Teenagers and young adults in dissident Irish republicanism: A case study of Na Fianna Éireann in Dublin

Dieter Reinisch; OrcID: 0000-0002-3205-8739

[a]*Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University*

Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University, Nador u. 9, 1051 Budapest, Hungary; dieter.reinisch@gmx.net

Dr Dieter Reinisch is a Junior Core Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University, and an Adjunct Professor in International Relations at Webster Vienna Private University. He holds a PhD from the European University Institute.

Teenagers and young adults in dissident Irish republicanism: A case study of Na Fianna Éireann in Dublin

On 18 April 2019, by-stander Lyra McKee was killed while a group of teenagers and young men rioted against the PSNI in the Northern Irish city of Derry. During these riots, two masked gunmen of the "New IRA" fired up to ten shots at three PSNI Land Rovers. The recruitment of teenagers into the ranks of dissident Irish republicans has raised concern that a new generation of young adults born after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement is prepared to continue acts of political violence in Ireland. This article will examine the motivations and ideology of teenagers and young adults in dissident Irish republican organisations. It is based on a series of in-depth interviews with members of the dissident republican youth organisation Na Fianna Éireann in the Dublin region. The interview data show four broad motivational factors for teenagers and young adults to join the republican youth organisation, Na Fianna Éireann, in the Republic of Ireland. These four are: First, working-class background, with its related deprivation and social problems (such as criminality and drug addiction); second, the importance of family links and social networks; third, social media as an introduction to republicanism; and, fourth, fascination with Irish history.

Keywords: radicalization, dissident Irish republicans, Na Fianna Éireann, interviews, Ireland

1. Introduction

On the night of Tuesday 18 April 2019, a group of teenagers and young men rioted against the PSNI in the Northern Irish city of Derry. During these riots, a masked gunman fired up to ten shots towards three PSNI Land Rovers, fatally injuring Lyra McKee. Mobile phone footage and CCTV of the incident indicate that the gunman responsible for killing McKee was a teenager or young adult. The so-called "New IRA" has since admitted responsibility for her death. (Young 2019) Among those later arrested for their alleged involvement in the riots and the shooting are four teenagers, aged 15, 18, 18, and 19. The recruitment of youths into the

ranks of dissident Irish republicans in areas like Creggan, a Catholic working-class neighbourhood in Derry, has raised fears that a new generation of young adults born after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement are prepared to continue acts of political violence in Ireland. This public debate has even motivated a national executive member of Saoradh, a dissident republican organization with alleged links to the "New IRA", to contribute to the discussion about "youth radicalization publicly". (Fennell 2019) While dissident paramilitaries define their armed actions to Northern Ireland, there is a "dominance of the Republic of Ireland in the dissident community". (Horgan 2013, 96) For this reason, this article presents motivational factors for joining dissident groups in the Republic of Ireland. This article will shed light on what motivates teenagers and young adults to join dissident republican organizations and the ideology of the teenagers and young adults in these groups. It is based on a series of interviews with six members of the republican youth organization Na Fianna Éireann in the Dublin region.[1]

The interview data identify several factors that seem to increase the likelihood of joining the republican youth organization Na Fianna Éireann in the Republic of Ireland. These motivational factors are, first, socio-economic factors such as working-class background, deprivation, and social problems such as criminality and drug addiction in their areas; second, the importance of family links and social networks; third, engagement in social media as an introduction to the groups; and, fourth, a fascination with Irish history. This paper will introduce these factors by providing excerpts from the oral history interview transcripts.

Since the March 2009 attacks by dissident republicans that killed two British soldiers and a PSNI officer, there has been a growing academic interest in Irish republicans opposed to the Good Friday Agreement. (Frampton 2011; Hoey 2018b; Horgan 2013; McGlinchey 2019; Morrison 2013; Sanders 2011; Taylor and Currie 2011; Whiting 2015) While the field of dissident republicanism was well-defined until 2006, several new groups have since emerged,

both political organizations and paramilitaries. (Horgan 2013, 21-46) Researchers struggle to keep up with the often fast-changing developments within the scene.

McAlister et al. researched youths in post-conflict Northern Ireland. (McAlister, Haydon, and Scraton 2013; McAlister, Dwyer, and Carr 2018) While her research is primarily concerned with young victims of paramilitary violence, she also interviewed two young men active in paramilitary organizations. (McAlister, Dwyer, and Carr 2018) Notably, she completed the data collection process for her research in 2016 – the same year, I conducted these interviews. Hence, I use McAlister's research to compare and contextualize my findings. So far, Horgan and Gill have provided the most detailed analyses of recruitment patterns into dissident republican groups. (2011, 43-64) However, their research was published before the emergence of the current Na Fianna group in Dublin and the foundation of the New IRA, both around 2012; a subsequent book by Horgan further analysis the membership of dissident republican organization before the emergence of the two groups. (2013) Moreover, while recent publications provide an understanding of Provisional republicanism in the Republic of Ireland, dissident republicanism in the Republic of Ireland remains a research lacuna. (Ó Faoleán 2019; Hanley 2018; Mulroe 2017)

In 2013, Gill and Horgan published an analysis of 1240 Provisional republicans. (2013) This research is the most detailed analysis of republicans during the Northern Irish conflict so far. They note that "there are notable exceptions of course, but by and large empirical analysis of political violence in Northern Ireland at the individual level have been scarce" (Gill and Horgan 2013, 436) My article will build on these finding by providing understanding at the individual level in two ways: I will provide qualitative data on recruitment into republican organizations opposed to the peace process; and, thereby, offer a post-1998 perspective on Irish republicanism.

The roles of the Republic of Ireland and young recruits have been acknowledged in by experts in the field. Horgan and Gill stress that Southerners have always swelled the general

ranks of dissidents. (2011, 54) Another expert of dissident republicanism, Morrison, suggests that dissident groups "are not able to survive" without young recruits. (2011, 37) Nonetheless, little literature is available on these two aspects. My research will, therefore, add to the growing corpus of publications about dissident republicans, albeit, on two henceforth under-researched topics: the activism of teenagers and young adults in these groups and the activism of these groups in the Republic of Ireland.

The narrative, life-story approach to conducting interviews by oral historians has recently found entry into the social sciences, including International Relations. (Ben Aharon 2020) Many scholars, most notably Sageman, have complained about the lack of primary sources and access to perpetrators of violence in the study of terrorism. (2014) Larsen acknowledges that researchers of radicalization face obstacles in accessing hard-to-reach groups and gaining a high degree of trust with radical groups and potential interview partners. Hence, "research on radicalization has to a large degree relied on data collection through secondary source". (2020) Under these circumstances, oral history provides an alternative perspective to terrorism and radicalization, which may help to overcome these limitations and obstacles. This article aims to provide insight and original interview material for further research on youth radicalization in the Republic of Ireland. The content provided is limited to a small number of interviews and does not aim to be representative. Instead, my qualitative research adds data for further comparative analysis.

This article consists of six parts. I will first briefly introduce the current scene of so-called dissident republicanism. This outline will provide an understanding of the second part that will introduce youth in these organizations and the third part, an overview of the current Na Fianna Éireann republican youth organization. My research methodology and interview data follow this. The fifth part will introduce several observations from the interviews that will help us to understand what motivates teenagers and young adults to join dissident

organizations. The conclusions follow this section; it will introduce further research questions that arise from this article.

2. Dissident Irish republicanism since 1986

The dissident republican groups are actively recruiting teenagers into their ranks. (Frampton 2011, 77-8) For this purpose, three groups maintain separate youth organizations: the Republican Socialist Youth Movement (RSYM) of the IRSP/INLA; Éistigí of Saoradh; and Na Fianna Éireann of the RSF/CIRA movement. This article will help answer the following questions: What motivates teenagers and young adults to join dissident republican groups that advocate and carry out paramilitary activities in Ireland today? How are they recruited? By analysing the biographical and social backgrounds of the young activists as well as their political and historical education, this research will shed further light on the recruitment processes of dissident republican groups and address the "simple question of why an individual would turn to the utility of political violence" (Morrison 2016, 599-60) To understand this process, I have used the Na Fianna organization in the Dublin region as my case study.

