposal set out to establish a 78-member Assembly at Stormont (UK Parliament 1982). This new Assembly would be asked to agree on how the powers that would presumably be devolved, would be administered by the Assembly. Additionally, the Assembly would need at least 70 percent of the members to agree before powers would be devolved and would be passed to their respective departments one at a time. This “rolling devolution” had previously been discussed, but most of the political parties had been opposed to this style of devolving powers. 1982 also saw the enactment of the *Northern Ireland Act of 1982*. This new bill would introduce the new Assembly at Stormont, and it was not without some quarrels. For example, Nicholas Budgen²², resigned due to his opposition to this bill. However, it was James Prior – then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland – in May

²² Was the then Assistant Government Whip (Melaugh, *A Chronology of Conflict - 1982 2019*).

1982 that gave support to the bill stating that direct rule was not a long term solution, but either a move to total integration or a gradual devolvement of powers would need to occur (Melaugh 2019). Two months later the

[*Northern Ireland Act of 1982*](#) became law, with James Prior indicating that elections for this new Assembly would take place in October (Melaugh, A Chronology of Conflict - 1982 2019). Another example of the difficulty in getting a new Assembly established involved SDLP in August 1982. The SDLP made its displeasure clear with its strong statement that they would contest the coming Assembly elections, and those elected would not take their seats. Sinn Fein also indicated that they would oppose the SDLP, however, they also would not sit at the Assembly for any of their successful candidates. Their motives for participating but not sitting at the Assembly would be to “give the Nationalist electorate an opportunity to reject uncontested monopoly in leadership which the SDLP has had” (Bew and Gillespie 1999). The new [Assembly elections finally took place on October 20th 1982](#). While the election had been contested by Sinn Fein and SDLP they received 10.1 percent and 5 of the seats, and 18.8 percent and 14 seats respectively. However, on the Unionist side the UUP secured 29.7 percent with 26 seats, while the DUP earned 23 percent and 21 seats, with APNI obtaining 9.3 percent of the vote and 10 seats – surprisingly double the seats Sinn Fein received. The success of Sinn Fein, despite their abstentionism, started a worry within British establishment circles, indicating they would one day replace SDLP.

A few months later in May 1983, the new Assembly sat through an all night session in order to talk about a way forward and which powers would be devolved from Westminster, however, the talks were a failure since they could not agree on a common approach (Bew and

Gillespie 1999). A month later the UK held its general election, where the Conservative party won a majority, returning it to power. The election was contested in Northern Ireland due to the election of Gerry Adams, then Vice-President of Sinn Fein in the West Belfast Constituency, who had unseated and beat the SDLP candidates. Gerry Adams became President of Sinn Fein later that year. Other contentious issues continued between Republican Nationalists and Loyalist Unionists. For example, in January 1984, the Londonderry District Council got permission from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to change the name of the Council. The new name would be the Derry District Council. Although this is a small nuance, and the official name of the City remained Londonderry, Unionists were clearly riled up about the name change. The [Union Jack flag](#)²³ would also stop flying on Council property. In fact a Loyalist demonstration took place at Stormont in Belfast against the proposal to change the name of the Council, however, no proposal to change official name of the City Londonderry despite the symbolic move to change the Council name (CAIN 2019). Shortly after in March 1984, after a series of bombings by the IRA in the center of Belfast, a new Prevention of Terrorism Act became law, which allowed the Secretary of State to proscribe organizations associated with terrorism illegal. The law also continued the previous iterations of this law that allowed the RUC to arrest people without warrants as well as detain them for up to 48 hours and an additional 5 days. This same year there would be two documents put forth by the UUP and the DUP respectively, indicating their ideas for a way forward on devolution of power and the future of Northern Ireland. Towards the end of the year in November, British PM Thatcher held an Anglo-Irish Summit meeting with Taoiseach

²³ The National Flag of the United Kingdom. It combines the crosses of the three countries united under one sovereign – although since 1921, only Northern Ireland has been part of the United Kingdom (Union Jack 2019).

Fitzgerald at Chequers, England. Thatcher turned down each of the options that the [New Ireland Forum](#)²⁴ had produced. The “out, out, out” comments by British PM Thatcher – was viewed as dismissive (CAIN 2019). Early in 1985, British and Irish governments came to some consensus on better cooperation with respect to Northern Ireland (Mullholland 2002, 117). Although the Irish Republic was ambitious in its demands and Britain’s Margaret Thatcher unsympathetic, they still found enough common ground to go forward with the agreement. On November 15th, 1985 the governments made the agreement public. Unlike the Sunningdale agreement (a joint “communique”), the Anglo-Irish agreement was an international treaty registered at the U.N. (Mullholland 2002, 118). Sinn Fein – among other Nationalist groups – were not pleased with this new agreement, but ultimately this was just another piling on by Britain that Dublin had a special responsibility for the North. This allowed Ulster’s Catholics to enjoy a new symbolic legitimacy for their national identity. For the North’s Catholic Nationalists their view of how the Agreement was negotiated allowed for further agreements that chipped away at the substance of the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The new symbolic move would make the union more uncomfortable for Protestants Unionists (Mullholland 2002, 119). The agreement did make the Unionists feel unsettled. The Unionists had not wanted to negotiate because the violence that came with direct rule was still more preferable to anything the Nationalists were likely to accept (Mullholland 2002, 120). This Anglo-Irish Agreement came to create a sort of “new found” veto for the Nationalists. For the first time Catholic Nationalists had the political opportunity to help usher in a new “Sunningdale” settlement, acceptable to Catholic opinion,

²⁴ The three options that had been proposed through the New Ireland Forum included a united Ireland, a confederation of the two states, or joint authority between the British and Irish governments.

involving power-sharing, and a strengthened Irish dimension, and ultimately upend the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Mullholland 2002, 120).

By 1987 when Margaret Thatcher won the 1987 General Election, and no changes were made to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Unionists felt their opposition had failed (Mullholland 2002). Keeping in mind that direct rule had been adopted as a short-term measure that became “part of the longer-term fabric of governance in” [Northern Ireland], it was an unaccountable and undemocratic political system. “While not as corrosive as the Unionist regime at Stormont, direct rule infantilized the politics in the region” (Cochrane 2013, 103). Political progress was slow moving, however, following “talks about talks,” a formal talks agenda had been agreed to by Secretary of State Peter Brooke and the constitutional parties in 1990 (Morrow 1996). While the talks did stall out in 1991, they resumed in 1992, even with a new Secretary of State – Sir Patrick Mayhew, that November they again ended inconclusively (Morrow 1996, 27). Northern Ireland had been suffering from a “democratic deficit²⁵” this was recognized by the Opsahl Commission²⁶ in 1993, which indicated “Government is remote, imperial and non-accountable to the electorate, which did not elect it in the first place” (Cochrane 2013, 104). With British PM John Major at the helm there existed the opportunity for a way forward on peace talks. He certainly wasn’t Margaret Thatcher, especially since he did not carry any of her associated baggage²⁷. Although not as charismatic as his predecessor, PM Major was dogged in his

²⁵ A phrase used to describe the fact that decisions were taken by ministerial decree from the British-based politicians, while local people and their political representatives had very little means of influencing the political process (Cochran, Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace 2013, 102).

²⁶ The Opsahl Commission was a non-official attempt to take the temperature of “ordinary people” in Northern Ireland, to seek alternative ways forward.

²⁷ Thatcher had been considered a *bête noire* within Irish Nationalist since the 1981 Republican hunger strikes, making her unsuited to pragmatic realignment (Cochrane 2013, 122).

determination and endurance until his defeat to Labour at the 1997 general election (Cochrane 2013, 122). However, British PM John Major presented an opportunity for renewed talks with Sinn Fein. The construction of the peace process and cornerstone of the IRA ceasefire in 1994 began when Secretary of State Peter Brooke addressed a trade group in London indicating that Britain had “no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland, and would legislate for a united Ireland when the majority of people in Northern Ireland expressed that wish” (Cochrane 2013, 123). Cochrane (2013) argues that [Northern Ireland] became *de facto* rather than *de jure* British. The twin track talks process sought by 10 Downing started late 1993 when Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds tried to get an agreed upon joint position on the peace process with British PM John Major. While often tense, the goal was to announce a joint statement strong enough to convince the IRA to announce a ceasefire, while avoiding scaring away Unionists into public dissent. The British were publicly trying to encourage talks between Unionists and Nationalists, however, privately they were in contact with Sinn Fein and the IRA through backdoor channels managed by MI6 – without the knowledge of the Irish government, the SDLP, or any Unionist party. Separately, Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein and John Hume leader of SDLP had been engaging in secret talks of their own – on and off – for five years between 1988 and 1993, without the knowledge of their own parties or the British and Irish governments. Nobody really knew whom anyone was actually talking to, or whether they were listening (Cochrane 2013, 129). While these were steps forward – sort of – it also caused some confusion over who was aware of what and mistrust of those involved. This does not mean that among the confusion there were not some amusing moments. On one occasion for example Sinn Fein’s chief negotiator Martin McGuinness went to Dublin for a secret meeting with the Irish

Department of Foreign Affairs. McGuinness himself recalled that during one of these secret meetings there was some unfortunate timing with his arrival at the government offices.

McGuinness's arrival coincided with an open-top bus full of American and Japanese tourists on a trip to Dublin. As the tour bus approached a traffic light outside the offices he attempted to get in the building without being seen or drawing too much attention, when suddenly "[he] heard through the loudspeaker on the bus 'And the Chief Negotiator for Sinn Fein, Martin McGuinness, is now entering the Department of Foreign Affairs'" (Mallie and McKittrick 2001). This all happened near Stephen's Green²⁸; Martin McGuinness could not believe it (Cochrane 2013, 129).

With direct rule in effect, the parties involved were trying for a new Sunningdale with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, though it appeared to have hit the Unionists the hardest. Unionism had fallen apart some in the late 1960's²⁹. This fragmentation and the move towards direct rule, and end of power sharing, left little of the idea that a majority government that included Catholics could be achieved (Mullholland 2002, 120). While 10 Downing Street preferred a twin-track process, the goal was all-party talks to begin by the end of February 1996. On May 30th 1996 the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation were held³⁰; the talks began June 10th 1996 with Sinn Fein excluded. These did not advance much politically. However, the election of Tony Blair in a landslide Labour government win May 1st 1997 may have led to the IRA stepping away from

²⁸ A nearby public park.

²⁹ There had been fragmentation within the Unionist parties in the 1960's. The chasm was created between those who believed that a majority for the Union included Catholics could exist, and those who preferred to rely upon ethnic solidarity and the advantages of constitutional incumbency (Mullholland 2002, 120).

³⁰ This Forum was held after the IRA ceasefire in August 1994. Held in Dublin to discuss the Northern Ireland Peace process. Sinn Fein accepted invitation, however, Loyalist Unionist parties PUP and UDP rejected invitation as well as the more mainstream Unionist parties UUP and DUP.

abstention. While the Docklands attack may have ended the paramilitaries and IRA's ceasefire quite quickly, a year later, on July 20th 1997, the IRA suddenly restored their ceasefire. Six weeks later Sinn Fein was admitted back into the talks.

Violence

With the troubles already started by the end of the 1960's as well as the implementation of direct rule over Northern Ireland in 1972, the period of direct rule proves to be one of the most violent. Westminster's decision to take over the reigns in Northern Ireland may have contributed to many attacks that occurred after the decision. While violence had been on the rise, more sensational attacks had occurred after the decision to implement direct rule. At the same time violence would surround the attempts at a new devolutionary arrangement that was Sunningdale a couple of years later. Even with Sunningdale's failure violence would continue throughout this devolved period. Violence would slowly die down but it would not be into the 90's that a change would come to bring less violence. Below are instances of violence throughout the direct rule period, some more sensational attacks occur throughout the end of the 1960's and beginning of the devolved period in 1972. However, several other instances of violence follow, tracing it through and after Sunningdale as well as into the direct rule period up to 1998.

Examples of the violent incidents that took place include *McGurk's Bar*: On December 4th 1971, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) planted a bomb at McGurk's Bar. This bar was typically frequented by Catholic Nationalists. During this bombing fifteen civilians were killed, including two children. Seventeen others were wounded. The attack was so severe part of the building collapsed. Part of the animosity that existed led to the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)

to implicate the victims in the very attacks, indicating that an IRA bomb exploded prematurely; however, a UVF member was later arrested and sentenced and it was also acknowledged that the RUC's bias hindered their investigation. This attack was one of the tipping points that led to tit-for-tat bombings and shooting between loyalists and Republicans leading to much more violence in 1972.

Bloody Sunday: One of these examples is known as “Bloody Sunday” occurred on January 30th 1972; in this particular example 28 civilians were killed by British soldiers as they marched to protest internment. Most of those killed and injured were Catholics, some while trying to help wounded civilians. This particular march had been organized by NICRA. Not only was Bloody Sunday one of the more significant days of violence during the “Troubles” for the amount of people killed, but because it was acted out by British State forces and increased support for the Provisional IRA³¹ (McCann 2006, 4-6) (Pringle and Jacobson 2000, 293). Bloody Sunday became engraved in the minds of many, not just for its violence against unarmed civilians (Catholics), but because of who perpetrated this violence, in front of other civilians and the press. The soldiers involved in this violent event had previously been involved in other violent acts months previous as well as later attacks on Protestants months after Bloody Sunday. Direct rule then became much more complicated for the new Secretary of State at the time – William Whiteclaw – since he now had to reconcile how to placate Unionist fears about threats

³¹ Was an Irish Republican paramilitary organization seeking out an end to British rule over Northern Ireland; facilitate reunifying of Ireland, and bringing about an independent republic. It was the largest and most active Republican paramilitary group during the Troubles. It was a successor to the original IRA, following a Republican split in December 1969.

to the State and British sovereignty as well as placate Nationalists who had had enough and were demanding radical reform, if not the abolition of Northern Ireland (Morrow 1996, 20).

Abercorn Restaurant Bombing: Occurring on March 4th 1972, the Abercorn restaurant bombing was a bombing directed by the Provisional IRA (PIRA) which injured over 130 people, also killing two women at this restaurant in Belfast. This attack was brutal causing loss of life and limbs, as well as blinding many victims. Despite the restaurant and bar being Catholic-owned it was still targeted by supposed PIRA operatives. That day late in the afternoon an anonymous phone call issued a five minute warning to 999³² prior to the bomb going off (McCorry 2005). The two women killed during this bombing were Catholic. These attacks were occurring during a period of rising anti-IRA sentiment not just by Protestant Unionists but Catholics, as well other issues like the UK imposing direct rule. Tensions were high politically, between powers being transferred back to the UK and continued tensions between Nationalists and Loyalists. Following the attack, Herbert Norris of the RUC condemned the attacks but failed to mention that the restaurant had been Catholic owned. Even though no organization ever took responsibility and no charges brought forth, the PIRA were thought to be the main suspects. Even though the PIRA was suspected, there were some who speculated there could have been another group responsible like Unionist-fanatic Ulster Vanguard Movement (UVM). The speculation was that this was a false flag, being covered up by some in the RUC. The PIRA typically claimed its attacks even when women and children were attacked or killed.

