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Selling the End of Terrorism: A Framing Approach to the IRA's Disengagement from Armed Violence

Experiences from the end of the Provisional *Irish Republican Army's* campaign of armed violence have informed broader debates on how terrorism ends, yet this research has underplayed the internal dynamics which made the IRA's disengagement successful. The article utilises a framing approach to explain how a network within the IRA managed to ensure the majority of the movement supported an end to violence. A disengagement frame was constructed by this network within the IRA which maintained narrative fidelity, it utilised the credibility of mid-ranking commanders, and there were sufficient linkages to diffuse the frame due to generational hegemony, the structure of the IRA, and the unique structure of the prisons system. Finally, the article challenges the utility of decapitation strategies because organisational stability can maintain the components which ensure a disengagement frame will resonate.

Following Cronin's observation that the end phase of terrorism campaigns has been vastly underexplored, a range of studies have emerged under iterations of the title 'how terrorism ends'.¹ These studies have sought to identify what causes militant groups that use terrorism to end (otherwise known as disengagement); these findings have been highlighted as a means to improve counter-terrorism strategy. The focus of this article is on the internal factors within a group that leads to terrorism campaigns ending through negotiations. As will be demonstrated below, most research on the role of internal factors has tended to emphasise how external factors such as state repression impact upon internal group dynamics to cause disillusionment or a change in tactics within the group, thus prompting the group to move away from violence or slowly disintegrate as members leave.² State actions that foment discontent and tensions within a militant group are seen as a positive means to bring about the end of a terrorism campaign. However when a militant group leadership is seeking to end the campaign, it is important that it can bring along the majority of its membership; otherwise the attempt to disengage from terrorism can end in failure. Therefore, counter-terrorism strategies, such as repression, decapitation and negotiation, which seek to prompt internal change, have to walk a tight line between leading to a successful or weak disengagement process in terms of the extent

there are splinter groups and/or a high risk of recidivism among members.³ To that effect, two crucial questions are: a) how do militant group leaders sell disengagement to their members to ensure they support the process; and b) which forms of counter-terrorism are more effective at helping those within a group sell the end of terrorism?

The article seeks to answer these questions and contribute to our understanding of ‘how terrorism ends’ by explaining the process by which a network within a militant group convinces other members to stop using armed violence. It focuses on how the Provisional Irish Republican Army’s (IRA) thirty-year campaign formally concluded in 2005, drawing on interviews with former Provisional IRA members where they account for how they began to support an end to armed violence. The article firstly outlines the research on ‘how terrorism ends’, focusing especially on the accounts of how the Provisional IRA declined which have been influenced by theories from negotiations studies. By demonstrating the problems underpinning the explanations for how terrorism ends through negotiations, a framing approach – drawn from social movement theory - is proposed as one means to explain how Provisional IRA members began to accept the need for an end of violence. Three factors are then explored: 1) how the disengagement frame was gradually formed and maintained narrative fidelity; 2) the role of credibility and internal interaction; and 3) the significance of linkages that enabled the network to diffuse the frame, particularly in the prison system. The articles then builds on this observation to engage with debates in the ‘how terrorism ends’ literature, specifically on the efficacy of repression, decapitation and negotiations in bringing about an end to terrorism campaigns.

HOW TERRORISM ENDS AND THE WEAKNESS OF RIPENESS THEORY

Terrorism campaigns can end through a number of pathways: the loss of a terrorist leader (decapitation); transition towards a political process through negotiations; achieving the objectives (success); disintegration through burnout/implosion and backlash/loss of support, or an unsuccessful generational transition; repression, whether by the military or policing and intelligence services; or transitioning toward another modus operandi such as criminality.⁴ Since over forty percent of terrorist campaigns end through politicisation,⁵ a significant amount of analysis on how terrorism ends has focused on the processes which encourage negotiations. By drawing on Ripeness Theory from negotiation studies, Cronin outlines the dominant perspective of how the Provisional IRA’s campaign drew to a conclusion, which can be

paraphrased as follows: State and non-state repression, combining a policing and intelligence approach with paramilitary assassinations, led both the British government and the Provisional IRA to see the conflict as a stalemate, and electoral success reinforced the potential in an exclusively political route. As the parties engaged in the peace process, they became invested in it and found it increasingly difficult to return fully to an armed strategy. The culmination of this process, the Good Friday Agreement, was ambiguously constructed to be acceptable to both Unionists and Republicans, with Sinn Fein arguing that its constitutional agenda was being advanced. In the background throughout this settlement was a changing international context, with South African intermediaries assisting with the process, thus leading to a sense that history was marching in a certain direction that made the Republican armed struggle obsolete.⁶ From this perspective, factors such as repression and decapitation contribute to the perception of a stalemate, thus accentuating the role of negotiations in this form of disengagement. However, the paper critiques Ripeness Theory that underpins this explanation, which then has consequences for how we understand other factors such as repression, decapitation and negotiations more broadly within the context of how terrorist campaigns end.

Ripeness Theory highlights how changing opportunity structures develop which make conflicts ripe for resolution, and these conditions consist of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate between parties in the conflict, and the existence of Mutually Enticing Opportunities for negotiations to succeed.⁷ However, the theory acknowledges that the changing structural environment needs to be subjectively perceived by the actors in a conflict, so leaders can intervene to raise the awareness of key (military) members of these changing conditions.⁸ Ripeness theory is not sufficient because the supposed objective conditions of Mutually Hurting Stalemate and Mutually Enticing Opportunities can be found to exist in multiple stages in a conflict where negotiations are not successful.⁹ And while Ripeness Theory accounts for this by placing emphasis on the perception of these structures, this makes the claims of ripeness tautological.¹⁰ Even if changing opportunity structures do lead actors to perceive violence as dysfunctional and begin to view negotiations with optimism,¹¹ there is still an assumption that structural change will prompt a readiness to negotiate when these two elements are aligned. Yet, it has been shown that even when there is an observable continuity in opportunity structures that do not affect the utility of violence, leaders can convince followers that these opportunity structures have in fact closed by amplifying other opportunities which serve the interests of the leaders.¹² Thus, the theory underpinning Cronin's explanation of the role of negotiations in ending terrorism has faced substantial criticism from within studies on

negotiations. Subsequently, the article builds upon two other perspectives within the negotiations literature to contribute to discussions on how terrorism ends.

Firstly, there are a number of organisational and network approaches to explaining how leaders may encourage members to support negotiations. Leaders can navigate between different communities, cultures and social networks, utilising this position to convince and cajole its members to support an agreement by presenting it in a language which resonates with them and other parties.¹³ Leaders can also take advantage of their power within the organisational structures, repressing dissent and manipulating, deceiving and coercing members into complying by supporting negotiations, somewhat passively.¹⁴ However, in terms of the organisational approach, repressive approaches seldom work, with Lilja arguing that non-coercive measures tend to be more pervasive in pre-negotiations.¹⁵ Deception by the leadership may have played a role in the Provisional IRA's case,¹⁶ but this argument tends to be overly conspiratorial, presenting leaders as all-powerful, Machiavellian figures tricking a movement into negotiations.¹⁷ Even if there was deception, this does not apply throughout the entire movement, and since many studies state that only a percentage of the movement needs to be convinced to shift the rest of it,¹⁸ this places greater emphasis on how this cohort was persuaded, especially where deception and threats may not have sufficiently worked. This then leads back to how leaders convince enough members of the need to negotiate.