There are a wide range of organizations and individuals with sometimes opposing political views that can be subsumed under the umbrella term "dissident Irish republican". What they have in common is their opposition to the Northern Irish peace process. However, as Hoey outlines, not all of them support the continuation or return to armed struggle. (2018b) Just as the scene of radical republicans is splintered, so are the terms used to describe them. (English 2015, Hearty 2017, Hoey 2018a, Horgan and Morrison 2011, Tonge 2010, White 2017) This article will focus on dissident republicans that support a continued armed struggle. I will use the definition of Frampton, who writes that "violent dissident republicans are

committed to the conduct of an armed campaign in Northern Ireland. Their aim is to prevent normalization, undermine the peace process and foment political instability" (2010, 2)

Dissident republicans are not a monolithic bloc; instead, they are splintered into various, often opposing, factions. (Horgan 2013) Morrison has analyzed the splits of the republican movement since 1969. (2013) Following the reorganization of the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and the dropping of the Éire Nua program, (Provisional) Sinn Féin abandoned its policy of abstentionism toward the Irish parliament. (Lynn 2002; Evans and Tonge 2013) This prompted a group of traditionalists around the former Sinn Féin president Ruairí Ó Brádaigh to split from the Provisionals and form the Republican Sinn Féin (RSF) in 1986, and the Continuity Army Council the following year. The latter emerged in the 1990s as the Continuity IRA (CIRA). (White 2017) In 1997, a group of PIRA members around Quartermaster Michael McKevitt split from the PIRA and formed the Real IRA (RIRA). Following the decommissioning of the PIRA in 2005 and the support for the policing of Sinn Féin in 2007, a section of disillusioned PIRA members re-engaged as paramilitaries. One section joined with former members of the RIRA to create Óglaigh na hÉireann, a paramilitary group that later became affiliated with the Republican Network for Unity (RNU); it declared a "military ceasefire" in January 2018.[2] Another section reorganized without forming a new organization. (Interview with a member of Óglaigh na hÉireann, Belfast, November 2018) This group joined forces with parts of the RIRA and other republican paramilitary organizations to form the "New IRA" in 2012. In 2016, the political organization Saoradh was formed; it is widely considered as the political wing of the New IRA. (Edwards 2019)

Of the five existing republican paramilitary organizations, three are prepared to conduct armed attacks on targets they consider as representatives of the British state on the island of Ireland. (NIO 2019, PSNI 2020) For this reason, the current Northern Ireland-related terrorism threat level is considered by MI5 as "sever". The three active groups are the CIRA,

which has only a small presence in Lurgan and Craigavon, Co Armagh, and along the Cavan/Fermanagh border, as well as in Belfast; after a period of inactivity, it conducts sporadic attacks since summer 2019. (Morris 2020) Second, the RIRA, which is made up of members opposed to the merger that created the New IRA, however, like the CIRA they are not currently capable of engaging in the broader scale of paramilitary attacks; however, sporadic attacks by these groups are ongoing, as an attack on the PSNI claimed by the CIRA in December 2019, and the so-called "Brexit Bomb Plo" demonstrate.[3] Third, the New IRA, which is responsible for most security incidents caused by republicans in recent years. (CISAC 2019)

3. Youth in dissident republican organizations

Since the publication of Crenshaw's article on the root causes of terrorism, a growing body of literature analyzed why people radicalize and turn to political violence. (Crenshaw 1981; Moghaddam 2005; Sageman 2004, 2017; Silber, Bhatt, and Analysts 2007; Horgan 2014; Wiktorowicz 2005; Kuznar and Lutz 2007; McCauley and Moskalenko 2016; della Porta 2013; Kruglanski, Bélanger, and Gunaratna 2019) In total, Orsini has identified 6,335 academic articles about radicalization, published in peer-reviewed scientific journals between 2001 and 2015. (2020) Recently, researchers have turned their attention to youth radicalization. Among them are Cardeli and Bloom, as well as Lynch, who explored the mobilization of children into violence in Central America and the radicalization of British Muslim youth, respectively. (Cardeli et al. 2019; Lynch 2013) In the Irish context, research on radicalization and engagement in political extremism has largely been confined to Northern Ireland. (Ferguson and McAuley 2019) Insofar youth is subject to examination, analyses focus on de-radicalization or the prevention of terrorism through former paramilitaries.

(Clubb 2016) Youth radicalization and engagement in dissident republicanism since the Good Friday Agreement and the role of these groups in the Republic of Ireland received much less attention. In the most detailed analysis of dissident republican membership so far, Horgan, however, observes that the majority of CIRA and RIRA members are from the Republic of Ireland and "the importance of children as a recruitment source for the next generation of Irish republicans is evident". (2013, 140)

There is an extensive literature on the recruitment into the republican paramilitary organizations during the Northern Ireland conflict since 1968. Among those, Ferguson and McAuley researched republicans and loyalists; their findings show parallels with the interviews presented in this article, namely, the importance of collective identity, perceived threats, community grievance, and peer and family influences in fuelling initial engagement with the armed groups. (2019) Their research builds on earlier findings by Ferguson and Burgess. (2009) In her comparative study on terrorist recruitment, Bloom concludes: "The [pre-1998] IRA was remarkable in their ability to recruit top-level operatives, especially given the lower economic status of Catholics in Northern Ireland, and their under-representation in higher education, and their overall socio-economic disadvantage. Despite these challenges, the IRA was able to train and professionalize its cadres" (2017, 617) Again, the under-representation and the lower economic status continues in the post-1998 era of dissident republicanism.

White and Bosi have analysed pathways into armed groups in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s. White describes four pathways of recruitment into Provisional republicanism. These are family; personal relationships; political events that lead to "bloc recruitment"; and developmental recruitment. (White 2000, 288; White and Fraser 2000) Interestingly, White also interviewed Na Fianna recruits from the 1950s, and his observations resonate with the answer given to me by recruits six decades later. (2000, 292). Bosi analysed the radicalization of those who joined the Provisionals between 1969 and 1972. He concludes that those who

joined before 1969 "were raised in families steeped in Republican tradition. The same cannot be said for all of those who joined later with the outbreak of the Troubles" (2012, 360) Both White and Bosi argue that the motivations for joining the Provisionals changed with the outbreak of the Northern Irish Troubles. In sum, they argue that the radicalization before the outbreak of the Troubles was driven by ideology and family links; during the conflict between 1968 and 1998, triggering events, the perceived repression, the attraction to the armed struggle, and what Bosi calls facts on the ground, were the prime recruitment patterns; in the post-1998 era, the recruitment factors shifted again to ideology and family and friends networks. (Bosi 2012, 351)

Since dissident republicanism emerged in the 1990s, its membership remained remarkably older in age than that of the Provisionals during the 1970s and 1980s. Gill and Horgan write that the average age at the time of the first identifiable PIRA-related activity was 25 years. At the same time, the sample of dissident republicans shows that between 1999 and 2010, their comparable average age was 35 years. (2013) As outlined above, several new dissident republican groups have emerged and founded youth wings since 2010.

Data by Gill and Horgan suggest that since the emergence of PIRA violence in the 1970s, Irish republicans relied on youth recruitment to sustain their campaigns. "Although youth is not necessarily a causative factor in why people join terrorist movement", they argue that "there is a high correlation between it and engagement in high-risk activities and [it] is well-established as a strong risk factor for involvement in direct terrorist activity". (2013, 440) In the early 1970s, PIRA leaned upon its youth wing, Na Fianna Éireann, for early socialization and recruitment. (Watts 1981) However, this changed during the peace process. Na Fianna Éireann was replaced by Ógra Sinn Féin, a political youth movement. Since the 1990s, the later reincarnations of Na Fianna Éireann serve a similar role to dissident organizations, as Na Fianna Éireann did to the Provisionals in the 1970s and 1980s. Horgan

outlines that the Real IRA used the strategy of "fresh ski", i.e. using young recruits for bombing campaigns in England. (2013, 86)

In 2011, Horgan and Gill published their findings on the profiles of 500 dissident republicans. (2011) They highlight that "a highly significant amount of recruitment to the dissident movement (…) occurs within the southern 26 Counties". (2011, 51) The average age of the dissidents was 35 years. While 9,5% of the CIRA members were students, its youth organization Na Fianna Éireann was not mentioned separately in the database, despite the recording of a small number of events. (Horgan and Gill 2011, 57-8) This lack is explained by the fact that "there is virtually no reliable open-source information on Fianna Éireann (…) membership" available. (Horgan and Gill 2011, 63)

This age profile has changed in the past decade. In 2010, the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) observed that "the majority of recruits are inexperienced young male". (Morrison 2011, 32) Horgan's findings, published in 2012, come to a similar conclusion. There are two distinct age groups active within dissident republicanism. These are, on the one hand, experienced older republicans and, on the other hand, "a younger generation" that has become active for the first time. The latter group is between 14 and 30 years of age and gained their first-ever experience of republican activity in dissident republican groups. They have no adult experience of the Northern Ireland conflict, have not been born in Northern Ireland, and were born after the 1994 ceasefire of the PIRA, or later. Horgan concludes that "this issue raises significant questions about motivational factor". He continues: "The dominance of younger personnel partaking in violent activity suggests that it is an intentional strategy of the violent dissident republican (VDR) groups to use younger operatives in attack". (2013, 91) In the most recent wave of dissident republican violence, the so-called Wave 3, which started in 2007, the age group 21 to 25 years had the highest conviction rate. (Horgan 2013, 93) The most visible of the dissident republican youth organizations in the Republic of Ireland is Na Fianna Éireann, which is the youth wing of the CIRA. (Bowman-

Grieve 2010) The following section will introduce this youth group since the formation of the adult organization in 1986.