³² 999 is the official emergency number for the United Kingdom and Ireland. First introduced on June 30th, 1937, the UK's 999 number is the world's oldest emergency call telephone service.

Additionally, the PIRA in this case disclaimed the attack, and following a leaflet circulated by the UVM declared:

“We make no apologies for Abercorn. No apologies were made for Aldershot (barracks explosion in Aldershot, England, which killed seven and which IRA claimed credit for). These premises were being used extensively by Southern Irish shoppers for the transmission of information vital to the terrorist campaign in the six counties. We gave no warning, and we will give no warning” (Levine 1972).

Bloody Friday: On July 21, 1972, the PIRA set off several – at least 20 – bombs each exploding within a half-hour of one another in Belfast. Although the bombs had been targeted at infrastructure, specifically the transportation network, 9 people were killed. Of those nine five were civilians, two were British soldiers and the other two were a RUC³³ member and UDA³⁴ member; 130 were also injured in the attacks (McKenna 2019). After this terrible series of bombings, with direct rule in place, the British Army was finally sent to Northern Ireland to enter and upend the ‘no-go’ areas of Belfast and Derry which had ghettoized the Catholic/Nationalist communities there (Melaugh 2019). These attacks stemmed from failed secret talks between the PIRA and the British government. The talks were set in motion after certain pre-conditions were set which included: no restriction on who represented the IRA at the talks, a present independent witness, meeting should not be held at Stormont, and lastly that political status should be given to republican prisoners – this had previously been taken away. After release from detention and travelling with a delegation to London, Gerry Adams representing the PIRA had talks with Secretary of State Whiteclaw and other Northern Ireland Office (NIO) ministers. The

³³ Royal Ulster Constabulary

³⁴ Ulster Defence Association – largest Ulster loyalist paramilitary and vigilante group in Northern Ireland formed in 1971.

breakdown in the ceasefire led to the bombings which were a decision by the PIRA to step up its violent campaign trying to bring ordinary life in [Belfast] to an end (Melaugh 2019).

Kelly's Bar: Kelly's Bar was another incident in the bloodiest of years in Northern Ireland, where 66 were injured and three were killed. The incident involved the use of a car bomb outside a mostly Catholic and Nationalist bar where people were watching a soccer match on May 13th 1972. Initially, the car bombing was blamed on the PIRA, with the British Army claiming that it had been an "accident" caused by a PIRA bomb. The recently appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw had indicated to the House of Commons that the bombing had been caused by a PIRA blast that had gone off prematurely (McKittrick, et al. 1999). There was suspicion that the bomb had been planted by loyalists of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). In fact the British Army was given the names of two men suspected of involvement in the attack on Kelly's Bar (Young 2017). It was also revealed much later that loyalist gunmen also sprayed survivors with bullets after the explosion. While drinking at Paisley Park Pub, a British Army soldier from the Parachute Regiment on leave had indicated to superiors a man had stated that "Kelly's Bar would go up in two hours" – which it did (MacAirt 2017).

Later, as Sunningdale broke down, violence came from all sides. There were major bombings in Dublin, Monaghan, and M62³⁵ (Coogan 1996, 191). Other bombings the year of the breakdown at Sunningdale include no-warning pub bombings by the IRA or "Provisionals" at Guildford and at Birmingham in October and November respectively. In the former bombing

³⁵ The [M62](#) is a 107-mile-long, west-east trans-Pennine motorway in Northern England, connecting Liverpool and Hull via Manchester and Leeds. See also [M62 coach bombing](#).

there were five deaths and 54 injured, with the latter leading to 19 deaths and 182 injured (Coogan 1996, 191). The violence was certainly taking a toll. With the view that British interest in Northern Ireland was dwindling, the IRA started new rounds of armed propaganda. They turned to attacking Great Britain itself: killing 5 people and injuring 44 in a pub bombing in Guildford in October 1974; killing 19 and wounding 182 in Birmingham in November 1974 (Mullholland 2002, 100). While these attacks did turn British attention on those in Northern Ireland again, it also negatively affected innocent Irishmen that were picked up, brutalized and unjustly imprisoned. The result of piling one kind of tragedy – pub bombings – on top of a different kind – by imprisoning innocents – strangely helped change the tragic nature of the pub bombings into propaganda boons for the republican movement.

Despite their propaganda boon, on January 1st 1975 the Provisional IRA announced a truce after meetings with Protestant churchmen. However, this was short lived and ended January 16th, with another truce beginning on February 10th 1975. The truce technically lasted until January 1976. During this period, the British opened “incident centers” operated by Sinn Fein members who were liaisons with the government, and allowed the Provisionals could openly patrol. Their patience was waning however, as they were being strung along with no sign of “political advance” (Mullholland 2002, 101). While this truce did not really bring down violence, but led to different kinds of violence such as the Provisional IRA continuing to feud with the still operating Official IRA, as well as loyalist violence brought on by misguided fears that a British withdrawal was pending. In fact, the loyalists escalated their assassination campaign. The loyalist army continued to be upset about the truce that had been negotiated with the IRA and MI6 in the aftermath of the Birmingham bombings. Loyalist killings of civilians

increased from 87 in 1974 to 96 in 1975, up to a high of 110 in 1976. This violence by loyalists was not unmatched as the IRA retaliated by carrying out sectarian murders. One example of this tit for tat occurred when the Protestant Action Force (PAF) killed 5 Catholics in South Armagh, which was followed the next day by the killing of 10 civilians by the IRA, when they were taken off a bus at Kingsmill in South Armagh. The sectarian conflict had reached a point where the government decided to criminalize the conflict. William Whitelaw had previously ended harassment of Catholic areas for political reasons, Merlyn Rees the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland continued this track in a more strategic way. Rees' approach was to stop the strategy of counterinsurgency against the IRA in favor of a more internal security strategy. This led to less direct involvement by the Army against the IRA and hand that responsibility over to the RUC with the army supporting them. With this new strategy in place and the constitutional issues of Sunningdale over-with, the loyalist assassinations were starting to take a dive (Mullholland 2002). Loyalist assassinations went from a high of 110 in 1976 to 19 in 1977, 6 in 1978 and 12 in 1979 (Mullholland 2002, 104). This may be due to the British government appearing to taking a more hard-nosed security policy approach to the IRA, and no longer giving the impression that they would 'sell-out' to the IRA. By 1980, mass communal violence had mostly died down, it would not be until later in the 1980's that loyalist violence would climb back up.

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Hyde and Regents Park in London; two members of the Household Cavalry were killed as were six soldiers from the Royal Green Jackets (Mullholland 2002, 128). However, the Republican Nationalists were prepared for the long haul³⁶; by 1983 the IRA and republican movement was making sure to stay strong enough to ensure participation in whatever political solution would come (O'Brien 1999). While violence did continue into the 1980's, the numbers indicated that violence remained at a lower level than had occurred in the 1970's. The early years 1981, 1982, and 1983 saw a death toll over 100 and in 1985 only 57 deaths due to the conflict. Violence throughout this period continued. In fact while loyalist violence had eased up somewhat in the early 80's, yet picked back up again after the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The loyalists along with the Ulster Resistance³⁷ imported weapons from South Africa due to fears of being "sold out" (Dorney 2015). The violence by the loyalists as in the past was intended for republican militants and politicians, but many victims were unarmed Catholics. New loyalist violence would bring back to life the RUC – in 1982 six men were shot dead by the RUC in County Armagh, five of them from Republican paramilitary organizations, the sixth man was a civilian. This violence by Unionist against Catholics also shows the extent of their perception of Protestant alienation. The alienation perceived could stem from the fact that Westminster was not necessarily playing favorites at this time.

The re-escalation of Unionist violence after the Anglo-Irish agreement put pressure on the IRA. By 1984 politicians were being considered "legitimate targets", for example the IRA assassinated Conservative MP Ian Gow, in order to intimidate those that would stand by the

³⁶ Gerry Adams's strategy known as the "Long War" would allow the IRA to be reorganized into small cells, more difficult to infiltrate until their hope of British withdrawal (Dorney 2015).

³⁷ This group was linked to the Democratic Unionist Party.

Union. At this point in time the IRA was quite violent unleashing several lethal attacks in the 1990's. One of those attacks included the bombing at the Baltic Exchange in the center of London in 1992, where a young girl was wounded and three people killed. This is not to say that IRA violence was unmatched. The violence engaged in against the IRA here was from two sides; one from the loyalists who were trying to help Unionists and Protestants keep a hold on power and maintain an edge on remaining in the Union, while the SAS represented Westminster's attempts to infiltrate and destroy the IRA and attempt to remove violence. The IRA had tried to counter this by the implementation of their "Long War" strategy in 1983³⁸ (O'Brien 1999). In 1988 three IRA members were shot dead in Gibraltar by members of the SAS, while a few days later during the funerals a loyalist named Michael Stone killed three mourners. In fact between 1989 and 1992, 21 Catholics, died by the hand of loyalist paramilitaries and the security forces for the Derry/Tyron area (Mullholland 2002, 129). The IRA took revenge by murdering seven Protestants using a landmine, followed by other attacks at the hands of the Ulster Freedom Fighters which murdered five Catholics in a betting shop in Belfast. The early 1990's was seeing re-escalations in violence between loyalist paramilitaries and the IRA. They were again stuck in a tit for tat, which may have led to the decision by the IRA to not engage in internecine sectarian war and call a ceasefire. However, it was clear that violence by both sides was an issue in late 1993 and early 1994 the IRA's violence was directed at security forces and incendiary devices took lead on economic targets, while Loyalists – "less choosy" – were killing more than just republicans (Mullholland 2002, 130). On August 31st 1994 the IRA "called a 'complete and unequivocal' ceasefire", while six weeks later loyalist paramilitary groups offered a reciprocal

³⁸ See footnote 13.

ceasefire October 13th (Mullholland 2002, 132). From the ceasefires, it appeared a new way forward was being formed. However, this was not to be the case as negotiating ways forward still encountered complications. Sadly, in February 1996 the IRA detonated a bomb in the Docklands area of London causing 85 million in damage, injuring 100 and killing two people. This new attack echoed republican sentiment for “delaying” tactics by the British government (Mullholland 2002, 137). This violent act was not only sending a signal that they were dissatisfied with delays by the British government, but also that the British were not about to railroad the Unionists.

Analysis

To realize what has happened here is important. The Protestants and Catholics went from a very brief period of high violence during the civil war and partition, to a period of – although high tensions – little to no violence at all. That period of non-violence lasted for several decades, only to be disrupted by extreme violence on both sides – Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists – during the “Troubles”. Particularly violent in 1972, with over 500 deaths, mostly Catholics and some Protestants, and many more wounded. While there was responsibility on both sides for the attacks and deaths, there were false flag attacks, where paramilitary unionist/protestant groups carried out attacks which were blamed on the IRA. Decades later many of these false flag attacks have come to be discovered. This is important because before these attacks were known to be false flags they were used to sew further distrust towards Catholic Nationalists and the IRA; as well as showing that they should not have a stronger voice

in Northern Ireland. Another way to trace the violence and groups involved is to look at the Protestant/Unionist groups and then the Catholic/Nationalists.

Initially, the Protestant and Unionist groups in Northern Ireland held the majority of the province in the North. Protestant Unionists accounted for the majority of most provinces of the North except for two: counties Londonderry and Tyrone, which were predominantly Catholic and identified as more Irish than British. At first Protestant Unionists were opposed to devolution – at least before partition, but with their majority in the North, they soon realized that this system would work to their benefit. After partition, it was clear to them that to keep control and avoid Catholic rule as well as the re-integration³⁹ into the Irish Republic, they would need to do whatever was necessary to keep control. This was what was done; Catholic Nationalists were kept out of most sectors of everyday life. Catholic neighborhoods were ghettoized by those in control of housing commissions in the North, elections were controlled through gerrymandering and the rate payers franchise. Work in the public sector for Catholic Nationalists was hard to come by, due to being kept out of public service jobs and lack of quality education. For the Protestant Unionists this was working out better than they had expected. They controlled most of the governmental functions of Northern Ireland with little access to Catholic Nationalists and even if there were complaints, it did not appear to matter to Westminster. Westminster did not want any part of it and were trying to keep out of the “Irish Bog” that had kept them so involved in messy politics through partition. During this period of devolution from Stormont, Protestant Unionists maintained a hold on power, even if there were some periods of uncertainty about their control throughout the years. But the Unionists lack of self-control in maintaining full charge of

³⁹ The British always thought of partition as a temporary solution to a messy problem.

the government and holding Catholic Nationalists at arm's length helped build some of the resentment and high tensions that ended up leading to violence. The Civic Weeks of Terrence O'Neill had intended to try and persuade Catholic Nationalists to integrate into the Union – although gimmicky to some – could have been helpful, but they only led to O'Neill being voted out for being too welcoming to Catholic Nationalists. These behaviors are what led to Westminster taking control by direct rule in 1972, which only increased the violence in Northern Ireland. The Protestant Unionists saw their hold on power being taken away as devolution was ended, and Westminster took more control over the “Bog” they once wanted to forget. As Unionist power over Northern Ireland slipped into the hands of 10 Downing Street, violence became more extreme, with bombings that took the lives of many. This shows that as direct rule is imposed and devolution dissolved – for the time being – Unionist violence appeared to increase.

Sometimes the violence was traceable to Unionist paramilitary groups against Catholic Nationalists. However, there were times as mentioned above where attacks were only found to be caused by Unionist groups decades later. This is interesting and sort of falls in line with the notion that Unionists wanted to portray all Catholic Nationalists as having sinister motives and tie them to the IRA. This was not the case, as the Abercorn restaurant bombing had shown. This was an attack by supposed Catholic Nationalists on other Catholics. This attack – later discovered to have been committed by Unionist paramilitary groups – was condemned by Catholics as well at the time, who were growing tired of the violence no matter who was perpetrating it.

From the Catholic Nationalists perspective they were truly the victims. Partitioned into a province that was dominated by Protestant Unionists, who wanted no integration into the Republic of Ireland. The Unionists were ready to keep Nationalists from re-integrating into the republic but also from participating in the newly devolved government after partition. Catholics were hindered by an image thrust on them by several Unionist groups that wanted no participation by Catholic Nationalists whatsoever. That image was of poor, uneducated people that wanted to take control from Unionists and make them the minority in re-united Ireland. Through the civil rights years, many saw that this was not the case. Catholic Nationalists may have – early on – sought to re-integrate into the rest of Ireland, however, over time their struggle became one of civil rights. The tensions that led to violence between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists became about their rights and ensuring that they could participate without being taken advantage of and overlooked. They spent many years dealing with the gerrymandering of their communities only to see their voice fade when Catholic Nationalist Majority neighborhoods remained in control by Protestant Unionists. They saw their influence diminish as jobs in the public sector went only to Protestant Unionists, and more hurdles were created to make sure they would not get a shot at public sector work. For example, implementing competitive testing for work in the civil service (Mullholland 2002, 47).