Second are the approaches which place greater emphasis on the role of agency in engaging in internal political processes which encourage changes in attitudes toward negotiation readiness.¹⁹ Leaders can bring about support for negotiations within a group by developing these changes in attitudes through dialogue, incentives, and pressure. In dialogue, the leaders seek to generate motivation and optimism for negotiations: they seek to construct armed violence as dysfunctional and they lower aspirations to make the prospect of negotiations achievable.²⁰ From this perspective, it is not the existence of an objective stalemate which leads groups to support negotiations, but through interplay within an organisation through.²¹ The success of dialogue within a group could be linked to the relative power of the leadership and the availability of a means of communicating to members.²² However this underplays the extent the content of the dialogue is persuasive in the first place, which is important to convince core members to begin with. Given that negotiations, if successful, would remove these very means of persuasion (i.e. through organisational disbandment), interplay cannot solely account for why leadership attempts to promote support for negotiations resonates within the group. Thus, the process of interplay that leads a group to support

negotiations underplays the structural factors which inform whether or not dialogue will be successful or what makes one set of perceptions within a group give way to another set of perceptions. With these comments of alternative theories in mind, the paper builds upon the aforementioned perspectives through a framing approach in order to explain how a leadership sells negotiations - and disengagement - from terrorism, to its membership. This framing approach contributes to the research on how terrorist groups end by emphasising the internal group dynamics in relation to 'external' factors such as repression and the significance of broader structural factors, which has implications for decapitation strategies.

APPLYING FRAMES ANALYSIS TO DISENGAGEMENT

The article contends that just as militant group leaders construct a frame to justify and mobilise a terrorism campaign, they also have to construct a frame to justify and demobilise a terrorism campaign – yet how this framing process manifests in demobilisation has been neglected.²³ The analysis of how these frames are constructed and how successful they are can account for the process by which 'radicals' become 'moderates',²⁴ thus bringing along the majority of a group's members in the disengagement process.²⁵ The framing approach is derived from Goffman's research: a frame denotes a schema of interpretation which functions to organise experience and guide action, whether individual or collective.²⁶ Frames are often constructed by political entrepreneurs – actors who take the initiative in mobilising resources – and the frame is promoted by them and others who act as messengers. According to framing theory, social movements seek to create linkages with unmobilised individuals who have common grievances. They create such linkages by diffusing information through interpersonal and intergroup networks, mass media, the internet etc.²⁷ There are three main components in a group's frame which they use to mobilise their target population and generate support: firstly, frames diagnose a problem and who this problem is attributed to; secondly, they state how such problems are to be solved; and thirdly, they seek to provide motivation by incentivising action.²⁸ In addition, the gap between attribution framing within society and amongst social movement organisations should be explored (known as resonance). The credibility of framing is dependent on frame consistency, empirical credibility and credibility of the articulators.²⁹ The resonance of framing also depends on factors pertaining to the targets for mobilisation: 1) centrality refers to how essential the beliefs and goals of the organisation are to the lives of the

targets of mobilisation (typically hierarchical); 2) experiential commensurability asks to what extent does the frame resonate with the personal, everyday experiences or is framing too abstract and distant, and 3) narrative fidelity refers to the extent a frame resonates with the targets' cultural narration, or 'myths' and 'domain assumptions'.³⁰ While frames analysis is primarily used to explain mobilisation, the article is the first to use it in the context of disengagement.

Prior to a militant group voluntarily disengaging, political entrepreneurs, typically the leadership, will begin the process of constructing a disengagement frame. The political entrepreneurs bring together the different types of (perhaps unpronounced) changes in attitudes that are occurring, to inform a coherent disengagement frame. In cases where there is little leadership or the organisational upper echelons are divided in creating a disengagement frame, the different attitudes within an organisation can coalesce around different political entrepreneurs within a movement, resulting in multiple frames existing which can undermine the case for disengagement. A disengagement frame makes the case for demobilising, and while this frame may not be overtly calling for disengagement in the initial stages of the process, as the process develops it becomes more refined. Crucially, a disengagement frame will need to build on the mobilising frame to maintain narrative fidelity, otherwise it will fail to resonate.

The components of a disengagement frame, as conceptualised here, are as follows: it diagnoses a problem with the mobilising frame, which may be ideological, strategic or tactical, or recognising a change with whom the problem is attributed to; a new approach that does not involve the use of armed violence will be identified; new or previously dormant components to the frame will be developed (frame extension and frame amplification respectively) to motivate current members or mobilise new constituencies. Fundamental to the success of a disengagement frame is the extent it resonates with the movement (frame alignment), and the article focuses on three overlapping factors that affect the resonance of a frame: network linkages; credible messengers; and narrative fidelity.

Firstly, there must be sufficient linkages between the network attempting to diffuse the frame and those they are targeting. Given the illicit nature of militant organisations, the ability to develop linkages can be influenced by the amount of repression and the organisational structure. Another key factor is the medium of linkages and dialogue, which builds on Ashour's argument that successful disengagement is partly contingent on internal discussion.³¹ Dialogue

and debate can be sufficient to produce a change in attitudes among members of a militant group or adjust their attitudes to align it with imposed behaviour (whether by the leadership or by external factors) to avoid cognitive dissonance.³² Crucially, the unique aspect of a disengagement frame is that it has a normative function, which through personal networks and influence, can mean people will adhere to frames and use them as scripts when in dialogue with other members or in the community, even if they do not believe in it. Secondly, the ‘messengers’ of the frame must be perceived to have credibility – not only charismatic leadership as Ashour emphasises³³ - and they must be able to generate credibility relative to counter-frames, which can be achieved by discrediting rivals.³⁴ Therefore the article’s framework highlights the significance of analysing what provides the messengers with credibility, how this affects resonance, and how credible messengers are utilised in diffusing the frame. Thirdly, the disengagement frame must maintain narrative fidelity; that is, it cannot deviate substantially from the mobilising frame and attitudes within society. Finally, while the diffusion of the disengagement frame will be primarily targeted internally, the frame will also be influenced by external actors who seek to define its parameters and the militant group will also diffuse the frame externally to its sympathisers and target community.

THE PROVISIONAL IRA’S DISENGAGEMENT FRAME: EXPLAINING FRAME RESONANCE

There were three aspects to the successful diffusion of the Provisional IRA’s disengagement frame. Firstly, the frame that was constructed maintained narrative fidelity with the mobilising frame that underpinned the Provisional IRA, which resonated with the generation that had joined the Provisional IRA in the 1960s and later established generational hegemony within the group. Secondly, while the confidence members had in the high-ranking leadership was important,³⁵ it was credible mid-ranking members who were essential at building up the trust in the new direction. Thirdly, the culture of discussion cultivated by Adams in the organisation, and the surprising ease in which local activists had the space and time to meet considering the illicit nature of the Provisional IRA, formed the linkages by which the frame could be diffused and mutually constructed, leading to intense discussions which brought members along with the process. Furthermore, prisons played a crucial role in diffusion, firstly as structures to facilitate discussion, but secondly as institutions which made prisoners credible voices that activists and the community listened to.³⁶ Moloney acknowledges that prisoners were important in solidifying support for Adams’ strategy but he fails to explain

how the prisoners came to share a similar view. That the prisoners were supportive suggests that there was greater internal support for disengagement which derived through the internal discussions that Moloney dismisses, rather than the behind-the-scenes machinations of Adams' allies as he argues.³⁷ It is the interplay of these factors which can help account for the successful resonance of the frame that was constructed to justify an end to violence,³⁸ and while there were of course some who rejected it, they were in the minority.

Narrative Fidelity and Generational Hegemony within the Provisional IRA

According to frames theory, a frame has greater chance of successfully resonating when it remains consistent with pre-existent values and beliefs.³⁹ In terms of applying frames analysis to disengagement, the article contends that as the target are active militants, a disengagement frame has to be consistent with the frame that was used to mobilise them or sustain their mobilisation. However, generations within the movement can have markedly different motivations and that there needs to be narrative fidelity between the message that motivates armed struggle and the message that motivates disengagement. The success of narrative fidelity in the 1990s disengagement process was helped by the dominance of the generation as this meant there was greater homogeneity in experiences, shared motivations for joining, and deeper friendships. Furthermore, 'rubber-band diplomacy' was conducted to ensure that the change in attitudes of the leadership did not drift too far away from the mainstream of the movement. Finally, to understand how the disengagement frame ensured narrative fidelity, it is important to contextualise it within the strategic changes that were affecting the leadership in the 1980s, and how, for example, the recognition of a stalemate in the conflict provided a bridge from armed conflict to a political direction.