4. Na Fianna Éireann since 1986

In August 2015 Na Fianna Éireann made headlines with a VICE documentary that showed children as young as ten marching in paramilitary uniforms through a forest in the Republic of Ireland.[4] One hundred thousand users viewed it on YouTube within the first week of being uploaded. In the past decade, Na Fianna Éireann, formed initially in 1909 (Hay 2019), experienced an upsurge in membership throughout Ireland. The organization is widely seen as the youth branch of the paramilitary organization the CIRA. Both Na Fianna Éireann and the CIRA (Continuity Army Council) are designated "proscribed groups linked to Northern Ireland related terrorism" by the British government. (Home Office 2020)

White writes that when the Provisional republican movement split in 1986

> A majority of Na Fianna Éireann scouts were opposed to taking seats in Leinster House, but because they were children and teenagers, the Provisionals could more easily manipulate them. The organization's constitution was changed to allow members to support taking seats in Leinster House, and it caused a split. Some of the membership did leave for the Provisionals. Those who remained undid the change and then carried on as Na Fianna Éireann. Today, Na Fianna Éireann is an independent organization that is closely aligned with Republican Sinn Féin. As far as the Provisionals are concerned, after the 1994 ceasefire, Na Fianna Éireann morphed into Ógra (Young) Sinn Féin. (2017, 237)

Hence, Na Fianna Éireann is the only republican organization maintaining this name, and in the orthodox republican tradition, considers itself as the legitimate successors of the original

Na Fianna Éireann movement. (Ó Brádaigh 1997)

Today, Na Fianna Éireann is part of the so-called Continuity republican movement (CRM) that encompasses the CIRA, RSF, the women's organization Cumann na mBan and the prisoners' support group Cabhair. (Reinisch 2018) Although the movement has witnessed several splits since its foundation, during the previous decade the surviving remnant of Na Fianna Éireann reorganized in Dublin and founded the Seán Healy Slua – a "slua" (plural "sluaigthe") being a local branch.[5] It was named after Seán Healy, a Dublin member of Na Fianna who died during the Easter Rising in 1916. Since 2014, it holds an Easter commemoration on the spot where Seán Healy was shot during the 1916-rising on Easter Monday before the national Easter commemoration of RSF.[6] On 26 July 2014, it held a commemoration remembering the Howth gun-running. The main oration was given by a teenager named "Fian[7] Jamie Mullen", who said:

> The aim of Na Fianna remains the same as the aim of the organization on our founding in 1909: the complete re-establishment of Ireland's independence. We accept no other government after the 1921/22 period as the legitimate government of Ireland. Leinster House, which was set up by the British government to govern 26 of our counties, is a dependent state. It was formed by a foreign occupier to suit the foreign occupier. It was not formed independently by the people of Ireland acting as a unit without British interference. Therefore the aim of our organization since its foundation has yet to be achieved but proudly will be. We continue the fight and we will accept nothing less than an 'Ireland free from the centre to the sea'.[8]

As with other republican organizations, it stresses its organizational independence. (Na Fianna Éireann, 2009) Nonetheless, an adult member, usually associated with the CIRA, is appointed by the republican movement to coordinate the work of Na Fianna Éireann. For the past decade, those running Na Fianna have all come from the province of Leinster. (Interview with CIRA member, Dublin, March 2018)

While the organization is most influential in Dublin, where they regularly march at commemorations of RSF, its membership is spread across the island, with members in Wexford, Mullingar, Galway, Kerry, and Athlone. Before the 2010-split of the movement following the election of Des Dalton as the successor of the late Ruairí Ó Brádaigh as President of RSF, the youth organization also had a Slua named after Seán Glynn in Limerick and individual members in Cork.[9] (White 2017, 379-81) During a protest outside Glasnevin Cemetery in April 2016, a 15-year old member of Na Fianna Éireann was arrested.[10] The same activist addressed a Ruairí Ó Brádaigh summer school organized by RSF in Roscommon in full military-style uniform in September 2016.[11] Contrary to Northern Ireland, Na Fianna Éireann is not a proscribed organization in the Republic of Ireland. The public display of paramilitary uniforms with the use of sun-glasses, their militant speeches, and their use of military ranks such as "OC" as in a letter published in the RSF-aligned newspaper *Saoirse* indicate the subculture of violence in which the members are socializing.[12]

The situation in Northern Ireland is less clear for Na Fianna remains proscribed under British law; this is contrary to the legal status in the Republic of Ireland. (Home Office 2020) At the Easter commemoration in March 2012 in Lurgan, Co Armagh, a statement issued by the "Na Fianna Éireann Slua North Armagh" was read.[13] British intelligence used to refer to this group as the "CIRA youth".[14] From 2009 to 2011 it encompassed about a dozen youths who were directly subordinated to the local CIRA structure. However, following the arrest of a local republican who British intelligence considered as the leader of the group on 20 September 2012, the "CIRA youth" disintegrated and ceased to exist.[15]

Since 1986, other republican youth organizations have emerged. During various phases, both the 32CSM/RIRA and RNU/ÓNH maintained their own youth outfits with the name Na Fianna Éireann, though both experiments were short-lived. RNU holds an annual Na Fianna Éireann commemoration in the North Belfast neighbourhood of Ardoyne on Easter Saturday. In 2013, young children marched in front of the parade wearing uniforms and

sunglasses. (Black 2013) Since its formation in the autumn of 2016, Saoradh established Éistigí as their youth organization.[16] Éistigí has an existing structure of a few dozen activists in Derry. However, it has been reported that the organization has also established branches in Belfast, Newry and Dublin. (Interview with Saoradh national PRO Paddy Gallagher, Derry, 17 May 2019) Among the teenagers arrested after the killing of Lyra McKee in Derry, two were reportedly members of Éistigí. (Interview with Gallagher)

Youth organizations are potential entry points to dissident paramilitary organizations. (Frampton 2011, 77-8) The Ryan brothers, Alan and Vince, were both members of Na Fianna Éireann in Dublin in the 1990s. Due to their involvement in Na Fianna, they later joined the CIRA, becoming two of its most active members. They were both involved in bomb attacks in Northern Ireland. (Interview with a former dissident republican, Dublin, May 2019) When the RIRA was formed, they joined the new outfit. At the age of 19, Alan was arrested at a RIRA training camp in Co Meath and spent time as a dissident prisoner in Portlaoise Prison. (White 2017, 313) Following his release, he became the leader of the RIRA in Dublin. (Mooney and O'Toole 2003; O'Driscoll 2019) During this period of RIRA activity, so-called Wave 2 of dissident republican violence between August 1998 and January 2007, training camps of young recruits led to the conviction of 22 individuals. Nine of them were members of the CIRA, thirteen of the RIRA. All four training camps were located in the Republic of Ireland. (Horgan 2013, 92-3) In an article published the month after the killing of Lyra McKee, a Saoradh national executive member acknowledged that joining a republican youth organization was for him "an introduction to radical politics and an informal political education that was grounded in revolutionary ideology". (Fennell 2019) The following interviews provide an understanding of why teenagers have joined and continue to join these dissident groups in the Republic of Ireland.