The period of time discussed in the previous paragraphs is known as the “Troubles” for a reason. Death and violence plagued this period where Catholic Nationalists and loyal Protestant Unionists were at each other’s throats. This period of time saw the government in Northern Ireland turn from an imperfectly devolved government back to British control at Westminster. Violence was already at a high when Westminster took the reins. In fact, one of the reasons that

Westminster took over was the inadequate ways in which Northern Ireland was dealing with violence. Other issues also contributed since Northern Ireland did not want to willingly and quietly hand back power to Westminster. However, violence continued and in some cases increased on the part of the Protestant Unionists as they were not only fighting back against the IRA and Catholic Nationalists, but on another front, increased attacks – sometimes as false flags – in order to show that Catholic Nationalists including the IRA were a greater threat the Union than they appeared.

This period was characterized by a several changing factors. It went from being controlled from Stormont, albeit poorly with regards to power sharing and the role that Catholic Nationalists could play to being controlled from 10 Downing Street. In essence the devolved government and hands off approach by Westminster loyalist Protestants had come to enjoy was taken away and direct rule imposed once again. For Protestants this became an issue because for them, their role participating in government shrunk and became less open to them as someone else would be making decisions. On the side of Catholic Nationalists this was sort of a win. Westminster would now take over several of the functions Stormont and the Unionists controlled, however, they still would not participate in the way that would make any sort of difference in their government. In all, the system became less open to participation, however, for the Catholic Nationalists this would not mean much in terms of participating since they left out already. There was the possibility now though, that Westminster could administer Northern Ireland in a more equal way with respect to Catholic Nationalists which did worry the Protestants.

In terms of violence during this period of time, it would be characterized from two perspectives. Initially tensions were very high, but violence was very low to non-existent, with more discrimination from the Protestants towards Catholic Nationalists than anything else. However, in the 1960's the high tensions and animosity between the two groups turned into full-fledged violence as the civil rights movement the Catholic Nationalists had begun to engage in turned protests into bloody fights. The Protestant government reacted poorly to protests and rioting, and through official forces and their connections with paramilitary forces like the UVF, the UDF and the B-Specials laid the groundwork for the bloodiest period in Northern Ireland. Violence became a regular part of life during the Troubles. This is not to say the Catholic Nationalists were innocent. Through their connections to groups like the IRA and the PIRA many lives were taken in order to move their message forward that they favored a united Ireland as well as more equal treatment and the ability to not just have a perceived role in the government in Northern Ireland but participation that would hold weight.

The hypothesis described in this research can be evaluated through the different groups and the period of time we are examining. For example initially at the beginning of the period above, Catholic Nationalists in Northern Ireland were part of a devolved government, but were limited in their participation in that government. While the government was devolved and included for more decisions from Northern Ireland, they were only really coming from the Protestant Unionists and not the Catholic Nationalists. Political opportunity to participate was open, but only really open to those that held the power – the Protestants. In terms of violence there was little to no violence. However, as time went on and direct rule was imposed, violence was increased. Now no one would be making decisions from Stormont; even though Catholic

Nationalists had not been participating politically in Northern Ireland, violence increased, which is the inverse of my hypothesis that as a government becomes more devolved, violence will decrease. From the view of the Protestants, they initially had a devolved government where they were given the reigns in Stormont, and with little to no participation or inclusion of Catholic Nationalists were able to lead Northern Ireland. The hypothesis in this case shows that as the Protestant's powers grew through devolution, there was little to no violence. However, there was no real opposition, the little to no participation by the Catholic Nationalists allowed the Protestants to wield power without any real counterpoint. On the other hand, when direct rule was imposed on Northern Ireland – since it would not be given up quietly, the parties in Northern Ireland would now not be the ones participating in making the decisions, and violence was at a high. Again, as devolution was reigned back in by Westminster and they took control over functions in Northern Ireland, violence became higher – from both Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists.

Making A Lasting Peace?

Since the joint declaration⁴⁰ setting out the basic principles of a peace process in December 1993, parties in Northern Ireland were slowly making their way towards a place to move political talks forward. By 1996, the goal was to be able to find a way to bring Unionist representatives to the table where Sinn Fein would also be represented (Ahern 2003). With over 3,000 killed and many more having been injured in 25 years of violence in Northern Ireland, a road was finally being paved to end violence and conflict between Unionists and Nationalists.

⁴⁰ Central to the joint declaration were principles of self-determination and consent (Ahern 2003).

The period from September 1996 until October 1997 would be crucial to for the parties involved to negotiate rules and procedures with a vague agenda (Cochrane 2013, 177). The negotiations throughout this previous period as well as those leading up to April 1998 made for one of the most significant agreements in history. The Belfast agreement – or Good Friday Agreement as it is known – brought an end to the virulent “Troubles” and paved a road forward for the return of devolved government at Stormont. That is not to say that problems or religious and political antagonisms disappeared but the dark cloud cast over Northern Ireland for so long was starting to dissipate.

Would this agreement finally be the key to ending the horrors witnessed throughout the troubles? Only time would tell. The Good Friday Agreement brought together four⁴¹ of the major political parties at the time and allowed paramilitaries and groups like the IRA to disarm. However, issues still came up again and again. London did not devolve powers right away, not until 1999. But shortly after London had to briefly re-impose direct rule in 2000 and 2002. Restored in 2007, devolved government again returned to Stormont. The 21st Century did however see new milestones that were hopeful signs devolved government would last. Milestones such as the Hillsborough Agreement which saw Sinn Fein and the DUP resolve terms for the devolving functions such as policing and justice (Landow and Aly-Sergie 2019).

The Good Friday Agreement

This new Agreement would provide the framework for the “return of a devolved government to Northern Ireland” since the failed power-sharing executive which collapsed at Sunningdale in May 1974 (Tonge 2000). Early in 1998 – with ongoing all-party talks – violent activities by the IRA as well as paramilitary loyalists went almost unremarked. Minor sanctions were imposed on Sinn Fein because of the IRA as well as those by loyalist groups. In the party talks in early 1998 however, Sinn Fein did not have much influence substantively. It was the UUP and SDLP that had most sway. The SDLP presented proposals with ways in which to maximize an all-Irish dimension and involvement by Dublin as a guarantor for the Catholic minority’s Irish identity. On the other hand the UUP was striving to moderate the all-Irish dimension. Seventeen hours after the updated deadline on April 10th 1998 – Good Friday – an agreement was reached (Mullholland 2002, 142). This new “Good Friday” Agreement or Belfast Agreement – internally – brought a power-sharing arrangement that gave representatives of each community a veto over the other. With legislation in the new devolved assembly requiring parallel consent or a majority of 60 percent of voting members to be passed (Mullholland 2002, 143).

The Good Friday Agreement was historic, however, getting there was just as historic. There were many parties to the talks which put strain on progress. For example, in September 1997 Sinn Fein entered the multi-party talks, and just like that the DUP and UKUP exited (Ruane and Todd 1999, 9). The talks though continued with Sinn Fein, the UUP, PUP, and the UDP, the SDLP the Alliance Party (APNI) and two smaller parties⁴² (Ruane and Todd 1999, 9).

⁴² The Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) and the Labour Party.

At the same time these talks were taking place, decommissioning would be taking place, dealt with by an International Commission. Initially, parties exhibited a wide gap in views and goals. “Sufficient consensus” was set up to move talks forward. Even so, the UUP would need PUP or UDP for a unionist majority, while SDLP was sufficient to make up a majority of Nationalists. However, this becomes problematic later because Sinn Fein was considered by the governments crucial to any agreement succeeding. The three topics of discussion had been talked over before at Sunningdale; they include discussions dealing with Northern Irish institutions, relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and East-West relations (Ruane and Todd 1999). One of the first hiccups in the discussions dealt with North Ireland’s institutions. The SDLP and the UUP as well as minor parties agreed on the desire for a devolved assembly, however, Sinn Fein was opposed because it would reinforce Unionist dominance as the majority. Parallel discussion between SDLP and UUP also concerned the form and terms of reference of an assembly, with each favoring a different approach. The UUP on one hand were opposed to an executive with a collective cabinet due to the possibility of working with Sinn Fein. On the other hand the SDLP favored an assembly that would provide strong powers for the legislature and the executive. At one point the UUP refused to talk directly to Sinn Fein (Ruane and Todd 1999, 11). Not until the beginning of 1998, when the British and Irish governments put out a position paper in January, was there any sort of first steps towards negotiations. The paper set out a sort of broad outline of the governments’ proposals for a settlement. Covered in this “Proposition on Heads of Agreement” was a framework that focused on ‘equity’ and not ‘equality’⁴³. The

⁴³ The use of the terms is important. The change to equity from equality was contentious and met with ire from both nationalists and the human rights community. (McCrudden 1999, 104)

“Agreement” also discussed ‘implementation bodies’ – that would be accountable to the assembly at Stormont – focused on the North and South relations. Additionally, this proposal framework also touched on the creation of a council that would include British and Irish governments, the North Irish administration, and devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales. (Ruane and Todd 1999, 11). Different from previous proposals such as in 1995, the document was tilted towards Unionism. This was something that was obviously welcomed by loyalists and Unionists but produced serious unease by republican nationalists. Although discussions began taking a more serious and focused direction, the process was not without issues. The UDP and Sinn Fein were removed from negotiations because their associated paramilitaries were in breach of the ceasefire enacted to be able to make progress (Ruane and Todd 1999). Just two week shy of the deadline George Mitchell⁴⁴ had set of April 9th, The parties – British and Irish Governments, Sinn Fein and the Unionist Parties – failed to reach agreement. Chairman Mitchell hurriedly shared a draft agreement two days prior to the deadline however, the UUP and the APNI refused⁴⁵ this proposal; this created a small crisis, which mobilized not just the Irish and British governments but also several consultations with many of the parties involved. With last minute changes and several re-drafts to placate the “most important parties”, Unionists were becoming uneasy (Ruane and Todd 1999, 12). As the agreement began trickling out, Unionists zeroed in on the issue of decommissioning. The Ulster Unionist Party insisted that decommissioning occur before Sinn Fein was allowed entry into the executive. Sinn Fein was

⁴⁴ Senator George Mitchell of Maine (D), asked by President Bill Clinton in 1995 to be a special envoy to Northern Ireland. Part of Senator Mitchell’s influence on the Good Friday Agreement came later as he chaired the commission to disarm the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland and then later was Chair of the peace process and negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement (Rafter 2008).

⁴⁵ Both parties took issue with the North-South bodies being considered and their accountability to the Assembly (Ruane and Todd 1999).

not thrilled with this and rejected the notion that they would decommission before they would be allowed to join the executive (Ruane and Todd 1999). British Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped in and attempted to come to an agreement on words with Sinn Fein, that would not necessitate their decommissioning beforehand (Ruane and Todd 1999). The deadline of April 9th came and went. With the UUP still divided on the decommissioning issue, a small flub in the wording of the agreement finally managed to bring the historic agreement to fruition on April 10, 1998, Good Friday. The wording that allowed the agreement to move forward indicated that decommissioning was not “required”, however, Prime Minister Blair wrote a letter to David Trimble of UUP confirming that decommissioning “should” begin once the agreement was signed (Ruane and Todd 1999, 12). The “political logjam” had finally broken it seemed.

The agreement was seen as a political success and political elites showed that each side could secure endorsements of their supporters. Sinn Fein made sure to secure their support and the still divided UUP was kept together by David Trimble and pro-agreement unionists. The fight now would be to rally for the “Yes” campaign to pass during the referendum. Ultimately the campaign was managed to ensure a strong yes vote and culminated in a major U2 concert on Stormont grounds. However, it still wasn’t clear if the UUP had “found what it was looking for”⁴⁶. The “Yes” campaign was a very grass roots centered campaign. Its leader Quentin Oliver⁴⁷ was able to work locally and make sure that people at every level were given a voice (Golan 2017, 109). The “Troubles” were used by leaders to play on the public’s fears and portray a ‘No’ vote as a likely return to those dark times (Golan 2017, 109-110). Referendum

⁴⁶ (U2 1987)

⁴⁷ Had been Director of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (Golan 2017).

communications involved using traffic signals that either had an arrow pointed forward⁴⁸, or toward a dead-end to indicate a yes and no vote respectively; this helped underscore the importance of a “Yes” vote (Golan 2017, 110). Again, the importance of the referendum was underscored by the importance placed on inclusivity and on making sure the voters of Northern Ireland were voting “Yes” on something they could “own” (Golan 2017, 110). The campaign for “Yes” was viewed as a “patriotic” act (Golan 2017, 110). However, while many of the parties involved in the GFA went off to sell the Agreement to their respective supporters and constituencies, a “No” campaign was also working against them. The “No” campaign was also not born overnight, but had been waiting to emerge since the DUP rejected negotiations in 1997 (Cochrane 2013, 194). The slogan for “No” was “It’s Right to Say No”, as opposed to the “Yes” Campaign’s use of traffic signals (Cochrane, *The Incomplete Agreement, 1998-2002* 2013, 194). While the campaign for ‘No’ was being waged so too was that between the DUP and UUP. The campaign that UUP was waging involved little dealing with devolution, or power-sharing but the issues dealing with decommissioning and having to share government with Sinn Fein (Cochrane 2013, 194). Although both campaigns seemed to be strong, some considered the “Yes” campaign to be somewhat incoherent (Cochrane 2013, 195).

The Good Friday Agreement contained several important themes, that were expected to ensure its success. These themes include “devolution, consociationalism, cross-borderism and intergovernmentalism” (Tonge 2000, 51). The agreement created a large 108-member devolved Northern Ireland Assembly, a North-South ministerial council, a British-Irish Council, a British

⁴⁸ Under the forward pointing arrow was a checked box next to ‘Yes’ with the words “Vote Yes. It’s the Way Ahead” (Golan 2017, 110).

Irish intergovernmental conference, a civic forum for voluntary groups, as well as Constitutional changes with respect to sovereignty over Northern Ireland, and a large “micro” agenda on “policing; equality; human rights; prisoners and paramilitary weapons.” (Tonge 2000, 51-52). The “micro” agenda topics would come up later through discussion of devolving further powers as well as contentious Assembly issues.