M.L.R Smith makes a convincing argument on how the Provisional IRA transitioned from an ideologically driven group to a more pragmatic group willing to trade in the armed struggle for political gains short of their original goals. The breakdown between different generations within the movement in the mid-1980s marked this shift. Building on M.L.R Smith's argument,⁴⁰ this generational disjuncture can be traced back to the manner in which it was mobilised. The older generation utilised frame bridging in the 1960s civil rights movement to mobilise the younger generation, but the way in which the younger generation interpreted the frame was markedly different. Firstly, while supportive of a united Ireland, exposure to Republicanism was seen in cultural and identity-based terms rather than ideological ones – in

a sense, being a Republican helped to resolve some of the grievances that drove their involvement. Secondly, while the younger generation may have adopted much of the Republican frame of 'Brits out', their initial mobilising frame was based on the specific conditions of the 1960s. These two differences impacted upon the disengagement frame that would develop: firstly, parity of esteem and equality became a central part of the frame;⁴¹ and secondly, they were able to (re)amplify the conditions of the 1960s as the main justification for violence, placing less emphasis on the presence of Britain or partition. Before expanding on these last two points, however, the section will expand on the point with regard to the transition between generations and mobilising frames.

The Provisional IRA had split with the Official IRA in 1969 because the latter wished to end the policy of abstentionism and take up seats in parliament.⁴² The first generation leadership of the IRA called for a return to traditional Republican militancy, locating its claim to legitimacy in the 1916 Proclamation of Independence and the 1918 Sinn Fein election victory as a mandate for a united Ireland independent of Britain. Such ideals and principles did not factor much in the thinking of the young people who wished to join the Provisional IRA in the late 1960s and early 1970s. While some young people were motivated to join the Provisional IRA because family members were Republicans,⁴³ this did not mean that there were large numbers of people necessarily sympathetic or understanding of Republican ideology. Instead, a number of Republicans commented on how the motivation to join was because of the environment (checkpoints; armoured cars; soldiers on the streets; beatings; Bloody Sunday), while others mentioned how, as children, it was cool to be given a gun.⁴⁴

The primary role of social networks, rather than spreading Republican values, was in providing easy access to joining and functioning as a vetting-process for recruitment (at least initially).⁴⁵ However, such a disjuncture between the frame of a group and the motivations for joining is not unusual,⁴⁶ and while this is widely accepted in the terrorism literature, frames analysis provides insight into how this can be significant. Militant groups may often use frame bridging to reach new audiences for mobilisation; this involves connecting the group's frame (Republicanism) with the frame (or general attitudes) of another group (the younger generation). The implicit frame and motivations that young people were mobilised by was one that was critical of the structure of the Northern Irish regime and discrimination against Catholics; it was the Republican movement and the Provisional IRA that reframed this as an anti-British campaign for the younger generation. Of course, there was extensive overlap and the two frames were complementary, however scholars underplay this distinction.

The Provisional IRA, under the leadership of the older generation, sought to subsume the anti-Stormont frame into its anti-British frame, and in many ways this successfully resonated with the younger generation. However, attempts at frame resonance came with two caveats. Firstly, the anti-Stormont frame was latent and it would be re-activated in the disengagement process in the 1990s. Secondly, an outcome of frame resonance, specifically through political education in prisons, was the strengthening of Irish and Catholic identity, not necessarily the older generation's view of traditional Republicanism. Whilst this may have factored in on the sectarianism of the conflict, these two differences in how the Republican frame resonated would emerge in the 1980s.

Over the two decades from the emergence of the Provisional IRA, the older generation of leaders gradually lost authority to the younger (Troubles) generation based in the north. The failed ceasefire of 1975 undermined the authority of the older generation, which Adams and McGuinness would exploit in 1986.⁴⁷ At the 1986 Ard Fheis, Adams and McGuinness spoke of removing the absence for the Dail in the Republic of Ireland, meaning that Sinn Fein would now take their seats in parliament. Following the Hunger Strikes, there was a belief that political participation could complement the armed struggle, which marked the beginning of the IRA and Sinn Fein's broad strategy. Critics claimed that a greater political dimension would bring an end to the armed struggle and would lead to a compromised negotiated settlement; while they were proven to be correct, delegates at the Ard Fheis were convinced by Adams and McGuinness, voting in huge numbers to accept the new strategy. In protest, the older generation of leaders walked out to form Republican Sinn Fein and then later Continuity IRA.

While this perspective emphasises the role of political participation, or even the pursuit of political participation, in explaining moderation,⁴⁸ the article adds greater emphasis on the generational gap outlined above. The traditional Republican frame never substantially resonated with the generation of the Troubles, although this is not to say that they opposed it while the older generation of leaders were in the ascendancy. The components of this frame were not seen as principles, but mainly served to strengthen the identity of Republicans, and it was this diffusion of a Republican identity within society that provided a political route. As the conflict became shaped more by identity, this prompted a realisation that the 'other' that needed to be addressed was not Britain, but the Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist (PUL) community.

While the article is focusing on the evolution of frames and identity, this does not mean it neglects other factors which led to the Provisional IRA's new strategy. Yet the following

mainstream arguments are also related to and reinforced the points made above. The most important factor was the weakening utility of armed struggle, but this should not be understood as a weakening of capabilities, which remained significant throughout the disengagement process even if it was not enough to force a British withdrawal. Firstly, relatively lower control beliefs⁴⁹ with regard to armed struggle increased the perceived benefits of the political route. However, while members recognised they could not win the war, the acknowledgement that they also could not be defeated by the British Secretary of State helped a number of key figures to accept disengagement:

[The Hunger Strikes] period made it much harder to have the debate [on disengagement]. But I do remember the day when [the British Secretary of State] *made an aside that the British couldn't defeat the IRA*. And that was the one-liner that opened *[things] up, and thinking 'that's very interesting'*. *And I remember phoning people up and asking 'did you hear that statement?'* *Some people were going 'well they have been saying that for ages', and you were going 'no, they haven't, they haven't ever said that'*. *So that perhaps was an open, throwing the door open to see if we would come through it or an invitation.*⁵⁰

Secondly, the counter-terrorism strategy⁵¹ that the Provisional IRA faced in the mid-1970s prompted them to restructure their organisation to a tight cellular structure. This limited the scope of operations but improved their efficiency, yet in the 1980s improved British surveillance and, according to Moloney, a high-ranking informer, undermined this capacity.⁵² Crucially, the new organisational structure decreased the extent of recruitment which gave the Troubles generation a hegemonic role within the movement. Eventually a substantial number of this generation became imprisoned,⁵³ and the new activists became less experienced and made more mistakes.⁵⁴ Thus, while most research emphasises the effect of counter-terrorism strategy on limiting the efficacy of armed struggle, which it did to an extent, another significant outcome was that it (unintentionally) secured the hegemonic role of the Troubles generation within the movement, by undermining the old generation and subordinating the new recruits. Thirdly, while Ulsterisation⁵⁵ was seen to reduce the number of British soldiers being killed, for the Provisional IRA this was not a game-changer because 'the RUC was not seen as part of our community'.⁵⁶ The RUC had been seen as an entirely illegitimate police force which was

a colonial force, an appendage of the British army,⁵⁷ and importantly, it was staffed mostly by the PUL community. Thus, while Ulsterisation increased the sectarian dimension of the conflict, it also worked to increase the trend toward changing the Provisional IRA's frame of analysing the causes of the conflict. Whereas the traditional Republican frame located the problem in British colonialism and imperialism, members of the Provisional IRA began to recognise that it was the PUL community that were the 'problem', and this was a view that gradually grew as dialogue increased.⁵⁸ Given how the traditional Republican frame portrayed the PUL community as confused Irishmen living in false consciousness,⁵⁹ the transformation of the frame to include their grievances had an impact on how Republican goals could still be achieved. As one interviewee noted, 'I remember speaking to a priest and said that we cannot bomb the loyalists out [of Ireland]'.⁶⁰