5. Research methodology and interview data

These interviews are part of a larger oral history research project on the life histories of Irish republicans. Since 2010, I interviewed over 80 Irish republicans, among these interviews are 34 interviews with former PIRA prisoners and a similar number of Irish republican women. In the spring of 2016, I conducted six life-story interviews with teenagers and young adults. All six were male and members of Na Fianna Éireann, five of them were active in Dublin. Considering the political, legal and ethical implications of interviewing underage republicans who advocate political violence, it was agreed that all interviews were to be strictly anonymous, despite Na Fianna Éireann being a legal structure of the republican movement in the Republic of Ireland. (Bell 2000, 202)

I approached these interviews as life-stories, starting with a biographical section about their childhood and how they came to join the republican movement. (Della Porta 2014) This life-story approach, characterized by open-ended questions, allowed each narrator to recite his story as far as possible according to his own memories. Such interviews are sometimes also referred to as "qualitative in-depth interviews" or "biographical interviews", though the exact definitions may differ, and they allow for an analysis of the family, cultural, and social background of the narrators and their social networks; in that way, I aim to understand the routes that these young men took into Na Fianna, their motivations, and political ideologies before and after joining. My methodology is rooted in the tradition of oral history, influenced by the writings of scholars such as Portelli and Passerini. Portelli reminds us that interviews tell us more about the meaning of an event to the individual rather than the event itself. (1991) Accordingly, rather than extracting exact patterns, my oral history approach aims to understand the motivational drive of the narrators by acknowledging the limited sample – due to the sensitivity of the research topic – selected for this qualitative research. Thereby, the

interview excerpts illustrate how Na Fianna Éireann members remember the process that led to involvement in the group.

The oldest narrator was in his early 20s and had joined Na Fianna four years earlier as a teenager. The youngest narrator was 15 years old and had joined Na Fianna only a few months earlier. At the time of the data collection process, Na Fianna had less than ten members in Dublin and about a dozen other members in the rest of the Republic of Ireland. As such, I interviewed over one-third of Na Fianna's entire membership in Ireland. If the members in Wexford are included, then approximately half of the members in the province of Leinster were interviewed. And, despite the small number of interviews, the narrators provided diverse perspectives on recruitment to the organization.

Youth organizations affiliated with the CRM are almost without exception male-dominated. While nominally there is a girls' scouts organization called Cumann na gCailíní attached to Cumann na mBan, the movement has not attracted any members for the past two decades. (Reinisch 2018) McAlister et al. observed a similar predominance of males in republican youth organizations in their research on youths in Northern Ireland. (2018) The male exclusivity of Na Fianna Éireann in the Republic of Ireland, yet also of Éistigí and the RSYM in Northern Ireland, contrasts with the regular appearance of women as spokespersons and leaders of other dissident groups. (Alison 2009; Reinisch 2018)

6. Motivational factors for joining Na Fianna Éireann

The following section will introduce four motivational factors observed in the interviews. First, the narrators all come from deprived working-class areas; hence, social and economic problems such as criminality and drug addiction among their peers play a central part in the interviews. Second, the narrators grew up in republican families, or have friends in their

closer social network that are active republicans. Third, narrators mention the use of Facebook and other social media channels as their initial introduction to republican organizations. Fourth, the narrators stress their sincere interest in Irish history since their early childhood. To illustrate these four motivational factors, I provide excerpts from the interview transcripts that are most representative of my interpretation.

6.1. Deprivation and social problems

In 2016, Frank was the oldest member of Na Fianna Éireann and was in his early 20s when I interviewed him. He grew up in the north of Dublin in an inner-city working-class area. For several years, Frank was the most senior member of Na Fianna, and he was also active in Republican Sinn Féin. Although he has since left both organizations over internal disputes, he remains a committed republican. At the time of our interview, he was active in both organizations. In the interview, Frank remembers growing up in north inner-city Dublin and said that the social problems in his neighbourhood were his "main motive" for joining a republican organization:

> My main motive for joining was the area that I grew up in was a bit of – it was a very run-down area. It was a lot of unemployment, a lot of crime, anti-social activities, homeless people. The block where I lived in, there was a hostel right beside it, and on some mornings when you went to school, you were coming down the stairs, and you saw people smoking drugs or injecting them into their arms. Growing up like that, well, that was one of the main reasons that I thought: What the hell is going on? And what's not being done about it? That was the main reason and what is not done about it. And combined with the general interest in Irish history that I had, that experience kind of drove me on to get involved in Irish republicanism. [...]

> In that area, the police are hated. Within the area you see drug addicts and stuff, and there is no support for these people, there is a lot of criminality and if you had the police, you know, there is no help from the police or the government, you have nowhere to go. There is no support for young people, 13, 14, 15, they are going down on the wrong road and smoke drugs and drink alcohol. There is no support for them. You start to understand that the government is kind of neglecting your area, they kind of abandon your area. There is, I think, only one way to go about it and this is republicanism. It always had a social aspect with it, help out communities and stuff like that. I make my work experience now in a youth centre […], and they do great stuff for young people, and it is actually run by a republican.[17] I think if you care about your community that is run down and if you hate the police, there is only one way to go for you and this is through republicanism. (Interview with Frank)

John was the youngest member of the group I interviewed, although he was not the youngest member of Na Fianna at that time. John was 15 when he had joined in January 2016, another member of Na Fianna who regularly appeared at republican marches in uniform was only nine years of age. John also lives in a working-class area in Dublin. Like Frank, he highlighted the problems with illegal drugs and deprivation in his neighbourhood. He suggested that Na Fianna provided him with an exit strategy that helped him avoid drifting into a life of drugs and criminality:

> Another reason I joined Na Fianna was that I knew that I didn't have the stability and courage to stay on the right path in life, but Na Fianna gave me that stability and courage. However, it is clear that my generation, and sadly, a lot of people I know, do not share my mindset. Instead, they would rather involve themselves in criminality and drugs than they would for their country, and I think that sentence alone speaks volumes. Now, I'm not saying I'm a saint, but I think it's good to have something such as Na Fianna guiding me down the right track. (Interview with John)

The relationship between support for political violence and poverty observed in these interviews has also been noted by McAlister et al. in their research in Northern Ireland. She writes that "at a time of political and economic change, when the identity and position of working-class young men are threatened, engaging in violence and sectarianism becomes a means through which power and status is asserted." (2013, 13) She furthermore stresses that paramilitary groups act as community protectors against supposed drug dealers and sex offenders. (McAlister, Dwyer, and Carr 2018, 6) These findings follow Horgan, who reported "social disadvantage" among dissident republicans. (2013, 140) In his book on the psychology of terrorism, Horgan writes that members of terrorist organizations have "a strong emotional pull to act in the face of injustice" and most of them experienced social injustice themselves. Similar to the memories of the Na Fianna activists, these experiences can serve as triggering events. (2014, 79, 85-6) In essence, people with such backgrounds (featuring these connected but distinct issues of addiction, poverty, crime, etc.) are common to those drawn into dissident youth organizations, both in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

6.2. Family and friends

Family and friends play a crucial part in the recruitment process. All narrators were either recruited by family members or friends or had active republicans in their closest family. The sole exception was Frank, although even he could name a family member who had fought in 1916. Frank's attempt to establish a republican family background reflects the importance of generational links for the young recruits. Michael spoke about his first republican event in the interview:

> I always had an interest in Irish republicanism. Since I was small, I used to watch documentaries about Dan Breen and Tom Barry and Michael Collins. But I was only young at that time, and I didn't know, but then I got more interested in it, and I learned more and more. And my Granny, she was a republican, and my great Granny, the great Granny, was republican. And it just came to my head that the first time I went up to [the hunger strike commemoration in] Bundoran, I thought: This is for me. So, I always had a thing for it, so I said to me: I am going to join Na Fianna, and this is what happened, really. I always had an interest in Irish republicanism and how the men fought the British and got the 32 Counties Republic, what the men in 1916 died for. I always had an interest. (Interview with Michael)

Every year Michael, along with some relatives, attends the annual hunger strike commemoration organized by the "Bundoran hunger strike commemoration committee" – held on the last weekend of August. A republican family raised Michael, and both his aunt and cousin are active republicans.

John also comes from a republican family; two of his uncles were members of the PIRA in Dublin during the Northern Irish Troubles. However, both of John's uncles support the peace process and do not share the politics of Na Fianna and other groups opposed to the Good Friday Agreement. Nonetheless, the involvement of his uncles in the PIRA before 1998 has been an inspiration for the teenager. (Interview with John) Since John joined Na Fianna, his mother has also loosely become involved in republicanism.