The Assembly

One of the key pillars of the Good Friday Agreement was the re-establishment of a Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont. The legislative assembly would be made up of 108 members. The size of the assembly ensured that although large – in a country of 1.6 million – it would embrace as many political groupings as possible, including those who may have been tied to paramilitaries (Tonge 2000, 52). The members of the new Assembly are elected by popular vote, using the single transferable vote system (Wolff 2001). Members of the Assembly also have to indicate whether they are “Unionist, Nationalist or Other” (Ruane and Todd 1999, 14). From this Assembly an Executive is elected using the d’Hondt system, with a first minister and deputy first minister – which lead the Executive – also being elected by the Assembly. While the Assembly would eventually receive many of its devolved powers over a span of years, it did have legislative powers in several areas from economic policy to education and tourism. However, there were powers that were still in the hand of the Northern Ireland Secretary; one measure of power that was very contentious dealt with the area of Security and Justice Policy (Wolff 2001, 168).

Even before it began the new Assembly was already facing obstacles. The Good Friday Agreement provided for the re-establishment of an Assembly, however, the Assembly would “only exist in ‘shadow’ form without powers until it approves the North-South Council and implementation bodies” of the Agreement (Ruane and Todd 1999, 14). Although existing in ‘shadow form’ for some time, it did not mean the Assembly was dormant. From September 1998 through February 1999 “most of the necessary preparatory work for devolution was done” (Assembly Commission 2019). Agreements were made on the creation of new Northern Ireland Departments – approving many areas for North-South cooperation (Assembly Commission 2019). Many of the details of these arrangements during this period can be found in a February 15th 1999, [report](#)⁴⁹ from the First Minister (Designate) and Deputy First Minister (Designate) (Assembly Commission 2019). Finally, on December 1st 1999, after 27 years of direct rule from London, powers were transferred to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive (Archick 2005).

Fall of the Moderates, Rise of the Hardliners

The Omagh bombing while horrible played a dual role with regard to bringing Nationalists and Unionists together, but secondly, was a turning point that began to see the weakening of more moderate parties like the SDLP and UUP, in favor of hardliners like Sinn Fein and the DUP. “The withering of the once-unshakeable Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) is perhaps the most striking party-political development of the post-Agreement era” (Mitchell 2015, 51). The UUP had been the main political party for Unionist opinions for a century

⁴⁹ (Northern Ireland Assembly 2019)

(Mitchell 2015). The UUP's goals from the beginning had been to secure Protestant physical identity and security by operating a "de facto one party state" (Mitchell 2015, 52). However it was direct rule that looks to have "reduced, overnight, the Unionist party from a party of government to a body of incoherent and ineffectual protest, deprived of political power" (Walker 2004, 212). However, the greatest hit the UUP took was the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement; the agreement focused broadly on easing Nationalist alienation by giving Dublin a role in the North, with no mention of Unionism. That's when the time came for the Belfast Agreement, the UUP welcomed the closure it would bring to the North Irish conflict and the stability that would come with it (Mitchell 2015). The stability would come from the resolution of the constitutional controversy, but mostly the stability would come from the devolved government of Northern Ireland (Mitchell 2015). In 1998, the UUP was the fourth largest party, holding ten seats at Westminster; years later it would only hold one seat on the 13 member executive council. Yet the other Unionist party the DUP – which profited from UUP's decline – proceeded to follow the very path beaten by the Ulster Unionists towards cross-community power sharing.

Founded in 1971 by Ian Paisley, the DUP had been associated with quite a few ultra-loyalist groups such as the Ulster Protestant Volunteers, and the Protestant Unionist Party – which had risen to counter mainstream Unionism (Mitchell 2015, 138). Electorally, the DUP rivaled the UUP, outliving other movements of dissent within Unionism. The DUP's position that the Agreement would be fatal for the Union was based on their zero-sum view of politics; any deal endorsed by the SDLP and by the Republic of Ireland could only represent a "dilution and diminution of the Union" (Mitchell 2015, 143). The UUP's after-Agreement difficulties, as

well as increasing matter-of-factness from the DUP, opened the door for the DUP to rise to defeat the UUP in the November 2003 Assembly election (Mitchell 2015). In fact, the Northern Ireland Election Studies indicated that between 1998 and 2003, support from DUP's voters with respect to power-sharing increased from 32 percent to 65 percent, respectively (Mitchell 2015, 156).

On the Nationalist side the SDLP saw its support weaken to the more hardline Sinn Fein. While John Hume – leader of the SDLP for 22 years – has had many accolades⁵⁰, they are in sharp contrast to the way in which the SDLP has declined just as the UUP has. The 1998 Belfast Agreement had been a success for and of SDLP, however their dominance in helping achieve the agreement, its “wish-list” of the Agreement became a double edged sword for them (Mitchell 2015, 90-92). In the lead up to the Assembly elections that followed the success of the referenda, the SDLP thought it would maintain a strong presence in the new institutions to help ensure the Agreement through (SDLP 1998). However, SDLP's issues came from the constant questions of whether and how to distinguish themselves from Sinn Fein – all while lobbying in relation to several post-Agreement controversies (Mitchell 2015, 100). The problem with SDLP was that Sinn Fein had occupied thoroughly the political space, leaving little room for SDLP exposing its organizational and image weakness. For example, in the 2001 Westminster election Sinn Fein overtook the SDLP, from two to four Westminster seats while SDLP retained its three seats. As part of the vote share this came out to Sinn Fein having 21.7 percent while the SDLP just 21 percent vote share, down from 24.1 percent (Mitchell 2015, 101). This was historic, as the party

⁵⁰ Voted “Ireland's Greatest” in public poll by RTE, as well as Gandhi Prize, MLK Award, and the Nobel Peace Prize (Mitchell 2015, 85).

had been the second largest party after UUP, as well as the main Nationalist party with close to two-thirds of the Nationalist vote typically. This was further confirmed with the 2003 Assembly election where Sinn Fein secured 24 seats to SDLP's 18 (Mitchell 2015, 101).

Violence

At the time the discussions over what would become the Good Friday Agreement were taking place, distrust was still brewing among Catholic Nationalists and the Protestant Unionists. There had been little evidence of serious engagement at the beginning of the talks and even less negotiating. Outside those discussions of peace and devolved government, tensions were high. Partly due to a series of deaths that occurred over the Christmas and New Year period. One such death was that of Billy Wright⁵¹, who at the time was the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force⁵² (LVF); he was killed within the Maze prison by members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) who shot⁵³ him while being transported to a visitation. The violence taking place was not one sided. Just as Billy Wright was killed, Seamus Dillon, a Catholic man was shot dead by the LVF as he worked as a security guard in County Tyrone. The attack although somewhat⁵⁴ random was considered retaliation for the killing of Billy Wright; in the weeks that followed at least 10 Catholics were killed by the LVF and the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF). While there was little progress being made on the devolutionary front, violence

⁵¹ Wright also known as "King Rat" by media and Security Forces, was though to have been personally responsible for the sectarian killing of a number of Catholic civilians.

⁵² The LVF was composed mainly of former members of the mid-Ulster Brigade of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

⁵³ The shooting represented a breach of security in smuggling in a gun and the attack itself.

⁵⁴ Seamus Dillon had served prison time as a Republican prisoner.

was still a concern. In fact, the UDP and Sinn Fein were temporarily removed from negotiations because their associated paramilitaries were operating in breach of a ceasefire.

Even after the signing of the agreement paramilitary violence was not eliminated but only on the sidelines waiting to re-emerge at the correct time. And although the agreement was signed and it was billed as the best solution, public attitudes remained polarized (Ruane and Todd 1999, 28). Violent attacks continued like the murder of three Quinn children in July 1998, as well as the Omagh bombing of August 1998, and the murder of lawyer Rosemary Nelson in March 1999 (Ruane and Todd 1999, 28). The murder of the three Quinn children was apparently still fueled by sectarianism. Police in this incident indicated that the arson attack was the work of Protestants (Clarity 1998). And although it was denounced by both Catholics and Protestants alike, the tensions that had fueled this attack stemmed from “more than a week of Protestant violence linked to the banning of a Protestant march through a Catholic area” as well as fears that there would be a breakdown of the Good Friday Agreement that had been reached that Spring (Clarity 1998). The three children were aged 10, 9 and 7 when the “flaming gasoline bomb” came through a window at 4:30 A.M. (Clarity 1998). Protestants, especially Orangemen were reluctant to take blame, but it appeared obvious that Protestant paramilitaries were involved when some Orangemen claimed “the British Government was ultimately to blame for the killings” for having blocked their parade (Clarity 1998). Although this violent event was threatening the Northern Ireland peace agreement and new Assembly, there was still more violence to come that would test the agreement and resolve of the parties involved.

A critical event became known as the Omagh Bombing in August 1998, just a month after the death of the three Quinn children. On the 15th of August, 1998, a warning – though

misleading – had been called in, and a bombing occurred in the Omagh town center (Cochrane 2013, 203). This bombing which killed 29 people and injured 200 came as an unwelcome reminder of the past as most people had become consumed with the first Assembly election and the issues surrounding decommissioning and who promised what in the GFA (Cochrane 2013). The car bomb that had been detonated in the town center was the largest single act of paramilitary violence of the conflict. The carnage of this car bombing was horrible. With many children among the dead. Avril Monaghan who was pregnant with twins, along with her mother, and 18-month old daughter were killed in the blast (Cochrane 2013, 204). Many others such as Oran Doherty, James Barker, and Sean McLoughlin were also killed, aged eight, twelve and twelve, respectively (Cochrane 2013, 204). While a phone warning had indeed been phoned in to the Belfast News Agency forty minutes before the attack, police had claimed that the call had not provided enough accurate information (Cochrane 2013, 204). It soon became clear after admission of responsibility by the Real IRA⁵⁵ that the GFA would still face issues in light of this violence. Although decommissioning was one of the key issues that had plagued the Belfast Agreement from its drafting. It had become clear in that the decommissioning of the IRA weapons would be the Agreement's stumbling block. Initially, the IRA was requested to hand in some weapons before Sinn Fein would be allowed to re-enter negotiations. From the Republicans viewpoint this was just a barrier to the demands they had sought. Either way, the Blair Labour Government would acquiesce. McLaughlin (2000) argues that the claims about the IRA rushing

⁵⁵ The 'Real IRA' was a splinter group formed during this period of uncertainty with the GFA and the talks of decommissioning paramilitaries. The 'Real IRA's' main motive was to thwart the peace process and damage the implementation of the GFA. While a small radical fringe within the Republican community, it was an important fringe nonetheless (Cochrane 2013, 204-205)

to disarm to help Trimble out of his party difficulties was not taken serious as the hard-liner Unionists would just argue about other issues they had with the Agreement and process.

Analysis

Overall, the period that ushered in the Good Friday Agreement as well as the development of the new North Irish Assembly was contentious. However, it appeared there might be light at the end of the tunnel, even if brief. The Good Friday Agreement was a success in that it was able to finally bring several parties together that otherwise would have continued to fight – both rhetorically, and with real violence. The process helped bring SDLP, Sinn Fein, UUP and PUP to the bargaining table, but also bring back a devolved government to Northern Ireland. The talks that enabled the agreement to finally take place was a long one. Several times throughout discussions parties were either kicked out of talks or refused to participate for a variety of reasons. However, one of the main reasons that was impeding a decision in the final days was the relationship between the IRA and Sinn Fein and the issue of decommissioning paramilitaries. With the Unionists bent on kicking Sinn Fein to the curb, unless decommissioning happened how they wanted. Political elites made sure to use their power to insist that the agreement was completed. The political elites had already been selling the Good Friday Agreement as all or nothing. A failure to reach agreement some insisted would be a return to the “Troubles”. Even after the agreement was reached with last minute interventions such as by British Prime Minister Tony Blair⁵⁶, a referendum would still need to be held. The referendum

⁵⁶ In the final day and hours before the agreement deadline, the UUP was upset that the IRA had not yet decommissioned and therefore wanted Sinn Fein out of the agreement. Without Sinn Fein, no agreement would last. BPM Blair met with the parties and explained that although it was not in writing, decommissioning would occur.

needed to be sold as a decision that was made for the people by the people. Without the vote, it is not clear if the ‘Yes’ campaign that was waged would have received the support it did. The fear was that the referendum for the deal – already teetering on collapse – was more likely to experience defections from “Yes” to the “No” campaign (Cochrane 2013, 203). This was especially true if IRA decommissioning failed to occur. This also made the Omagh bombing of August 15th, 1998 so much of a turning point. It was a turning point because the attackers were the ‘Real IRA’. The ‘Real IRA’ had splintered from the PIRA, and although a small fringe, an important one. The feeling from the ‘Real IRA’ was that they had been “duped” by Sinn Fein and the PIRA leadership, selling-out its Republican heritage for the lure of political office, in the hope of some vague political change (Cochrane 2013, 205). While the bombing was horrific and did bring reminders of the last 25 years of violence, ironically, the Omagh bombing brought together Nationalists and Unionists instead of reminding everyone that militant Republicanism had ended (Cochrane 2013, 205). While “Bloody Sunday had unleashed the demons, Omagh reined them in” (Mullholland 2002, 149).

At the end of this chapter, I believe it is important to remember a few points that could help to further understand my theory. One takeaway would be that initially a devolved government led to less violence. However, with enough time and frustration from being unable to effectively participate at Stormont the Catholic Nationalists would end up turning to violence. For the decentralization that occurred leading to a devolved government at Stormont to mean something it had to work for all the people not just some of them. The Protestant-Unionist majority set roadblocks for participation that the Catholic-Nationalists could not climb. This is important as it showed that the players at the local level all needed to be involved and buy in.

When it appeared that the State would centralize due to concerns that violence would boil up due to ongoing issues in Northern Ireland, that is when the “Troubles” really began. Not only was the majority not able to participate, but the Protestant-Unionist majority would spoil any chance at power-sharing. Aside from decentralizing and bringing all local parties together – as much as was possible – an important point of the Good Friday Agreement that could be further looked at going forward would be the role people play. Even with campaigns for “Yes” and “No” in terms of the agreement, and that people supported parties on both sides, everyday citizens needed to feel like they were buying into something legitimate. That this would not be another failed attempt to appease like the first attempt at devolved government at Stormont.

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF SPAIN

Why the Spanish Case

The Spanish case study presents an opportunity to see a different kind of devolutionary arrangement than what we saw in Northern Ireland in the UK. The Spanish case can help show how periods of decentralization in Spain were replaced by a hyper-centralist period, leading to a federal system that still has issues balancing the relationship with its autonomous communities. Spain has also seen its share of violence during these periods. Spain experienced a civil war – although not related to autonomy – as well as violence by groups seeking a more decentralized system that would provide additional autonomy. Additionally, Spain provides an example of an attempt to “integrate a plethora of distinct local political cultures into a pluralistic but coherent national political culture” (Radcliff 2000).