Finally, another explanation for the evolution of the Provisional IRA that is commonly cited is with regard to interaction with the community. The 1975 ceasefire unintentionally increased the role of Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA in the community.⁶¹ While scholars would emphasise how this provided the groundwork for a political dimension years later, it also played a significant role in diffusing the Republican frame, which had become more identity-based, around the communities the Provisional IRA were based. Of course, there were already pre-existent relations but this had increased. While Malthaner demonstrates how interaction with supporters can moderate a militant group, it was not the Republican communities that were the driving force for moderation. Instead, the initial steps toward moderation were led by a small but dedicated base of activists within the Provisional IRA which then began to diffuse throughout Republican communities. Of course, there were voices from the community who did oppose violence, yet this did not have the impact that Malthaner suggests, at least according to one interviewee who played a crucial role in winning support for disengagement among Provisional IRA hardliners. He stated that:

Community revulsion to the armed struggle had been present throughout the conflict and it did not have an impact, although if there were problems with tactics, then you would *just change it...There was no straw that would have broken the camel's back. There was always latent support which could not be affected. The Brits could curtail armed action but it would have no effect on community support.*⁶²

However, the newly accentuated difference between the Republican and nationalist community meant that by the 1980s when Sinn Fein were engaged in a political approach, it had to bridge the frame it had cultivated in Republican communities with the nationalist community, and even to an extent the Unionist community (firstly through Eira Nua, secondly, and much later, power-sharing). The double-edged sword here was interaction in the early 1990s only occurred between elites. Therefore, having diffused the Republican frame throughout pockets of communities, any disengagement process would have to convince not only Provisional IRA members, but also sympathisers:

It's something that became called 'rubber-band diplomacy'. We were always aware that the minute you went too far beyond your community, you were lost to them. So if you turned around and said to them fifteen years ago 'now's the time to support the PSNI', everybody would have went: 'edjit, he's a cuckoo' ...so you were always trying put one leg out a wee bit and pull the community along or do something, but make sure a part of them was embedded within the community where you were attuned to what was going on and you understood...how that would impact upon the community.

However, as the Provisional IRA were now very much an identity-based movement, with shared grievances stemming from the Troubles which led to their mobilisation and community support, they had a latent frame already existing to justify disengagement. Therefore, there were clear bridges that linked the mobilising frame to the disengagement frame, which, as discussed above, consists of two main components. Firstly, past violence was legitimate and just, and it was a result of the unique conditions of the time which was the cause of violence. Secondly, the conditions now do not exist that would justify violence as there are other means:

Our struggle was a just war. Our struggle was the only way we could survive was by making them frightened of us. We had to go strong or we would have been eradicated...the war was right, and *when the time was right, we ended it...* the

conditions existed which made armed struggle inevitable, there was no other way forward.⁶³

These findings suggest that Silke is correct in saying that de-radicalisation did not occur in the Provisional IRA.⁶⁴ However the problem here is the concept of de-radicalisation and the assumption that it would have been a desirable goal. Firstly, given the nature of Republicanism, it was not possible to denounce past violence without causing great splits and disrupting the movement. Secondly, the disengagement frame has maintained narrative fidelity by maintaining Republican aspirations but it has re-emphasised the 1960s political system as the cause of conflict, thus functioning as a strong argument against using violence now. The disengagement frame would later develop in the 2000s onwards to emphasise further the unique circumstances that justified violence, but this is used to de-legitimise current violence, which is in effect what de-radicalisation refers to. However, without maintaining narrative fidelity, the frame would not have resonated from the beginning. The next factor that ensured frame resonance was the intense level of interaction between members and the central role of credible messengers in these debates.

Internal Dialogue Outside of Prison

As discussed above, a few members of the Provisional IRA and most of Sinn Fein began to consider a political route on the back of electoral success in the 1980s and the realisation that the armed struggle had reached a stalemate. Thus followed a number of meetings in the early 1990s within the movement:

They were held - ongoing - they were in secret locations and barns and garage. They would have went on for a year or a year and a half. They were ongoing through 1994 and obviously a long time after that right up to when Seanna Walsh sold everybody out [laughs] [2005]. From then [1994] onwards, there was always a history within Republicanism of getting as many people together for briefings *and to hear what they were saying...Hundreds and hundreds of meetings taking place for such a long time, to make sure that every single person involved in the armed struggle had their opportunity to listen or to respond and to give their opinion. And it was basically taking the temperature of the IRA to see if there was*

an appetite, and was there the confidence to move into a totally exclusively political arena.⁶⁵

Although the Provisional IRA sought to maintain unity as much as possible through dialogue, there have been some claims that there was also an element of coercion or asserting its authority. One member of the Real IRA who was interviewed discussed his time in the IRA prior to the split of 1997. He stated how there were a lot of meetings during this period, but there were also a lot of other meetings that they did not know about. For him, the ‘dialogue period’ was more of a case of identifying the people who disagreed with the main approach, who would then face death threats and beatings. Others would be offered piecemeal promises for the Provisional IRA to not compromise on issues such as decommissioning and recognition of policing, but when these would be overturned, they would gradually leave.⁶⁶ The use of secret meetings was refuted, however, by one member who remained in the mainstream Republican movement: ‘There was no way there were secret meetings. What would have been the purpose of only having secret meetings among people who were going to agree - you didn’t want that. We wanted the debate to take place in the room so it wasn’t going to take place in the street’.⁶⁷

When asked why the process was successful, one interviewee emphasised the bonds between members, once again emphasising the role of generational hegemony, whereby the group grew through the conflict together over decades, maintaining their dominance within the movement. The role of personal bonds, discipline and loyalty to social networks is ignored in theories on why groups support negotiations⁶⁸ – thus, compliance with negotiations can equally be important than having motivation and optimism to end the use of violence. Furthermore, strong networked relationships allowed the space for dialogue and the freedom to challenge each other’s position without breaking the movement before dialogue could start:

You might not always like them, but you love them...so there is that respect for each other, there is that understanding for each other. That’s why you, that’s why the engagements were so vital. And also because people had the confidence to get up and say ‘I’m totally opposed to this - this is a sell-out’ ...A friend of mine, a woman...I was doing a lot of travelling with her and her husband, and she said: ‘see since you two started travelling together, my marriage has improved 100%,

because when he comes in he is exhausted arguing with you', and he was like 'I can't do it anymore', because he was very opposed to the cessation of the armed struggle. We'd be [in the car] from Cork to Belfast, and we would have talked about nothing else, and there would have been screaming matches. It was not always comradely and 'let me hear your opinion', it was screaming: 'are you stupid! Think it through, think it through, it's not about the armed struggle, it's about the objective and how best to get there.' And once you have that in your head, it opens the possibilities: this is the best way forward, and nobody is going to die.