The importance of family for the recruitment process is most evident in the case of Richard:

> My dad came back, it was just before Easter, and he was getting out of his uniform, and this was the first time I saw him getting out of his uniform and all, and I was just asking him, and he just told me about the republican movement, and I just typed their name into Facebook, and it just appeared straight away. (Interview with Richard)

Richard's father has regularly participated in republican marches as one of the "colour party" who lead the parade, wearing military-style uniforms and carrying Irish nationalist and republican flags. Richard's father has been convicted for membership to an unlawful organization with the name "IRA" and served his sentence on the republican landing in Portlaoise Prison, Co Laois. Furthermore, Richard's younger brother is a member of Na Fianna, and his sister and mother are loosely involved with republicanism.

Another member of Na Fianna, who was recruited by his father, is Andrew. He lives in a working-class area with an unusually high level of criminality, drug abuse, and unemployment. Andrew was taken to a Fianna camp by his father; however, he initially "didn't like the marching and drilling at night". He left Na Fianna for two years but subsequently re-joined, again due to his father's encouragement. (Interview with Andrew) Since then he has been an active member of Na Fianna and was among the Guard of Honor at the funeral of the former RSF President and IRA Chief-of-Staff Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, on 8 June 2013. (White 2020) James, a childhood friend of Andrew, became involved in Na Fianna through him. (Interview with James)

White has stressed the importance of family links in the recruitment of the republican movement. In particular, the movement relied on family networks before, and after the Northern Irish Troubles. In other words, before 1969 and since 1998, republican organizations have been dominated by family links, with republican families and their close social networks being the primary recruitment fields. (White 1993; White and Fraser 2000; White 2017) Accordingly, the republican women's organization Cumann na mBan solely recruited their members from known republican families before 1969. (Reinisch 2018) Similarly, McAlister observed that one group "most vulnerable to recruitment [into paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland] are: family members (e.g. the sons of those currently involved)". (2018, 7) She quotes an 18-year old man called Jess: "See it's family as well like. If you're born into [name of paramilitary organization] family then like there's a good chance the boys in the family are

going to be in the [organization] as well." Hence, McAlister concludes that the "lack of opportunity, social marginalization and a sense of hopelessness", as also observed in the interview excerpts above, combined with the family ties provide the ground for recruitment into paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland. (2018, 8) Taylor described this phenomenon of family links in maintaining the survival of an organization in abeyance for other social movements. (1989) In other words, family links maintain the organizational continuity of the republican movement during phases of low activism, in particular, the period 1924-1969, and again since 1998. This phenomenon is not unusual for Horgan explains that family involvement is certainly a pervasive event in most "nationalist separatist" groups. (Horgan 2014, 91)

6.3. Social Media

All narrators mention the use of social media in the recruitment process. Even those who were recruited into Na Fianna Éireann by family members remember using Facebook and other social media platforms to gain information on dissident republican organizations before eventually joining, as the above interview with Richard illustrates. (Interview with Richard) As recently noted in a study on the online support for dissident republicans, the online presence of dissident groups lacks the sophistication and technical standard of other radical social movements, paramilitary organizations, and jihadist groups. (Frenett 2019) The data for this study by Moonshot CVE was collected in 2015, shortly before I conducted my interviews, and it shows a surprisingly small percentage of dissident republican online supporters under the age of 20. (Gallagher 2019) Nonetheless, as my interviews reveal, social media serves as an essential source of information in the initial recruitment process, as evident in youth radicalization also in other ideological contexts. (Gaudette et al. 2020) Nalton et al.

remark that "dissident republican groups seem to be using the internet to actively attract potential recruits, particularly young people". (2011, 120) Despite recent research, the online presence of dissident republicans remains an under-researched area and, additionally to Nalton et al., only research by Bowman-Grieve and some remarks in Hoey's book have been so far published. (Bowman-Grieve 2010; Bowman-Grieve and Conway 2012; Bowman-Grieve and Herron 2020; Hoey 2018b)

Frank was the only respondent without a republican family background, and his introduction to dissident republicanism came through Facebook:

> It was until I looked into Irish republican history that that kind of drove me on to get involved in the action. Believe me or not but the first book I actually read and that motivated me to get involved into Irish republicanism was a book written by a Provo, Gerry Adams, Bobby Sands prison diaries.[18] After that I read that, it was a big motivating force, and then I got in contact with a couple of my friends who were involved through Facebook like, got in contact with them on Facebook to get involved and they told me the different parties, the different republican parties that were there. Now, I thought that there was only the Provos at the time and then he told me all the other groups, and that's when I started looking into the other groups. These groups included Republican Sinn Féin, the 32s[19], Republican Socialist Party, and éirígí. So, I looked into the groups, and I looked at them for about three or four months, and I decided to go with Republican Sinn Féin. Looking at their history and stuff like that, the way they were connected to events down through Irish history and the way they never bend a knee and stuff like that. That motivated me to join, and so I joined Republican Sinn Féin about four years ago, three and a half to 4 years ago, and since then I am working away with Republican Sinn Féin, and I am also involved in Na Fianna Éireann, the republican youth movement and I got involved with a couple of lads there, and we are working in a team. Since then we have been building, building up slowly but surely, so making good progress. (Interview with Frank)

John became aware of Na Fianna Éireann when he saw the VICE documentary about the

organization in winter 2015/16. The online link had been shared on social media by several classmates, although none of them was involved in Na Fianna. John stressed that he had learned about the 1916 Easter rising in school and so already knew about Irish republicanism. It was only after watching the documentary on YouTube that he began "searching on Facebook and other social media platforms for information on them". He then contacted the organization online. (Interview with John)

6.4. Irish history

All the narrators gave Irish history a prominent mention. Historical antecedents of political violence, civil wars, revolutions, dictatorships or occupation are root causes commonly assumed to be associated with the emergence of terrorism. (Horgan 2014, 85-6) During my interviews, I was repeatedly told that they had "always [been] interested in Irish history", for some of them this interest reached back into "childhood" – as stressed in the interview with Frank. However, similar explanations came up in other conversations:

> I got involved roughly four years ago, roughly four to five years. There were a couple of reasons; I would have always been interested in Irish history, growing up, especially when I was in school and stuff, you know. When I was in school, they didn't teach as much Irish history, but I was always interested in what did they teach us about other countries and stuff like that. (Interview with Frank)

While there is a strong emphasis on Irish history and historical justifications for the ideology of dissident republicanism throughout the interviews, a close reading of the interview transcripts points to contradictions in these claims. Some of the narratives tell quite a different story, namely, that some of the Na Fianna members were not so interested in Irish history

before they joined the republican youth movement. This suggests that their emphasis on an interest in Irish history has become a retrospective explanation for their initial involvement.

For dissident republicans, history holds a central spot in the justification for continued activism. While recently the "New IRA" has made increasing reference to Irish history in their statements, with one prominent example being the statement claiming responsibility for a car bomb in Derry in January 2019 (Mullen 2019), the CRM has traditionally tended to justify their existence in the context of Irish republican history as outlined in the book of their founder and former President Ruairí Ó Brádaigh. (1997) In his book, Ó Brádaigh traces the heritage of his organization back to the Second Dáil Éireann, established in 1921, thereby arguing that the RSF and the CIRA are the legitimate Sinn Féin and IRA organizations. This is the very political ideology that the members of Na Fianna are taught within the CRM. Thus, this emphasis on interest in Irish history may reflect the CRM interpretation of Irish republican history more than their actual interest in or understanding of Irish history before joining the dissident youth organization. For this reason, I suggest that interest in Irish history is less an important factor than the three broader factors mentioned above.

Della Porta and Haupt stress that the construction of reality to legitimize strategic choices of violent actors is particularly evident in the life histories of IRA members throughout the long 20th century. They observe three trajectories towards violent actions: First, the construction of the British enemy and the Irish nation; second, the value of the Irish community and its glorious past; third personal pride and responsibility. (2012, 318) Accordingly, the use of Irish history to justify continued support for armed violence was not only a legitimizing strategic choice throughout the 20th century, but it also has still the same purpose for the republican youth in 21st century Dublin.

7. Conclusions

This article offers insight into the recruitment of teenagers and young adults into dissident republican youth organizations in the Republic of Ireland. It furthermore contributes to the empirical knowledge about the challenges involved in producing data in hard-to-reach groups and sensitive data by introducing the oral history methods into the field of Terrorism Studies. For this purpose, I researched the motivational factors for joining dissident republican youth organizations.