Two groups seeking more say in their affairs are the Catalans and the Basques. These two groups present identities that are seen as putting at risk the unity of the Spanish nation. Each identity has its own native language and history, predating the modern Spanish state. Each has experienced the repression of their language by the centralized Spanish state. The Spanish case also presents a chance to witness moments of centralization and decentralization from the perspective of different autonomous communities specifically here, the Basques. Basque and Catalan Nationalism was in part an indirect consequence of Spain’s loss of its imperial possessions. Responding to the achievement of independence by Latin American colonies throughout the 19th century exacerbated the state of Spain’s public finances, already strained by 18th and 19th century wars; in order to gain more revenues and promote economic development in Spain, absolutist and Constitutional monarchs increased centralization measures (political,

judicial and cultural) (Medrano 1994, 543). For example, in the case of Catalonia, the independence of Cuba in 1898 also had harmful economic consequences that intensified conflict between the Catalan bourgeoisie and the Spanish State. Both communities – Basque and Catalan – articulated the socioeconomic elites’ grievances with centralization policies through nationalist mobilization. The case of Spain shows a clash between the Church and State. Additionally, in Spain, while these “nations” – the Basques, or Catalans – have a separate identity, they still have a Spanish identity as well. The periods that follow will cover the Basques, and will trace their relationship with de/centralization of the Spanish state. This is important to show not just when the State went from one position to the other, but is a way to test my theory that those periods the State was shifting policies should see differing levels of violence. The history here helps me trace periods of greater autonomy for the Basques, but also those of less autonomy such as the period right after the Civil War and through most of the Franco era. In the nineteenth century, centralization increased while also increasing tensions. The Carlist wars initiated in part by the Basques against Madrid, had led to promises that the Basques could keep their traditional liberties, but with a caveat: so long as it did not prejudice Spanish unity (Lilli 1994, 331). These Carlist wars had represented a different strategy of protecting “Basqueness”, one that had represented the use of violence to control the Center. The end of the nineteenth century concluded with a rural move towards urban centers, Basques had become a minority in their own urban centers (Lilli 1994, 331). The Basques were the only surviving pre-Aryan race in Europe. The Basques ruled themselves according to the *Fueros*. Mostly codified during the 17th and 18th centuries, exempted the local population from both military service and taxation; it also gave provincial assemblies the right to veto royal edicts – a privilege rarely employed. Basques

protected the *Fueros* vigorously; attempts by Madrid to get rid of the *Fueros* altogether were contested – Basque support for the Carlist movement was directly connected to their opposition to centralism.

The three cases I will discuss include the period of the Second Republic beginning in 1931 through 1939, touching on the Spanish Civil War; followed by the Franco Period (1939-1975) and then the period of solidifying democracy and forward (1975-2005).

The Spanish case provides a good chance to see those periods in which the Spain was more centralized and those where its policies favored decentralization. For example the Basques experienced much more autonomy during the Second Republic where its policies turned towards decentralization, then towards more centralization at the end of the Civil War and the hyper-centralist period of Franco (Bertrand 1971); however, Spain still managed to solidify its democracy and install a constitution that engraved autonomous policies for all of its autonomous communities. The Spanish case will discuss those differences of more and less centralization, and how autonomous communities like the Basques reacted. The autonomy seeking communities like Catalonia and the Basque country have historically sought more control for themselves even before the Second Republic⁵⁷. Prior to the Civil War the Basque Country was making progress towards additional autonomy. However, attempts to further their autonomy and maintain their identity was halted when the Civil war broke out.

⁵⁷ Rooted in Carlism, laws in 1839 and 1876 ended the Ancien Regime relationship between the provinces and the Crown of Spain. These periods saw the *fueros* disappear from centralizing pressure from liberal and conservative governments in Madrid. The Spanish government suppressed the *fueros* after the Third Carlist War. The *fueros* being the native decision making and justice system issued from consuetudinary law (Uriarte 2015).

The period after the Civil War beginning after 1939 showed that despite the “lack of popular access to formal ‘high politics’, the opposition thrived in a broader oppositional arena that existed outside the narrow confines of a conventional model of politics”. At the local level, different groups mobilized for different reasons, either inclusion, reform or destruction of the Restoration⁵⁸ system, but through alternative political forms. Some of these groups, including anarchists and consumer rioters, adopted “direct action tactics that bypassed formal mechanisms of redress (Radcliff 2000). Challenges accompanied the new democratic regime in 1931 known as the Second Republic. The challenge was that Spain was had tried to sew together a plethora of distinct local political cultures into a pluralistic but coherent national political culture. The failure to make this a reality led to a renewed culture of demobilization and apathy. The bureaucracy that carried out government work was bloated and Spanish governments bought their support with government jobs. The Second Republic brought with it rocky politics, unfolding amidst a great depression. A rare divide came to be seen during this time, where people were divided into have and have-nots. Spain’s far more numerous have-nots wanted their fair share, and their ideologies began to turn toward anarchist and socialist rhetoric which promised them a fair share (Pierson 2003, 135).

The Second Republic ran aground due to several socio-economic and cultural conflicts; several issues impacted these conflicts. While class struggle was important, other struggles like those between Catholics and anti-clericals as well as those between regional nationalists and centralists, were also important (Junco and Shubert 2000, 176). These are some of the issues that

⁵⁸ The Restoration or Bourbon Restoration is the period starting December 1874, where a coup d’etat ended the First Spanish Republic restoring the Monarchy under Alfonso XII, and ending April 1931 where the Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed.

helped bring down the Second Republic. This allowed the right to coalesce and create a new party – the Popular Front. This ultimately led to the right attempting to take control through a military coup, and the Spanish Civil War. On April 1st, 1939, General Francisco Franco ended the thousand-day war (Junco and Shubert 2000, 176-77).

General Franco's followers advocated a highly centralized, conservative, uniform image of Spain which rejected the more progressive government that had been the Second Republic, and its tendencies to de-centralize. At the time of Franco's coup, Statutes of Autonomy had already been voted on and approved within several communities, such as Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia; however, only the Catalan statute had been implemented (Guibernau 2000, 58). During the Franco era, the provinces would see the curtailing of all autonomous political institutions and laws, as well as the prohibition of the Basque language and culture, as well as all symbols of sub-state identity like flags and anthems (Guibernau 2000, 58). Franco's Spain would impose a narrow vision of Spain emphasizing national unity and condemnation of all forms of cultural or political diversity. Franco's form of state nationalism was a reaction to modern ideologies like socialism and anarchism. Franco's Spain espoused an image of nationalism that was conservative, Catholic, Centralist and Castilian (Guibernau 2000, 58). For the Basques this meant the curtailing of their autonomy and process of erasing their language and culture among other measures by the Franco regime. Although antagonistic to the Franco regime, violence was not the initial reaction to those measures. After some time, the repressive measures of the Franco regime frustrated and emboldened the Basques, however, it would be groups like the ETA that would engage and take on the Franco regime and its repressors even after Franco was gone.

Superficially, Franco's tenure seemed calm, but beneath the surface Spain was going through dramatic change, changes that would not be appreciated until Franco's death in 1975. Some scholars divide the Franco regime into two time periods: Early "Francoism" from the end of the Civil War in 1939 to 1957⁵⁹, and the "Desarrollo"⁶⁰ years between 1957 and 1975. However, for our purposes we will cover the Franco period as a whole from the end of the Civil War through his death in 1975. This will help better define the Franco part of the Spanish case as there really were no changes to centralization throughout. Although we do see some loosening of Franco's grip on centralization towards the end of the period, but more so informally. The 'Desarrollo' period led the regime to move away from the insufficient liberalization of the 1950's and to adapt to the fall of fascism and having a more pro-western appeal. This period of Franco's regime led to what some called the "Spanish Miracle", when Spain developed some of the fastest growth rates around the world. This miracle however, led to a paradox: the change of Spanish society – considered the regime's greatest achievement – produced the very tensions that made its existence increasingly problematic (Junco and Schubert 2000, 258).

After Franco's death in November 1975, Spain experienced an extraordinary period. Spain was rocked by the 1974 international economic crisis and terrorist violence. Prince Juan Carlos assumed his place as head of state. Shortly afterwards, to everyone's surprise, the Francoist Cortes⁶¹ passed a political reform law calling for popular sovereignty and democratic elections. A year and a half later, the democratic Constitution of 1978 was approved. This new

⁵⁹ Scholars have also divided Franco's early period 1939-1957 into two distinct periods: A Falangist phase (1939-1945, where Franco espoused an ideological affinity for Fascism and a "Catholic" phase between 1945 and 1956 when Franco responded to the defeat of Fascism by presenting a more pro-Western face (Junco and Schubert 2000, 257).

⁶⁰ "Development" years

⁶¹ The Cortes is the bicameral legislative branch of the Spanish government.

constitution opened the door for widespread regional autonomy and ended the period of political consensus⁶². Although there was a turn towards democracy, the transition occurred mostly in an improvised way. The success was in the negotiation between the ‘continuistas’⁶³ which sought reform, and the opposition or ‘rupturistas’⁶⁴ which wanted to return the country to democracy. Some of the obstacles faced by this new government early on – which still employed many of the forces like the Guardia Civil and National Police that had participated in repressing autonomous communities - included Basque terrorism.

The new constitution’s most striking feature was the recognition of “historic nationalities in Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia, implying a move toward a more decentralized state (Junco and Schubert 2000, 302). Moreover, while the Second Republic had only created two autonomous communities – The Basques and the Catalans, the new government created a quasi-federal ‘State of the Autonomies’ with 17 regions. In 1982 the Socialist Party came to power; it also won the next three elections. During the 13 years that the Socialists were in power, Spain joined the European Union. The Socialist era ended when the Conservative Partido Popular defeated the PSOE in March 1996. The Partido Popular came to power as a minority government supported by Basque Nationalists.

The Basque Country was bestowed with their own culture and national personality, and had been trying for self-government for much of the 20th century. It can be difficult to separate

⁶² “Spain’s transition from authoritarian rule rested on a combination of constitutional ambiguity and tireless negotiations amongst key political actors. And, despite a strong majoritarian bias in the new electoral system, the consensual theme continued after the first democratic elections.” For example, consensus was maintained for the passing of the Statutes of Autonomy for the pressing cases of the Basque Country and Catalonia (Hopkin 2000, 1-2).

⁶³ Francoists resistant to change

⁶⁴ Left-wing opposition which insisted on immediate dismantling of the authoritarian regime.

the different stages at which decentralization occurred in Spain. First, it was not a clear-cut process, it occurred as a continuum; secondly, the process was different for each autonomous community (Pi-Sunyer 2010). The last stage also came with a transfer of services from Madrid to the autonomous communities such as Basque Country. Included in the transfer of services were the transfer of financial services to the autonomous communities, providing more control at the local level. The Basque nationalist movement stood out in that they developed their high levels of industrial development relative to the rest of Spain and had experienced intense immigration from the poorest regions of Spain (Medrano 1994, 541).

Intro to Basques and Basque Nationalism

The Basque people are the oldest surviving ethnic group in Europe, although their exact origins are not quite clear (Richard 2019). The location of Basque country – inhabiting the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains around the Bay of Biscay in Northern Spain, and Southern France – helped them avoid Roman conquerors (Richard 2019). As well as invading Moor, Visigoths, Normans, or Franks. Even when Spanish (Castilian) forces were finally able to conquer the Basque territory, they were given a great deal of autonomy called the Fueros. Eventually this became problematic as Spain and France began to pressure the Basque people to assimilate, losing some of their rights during the Carlist Wars of the 19th Century; also intensifying Basque Nationalism along the way. Geographically, the Basque autonomous community is divided in three Spanish provinces; these are: Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa. The capital and home of the Basque Parliament is Vitoria-Gasteiz (Richard 2019). One of the region's main features are the Pyrenees Mountains. Basque country is also heavily industrialized.

Some of the conditions that led the Basque country to stand out from the countries – Spain and France – where the Basque region is located includes their language, as well as other features like the *fueros*. The *fueros* were “privileges of self-governance and local assemblies” (Aguirre 1994). In the 1800’s a series of Civil Wars were fought in Spain known as the Carlist Wars. The warring factions sought to either keep the medieval legal structure of Spain, or reform it – similar to the principles of the French Revolution (Aguirre 1994). The Basques sided with the more conservative faction of King Carlos V in order to maintain the *fueros*, however, after their loss many Basques fled Spain.

Modern Basque Nationalism formed in the 1890’s in Bilbao. Basque nationalists include those seeking autonomy within the Spanish state, as well as persons aiming toward complete independence for a Basque state – which would include both French and Spanish Basques (de Silva 1977). Basque Nationalism’s emergence came about as a reaction in opposition to modernization. Industrialization and quick urbanization created a wealthy upper bourgeoisie, while also bringing in unparalleled numbers of labor migrants. While nationalists could be found in the upper class as well as the more rural class. For Basque peasants in rural areas the Carlist wars were to defend the traditional institutions and their communal interests during the process of centralization and urbanization (Shih 1998, 46). Shih (1998) indicates that the Carlist wars may almost be treated as a Basque Civil War.

Basque Nationalism sought independence from Spain from its early beginnings. Sabino Arana the founder of the Basque National Party (PNV), decided that Spain had modified the ‘*fueros*’ after the third Carlist War in 1872-1876, breaking a pact with the Basques, and that they should no longer be linked to Spain. Basque “nationalism may be said to have grown out of

Carlism. The Carlists were primarily preoccupied with the restoration of the *fueros* and against the unilateral abrogation of local rights by the liberals; they were not committed to the idea of a separate Basque nation” (Shih 1998). However, “the rise of modern Basque nationalism owed much to Carlism, insofar as the latter provided the element of resistance to the center” (Shih 1998, 46-47). In fact, in Basque nationalist mythology the “other” was Spaniard, representing the evils of modern society. Being a minority in both France and Spain; the demand for autonomy coincides with the ethnic-national character of the group (de Silva 1977). The demand for autonomy though is also a form of strategy for a group that sees no hope of dominating national politics by its electoral strength (de Silva 1977, 98).

In terms of violence, the Basques were mostly peaceful, until the creation of ETA in 1959. Before this, the Basque Nationalist movement had counted on Franco’s isolation⁶⁵ from the rest of the international community to allow for a quick change of government; however, the United States recognized Franco’s regime in 1951, forcing the movement to change its strategy (Bothen 2014). Also, up until the Civil War, Basques enjoyed a mostly self-run government, however, during the struggles leading up and through the civil war some municipal elections were cancelled by Madrid (Portilla 2011). During the Republic, a statute of autonomy was ultimately sanctioned for the Basque Country (1933).