Therefore, a culture of dialogue opened up space for discussing the possibility of disengagement and its consequences. While the means of communication may be readily available in inter-party negotiations, illicit organisations are often denied the opportunities for large-scale dialogue and a culture of silence can be prevalent in military organisations. Personal relationships were also important as members would later be able to discuss in public spaces and the respect built up over years enabled people to debate freely – although this seemed to occur later in the process than it did in the prisons, as discussed below. However, while personal relationships may have allowed the opportunity to debate, they did not necessarily mean they were enough to ensure successful frame resonance,⁶⁹ but members may acquiesce for other reasons, whether this was personal loyalty to others or personal reasons.⁷⁰ Another aspect of the dialogue was it allowed members to hone their debating skills, something which had been occurring in prison much earlier. Subsequently, there would be members who were opposed to disengagement but they were unable to articulate the reasons why, in contrast to the members arguing in favour of disengagement who had become more articulate and experienced.⁷¹ Aiding these discussions on the outside was the influence of credible figures who could instil trust in members who were unsure of the approach, whether through their own social networks or through institutional networks. One Loyalist stated what role charismatic figures had in the process' success:

I think [figures like Gerry Kelly] were incredibly important [in bringing the IRA along]. Incredibly important. And that can't ever be underestimated. Their change in strategy and tactics, the need to have their key people on board with that, to bring the foot soldiers along with them...That's why someone like Gerry would be

pushed to the front in terms of policing and criminal justice issues, because of his involvement in the conflict, he has a lot of kudos. He has a lot of legitimacy and credibility.⁷²

Whereas Ashour emphasises the role of the official leadership in Islamist disengagement, for the Provisional IRA, mid-ranking leadership was essential for convincing members:

There was people in the middle tier there, people like Paddy McGeown, who could walk into a room full of IRA volunteers and had that respect, former hunger striker, former-prisoner, IRA volunteer himself, who was so well-respected and...people like Brian Keenan, prominent Republicans, so they had so much respect from the IRA volunteers on the ground that they were able to go into a room full of those *people and say 'look, we need to change'.* And people would challenge that and question that, and they would get a logical reason used for doing that, then people could buy into that. In the main, the IRA volunteers on the ground did buy into that and trusted them. It was about trust as well because there is the context of whenever Republicans move out of armed conflict immediately all the words of sell-out, traitors, it all flies.⁷³

These high and mid-ranking leaders had authority and respect among members for their time in prisons and in the armed struggle in general. As will be discussed below, the conclusions here would suggest that a decapitation strategy of state repression would remove this dynamic from ever developing, which would be especially important in contrast to Islamist groups where religion may provide an alternative source of credibility than from activism. Another aspect to the internal dialogue was its geographical nature, which helped to demonstrate to grassroots activists that support for disengagement was broad:

I would suggest that two people were delegated to go into an area and neither of them would have been top command. They would have been seen as maybe a leader

from another area, who was well respected, and he or she would be sent in to a *different area*... There were areas where if they had a strong leader - a lot of it was about personality - but if they had a strong leader who was opposed to the strategy *you could bet you weren't going to get an easy ride going in there. But what we had to remind people of was 'this is your leadership, we elect a leadership and you elected this leadership. So don't turn around and say you want to change it because they don't agree with you'. Leadership leads, and it does so because we put them there to lead, and a good leadership will always want to bring its people along with it and this is what I think, by and large, the IRA did very, very successfully. But they didn't do it just by sending out a general order saying 'alright, this is what we are doing', the debates, the meetings and the consultations were unending.*⁷⁴

The quote above suggests that while open discussion was encouraged, there were key elements who were pulling the discussion in a certain direction. The combination of a leadership approach and a consultative approach, coupled with the use of credible voices applied across organisational boundaries, managed to pull off the feat of bringing along the vast majority of the Provisional IRA membership despite some significant opposition, particularly in 1994. The long-drawn nature of the discussion provided the time for arguments and debating-skills to be honed, which seemed to have favoured the advocates of the disengagement frame at the expense of its antagonists. Personal ties facilitated discussion and built trust, and while these ties were not unbreakable, they prevented a large-scale split in the Republican movement. Importantly, in contrast to much discussion on disengagement which emphasises the merits of creating an organisational split,⁷⁵ the leadership of the Provisional IRA were quite determined to avoid a split as they recognised the importance in bringing along the movement and the community together.⁷⁶ Therefore there is a much stronger possibility that they would have simply put an end to disengagement if frame resonance was unsuccessful throughout the movement. While there was a culture of internal discussion cultivated early on, it was in fact the prisons which were the fore-runners of this form of debate where the disengagement frame was constructed, tested and then diffused. The next section outlines firstly the structural reasons why prisons allowed the disengagement frame to develop, why it increased the credibility of prisoners as messengers, and why, upon release in 1998, former prisoners were central to convincing members to make the further concessions that would be required in the next phase of disengagement.

The Role of Prisons

Prisons were important to the successful resonance of the disengagement frame, firstly as a potential site for its construction in the 1980s, and secondly, in terms of how prisoners released in 1998 helped to strengthen the credibility of the frame. Crucially, prisoners released on parole prior to 1998 also had a significant role in calming nerves in the Republican community. While after 1998 there may have been some inevitability in terms of the future concessions that would need to be made, former prisoners were crucial in helping maintain and conclude disengagement in 2005. Time in prison most crucially allowed time for the Provisional IRA members to discuss politics, the conflict and strategy. Militants on the outside would have less time to reflect because of involvement in operational activities, evading the British army and the RUC, and greater normative pressure to not be critical of the armed struggle. Furthermore, the prisoners were not as affected as much by what was going on outside in terms of the day to day pressures of involvement in the armed struggle. Prisons provided greater freedom which meant that they were more open to disengagement when the time had come. One senior Provisional IRA prisoner stated that ‘anyone could say what they wanted. In the main, there was one or two in every wing who were opposed [to disengagement]. A lot of them found it difficult to articulate why’.⁷⁷ Another Provisional IRA prisoner also stated how the prison environment provided a space to rethink the direction the movement was going in:

I think there was a whole thing within prison where people had the ability tothat final stage of conflict would always have to be political engagement, and for me the end game was always going to be discussion and negotiation. Those kinds of discussions developed in prison where people would say ‘well I do agree with you’; outside it would have been heresy but inside you were allowed to have that thing going on.’⁷⁸

In addition to providing time and space for thinking, discussing and learning, a command structure was maintained in prison. In the prisons there were leaders for each of the groups who would still maintain authority and organisational discipline within the cells, therefore the external leadership were still able to exercise influence over members. While one interviewee

stated how a number of prisoners came to the same conclusion themselves,⁷⁹ the organisational structure within the prisons also allowed a more coherent diffusion of the newly emerging disengagement frame. Furthermore, prisons helped to reinforce the second generation's control of the movement: while in prison they could still continue the armed struggle through other means; they could still distribute orders; and they still had authority. However, Adams managed to assert more control in prisons by changing rules so that the Provisional IRA leadership had a say in who would be Officer Commanding, rather than the prisoners (or the Active Service Units on the outside).⁸⁰ Therefore, in other contexts where a new, more militant generation of members on the outside could come to dominance, younger activists still remained subordinate to the second generation inside and outside. This can also be attributed to a decline in recruitment of the younger generation⁸¹ and that new activists became less and less experienced and made more mistakes.⁸² Therefore, prisons helped to solidify this generation's dominance of the movement, meaning there were still strong enough personal connections with the outside leadership. As stated in Shirlow et al's extensive study on former prisoners, 'imprisonment built up trust within groups and their respective leaderships due to the latter having themselves being imprisoned'.⁸³

The prison system also gave the leadership a captive audience to engage with, meaning internal discussions could be done en masse and there would be more time for debate and discussion. While one interviewee stated how a number of prisoners came to the same conclusion themselves,⁸⁴ the organisational structure within the prisons also allowed a more coherent diffusion of the newly emerging disengagement frame.