Since the killing of Lyra McKee in April 2019 during a riot that was staged overwhelmingly by teenagers and young adults, and the emergence of an active youth organization linked to the dissident republican organization Saoradh, public attention has turned to the question of why people born after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 would join dissident republican organizations. This article analyses this question by providing a case study on the Na Fianna Éireann youth organization in the Republic of Ireland. Na Fianna Éireann is linked to RSF, and it is widely believed that RSF is connected to the dissident republican paramilitary organization CIRA.

This article analyses the radicalization of teenagers and young adults and the recruitment into dissident republican youth organizations in the second decade of the 21st century. In the 1960s, the IRA suffered from the failures of the Border Campaign, also known as "Operation Harvest". (Rekawek 2016; Treacy 2011) As six decades ago, the 2010s are marked by the end of the failed campaigns by the INLA, ÓNH, RIRA, and CIRA. Thus, these groups are focusing on training and recruitment.[20] In a statement issued by the republican prisoners linked to the organization Cogús in HMP Maghaberry, the prisoners compared the current state of republicanism with the situation after the end of the IRA's Operation Harvest in 1962.[21] Youth organizations today are an essential part of this rebuilding, as they were in the 1960s. Hence, the establishment of the youth wing Éistigí was a predictable move for the

far-left Saoradh organization. Researching the long-term radicalization and recruitment processes, particularly during a period when large-scale support for political violence has waned, provides an understanding of the recruitment processes of these dissident organizations.

Despite the growing visibility in the streetscape in Belfast, dissident republicanism remains marginal. (Goulding and McCrory 2020) Nonetheless, the threat-level remains "severe" in Northern Ireland. Brexit insecurity provides an opportunity for the groups to be exploited (Trumbore and Owsiak 2019); researchers also suggest that these groups are an entry point for youth into organized crime. (Jupp and Garrod 2019) The latter point contrasts sharply with the motivations for joining these groups, as demonstrated in this article. Hence, this aspect needs further in-depth analysis since it is not possible to discuss it in the space of this paper.

The findings of this case study correspond with the recent literature on radicalization and recruitment into terrorist organizations. (Weisburd 2020) In particular, vulnerability, identity, social networks, and the internet in the radicalization of youth has recently been researched in other political, religious, and ideological contexts in Western Europe. (Goerzig and Al-Hashimi 2014; Gaudette et al. 2020; Lynch 2013; Pfundmaier et al. 2019) Bal and van den Bos argue that "the threat of terrorism is one of the defining features of contemporary society." (2017, 4) Bal and van den Bos introduce four themes that lead to radicalization. The first is system rejection – where "confrontations with inequality or unfairness are central to the process of radicalization." Indeed, the young members of Na Fianna Éireann mentioned poverty and inequality in their Dublin neighbourhoods throughout the interviews; they had a strong perception that society is unjust. (2017, 5) Second, a direct consequence of the first theme is the rejection of the status quo and the decision to follow movements that pursue an alternative system. The alternative system of the interview partners in my research project is a re-united Ireland. Some of my narrators mentioned the Éire Nua program of RSF and, thus,

the "united Ireland" they are fighting for was also called "new Ireland", even though they often cannot outline their vision of this "new Ireland". In other words, the rejection of the existing system is not enough for radicalization without a clear vision of an alternative system. This second theme links to the third, the acceptance of violence. Bal and van den Bos write that "the presence of an alternative system can be assumed to be a prerequisite for radicalization to turn into terrorism." (2017, 12) Moreover, the "right to armed struggle" is a regular feature of Irish republicanism since the foundation of the first Irish republican organization in the late 18th century, the Society of the United Irishmen. Finally, fourth, the existence of a radical subculture that exists in Ireland, as was mentioned by many interview partners when explaining their routes into political activism, for example through attendance at commemorations, such as the Bundoran hunger strike commemoration, or ballad sessions.

Based on these considerations, I would argue that the radicalization and recruitment processes of Irish republicans today mirrors the practices in the 1960s. Like in the 1960s, the movement was at a low ebb. Analyzing women's rights activism between 1940 and 1960, Taylor writes that social movement abeyance structures provide "the organizational and ideological bridges between earlier activism and the development of other movements". (1989, 762) I would argue that today's dissident republican youth organizations may serve as the organizational and ideological "bridge" for a future wave of small group political violence in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, as did the youth organizations in the 1960s. To be sure, the post-1969 violence was sparked by years of militant social movement activity by the civil rights activists, followed by an extraordinary level of state repression. Both factors do not exist in Ireland today. Nonetheless, the PSNI recorded two security-related deaths, further 87 casualties of paramilitary violence, and 15 bombing incidents in Northern Ireland in 2019. The number of persons charged was 18 over the same period. (PSNI 2020) While these numbers are far lower than prior to 1998, the potential significance of contemporary paramilitary violence should not be discounted. If conditions deteriorate

drastically, in particular as a result of external shocks such as Brexit, it is conceivable that these tiny groups might constitute the harbinger of a much more significant movement. (Garry et al. 2020, 2)

In essence, this article offers insight into dissident republican youth organizations in the Republic of Ireland. In this way it sheds light on several issues, among those are the appeal of dissident youth organizations; the social and family background of the young recruits; the organizational strength of these organizations in the Republic of Ireland; the ideology of dissident youth members; the recruitment practices of dissident republican organizations; and, more generally, what motivates teenagers and young adults to turn to political violence in liberal democracies. While this research is confined to the province of Leinster, it opens avenues to explore other related subjects: First, why do teenagers and young adults join dissident republican organizations in Northern Ireland. Second, why do teenagers and young adults join loyalist organizations in Northern Ireland? Third, in the context of the ongoing drug gangs' feuds in Dublin and Limerick, (Hourigan et al. 2017) why are some young adults joining republican organizations and other criminal gangs? Finally, fourth, what determines the choice of joining non-violent republican organizations versus dissident groups advocating political violence in today's Ireland?

Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of this article were presented at the conference *Irish Society, History & Culture: 100 years after 1916* in October 2016 in Florence; and the conference *Children & War: Past & Present* in July 2016 in Salzburg. I want to thank the anonymous reviewers, Helen Aitchison, Richard English (QUB), John Morrison (Royal Holloway), Melanie Sindelar (University of Vienna), Robert W. White (IUPUI), and the CEU's Conflict and Security Research Group (ConSec) led by Erin Kristin Jenne (CEU) for their helpful comments. They are not responsible for any errors or the opinions expressed in this article.

Disclosure statement

The author reported no potential conflict of interest.

ORCID

Dieter Reinisch: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3205-8739

Notes

Alonso, Rogelio, and Paul Delgado. 2020. "The Radicalization of Young Jihadi Convicted of Membership of Terrorist Organization in Spain: Analyzing the Pieces of the Puzzle." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1780025

Alison, Miranda. 2009. *Women and political violence: Female combatants in ethno-national conflict*. London: Routledge.

Bal, Michèlle, and Kees van den Bos. 2017. "From system acceptance to embracing alternative systems and system rejection: Tipping points in processes of radicalization." *Translational Issues in Psychological Science* 3 (3):241.

Bell, J Bowyer. 2000. *The IRA, 1968-2000: analysis of a secret army*. London: Frank Cass.

Ben Aharon, Eldad. 2020. "Doing Oral History with the Israeli Elite and the Question of Methodology in International Relations Research." *Oral History Review*:1-23. DOI: 10.1080/00940798.2019.1702467.

Black, Rebecca. 2013. "Children dressed like Provos is 'deeply worrying'." *Newsletter*, 3 April.

Bloom, Mia. 2017. "Constructing Expertise: Terrorist Recruitment and 'Talent Spotting' in the PIRA, Al Qaeda and ISIS." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40 (7):603-23.

Bosi, Lorenzo. 2012. "Explaining pathways to armed activism in the Provisional Irish Republican Army, 1969–1972." *Social Science History* 36 (3):347-90.

Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine. 2010. "Irish Republicanism and the Internet: Support for new wave dissidents." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4 (2).

Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine, and Maura Conway. 2012. "Exploring the form and function of dissident Irish Republican online discourses." *Media, War & Conflict* 5 (1):71-85.

Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine, and Stephen Herron. 2020. "Then and Now: Irish Republicanism and Ulster Loyalism Online." In *Digital Extremisms: Readings in Violence, Radicalization and Extremism in the Online Space*, edited by Mark Litter and Benjamin Lee, 109-32. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cardeli, Emma, Mia Bloom, Sarah Gillespie, Tanya Zayed, and B. Heidi Ellis. 2019. "Exploring the Social-Ecological Factors that Mobilize Children into Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence*:1-23. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2019.1701444.