The Basque Country used to be exclusionary of immigrants, and passionately seeking independence out of fear of being overwhelmed by the influx of immigrants from industrialization and urbanization (Conversi 1997). After the Civil War, fierce repression was

⁶⁵ The entire strategy for the Basques Nationalist Movement between 1945 and 1951 was directed at re-entering the region as soon as Franco was gone and resume their pre-civil war goal of autonomy and independence (Bothen 2014).

used against those that were part of the Basque Nationalist movement. For example, an army of occupation was left in the region, and their language prohibited; the Basque government was exiled to Paris, where the PNV operated from French Basque Country, while most activists were sent to prison or exiled (Lilli 1994, 334). During this early period in the Franco era, the Basque nationalist movement had counted on Franco's isolation from the International community, the entire strategy of Basque Nationalism was focused on re-entering the region as soon as Franco stepped down, where they would resume the pre-civil war journey towards autonomy (Lilli 1994, 334).

Furthermore, this period also ushered in the recognition of the Franco regime by the United States. Forcing the Basques' hand, and a change in strategy. However, this change led to a period of stagnation for the Basque nationalist movement, that would emerge in the form of ETA in the 1950s. From the 1950's forward Basque country would endure a chipping away at their way of life from two different angles. From one angle, there was a wave of immigration to several Basque areas including to Biscay and Gipuzkoa that would continue into the 1960's and 1970's. This was a response to the continued industrialization in those areas of Basque Country – which had aimed to supply Spanish internal markets because of post-war self-sufficient policies favored by the Franco regime.

The other angle attempting to change Basques' way of life came from the Franco regimes persecution which provoked ETA into taking up arms. However, ETA was only one part of the Basque nationalist response which rejected Spanish domination as well as Basque conservative

nationalists (allied to the PNV)⁶⁶. While Franco's regime lasted almost 40 years, his death in 1975 served as an opportunity where Basque nationalist politics would break or turn to compromise. ETA continued to maintain an armed aggression against the State to seek more autonomy but ultimately independence, the Conservative PNV, as well as the Spanish communists and Socialists opted for negotiations with what remained of the Francoist regime (Conversi 1997). In 1978 a referendum to ratify the Spanish constitution was held, as well as a general pardon issued forgiving all politics related offences – directly affecting Basque nationalist activists as well as ETA. Although the central government granted broad wide self-governing powers between 1979 and 1983, Basque country was still gripped by intense violence by Basque nationalists – ETA – as well as state-sponsored illegal groups and police forces like the guardia civil (civil guard) and National Police. Powers continue to be devolved and re-negotiated through present day. In 2002 the Basque Premier – Juan Jose Ibarretxe - set forth an attempt to replace the 1979 autonomy statute (Rosales 2008, 49). However, since self-determination is not recognized under the Spanish Constitution of 1978, it was turned down on constitutional grounds by the Spanish Congress, even though the draft passed at the regional level 39 to 35 (Rosales 2008, 51).

The following section will discuss Basque Country and Basque Nationalists in more detail. It will follow the politics starting with the second republic 1931-1939, followed by the Franco period 1939-1975, Spain's transition back to democracy 1978 and thereafter through

⁶⁶ Tensions between two political trends dominated the nationalist part of the Basque Political Spectrum between the Abertzale (patriotic or nationalist) left and the PNV, with the rest of the Basque political spectrum made up of non-nationalist parties (Lilli 1994).

2006. This will trace Spain's back and forth between centralizing and decentralizing and the violent (or not) responses by Basque nationalists.

The Second Republic (1931-1939)

November 5th 1933, the referendum established by the Constitution of the Second Republic was held in the Provinces of Guipuzcoa, Vizcaya, and Alava, excluding Navarre. The three Basque provinces had their statute of autonomy approved in a revised form by large majorities. Earlier elections in 1933 led to reduced popularity for the center government in Madrid; this would turn out to be a wrench in what appeared an easy path forward for the Basque Statute of Autonomy in the Cortes (Peers 1936). The large Basque nationalist majorities in 3 of the 4 provinces painted an easy road towards the Statute being moved straight through the Cortes, but it would not happen. Due to the government's decline in popularity, as well as obstructionism in the Cortes, the President of the Republic dissolved the Constituent Cortes in mid-October 1933 (Peers 1936, 539). A General Election – 2 weeks after the Basque referendum on the Statute – ushered in a parliament where the Right was the strongest group and combined with the center made up almost four times as many seats as the left. This power now held by the Right and Center-Right did not help move regional autonomy goals forward for the Basques. The Basque Statute of Autonomy did end up in the Cortes, but between parliamentary delays, and arguments from the Alavan minority⁶⁷, the Statute was held in committee until the Following February. Ultimately, the Statute did not pass. Arguments that Alava was slowly taking the same

⁶⁷ In the period where the Draft Statute of Autonomy was discussed and laid before the town councils and representatives of the four provinces. Alava's vote turned out: 52 to 11 in favor, with 14 abstentions. However, in the November 5th referendum Alavans voted almost exactly 50% in favor (Peers 1936, 539).

road as Navarre – divided over the role of Catholicism – was conceivable, and at a time when things were slow to move with respect to the regions, it was enough to stop the Statute completely.

The start of the Civil War in July 1936 put two of the Basque provinces – Conservative Alava and Navarre – on General Franco’s side as both of these provinces supported General Franco’s military uprising. The remaining Basque provinces remained supportive of the Republic. The Republic decided in October 1936 to declare the Basque region autonomous, however, months later in June 1937, rebel forces conquered Bilbao – the last Basque stronghold. Going into exile in Paris, France, the Basque government would not return until 1979. As Manuel Azaña took on the role of Prime Minister of Spain late in 1931 he gained the allegiance of Catalonia and the Basque provinces by turning over power and control of several functions to local authorities (Phillips and Phillips 2010, 247-48).

The responsibilities handed back to each respective community included finance, education, social policy and public order; satiating long-standing demands by regional political leaders (Phillips and Phillips 2010, 248). While the Republic had aimed to give power to the powerless, land to those without land, and social justice for all, it also created a clash during the Civil War because those aspirations were more divisive than unifying. In fact, movements for regional autonomy clashed with the need for coordinated resistance to the rebellion; to rescind the regional autonomy granted to the Basques would cause Republicans to lose the regions’ support. The Basques’ fueros taken away, the naming of the provinces is all they had left as a

reminder of the power they held. Their privileges deprived – amounting to local autonomy⁶⁸, the Basques made it their aim to recapture some degree of self-government. The Basques received much less attention than other struggling autonomists – the Catalonians (Peers 1936). On April 17th 1931, the mood was much different in the town of Guernica – where a Basque parliament once governed. The Basques attempted an autonomous State with the same federation of Iberian Republics. However, as the Basque representatives arrived, they realized the Government had sent the Civil Guard and Military to disperse them. The Mayor of Guernica barred the proclamation by the Basques and told townspeople to stay indoors, indicating that there would be Nationalist supporters coming through, which they hoped would move or “to return whence they came” (Peers 1936, 532). Based on the treatment received by the Basques at Guernica as opposed to the treatment of Catalonians in Barcelona, the proceeding five and a half years from April 1931, to Fall 1936, is how the Basques got their nationalist ambitions for an autonomous state. With the end of the Civil War also came the end of much of the autonomy for the Basques. For Basque Country, along with Guernica as a symbol of the many atrocities suffered, “ferocious” repression was coordinated against the Basque Nationalist movement, and most activists were either imprisoned or exiled (Lilli 1994, 334). In the Basque community centralization policies were opposed by significant segments of their socio-economic elites, which by the end of the 19th Century, expressed their grievances through nationalist mobilization (Diez Medrano 1994, 543).

⁶⁸ Only allowed to retain only certain economic rights which came into general notice during the “Concierto Economico” in 1934 (Peers 1936, 531)

Violence and Turmoil

According to Cenarro (2004), repression took several forms, including physical violence. Repression was mostly class-oriented⁶⁹, however, it was also used to solve other conflicts, such as centralism and regional nationalism⁷⁰. Friction between Madrid and Spain's regions – specifically Catalonia and the Basque Country – was key in the collapse of the Second Spanish Republic and the outbreak of the Civil War during the period 1936-1939. The Civil War was a result of some sectors of the Spanish Army revolting against the government of the Second Republic. This uprising rejected several elements of the Second Republic including: rejecting democracy; the party system; separation of Church and State; the autonomy of Catalonia, Basque country and Galicia, as well as liberties and civil rights of Spanish people (Guibernau 2004, 34). For Catalonia, Basque country and Galicia there was not just a feeling of defeat after the Civil War, but a worry, which came from the Francoist attempt to get rid of all the cultural and linguistic differences of these places (Guibernau 2004, 36). That worry would be the elimination of their linguistic and cultural identity.

Pre-Franco the Basques had experienced a more favorable environment as it related to their autonomy and were starting to see a movement towards more control of their own local functions or at least a movement towards greater political opportunities. This included the ability to continue certain traditions and customs – such as teaching their languages in schools – that made those communities unique and seen as autonomous communities. In this pre-Franco period beginning with the Second Spanish Republic, violence by the Basque Nationalists was non-

⁶⁹ The Spanish Civil War was basically a materialization of long-term class conflict, violence crept across more than just class lines (Cenarro 2004, 286).

⁷⁰ Or Clericalism, and anticlericalism respectively.

existent. Tensions between the Spanish state and Basque Nationalists existed, however, they had not become violent, or begun targeted attacks against the State until the formation of ETA. This is not to say that the Second Spanish Republic was not characterized by political instability and social conflict (Puche and Gonzalez-Martinez 2018). While physical violence was missing, the number of strikes increased initially during the period of 1931 to 1933, falling 1934-1935, and back up again in the months – February to July 1936 – of the Popular Front (Puche and Gonzalez-Martinez 2018, 1). As the autonomous communities were experiencing greater control of their local affairs, I would not expect there to be much violence. As mentioned above aside from contentious strikes and tensions with the State, not much violence took place. However, the next two periods in Spanish history – the Franco period and the turn towards democracy – could be seen as changes to policies that affected the Basques' autonomy. This could also be considered a shift in the political opportunities that were available to the autonomous communities.

Francoism

In the Franco period we see a totalitarian dictatorship form of government. Franco's government became about the state and centralized policies; not allowing for autonomy, and in search of subservience to the State. Franco's use of censorship and propaganda to get rid of his enemies, state control of ideologies of society gave him the title Caudillo (Boundless 2021). The Basques saw themselves as Basque and not Spanish, this threatens the Basques' identity, their way of life and their lives as those very traditions and customs, as well as their language that make them Basque, are repressed and forbidden in the Franco government. The Basque control

of their language and education (political opportunities) went from some control or limited to completely eliminated under Franco. Not only was the Basque language – Euskara – banned but Basque nationalist symbols such as the their flag was prohibited; any Basque leaders of the PNV were either imprisoned or forced into exile. The Basques were at complete odds with the Franco government, it would be close to 20 years after Franco had taken power that Basque nationalism began turning to violence. With ETA’s formation on July 31st 1959, Basque nationalist now had an armed contingent that could attempt to take on the Franco regime. While some have indicated that ETA’s first violent attack occurred as early as 1958, July 18th 1961 marks what others consider to be the first unsuccessful attack by ETA. On July 18th 1961, ETA unsuccessfully tried to derail trains carrying Franco supporters to commemorative celebrations in San Sebastian.

Among the things that disappeared after the Spanish Civil War and the Early Franco period was the workers’ movement. As a political and social subject, the movement vanished. According to Sampere (2013), the new regime led by Franco was intent on destroying the workers’ movement. This was done through the execution of 75,527 persons, although this figure has been debated some estimate it to be around 140,000. (71). The levels of repression varied among provinces early on in the Franco regime. Among the repression and violence from the Franco regime towards the provinces, they also sought to deny memory and history through public actions, but also in manipulating historical archives⁷¹ (Sampere 2013, 71-72). Aside from

⁷¹ It was not unusual to find records – if they were recorded at all – that indicated the cause of death from repression as “internal hemorrhage, traumatic shock, or traumatic bulbar hemorrhage” (Sampere 2013, 72). The objective according to Sampere (2013) was to build a new national community spiritually and materially purged, reshaped and integrated into the “New State”.

the deaths early on, which may be underestimated by fifty percent, are the victims who were jailed, sent into exile, and others who were purged (Sampere 2013, 72).

While Franco had repressed both through the banning of their languages, it was the Basques whose response was most radical. ETA, set up in 1959, is blamed for the deaths of at least 829 people in its bombing campaigns and shootings towards its goal of achieving independence. When ETA was formed there was a feeling of discontent by those who followed the PNV. The young undergraduates from Bilbao that ultimately formed ETA were tired of seeing the inaction by the PNV. Marxist in nature, ETA as well as *Terre Lliure*⁷² carried out violence. Basque Country has experienced ETA's terrorist activity as a major feature of the conflict between Spain and Basque Country. ETA's violence – among other kinds of political violence – led to a social split within Basque society (Centre on Constitutional Change 2019). ETA started its campaign from a position disappointed with the weak opposition of the PNV against Franco's regime. However, the young group of students forming ETA and demanding independence for the Basque Country turned into a socialist and revolutionary organization engaging in violence after struggles with internal struggles between purely nationalist positions and revolutionary ones. The formation of ETA from the youth and student groups is fitting. From Franco's earlier periods through "Desarrollo", he oppressed many Basques, but ultimately had made many youths suffer. Through removal of parents that had had a role in the Civil War, through turning schools into jails due to the number of Basques being imprisoned. These repressive tactics were creating an opportunity for those disenfranchised youths to start to learn

⁷² *Terre Lliure* was a Marxist organization similar to ETA, but coming to be in 1978 in Catalonia and disbanding in 1991 (Cancela-Kieffer 2018).

their Basque culture and language through more secretive means, but ultimately giving rise to ETA (Legarreta 1984).

Violence

During this period of Spanish development, something else was also developing and in planning – ETA’s first “known” attack. On July 18th 1961 ETA activists unsuccessfully attempted to derail trains that were carrying Franco supporters on their way to commemorative celebrations in San Sebastian⁷³. A few months later in 1962 ETA would hold its first assembly where they established their group structure and the principles they followed. These included things like their designation as a Basque “revolutionary national liberation movement,” proclaiming the right of the Basque people to self-rule, declaring their secularism and indicating that reaching their goals through the ‘armed fight’ (Alexander, Swetnam and Levine 2001). Their declaration for self-rule for the Basque people was a shot at the centralization policies and direction of the Franco dictatorship. While not every single incident resulted in death, the incidents were certainly violent, such as a September 24th, 1965 train that was intercepted, and a bank courier robbed by ETA. Furthermore, while Basque participation in the “period of consensus” declined, violence by the Basque insurgent group Euskadi ta Askatasuna increased. For example between 1968 and 1975, ETA was responsible for 34 deaths. And, despite a pause in 1977, ETA was responsible for more than 67 deaths each year in 1978, 1979, and 1980 (Edles 1999, 313).

⁷³ Coastal City located in the Basque Autonomous Community.