As well as prison providing space for dialogue, the credibility of the messenger diffusing the frame was important. As Guelke observed, 'one of the most extraordinary aspects of the Sinn Fein leadership's efforts to convince rank and file members of the value of the Agreement was its enlistment of aid from leading figures in the ANC [African National Congress]'.⁸⁵ The article can corroborate the significance of this intervention in convincing members of the need of disengagement. Two Provisional IRA prisoners in the H-Blocks identified the invitation of the ANC to speak as being important for increasing support for disengagement. A senior IRA prisoner said:

The ANC negotiators were brought into the jail and everyone came into the gymnasium, all the leaders like: Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams...The

leadership had brought them over to talk to IRA members in the field. Probably *you didn't have the same time constraints and restraints on questions [in the prison]*. And because of the numbers in the prison you could bounce more ideas *around...The ANC had walked the walk* – they were seen as an example of *success...For people who were in any doubt it helped them get around to the idea* the armed struggle was over.⁸⁶

Another prisoner at the time mentioned the meeting with the ANC:

That was one of the great occasions down in the H-Blocks, when the ANC were brought in. And that was at a stage where, prior to the Good Friday Agreement, that early period...and that was their advice to us, that your political struggle is going to be very important here. I think having people like that as allies, I think that was a great source of strength for people certainly. That was one of the great occasions for me, without a doubt, was that - as they were people who have been in a struggle for many decades, and they had come through it, and they said there are mistakes you can *make, you don't mean to do this, but you have to stand firm* on it, you have to be united. But yeah, they were very important.⁸⁷

These findings corroborate the argument made by Guelke on the role of the ANC and shows that internal dialogue was important to the disengagement process' success.⁸⁸ Furthermore, it helps to explain the gap in Moloney's account of the period insofar as the majority of the Provisional IRA membership supported disengagement despite leadership disputes a few years earlier in the process. The ANC, as an international success-story, was utilised by the Provisional IRA leadership to provide credibility and legitimacy to the group's disengagement frame.⁸⁹ While from 1994 there had been internal debate both inside and outside prison, the prisoners arguing for disengagement had the advantage that their experience provided them with greater skills to articulate the frame, and their time in prison also meant they were seen as credible voices on the outside.⁹⁰

Throughout the disengagement process, prisoners had been released firstly on short-term releases and then (conditional⁹¹) release as part of the Good Friday Agreement. The ex-

prisoners were crucial in helping to diffuse the disengagement frame and to provide it with credibility, which is important for resonance to be successful. For many in the Republican community, ex-prisoners are respected for being in prison, especially in the H-Blocks which has become a central part of Republican identity following the Hunger Strikes. One interviewee stated how, when young people were asked what they want to be when they are adults, they would say they want to be an ex-prisoner.⁹² One interviewee felt that it was not by virtue of being a prisoner that they were respected, but through their actions and becoming more educated and articulate through their time in prison.⁹³ With this credibility and respect, the prisoners were to have a significant effect on Republican communities upon release: ‘There was just much more reflection that was taking place inside than there was outside. I think what created the change outside was people getting out who had been inside...And I think people just got out and had those conversations’.⁹⁴ Another Provisional IRA ex-prisoner explained the nature of dialogue when he was released on parole after the 1994 ceasefire and as part of the Good Friday Agreement, where he was able to relate to his experience in prison to justify disengagement:

When you got out people will *talk to you and ask ‘so where is this going’ and stuff* like that. Even prior to my release I was allowed out during the ceasefire, and at *that period people were a bit more uneasy, with people asking ‘what [do] you think is going to happen here, the ceasefire has been on for months and they haven’t even agreed on prisoner releases’....Negotiating with the prison administration, learning to negotiate a little bit: we had come through that and having that sort of experience and that, so when we were involved in the political process, that’s how I would relate it to people. Coming out of the hunger strikes...we got some concession because we took a different tactical approach. So when I spoke to people as an ex-prisoner, I spoke about how inside the H-Blocks we went about the war...I think most of the time people just wanted to ask, just for that wee bit of assurance that people were on board with this because it was something different.*⁹⁵

To conclude, prisons provided space for Provisional IRA members to reflect on the armed struggle and to interact with each other in debates, which was much more difficult on the outside. In many senses, they were a captive audience for the outside leadership and

participation of the ANC is indicative of how interaction with credible voices ‘who have walked the walk’ can be powerful in creating attitudinal change. Furthermore, the continued organisation of members within prison and their political education helped in two ways: firstly, while discussions were free, they could be managed, which provided support for the outside leadership’s push toward disengagement; secondly, prisoners developed the skills to be credible articulators of the disengagement frame upon release. When the prisoners returned to their communities, they were influential in convincing other members or sympathisers to support the disengagement process, especially in the controversial part of disengagement, the giving up of arms and formal dismantlement of the organisation.

SELLING DISENGAGEMENT AFTER THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

The Provisional IRA leadership recognised the importance of prisoners in legitimising the disengagement process. In the crucial 1998 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis that was called specially to confirm support for the Good Friday Agreement, the leadership paraded two recently released former prisoners, Hugh Doherty and Liam Quinn. Upon presenting them to the conference, Gerry Adams referred to the ex-prisoners as ‘our Nelson Mandela’s’. This reference served two functions: for the public it sought to equate the IRA with the ANC’s and Mandela’s struggle, which had international legitimacy; for its own members it sought to use this legitimacy to justify the Provisional IRA’s disengagement. The crucial point that further strengthens the argument that it was internal factors that were important is that the 1998 GFA was not necessarily the end of the disengagement process. The Provisional IRA had to still decommission its weapons, it had to disband its organisational structures (officially), and then recognise the authority of the PSNI. Overcoming hurdles such as decommissioning was seen as the logical conclusion of the decisions made in 1994 and 1998,⁹⁶ and many of the same arguments were used:

I suppose it was the same as with armed struggle. You would use your weapons in armed struggle for political gain, and I suppose the further you moved away from the ceasefire and that stuff, you are engaged in negotiations and the institutions are up and down and stuff. But I think over time people began to internalise that *argument. Armed struggle: It’s a tactic. Weaponry, it’s a part of the armed struggle, it’s a tactic, and you make more advances using your weapons this way,*

*and I think that's what it was about. I mean would it do you more good lying in the ground rusting, or would it do you more good putting them beyond use.*⁹⁷

For some members these issues prompted them to consider leaving and required further convincing.⁹⁸ One interviewee, who now engages with the PSNI in community work, outlined the narrative that led him to accept the 2006 decision to recognise the PSNI:

*On the issue of policing, it was probably the most difficult thing for me to buy into. I've suffered greatly at the hands of the RUC and it was the last barrier for me to get over. And I had discussions, debates and arguments with people, I was on the verge of walking, and I was convinced that we needed policing. The thing about it is our community needs policing. The IRA was never a police service. The IRA knee-capped people, shot them, executed them, and policed the areas to a certain degree but that is not policing. And any community needs proper policing, but it has to be accountable, it cannot be political policing... [There needs to be] more accountability, bringing Catholics in and more community policing. That brought me over, that they are right.*⁹⁹

For those who were not convinced, they left and have strengthened groups like the Real IRA.¹⁰⁰ However, the staggered nature of splintering – in 1986, 1997 and 2006 – helped to minimise potential opposition and it divided dissident Republican groups as there was animosity between each faction, which may not have been there if all had left at the same time.¹⁰¹ Despite the benefits this may have had on the success of the Provisional IRA's disengagement, interviewees still emphasised a preference for unity¹⁰² and one refused to accept that, apart from the 1986 split, that splits even took place.¹⁰³ While a number of Provisional IRA members were disillusioned with the decisions that emerged from disengagement, they recognise that the dissident Republican groups are not an alternative and have individually disengaged¹⁰⁴ – similar to the experience in the 1960s disengagement process, but without the opportunities to re-engage later as had happened when violence increased at the end of the decade.