Carson, Niall, and Paddy Hoey. 2012. "The Bell and the Blanket: Journals of Irish Republican Dissent "*New Hibernia Review* 16 (1):75-93. DOI: 10.1353/nhr.2012.0008.

Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). 2019. *New Irish Republican Army*. published July 2019, cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/content/mmp-new-irish-republican-army.

Clubb, Gordon. 2016. "The Role of Former Combatants in Preventing Youth Involvement in Terrorism in Northern Ireland: A Framework for Assessing Former Islamic State Combatants." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39 (9):842-61. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2016.1144917.

Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. "The causes of terrorism." *Comparative Politics* 13 (4):379-99.

Della Porta, Donatella. 2013. *Clandestine Political Violence, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Della Porta, Donatella. 2014. "Social Movement Studies and Methodological Pluralism: An Introduction." In *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, edited by Donatella Della Porta, 1-20. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Della Porta, Donatella, and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt. 2012. "Patterns of radicalization in political activism." *Social Science History* 36 (03):311-20.

Edwards, Aaron. 2019. "The Fragility of the Good Friday Peace: The Persistence of Terrorism in Northern Ireland." *CTC Sentinel* 12 (4): online first.

English, Richard. 2015. "Why Terrorist Campaigns Do Not End: The Case of Contemporary Dissident Irish Republicanism." In *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 125-44. London: The British Academy.

Evans, Jocelyn, and Jonathan Tonge. 2013. "From Abstentionism to Enthusiasm: Sinn Féin, Nationalist Electors and Support for Devolved Power-sharing in Northern Ireland." *Irish Political Studies* 28 (1):39-57. DOI: 10.1080/07907184.2012.684681.

Fennell, Damien. 2019. "Radicalization Rubbish. "*The Pensive Quill*, 18 May, www.thepensivequill.com/2019/05/radicalisation-rubbish.html.

Ferguson, Neil, and Mark Burgess. 2009. "From Naivety to Insurgency: The Causes and Consequences of Joining a Northern Irish Paramilitary Group." In *Faces of Terrorism: Cross-Disciplinary Explorations*, edited by David Canter, 19-33. Wiley.

Ferguson, Neil, and James W. McAuley. 2019. "Radicalization or Reaction: Understanding Engagement in Violent Extremism in Northern Ireland." *Political Psychology*. DOI: 10.1111/pops.12618.

Frampton, Martyn. 2010. "The return of the militants: Violent dissident republicanism." *London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, King's College London* 68:3-14.

———. 2011. *Legion of the Rearguard: Dissident Irish Republicanism*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Frenett, Ross. 2019. "Who Supports Dissident Irish Republicanism? A Snapshot of Sympathizers on Facebook in 2015." *VOX-Pol*, 25 April.

Gaudette, Tiana, Ryan Scrivens, and Vivek Venkatesh. 2020. "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right-Wing Extremists." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2020.1784147.

Gallagher, Connor. 2019. "Dissident republicans operate 'broad, unsophisticated online networks'." *Irish Times*, 24 April.

Garry, John, Brendan O'Leary, Kevin McNicholl, and James Pow. 2020. "The future of Northern Ireland: border anxieties and support for Irish reunification under varieties of UKexit." *Regional Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/00343404.2020.1759796.

Gill, Paul, and John Horgan. 2013. "Who Were the Volunteers? 1 The Shifting Sociological and Operational Profile of 1240 Provisional Irish Republican Army Members." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25 (3): 435-56. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2012.664587.

Goerzig, Carolin, and Khaled Al-Hashimi. 2014. *Radicalization in Western Europe: Integration, Public Discourse and Loss of Identity among Muslim Communities*. London: Routledge.

Goulding, Stephen, and Amy McCrory. 2020. "Representing the (un)finished revolution in Belfast's political murals." *Critical Discourse Studies.* DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2020.1777176.

Hanley, Brian. 2018. *The impact of the Troubles on the Republic of Ireland, 1968–79: Boiling volcano?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hanley, Brian, and Scott Millar. 2010. *The Lost Revolution: The Story of the Official IRA and the Workers' Party*. Dublin: Penguin Ireland.

Hay, Marnie. 2019. *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-23: Scouting for rebels*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hearty, Kevin. 2017. "Spoiling through performative nonviolence: ritualistic funerary practice as a Violent Dissident Irish Republican (VDR) spoiling tactic." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2017.1402430.

Hoey, Paddy. 2018a. "Dissident and dissenting republicanism: From the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement to Brexit." *Capital & Class* 43 (3).

———. 2018b. *Shinners, Dissos and Dissenters: Irish Republican Media Activism Since the Good Friday Agreement*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Home Office. 2020. *Proscribed Terrorist Organizations*. 28 February, assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869496/20200228_Proscription.pdf.

Horgan, J, and P Gill. 2011. "Who becomes a dissident? Patterns in the mobilization and recruitment of violent dissident republicans." In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, edited by Maxwell Taylor and PM Currie, 43-64. Continuum Press.

Horgan, John. 2013. *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2014. *The psychology of terrorism*. Revised and updated second edition. London: Routledge.

Horgan, John, and John F. Morrison. 2011. "Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23 (4):642-69. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.594924.

Hourigan, Niamh, John F. Morrison, James Windle, and Andrew Silke. 2017. "Crime in Ireland north and south: Feuding gangs and profiteering paramilitaries." *Trends in Organized Crime*:1-21. DOI: 10.1007/s12117-017-9312-9.

Jupp, John, and Matthew Garrod. 2019. "Legacies of the Troubles: The Links between Organized Crime and Terrorism in Northern Ireland." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*:1-40. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2019.1678878.

Kruglanski, Arie W, Jocelyn J Bélanger, and Rohan Gunaratna. 2019. *The three pillars of radicalization: Needs, narratives, and networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kuznar, Lawrence A, and James M Lutz. 2007. "Risk sensitivity and terrorism." *Political Studies* 55 (2):341-61.

Larsen, Jeppe Fuglsang. 2020. "Talking about radicalization." *Nordic Journal of Criminology* 21 (1):49-66.

Lynch, Orla. 2013. "British Muslim youth: radicalization, terrorism and the construction of the "other"." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 6 (2):241-61. DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2013.788863.

Lynn, Brendan. 2002. "Tactic or Principle? The Evolution of Republican Thinking on Abstentionism in Ireland, 1970-1998." *Irish Political Studies* 17 (2):74-94.

McAlister, Siobhan. 2019. "Northern Ireland: how some of the 'agreement generation' are drawn into paramilitary groups. "*The Conversation UK*, 26 April.

McAlister, Siobhan, C Dwyer, and N Carr. 2018. "Experiencing Paramilitarism: Understanding the Impact of Paramilitaries on Young People in Northern Ireland." In *Centre for Children's Rights Research Findings*. Belfast: Queen's University.

McAlister, Siobhán, Deena Haydon, and Phil Scraton. 2013. "Violence in the lives of children and youth in "post-conflict" Northern Ireland." *Children Youth and Environments* 23 (1):1-22.

McCauley, Clark R, and Sophia Moskalenko. 2016. *Friction: How conflict radicalizes them and us*: Oxford University Press.

McGlinchey, Marisa. 2019. *Unfinished business: The politics of 'dissident' Irish republicanism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Moghaddam, Fathali M. 2005. "The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration." *American psychologist* 60 (2):161.

Mooney, John, and Michael O'Toole. 2003. *Black operations: The secret war against the real IRA.* Dublin: Maverick House.

Morris, Alison. 2020. "Security alert in Rosslea." *Irish News*, 25 March.

Morrison, John. 2011. "Why do people become dissident Irish Republicans?" In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, edited by Maxwell Taylor and PM Currie, 17-42. New York: Continuum.

Morrison, John F. 2013. *Origins and Rise of Dissident Irish Republicanism: The Role and Impact of Organizational Splits*. New York/London/New Dehli/Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Morrison, John F. 2016. "Fighting Talk: The Statements of "The IRA/New IRA"." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (3):598-619. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2016.1155941.

Mullen, Kevin. 2019. "Saoradh speculate 'mine attack' timed to coincide with Soloheadbeg centenary." *Derry Journal*, 19 January.