The 1978 Constitution and Transition to Democracy (1975-1993)

The constitutional referendum passed with 88.5 percent of votes, representing 59 percent of the total electorate, while in the Basque country the referendum was approved by 68.7 percent of votes, only representing 31 percent of the electorate. Aside from the possibility of creating new self-governing entities in the form of autonomous communities, it also established a few other things. This included: establishing powers assigned to the central government; letting the autonomous communities assume those powers not explicitly assigned to the central government in their respective constitutions⁷⁴; acknowledging that the central government could delegate powers to the autonomous communities, and at times enact laws to homogenize some matters that were held by the autonomous communities; as well as stating that Spanish legislation not only supplements those of the autonomous communities but that in the event of a conflict, Spanish legislation would supersede. During the time of transition to democracy, also a transition to a more decentralized government system, several of the provisional autonomous communities already held a certain level of autonomy at the time of their ascendance to autonomous community. In the case of Basque Country and Catalonia, whose statutes of autonomy were approved in 1979 – this pair of historical communities started with “high” levels of devolved “competencies”. In the case of the Basques political life was organized on an immemorial kind of “primitive peasant democracy” (Lilli 1994). However, this changed for Basque Country. As the Basque region grew from an area of geo-strategic importance into a peripheral geo-economic center, those previous privileges were eroded by central governments (Lilli 1994, 330-31).

⁷⁴ A residual clause in the constitution indicated that “powers not assumed by autonomous communities would fall under central government jurisdiction” (Pi-Sunyer 2010, 7).

Within the Basque region, there were multiple parties striving for similar goals – autonomy and independence – but also with different ideologies and methods to achieving their goals. For example, two parties with those similar goals, but supporting different methods of action and ideology were Batasuna and the PNV. While Batasuna was associated with ETA and their violent tactics to win independence, the PNV also sought additional autonomy and independence, but without the violent means. Then again Batasuna was made up originally of a coalition of leftist nationalist political groups. On the other hand the PNV was a Catholic and conservative political party agitating for independence and for protecting Basque traditional culture and language. The PNV's historical shifts to become broader in nature becoming a movement not just a political party created changes in its positions from outright independence, more towards Basque autonomy within Spain. The end of Francoism brought changes to the Basque region, but in a different way than with the situation in Catalonia. While most Spaniards ratified the Constitution, most Basque nationalists were opposed. In fact, the referendum on the constitution had an abstention rate of 56% in Guipuzkoa and Vizcaya (Guibernau 2000, 57).

Resentment at the PNV's attempts to control ETA's movement, which was advocating for language instead of race to be the measurement for Basqueness. Ultimately ETA would have as one of its components Batasuna as its political wing. It is certainly possible that ETA was also looking with its attacks as well as with its political wing to disrupt the PNV as one of its goals. For example ETA had separated itself from the PNV early on, and associated itself with Batasuna. The PNV eventually after returning from exile began to make contacts with other Spanish parties in order to see where it stood in a post-Francoist period. At this same time in the late 60's and early 70's the Basque Nationalist Party made its stance against ETA clearer. This

was during a time when ETA violence had been surging and their presence and influence in society was fairly well known. It could be the case that ETA was trying to push out the PNV both with violence and through the ballot box. Although the parties had different ideologies and tactics, Batasuna and the PNV ultimately wanted additional Basque recognition. However, the PNV was okay with more and more autonomy, while Batasuna and ETA sought independence and separation from Spain. Yet each was not without its problems. The PNV on one hand had a split around 1985 with some within its organization due to a personality clash. Aside from the clash of personality between some of its leaders, the party also was starting to differ on the configuration of Basque Country. The PNV sought strong provinces within Basque Country, while the splintering group – EA⁷⁵ - was seeking a strong Basque Government with weak provinces. At the same time Batasuna had its own issues. Prior to 2003, when the party was outlawed for its associations as part of ETA, it also splintered into Aralar – a dissenting minority. Similarly to the situation with the PNV and EA, Aralar shared separatist aims with Batasuna, however, this minority rejected the violent attacks and assassinations by ETA. Electorally both the ETA associated Batasuna and the PNV participated in Spanish Parliament. Batasuna first stood in 1979, obtaining 3 seats while polling at 15% in the Basque Autonomous Community. Later in 1982 they lost a seat, but their high point won them 5 seats in 1986. At a provincial level, one of their best results included topping the polls in the 1989 general election in Guipuzcoa.

Both the left party – Batasuna – and the right of center PNV held different associations to religion. The PNV were Catholic, while Batasuna interacted differently with Catholicism. For

⁷⁵ Eusko Alkartasuna – Basque Solidarity

example, ETA closely associated with Batasuna, came to consider itself anti-clerical. This was a departure from early nationalists' flirtations with Catholicism as one of the fundamental pillars of Basque identity. Unlike the PNV and other moderate Basque nationalists, ETA did not believe that self-determination for the Basque people could be achieved through legal means such as participating in established political institutions (Bourne 2012). However, this could be argued as they did associate with, even if loosely with organized political parties such as Batasuna. Even so, ETA has tried to avoid sectarian killings, and the conflict has not involved a clash of communities between nationalists and non-nationalists; generally, ETA has mainly acted against a single "enemy" the Spanish State (Bourne 2012). While ETA has acted against the Spanish State, it has not shied away from violence.

Violence

Starting with Franco's death in 1975 through 1979⁷⁶ ETA committed 417⁷⁷ acts of violence. Those violent incidents amounted to 184 fatalities, and over 200 injured (START (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism) 2022). I believe there is a combination of factors occurring here. Not just the internal divisions within the Basque communities and political parties, but some others as well. Those others include Franco policies that remained even after his death, but before the beginning of what would be a transition to democracy. There would be a concern for the Basques as Franco had hand-picked Prince Juan Carlos⁷⁸ as his official successor. While seemingly prepared to follow in Franco's footsteps,

⁷⁶ The year the Statutes of Autonomy were realized as included in the 1978 Constitution.

⁷⁷ See chart on page 137. Data compiled from Global Terrorism Database (GTD), (START (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism) 2022).

⁷⁸ Grandson of Spain's most recent King – Alfonso XIII.

Prince Juan Carlos would attempt to facilitate the development of a Constitutional Monarchy after Franco's death. Still between the time Prince Juan Carlos was named a successor – 1969 – and when he became King, it would follow that Basques would be concerned that Franco policies would continue chipping away at their culture and want of more devolved powers. A time period that was tumultuous in its movement away from Franco, it still found itself in the confines of Franco's legal system (Tusell 1977). For example, King Juan Carlos stayed loyal to the principles of the *Movimiento Nacional* – National Movement – the political system of the Franco period; took possession of the Crown before Francoist *Cortes Españolas*⁷⁹. Part of what can be seen as a continuation of the Franco era in this transition period and a worry to the Basques was the leaving in place of the incumbent head of state under Franco – Carlos Arias Navarro. Believing that political changes should be limited, tasking the Cortes to update laws and institutions in a way Franco would have wanted (Tusell 1977). The Basques in believing that what they were witnessing would amount to a continuation of Franco era policies and repression of Basque identity would not necessarily mind groups like ETA taking violent actions against the State.

The transition period would offer an opportunity, but it also came with many uncertainties as to what direction the transition would take. Several initiatives took place that set the stage for political change to begin, with support from widely disparate groups, increasing the chances for the transition's success (Tavaana 2020). Some of these included easing censorship, legalizing political parties – for example Batasuna⁸⁰ and the communist party, and elections

⁷⁹ Spanish parliament established under Franco.

⁸⁰ Batasuna was the Basque Nationalist Political Party and one of the parties legalized in 1976.

which were held in 1977⁸¹ (Schmemmann 1981). Batasuna as a political party was viewed controversially because it was a component of or the political wing of ETA. However, the Basque Country remained, for most of this transition period, in a state of political turbulence (Schmemmann 1981). A multi-stage amnesty for numerous Basque political prisoners was granted, but Basque protesters and local police continued to clash. Even with the abolition of the *Tribunal de Orden Publico*⁸² - ETA had appeared to at least be open to a possible truce in mid-1976, however, continued their violent attacks in October of 1976. This is also supported by the number of violent incidents, which in table at the end of the chapter we can see that 1976 was the year with the lowest number of violent incidents – 17 – since Franco’s death.

After the Transition to Democracy

The end of the transition period is a bit difficult to pin down due to different scholars disagreeing when the democratization process was completed. For example, some indicate that the transition ended after the 1977 General Election, while others indicate it was complete after the approval of the 1978 Constitution, and other scholars suggest it ended after the failed coup d’etat of 1981 (Sanchez-Cuenca and Aguilar 2009). During the transition to democracy following Franco’s death, ETA ended up splitting into two separate groups. These were ETA Political-Military or ETA-pm and ETA-Military or ETA-M. However, during this transition both wings of the group refused amnesty by Madrid and instead, continued to pursue their violent struggle. While ETA continued its struggle and still had some of its most violent years ahead of

⁸¹ Elections had not been held since 1936.

⁸² The Public Order Court was a court created in Francoist Spain to deal with most political crimes. Also included what was considered a sort of Francoist secret police. Dissolved December 1976.

it, it also dipped its feet into the political realm. In the 1980's ETA-PM finally took to offers of the Spanish government's offers of individual pardons to ETA prisoners. This action caused a rift within the ETA-PM group. The group accepted the partial amnesty granted, and ended up integrating into the political party Euskadiko Ezkerra⁸³. The other wing (ETA-VIII) integrated with ETA-M, which continued with the original name of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna.

Shortly after Franco's death, the Basque provinces received pre-autonomy legal and administrative status and were officially granted status as an autonomous community in 1978 (Clark 1985, 74). The policies that were being discussed would ensure that all autonomous communities like the Basques had the same powers. For example, a popularly elected parliament, a president elected by the parliament; as well as financial autonomy to include the right to levy its own taxes, and charge for its services in its territory. Other powers would include charging for licenses and permits, and to receive income from the rent or other use of property such as land and buildings (Clark, *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*, 360). Even more, the statute that was negotiated for the Basques granted them exclusive jurisdiction over matters affecting social security, health, welfare, labor relation, education, culture, media, environmental protection, and control over transportation and agricultural (Bothen 2014, 34-35). The economic matters were a big step, but also came with some issues. While the Basque region would levy and collect its own taxes, only a portion would go to Madrid (Bothen 2014)⁸⁴. However, more recently the Basque country began paying 10% of its taxes to the Spanish government each year.

⁸³ Left of the Basque Country. This was a Basque Socialist party, many of its members later integrated into Herri Batasuna which was a predecessor to Batasuna.

⁸⁴ The portion going to Madrid, however, it would be in lieu of payment of personal or corporate taxes directly to the Spanish government.

Despite all these new powers and responsibilities, ETA continued its reign of violence. This would lead to a slowing of decentralization (Clark 1985, 64). As should be expected ETA's violence was denounced, however, the violence early on was mostly directed towards political figures and the Guardia Civil, which opened the door for sympathy from some (Clark 1979, 375). Going forward however, any sympathizers quickly vanished as ETA escalated its violence in number of incidents but also to include civilian casualties. Some of ETA's most violent years included 1978, 1979 and 1980. During these three years, ETA is credited with 436 violent incidents leading to 238 deaths and over 1700 injured. This led to the Spanish governments' reaction of reverting to more repressive and violent tactics themselves in their attempts to stop ETA.

The early to mid-1980's saw what some labeled "dirty wars", those in the later years (1983 -1987) involving "Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberacion" or anti-terror liberation groups⁸⁵. These groups carried out assassinations, kidnappings and torture of ETA members and many civilians (Eager 2008, 149). Violence continued by ETA – and also by the Spanish police forces and the anti-ETA terror commandos from the extreme right. In Franco's regime the Guardia Civil and the National Police had been the coercive pillars of the authoritarian. Now in this transition, it was not surprising that those two entities became the major targets of ETA attacks. These repressive measures would in turn lead back to a renewed sense of sympathy in some Basque people. And even renewed the idea in many Basque nationalists that behind the changing that was taking place during the transition. The uptick in volume of violent attacks indicated that the real targets were not really the dictatorship, but ultimately the Spanish state. For example,

⁸⁵ Also known as GAL or death squads.

during the Franco period ETA killed 43 people, however, between 1976 and 1980 that number rose to 270. According to Mees (2019, 119) these figures represent an average 5.4 casualties per year during the dictatorship, and 54 per year for the years of the transitionⁱ ⁸⁶. The “Same Francoist fascist state apparatus was functioning as murderously and untouchably as ever” (Eager 2008, 149). In 1987, ETA engaged in over 60 violent incidents leading to 60 fatalities and about 180 injured. One of these incidents that year is considered one of their most heinous. A bomb was placed at a parking garage at a Barcelona supermarket, killing 21 people, and injuring at least 45.

While GAL would continue their tactics and strategies, it was the Civil Guard and the National police that would account for a large portion of the deaths that came at the hands of ETA. The Guardia Civil with 206 fatal victims from 1968 to 2010, while the National Police saw 149 casualties (Mees 2019, 119). Throughout those years these casualties amounted to 42% - almost half of ETA attacks – of the 845 casualties attributed to ETA. The attacks that we see after Franco’s death through the transition to and into a Spanish democracy may be attributed to the continuation of police practices that indicated the difficulties for the police forces to adapt to this new transition to democracy. Several ceasefires would be attempted with ETA, including in 1988 and 1989. However, based on the number of violent incidents ETA continued to engage in – 83 and 127 respectively – there wouldn’t be much indication that anything had changed. The devolutionary policies from 1980 going forward to 1990 favored greater decentralization. Although there were some residual elements in the police forces and central government that favored maintaining Franco era policies, they were on the way out in this transitional period.

⁸⁶ See figures in endnote i.

The steps being taken were in a way moving towards less centralization. However, even with this change in direction from the previous hyper-centralized period, Basque violence by groups like ETA still remained. Attempts would be made to try and create a cease-fires but failing to be fulfilled. As some scholars indicate it would be “naïve to conceive centre-periphery conflicts as susceptible to being solved, just as it is naïve to think that state parties make concessions to their rebellious peripheries in the hope that this will appease peripheral movements’ aspirations” (Alonso 2014). While I do agree with this sentiment as it may relate to the Spanish central government and Basque Country, I do not believe this would eliminate the peripheral movements’ aspirations, but may channel their responses in a different format – turning towards more peaceful means of attaining their aspirational goals and leaving violence behind.