The final part of the disengagement process was the formal disbandment of the Provisional IRA. Thus, the Provisional IRA Army Council's 2005 statement of its formal disengagement was read out by Seanna Walsh, the Officer Commanding in the H-Blocks, who had spent twenty-one years in prison. The reasoning behind having Walsh read out the statement was not only his credibility as a prisoner and former cell-mate of Bobby Sands, but as 'an IRA hard-man' who has respect as a reassuring face in the Provisional IRA¹⁰⁵ and to send a message to potential dissident Republicans. In a leaked diplomatic cable, it was explained that the rationale for using Walsh was to 'convey to people in the field that the army, including the most dedicated volunteers, and not just the politicians, was behind the statement'.¹⁰⁶ Although it is contestable to what extent the Provisional IRA's command structure has actually been disbanded, the 2005 statement marked the official end of the Provisional IRA and it once again demonstrates how the leadership utilised credible voices to convince and cajole the membership to follow.

The manner in which the disengagement frame was diffused suggests that its acceptance was not necessary, but compliance was. Although the process had convinced the majority of the movement, the use of personal loyalties and friendship ties could be used to incentivise acceptance even when members were not fully behind the process in its final stages. Other members had already made the shift in 1994 which made it easier to accept the other elements of disengagement. Crucially, the flexibility of the Provisional IRA's frame meant that members could also make arguments based on tactical disengagement, that the opportunities for violence no longer existed. Consequently, members who would not de-legitimise violence could also disengage without adopting the frame. Having outlined how the Provisional IRA's disengagement process was implemented through a frames analysis approach, the article will relate this analysis to the literature on disengagement.

CONCLUSION

Research on how terrorism campaigns end, especially on those that end through negotiations, has been overly informed by Ripeness Theory. Internal group processes which influence this form of group disengagement have tended to be treated as homogeneous, which has consequences for how we understand secondary factors driving disengagement, such as repression and decapitation. Taking inspiration from alternative theories from negotiation studies, the article analysed how group leaders frame disengagement and the factors which help

ensure it resonates with the membership, thus leading to successful disengagement. The article has argued that three factors were important to the success of the Provisional IRA's disengagement, with that success being judged by how much unity and discipline it could retain. The first factor was the ability to construct a frame that maintained narrative fidelity to the hegemonic generation's shared experience in the 1960s; the second and third factor was the existence of a structure of networks that gave actors credibility and gave them linkages to diffuse the disengagement frame. These linkages, or social networks, provided added incentives to acquiesce to the disengagement frame. Even when members did not accept the disengagement frame, they did accept a tactical disengagement frame that had been nested within the Provisional IRA's main frame. The article contributes to how we understand framing processes in facilitating negotiations and also how states may facilitate ending terrorism by taking into account the disengagement framing process.

Firstly, the framing of de-mobilisation does not necessarily work as the reverse of framing for mobilisation. To successfully resonate with the membership, a disengagement frame will need to build upon some aspects of a group's mobilising frame, but this requires the group to still advocate or glamourise the use of violence, otherwise the credibility of the frame can be damaged. Consequently, a leadership can face problems in signalling motivation and optimism for negotiations to other parties. States who punish a group in framing disengagement in this manner may undermine negotiations, and the more successful states are those which can provide the space for different framings to manifest and identify when to pressure a group to denounce violence and when to turn a blind eye. Secondly, while policing and intelligence can prompt a strategic re-evaluation as has been suggested, the article has shown how this does not necessarily lead to disengagement because the effect of repression may not be universal in the extent it changes attitudes. Another aspect of repression that is discussed in the literature is the de-capitation strategy – i.e. removing the leadership and key figures.¹⁰⁷ The article provides some reasons to be sceptical about the efficacy of this approach in successfully ending terrorism campaigns at the group level. The efficacy of having the leadership in prisons seems to be double-edged considering how Gerry Adams used it to refine and improve the organisational structure of the group and how the hunger strikes in the 1980s – albeit not necessarily by the leadership – increased support for the group. The Provisional IRA's disengagement suggests that previous research on disengagement has placed too much weight on removing the leadership to weaken the group¹⁰⁸ while neglecting how decapitation and prison can strengthen the position of activists who support disengagement. The inability to

decapitate the group – despite high-ranking informers - facilitated the establishment of generational hegemony, but repression and less recruitment of new members may have helped more at limiting a younger generation emerging. Generational hegemony meant that a network of members at the top ranks of the movement experienced a similar interpretation of the strategic environment. Corresponding with the findings of Tsvetovat and Carley, the longer the leadership can stay at the top of a group, the more they are able to institutionalise their control,¹⁰⁹ therefore providing the networks and linkages to diffuse the disengagement frame later on. Thirdly, prisons that can act as ‘terrorist universities’ can equally be turned into sites for disengagement. The relative openness in prisons allowed for internal dialogue but it also allowed for a degree of external control and influence. Therefore the advocates of disengagement could use prisons as a linkage for diffusing the frame to their advantage. In return, as prisons were used as sites of resistance and education, they bestowed credibility to the disengagement frame and the disengagement process in general through their release. This underpins the need to provide spaces for dialogue, but these spaces must be credibly managed to facilitate frame diffusion.

The paper has developed a framework for analysing internal processes of disengagement. Subsequently, while there are clear differences from case to case, whether this is with ethno-nationalist groups or Islamist groups, the approach is applicable – just as social movement theories are applied to different types of movements. Terrorism campaigns will end successfully when a re-framing process has been undertaken. Disengagement frames will resonate when they maintain narrative fidelity, are advocated through credible voices and there are sufficient network linkages which facilitate the generation of credibility, the process of frame reconstruction and its diffusion and implementation. Thus, the end of the Provisional IRA’s campaign was not solely caused by the ‘external factors’ of repression, decapitation or negotiations, but that these factors – by accident or design – helped to strengthen the resonance of the leadership’s disengagement frame.

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Notes

1. See for example Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). John Alterman, "How Terrorism Ends," (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1999). Gvineria, "How Does Terrorism End?," in *Social Science for Counter Terrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, ed. Paul K. Davis, et al. (New York: National Defense Research Institute for the Office of the Secretary for Defense, 2009).

² Leonard Weinberg and Arie Perliger, "How Terrorist Groups End," *CTC Sentinel* 3 (2)(2010).

³ See Peter Neumann, "Negotiating with Terrorists," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 86, No. 1.(2007).

⁴ Gvineria, "How Does Terrorism End?." Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

⁵ Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qaeda* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 2008).

⁶ Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

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⁸ Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (L. Rienner Publishers, 1991).