Mulroe, Patrick. 2017. *Bombs, Bullets and the Border: Ireland's Frontier: Irish Security Policy, 1969–1978.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

Na Fianna Éireann. 2009. *1909-2009: Centenary Commemorative Booklet*. Dublin: Irish Freedom Press.

Nalton, John, Gilbert Ramsey, and Max Taylor. 2011. "Radicalization and internet propaganda by dissident Republican groups in Northern Ireland since 2008." *Dissident Irish Republicanism*:119-14.

Northern Ireland Office. 2019. *Northern Ireland: Terrorism Legislation: Annual Statistics 2018/19*, published November.

Ó Brádaigh, Ruairí. 1997. *Dílseacht: The Story of Comdt. Gen. Tom Maguire and the Second (All-Ireland) Dáil*. Dublin: Irish Freedom Press.

O'Driscoll, Sean. 2019. *The Accidental Spy*. London: Mirror Books.

Ó Faoleán, Gearóid. 2019. *A broad church: The Provisional IRA in the Republic of Ireland 1969-1980*. Dublin: Merrion Press.

Orsini, Alessandro. 2020. "What Everybody Should Know about Radicalization and the DRIA Model." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*:1-33. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1738669.

Police Service of Northern Ireland. 2020. *Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics, 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019*, published 10 January.

Portelli, Alessandro. 1991. *Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories, The: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Pfundmair, Michaela, Elena Aßmann, Benjamin Kiver, Maximilian Penzkofer, Amelie Scheuermeyer, Larissa Sust, and Holger Schmidt. 2019. "Pathways toward Jihadism in Western Europe: An Empirical Exploration of a Comprehensive Model of Terrorist Radicalization." *Terrorism and Political Violence*. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2019.1663828.

Reinisch, Dieter. 2018. "Women's agency and political violence: Irish Republican women and the formation of the Provisional IRA, 1967–70." *Irish Political Studies*:1-24. DOI: 10.1080/07907184.2018.1554565.

Rekawek, Kacper. 2016. "'The Last of the Mohicans?' The IRA's 'Operation Harvest' in an International Context." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (3):435-51. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2016.1155930.

Sageman, Marc. 2004. *Understanding terror networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2014. "The stagnation in terrorism research." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26 (4):565-80.

———. 2017. *Turning to political violence: the emergence of terrorism*: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sanders, Andrew. 2011. *Inside the IRA: Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Silber, Mitchell D, Arvin Bhatt, and Senior Intelligence Analysts. 2007. *Radicalization in the West: The homegrown threat*: Police Department New York.

Taylor, Max, and PM Currie (eds.). 2011. *Dissident Irish Republicanism*. New York: Continuum.

Taylor, Verta. 1989. "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance." *American Sociological Review* 54 (5):761-75.

Tonge, Jon. 2010. "Dissidents, Ultras, Militarists or Patriots? Analyzing the Strategies, Tactics and Support for "Dissident" Republicanism." In *Political Studies Association of Ireland annual conference*. Dublin Institute of Technology.

Treacy, Matt. 2011. *The IRA 1956-69: Rethinking the Republic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Trumbore, Peter F., and Andrew P. Owsiak. 2019. "Brexit, the Border, and Political Conflict Narratives in Northern Ireland." *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 30:195-216. DOI: 10.3318/isia.2019.30.12.

Watts, John. 1981. "Na Fianna Eireann: A Case Study of a Political Youth Organisation." University of Glasgow.

Weisburd, David, Ernesto Savona, Badi Hasisi, and Francesco Calderoni (eds.). 2020. *Understanding Recruitment to Organized Crime and Terrorism*. Cham, Springer.

White, Robert W. 1993. *Provisional Irish republicans: An oral and interpretive history*, *Contributions in political science*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

———. 2000. "Issues in the study of political violence: understanding the motives of participants in small group political violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 12 (1):95-108.

———. 2017. *Out of the Ashes: An Oral History of the Provisional Irish Republican Movement*. Dublin: Merrion Press.

———. 2020. Irish Republican Movement Collection, sites.google.com/iu.edu/thefuneralofruairiobradaigh/home; accessed: 15 April.

White, Robert W., and Michael Fraser. 2000. "Personal and Collective Identities and Long Term Movement Activism." In *Self, Identity, and Social Movements*, edited by Sheldon Stryker, Timothy Joseph Owens and Robert W White, 324-46. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Whiting, Sophie A. 2015. *Spoiling the peace? The threat of dissident Republicans to peace in Northern Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2005. *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim extremism in the West*: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Young, Connla. 2019. "New IRA admits murder of journalist Lyra McKee and offers 'sincere apologies'." *Irish News*, 23 April.

Notes

1 I approached these interviews as life-story interviews. The narrators were recruited through Na Fianna Éireann and the republican organisation Republican Sinn Féin. Before conducting the interviews, I obtained consent from the two republican organisations, the interview partners, and the case that they were still underage at the time of the interview, from at least one of their parents. The interviews lasted between 2-3 hours and were conducted in a house in Dublin in spring 2016. Before embarked on the research, I had obtained ethical approval from the European University Institute, my affiliated institution during the data collection, for this research. Each interview partner signed a consent form prior to the interview that stated, among other things, that he participates voluntarily in the research project and that the he was given the opportunity to remain anonymous; in accordance with the consent form, all interviews are strictly anonymised, the real identities and the exact date and location cannot be revealed, neither will the interview recordings, transcripts, and consent forms be made available to any third party.

2 The term "military ceasefire" is used in dissident republican circles to describe a situation in which the paramilitary organisations do not engage with the PSNI or the British army but continue other paramilitary activities such as punishment attacks, training, etc.

3 "Belfast suspected grenade attack 'an attempt to kill or injure police officers'," *BBC News*, December 4, 2019, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-50658186; "Continuity IRA blamed for 'Brexit bomb plot'," *ITV*, February 6, 2020, www.itv.com/news/utv/2020-02-06/lurgan-bomb-find-followed-reports-of-device-on-lorry.

4 "The Republic's Dissident Youth: Ireland's Young Warriors." *Vice News*, July 23, 2015, news.vice.com/video/the-republics-dissident-youth-irelands-young-warriors; "Children aged 10 being groomed in training camps as IRA of future," *Irish Mirror*, August 30, 2015, www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/children-aged-10-being-groomed-6349081; Carlo Massimo, "The Dangerous People Liberalism doesn't reach," *Newsweek*, August 17, 2015, www.newsweek.com/dangerous-people-liberalism-doesnt-reach-363624.

5 "Na Fianna Éireann seek donations for the homeless," *Saoirse*, issue 323, November 2015, 2.

6 Information obtained from *Saoirse*, issue 324, April 2014, 16.

7 The term "Fian" is used by republicans for members of Na Fianna Éireann, similarly to the use of the term "Volunteer" for members of the IRA and INLA.

8 "Na Fianna mark 100th anniversary of Howth gun-running," *Saoirse*, issue 328, August 2014, 8.

9 The information on the Seán Glynn Slua in Limerick is mentioned in the republican newspaper *Saoirse*, issue 133, May 1998, 10.

10 "Glasnevin cemetery: Protests while British soldiers honoured," *Saoirse*, issue 338, April 2016, 3.

11 "Na Fianna Abú," *Saoirse*, October 2016, 10.

12 Article signed "OC, Na Fianna Éireann": "Helping the homeless," *Saoirse*, issue 368, January 2018, 2.

13 Reported in *Saoirse*, issue 289, May 2011, 10.

14 Court proceedings of Kieran Collins from Craigavon, charged for membership of the Continuity IRA, in possession of the author.

15 Ibid.

16 "Éistigí, The Youth Wing Of Saoradh," *An Sionnach Fionn*, January 31, 2018, ansionnachfionn.com/2018/01/31/eistigi-the-youth-wing-of-saoradh.

17 Brian Murphy, a social worker from Dublin and member of Saoradh and the Irish Republican Prisoners' Welfare Association.

18 Solely the introduction to Bobby Sands' prison diaries is written by Gerry Adams, the then president of Sinn Féin.

19 32s refers to the 32 County Sovereignty Movement.

20 "New IRA says border infrastructure would be 'legitimate target for attack'." *ITV*, October 16, 2019, www.channel4.com/news/new-ira-says-border-infrastructure-would-be-legitimate-target-for-attack.

21 Easter Statement by Cogús republican prisoners, published at Easter 2018, personal possession.