With the transition continuing into a consolidation of democracy starting in the 1990’s, the hardest problem for the authors of Spain’s democratic constitution was striking a balance between Madrid and the claims of communities like that of Basque Country for home rule (The Economist 2008). Regional governments began to become responsible for several sectors within their regions. They became responsible for schools, universities, health, social services, culture, urban and rural development, and in some places policing. While these devolved powers or responsibilities have been returned there have been some competitive tensions that have also been created. This decentralization has not placated politicians in Basque Country among others like Catalonia and Galicia. Ultimately, these autonomous communities did not care for decentralization for all, but only for them (The Economist 2008). This is the case in Basque Country where they enjoy a greater degree of home rule than any other region in Europe, however, their demands make it difficult to draw up a stable and permanent set of rules (The

Economist 2008). So as Spain continued to decentralize throughout the 1990's, this did not stop Basque demands for additional power. "The problem with nationalists is that the more you give them, the more they want" according to the philosopher Mr. Savater (The Economist 2008). Using language more or less as a threat for additional public monies and powers. For example, polling suggests that around 25% of Basques are interested in independence, even after all the years of struggle to self-govern, and control education, the media; even after around ten percent of the population has left Basque Country due to ETA's violence (The Economist 2008). This is also captured in that from 1990 through the end of 1999, ETA was responsible for just over 400 violent incidents (GTD).

The Parlamento Vasco or Basque Parliament is the legislative body of the Basque Autonomous Community, and the elected assembly to which the Basque Government is responsible (Basque Government 2009). The Basque Parliament's first session after passage of the 1978 constitution and statute of autonomy symbolically occurred in Guernica March 31st 1980. The assembly is made up of 75 deputies representing Basque citizens of the 3 provinces Alava, Gipuzkoa and Biscay (Basque Government 2009). Each elects the same number of deputies even though the population of each varies. Elections for the assembly are through closed list proportional representation, allocating seats on a provincial basis using the D'Hondt method⁸⁷ of allocation. Despite the significant differences in population for each province 285,198; 1,124,445 and 673,328 for Alava, Biscay and Gipuzkoa respectively, allocated 25 seats each. By 2001, its seventh iteration, held on Sunday, May 13th 2001, all 75 seats that comprises it

⁸⁷ Also called the Jefferson method, allocates seats among federal states aiming to allocate seats to parties approximately in proportion to the number of votes received.

were up for election. In its alliance the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and Basque Solidarity (EA), which had formed the Basque government since 1998, won a landslide with 33 seats and 42.4% of the share. The People's Party ran in coalition with Alavese Unity (UA) came in second with 22.9% of the vote and 19 seats; this left the Socialist Party of the Basque Country-Basque Country Left (PSE-EE) in 3rd place with 17.8% and 13 seats. In 2001 alone, there were 37 incidents attributed to ETA, including 13 deaths across those incidents, with well over 150 persons injured. In 2003, the governing Basque Nationalist Party proposed to alter the statute of autonomy through the Ibarretxe Plan (Goikoetxea 2012). This plan had been approved by absolute majority in the Basque Parliament after long held discussions⁸⁸. By the time it made its way to the Spanish Parliament the plan hit a wall as it was blocked for discussion by the two main parties PSOE and PP, which was further rejected for debate by large majority of that Parliament in 2005. By 2005, the number of incidents by ETA was down to 20; and although just under 100 people were injured throughout those incidents, no deaths were attributed to those incidents caused by ETA. 2005 was also another year where parliamentary elections for the assembly were held (Vall-Prat and Rodon 2017). They took place Sunday, April 17th 2005, electing the 8th Parliament of the Basque Autonomous Community. In this 2005 election again the PNV and Basque Solidarity formed a coalition which took 29 seats, while the Socialist Party of the Basque Country and the Basque Country Left's coalition took 18 seats, leaving the People's Party in third place with 15 seats (Vall-Prat and Rodon 2017). The Socialist Party in its coalition with the Basque Country Left, made some strides in gaining a few additional seats and

⁸⁸ There were lengthy legal discussions as it was believed that it contradicts the Spanish Constitution. These were ultimately overcome.

coming in second as opposed to third in 2001. This election may have been a turning point. Although the Batasuna Party had been banned, it had endorsed the controversial Communist Party of the Basque Homelands which won 9 seats. Despite ETAs decline, including their ceasefire, Urkullu – the Basque Prime Minister – in an agreement with Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, intends to increase the figure of ertzainas or autonomous police force of the Basque Country.

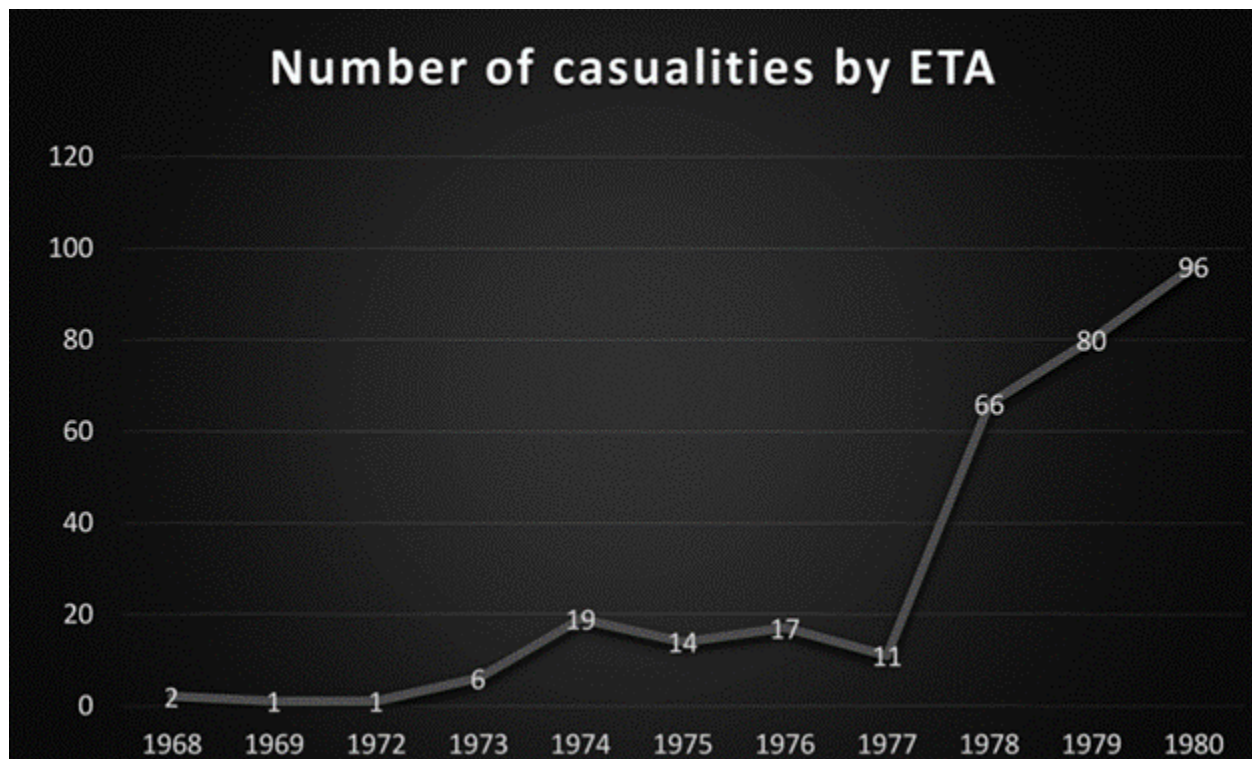


Figure 1 Number of Casualties by ETA (1968-1980)

Analysis

The Spanish Case presented a way to look at the theory I presented for this project through a different lens than the Northern Irish Case. The Spanish case not only presented how devolutionary arrangements were changing for the Basques early on in the Second Republic, but

how an authoritarian dictatorship eliminated devolutionary arrangements altogether. This allowed an opportunity to trace a different dynamic for the Basques where Spain became a hyper-centralist State. This shift in regime type did open up an avenue to explore how the deep repression of the Franco regime kept the Basques from really being able to mobilize and use violence effectively as what little autonomy they had at the end of the Second Republic was finished off. It was only with Franco's death and gradual turn towards attempting a liberal democracy that the Basques among other regions would start to see an opening to participate and help decide their future. However, this new opportunity for the Basques also presented an opportunity to engage in violence early on against the remaining Francoist elements in Spain. So while new opportunities were being carved for the Basques among other regions, the lengthy process also presented an opportunity for some violence to take place. This case highlights how the transition from authoritarian dictatorship to emerging democracy may show signs of effects that my theory was not capturing. Eventually violence began to tamp down and the autonomy the Basques sought, began to take hold and expand as time went on. While my theory was not necessarily incorrect about what would happen, it does indicate that sometimes decentralization and the opening of opportunities for groups like the Basques sometimes is not immediate and takes time.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overall greater political opportunities brought on through decentralization often leads to less violence. The quantitative results reached through this study tell us this; the results also lay out a more complicated story which is seen throughout the case studies of Northern Ireland and Spain. Ultimately, using decentralization in this way does not always lead to perfect results.

Reflecting on the quantitative portion of this project leads me to think about what a model should look like. Not only should it account for economic as well as social factors, but political ones as well. Regime transitions should be considered and even potentially the length of the previous regime, for example from that of an authoritarian dictatorship to a democracy. As some scholars have already noted parties at the local level may play a part and should be considered as well. And while decentralization may not be necessary nor sufficient for lessening violence and the likelihood of terrorist incidents, it certainly is a tool that may be effective. Decentralization has the influence to be used as a tool as seen in the case studies; some groups may use this tool for their benefit at one time and then be against it the next when it may hinder what they truly want. So while decentralization may not present a complete answer it is one part of the puzzle that should be included when studying the opening and changing of political opportunities and violence.

Through two case studies – Northern Ireland and Spain, as well as a quantitative analysis, I found that political and economic factors lower incidents of violence, while other times they may increase incidents of violence. In some instances, greater political decentralization led to more violence. It led to more violence when those who were in the minority were left out from participating in the decentralized opportunities that were presented. In that case the violence was

directed against groups in the majority and the Central State. As in the Northern Ireland case, when decentralization led to more political and economic opportunities locally, but the Protestant Unionist did everything to exclude the Catholic Nationalists. On the other hand, a decrease in political opportunities also led to its share of violence. When greater centralization took place, it seemed that groups that had held power locally when decentralized turned to violence as the Central State took more control. In that instance the groups that had held the majority turned to violence directed at those in the minority as well as the central state. This occurred in the Northern Irish case as well when Westminster decided to step in and take back some control from Northern Ireland. Protestant Unionists would not agree to share power with the Catholic Nationalists and so turned to spoiling any chance at power sharing. Through these case studies I found that decentralization has the potential to lower violence, however, on its own without participation by the majority as well as the minority may lead to a situation in which tensions can brew eventually spilling over into violence. Decentralizing appears to be best done as a process with stakeholders taking steps along the way to ensure that expectations are addressed, and any assurances agreed to. For example, the Spanish case showed how after decades of dictatorship but a turn towards democratization and increased decentralization led to more violence. In that case I found that as the Franco regime was coming to an end and the new constitutional period beginning a shift towards increased violence began, especially from the Basque region, specifically from ETA. With Basque repression slightly easing up towards the end of the Franco period and passing of the Statutes of Autonomy in the 1978 Constitution a new era was starting to take shape. I found however that as decentralization and forms of administrative, fiscal and political devolution took place, violence began to creep up. Additionally, from a quantitative

perspective I found that overall, a variety of political and economic factors along with decentralization may lower the likelihood of violent incidents. However, I also found that some factors on their own will not lead to that same outcome. For example, holding elections on its own, as well as ethnolinguistic fractionalization will not bring down incidents of violence.

Political decentralization attempts to give people or those who represent them more power in decision making, and also more influence in the creating of local/regional policies and their implementation. In this regard, I believe this is something my assumptions get right, albeit with some caveats. In the case of Northern Ireland, decentralization took place with the goal for an assembly and political, administrative and fiscal powers to be provided from the local level. While the parties there then had the opportunities to participate in this devolved government, not all of those had the ability to. Protestant Unionists making up the majority ensured that those in the minority could not participate; from creating barriers for taking administrative and political positions to the kinds of education that children could receive, Catholic Nationalists were treated as second class citizens. In this sense my theory deviated from what was occurring. In a technical sense London provided the opportunities to Northern Ireland for self-governance, but those in the majority made sure that the minority could not participate. While this period of decentralized government in Northern Ireland was mostly peaceful – and in line with my theory; keeping minority groups from the opportunities available led to violence. The violence being in retaliation for the repressive nature of the majority's rule and indifference or lack of the center's involvement. I would expect increases in centralization to lead to more violence, in this regard I was correct. As Westminster re-centralized its power over Northern Ireland, violence increased. Violent incidents continued by Catholic Nationalists, and also came from Protestant Unionist

towards the minority and against the Center – at times through False Flag attacks. This was in order to avoid any new decentralized agreements that would lead to power sharing that Unionists wanted to avoid. In the Spanish case my hypothesis did not follow fully. I would have expected that there be little to no violence as the 1978 Constitution and the Statutes of Autonomy was passed. However, violence began to increase for a period of time after these events. That violence would end up subsiding but not before ETA wreaked havoc against many central government institutions. As the period of democratization solidified and institutions rid themselves of groups and individuals that remained from the previous regime; as well as the devolution of administrative, fiscal and political powers to the Autonomous regions violence eventually did lessen and lead to more peaceful times. This leads me to the results from the quantitative portion of my study where my model showed that the likelihood of violent incidents did decrease with decentralization, but also among other political, fiscal and social variables. Generally, the thrust of my theory that more political opportunities placed at the hands of the local/regional population would lead to less violence is correct, but there are other variables that can push and pull violence in either direction.

This study has also found some interesting points. In the Northern Ireland case I find interesting that although violence was expected as centralization took place, where the violence came from was surprising. Specifically, Unionist violence. That the Unionists which had benefit most from decentralization and seemed to benefit from Westminster's intervention in Northern Ireland would take to violence unexpected. It showed that the Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland were willing to engage in violence – against the Catholic Nationalist minority as well as against the State to avoid power sharing. It appeared their violence was aimed at undermining

London's attempts to reach agreements that could lead to working with Republicans/Nationalists by committing violence. Violence that would be blamed on Catholic Nationalists/Republicans only to later be found to have been committed by Unionists. I was surprised to see violence in the Spanish case even after the passage of the Constitution with its creation of autonomous communities. However, there was not a clear direction as to how the process would take place. So, while the constitution established a process for eventual devolution, it did not force it upon any one region.

Political opportunities often lead to less violence in the long-term. Decentralization is one way of achieving this. However, sometimes decentralization may not work because it could take away rights from minorities; we see this in the case of Northern Ireland where Catholic Nationalists are left out once decentralization takes place initially. While in other cases, such as the Spanish case, we see that even after decentralization begins to take place, it can take a while for changes to take hold. Both the Northern Ireland and Spanish cases show that it is not always so simple as just saying decentralization will take place, or that it has begun. Using decentralization which can increase political opportunities then can lead to less violence, but it may not be a perfect fit for bringing down violence entirely or in a timely fashion.

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