- ⁹ Jonathan Tonge, Peter Shirlow, and James McAuley, "So Why Did the Guns Fall Silent? How Interplay, Not Stalemate, Explains the Northern Ireland Peace Process," *Irish Political Studies* 26, no. 1 (2011).
- ¹⁰ Eamonn O'Kane, "Decommissioning and the Peace Process: Where Did It Come from and Why Did It Stay So Long?," *ibid.* 22 (1)(2007).
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- ¹³ Stacie E Goddard, "Brokering Peace: Networks, Legitimacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace Process1," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2012).
- ¹⁴ Neumann, "Negotiating with Terrorists."
- ¹⁵ Jannie Lilja, "Ripening Within? Strategies Used by Rebel Negotiators to End Ethnic War," *Negotiation journal* 27, no. 3 (2011).
- ¹⁶ Neumann, "Negotiating with Terrorists." Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (London: Penguin, 2007).
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- ¹⁸ Mark Irving Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma* (University of Michigan Press, 1998). Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*.
- ¹⁹ Pruitt, "Whither Ripeness Theory." Amira Schiff, "Reaching a Mutual Agreement: Readiness Theory and Coalition Building in the Aceh Peace Process," *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 7, no. 1 (2014).
- ²⁰ Dean Pruitt, "Readiness Theory and the Northern Ireland Conflict," *American Behavioral Scientist* Vol. 50, No. 11(2007). Lilja, "Ripening Within? Strategies Used by Rebel Negotiators to End Ethnic War."
- ²¹ Tonge, Shirlow, and McAuley, "So Why Did the Guns Fall Silent? How Interplay, Not Stalemate, Explains the Northern Ireland Peace Process." Eamonn O'Kane, "Decommissioning and the Peace Process: Where Did It Come from and Why Did It Stay So Long?," *ibid.* 22 (1)(2007). Landon E Hancock, "The Northern Irish Peace Process: From Top to Bottom," *International Studies Review* 10, no. 2 (2008).
- ²² Fink Haysom, "Engaging Armed Groups in Peace Processes: Lessons for Effective Third-Party Practice," *Choosing to Engage: Armed Groups and Peace Processes* (2005). Pruitt, "Whither Ripeness Theory."
- ²³ David Snow et al., "The Emergence, Development, and Future of the Framing Perspective: 25+ Years since 'Frame Alignment'," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2014).
- ²⁴ Readiness Theory, for example, utilises this distinction to explain how groups successfully engage in negotiations, but it is unclear how so-called 'moderates' persuade and pressure 'radicals' to joining the former's side, and the distinction obfuscates how radicals and hawks can be supportive of negotiations. See Pruitt, "Readiness Theory and the Northern Ireland Conflict."
- ²⁵ While Stedman argues that it is not necessary to mobilise the support of the entire movement, the need for understanding how dialogue persuades a military elite to support negotiations vindicates the focus on how leaders engage in framing processes. Furthermore, a key part of convincing the military elite to support negotiations was that the majority of the movement was brought along as not doing so would threaten Republican identity – therefore framing processes do need to apply throughout the movement. Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*. John Morrison, "Why Do People Become Dissident Republicans?," in *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, ed. P.M. Currie and Max Taylor (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011).
- ²⁶ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New Hampshire: Northeastern University Press, 1974).
- ²⁷ David Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 54 (4)(1986). pg. 469
- ²⁸ Emmanuel Karagiannis, "Hizballah as a Social Movement Organization: A Framing Approach," *Mediterranean Politics* 14 (3) (2009).
- ²⁹ Robert Benford and David Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (1)(2000).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (London: Routledge, 2009).
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- ³⁵ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013; Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 4, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ³⁶ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013; Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ³⁷ Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (London: Penguin, 2002). Tonge, Shirlow, and McAuley, "So Why Did the Guns Fall Silent? How Interplay, Not Stalemate, Explains the Northern Ireland Peace Process."
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- ³⁹ Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).
- ⁴⁰ M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995).
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- ⁴² Of course, at the time both groups were all in the IRA, although the split had begun slightly before the vote. Other issues were the leftist nature the leadership was taking the movement in, the perceived inactivity in the armed campaign and the end of abstentionism.
- ⁴³ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁴⁴ CFNI, "From Prison to Peace: Learning from the Experience of Political Ex-Prisoners," (Belfast: Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, 2012). Interview, Former INLA Member, Belfast, 26th August 2013
- ⁴⁵ Interview, Former INLA Member, Belfast, 26th August 2013
- ⁴⁶ Alex P. Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review," (2013). Interview, Former INLA Member, Belfast, 26th August 2013
- ⁴⁷ Robert White, "The 1975 British-Provisional IRA Truce in Perspective," *Eire-Ireland* 45 (3)(2010).
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- ⁴⁹ Control beliefs refer to the extent an actor perceives they are able to actually behave in a certain way. For example, an actor may believe it to be beneficial to assassinate a political figure, but if they perceive this to be impossible through experience (low control beliefs), then they may begin to re-evaluate the utility of assassinating the political figure.
- ⁵⁰ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁵¹ This includes Operation Motorman and the policy of Ulsterisation and Normalisation.
- ⁵² Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*.
- ⁵³ With regard to debates on decapitation, imprisonment of the most influential members – as opposed to killing them – allows for the tactical learning which can facilitate the disengagement process, but the effect of this may be contingent on the extent a new group of members become influential on the outside.
- ⁵⁴ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁵⁵ The policy of reducing the presence of British soldiers and increasing the role of security services in Northern Ireland.
- ⁵⁶ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁵⁷ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 4, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁵⁸ Although, the conflict was still portrayed as an anti-imperialist struggle against Britain
- ⁵⁹ Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement*.
- ⁶⁰ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁶¹ Andrew Silke, "Rebel's Dilemma: The Changing Relationship between the IRA, Sinn Fein and Paramilitary Vigilantism in Northern Ireland," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11 (1) (1999).
- ⁶² Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁶³ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁶⁴ Andrew Silke, "Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists," *CTC Sentinel* 4 (1)(2011).
- ⁶⁵ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁶⁶ Interview, 32 County Sovereignty Movement Member, Belfast, 15th August 2013
- ⁶⁷ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁶⁸ Pruitt, "Readiness Theory and the Northern Ireland Conflict."
- ⁶⁹ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013

- ⁷⁰ Peter Shirlow et al., *Abandoning Historical Conflict?: Former Political Prisoners and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
- ⁷¹ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁷² Interview, Community Worker DE, Belfast, 13th September 2013
- ⁷³ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 4, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁷⁴ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁷⁵ Weinberg and Perliger, "How Terrorist Groups End." Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.
- ⁷⁶ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁷⁷ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁷⁸ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁷⁹ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁸⁰ Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*.
- ⁸¹ John Horgan and Paul Gill, "Who Are the Dissidents? An Introduction to the Most Violent Dissident Republican Project," in *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, ed. P.M. Currie and Max Taylor (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011).
- ⁸² Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁸³ Shirlow et al., *Abandoning Historical Conflict?: Former Political Prisoners and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*, pg. 13
- ⁸⁴ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁸⁵ Adrian Guelke, "'Comparatively Peaceful': South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland," in *A Farewell to Arms? From 'Long War' to Long Peace in Northern Ireland*, ed. Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
- ⁸⁶ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 2, Belfast, 2nd September 2013
- ⁸⁷ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁸⁸ Guelke, "'Comparatively Peaceful': South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland."
- ⁸⁹ International events such as the Israel-Palestine peace process in 1993 and the September 11th 2001 attacks were utilised by the leadership to build a narrative that the tide was turning against armed violence, although the latter actually had more tangible consequences in terms of a crackdown on Republican funding in the US.
- ⁹⁰ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁹¹ These conditions state that if the ex-prisoner commits an offence or breaches specific conditions of release, such as participation in Republican marches, then the person can be re-detained. Republicans, such as the Real IRA's political wing, currently mobilise on this, which they refer to as internment-on-remand.
- ⁹² Interview, Former INLA Member, Belfast, 26th August 2013
- ⁹³ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁹⁴ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁹⁵ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁹⁶ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 1, Belfast, 22nd August 2013
- ⁹⁷ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁹⁸ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 4, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ⁹⁹ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 4, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ¹⁰⁰ Martyn Frampton, "Dissident Irish Republican Violence: A Resurgent Threat?," *The Political Quarterly* 83 (2)(2012).
- ¹⁰¹ Morrison, "Why Do People Become Dissident Republicans?."
- ¹⁰² Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 3, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ¹⁰³ Interview, Former Provisional IRA Member 5, Belfast, 3rd September 2013
- ¹⁰⁴ Morrison, "Why Do People Become Dissident Republicans?."
- ¹⁰⁵ John O'Farrell, Gaby Hinsliff, and Henry McDonald, "Ira Declares Peace, but for Some Old Warriors It's Abject Surrender," *The Observer* 31st July 2005.
- ¹⁰⁶ Tom Brady, "Wikileaks: Why Ira Chose 'Hard Army Man' to Deliver Peace Message," *Belfast Telegraph* 31st May 2011.
- ¹⁰⁷ Weinberg and Perliger, "How Terrorist Groups End."
- ¹⁰⁸ Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.
- ¹⁰⁹ Maksim Tsvetovat and Kathleen Carley, "Structural Knowledge and Success of Anti-Terrorist Activity: The Downside of Structural Equivalence," *Institute for Software Research* 6(2005).