Introduction

For most observers, terrorism in Ireland has gone away. For those closer to the region, however, the issue has been frustratingly ambiguous. Though large-scale terrorist activity has been relegated to the past, an escalation of low-level terrorist activity by Irish Republican splinter groups has recently reached its highest level in ten years. Breakaway Irish Republican terror groups, known as 'the dissidents' (characterised by their refusal to sign up to the 1998 peace accord) came to the fore when in March 2009, when members of two such groupings claimed responsibility for three murders. Within a period of 48 hours, members of the Real IRA shot dead two soldiers at Massareene Barracks, while Continuity IRA members shot and killed a member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Though these murders represented the most dramatic examples of residual terrorism in Ireland since the 1998 Omagh bombing, the attacks signaled a dramatic turn in an already steady rise in activity from 2007 to today. In 2010 alone, high level attacks ranged from the detonation of a bomb at a Newry courthouse in February to the targeting of a number of PSNI stations by dissident bombers throughout the year. On April 2nd 2011, consistent with this overall rise in violent dissident Republican (VDR) activity, a car bomb planted by dissident Republicans murdered 25 year Catholic PSNI officer Ronan Kerr outside his home in Omagh, Co. Tyrone.

But VDR activity goes far beyond the targeting of police, soldiers and targets of 'national security'. Recent years have also seen the return of punishment attacks and other forms of vigilante justice where, among others, suspected drug dealers and sex offenders have been targeted within traditionally Republican communities. In fact, the security situation in Northern Ireland has so worsened overall that British Home Secretary Theresa May, in September 2010, declared that the threat level posed by VDR organisations had risen from 'moderate' to 'substantial',[1] further inferring that a VDR attack on the UK mainland was a 'strong possibility.'[2] This was echoed in the placement of the 'activities of residual terrorist groups'[3] alongside international terrorism as a 'tier one' security risk to the

national security of the United Kingdom.[4] In the same month, Jonathan Evans, the Director General of MI5, publicly acknowledged that the Security Service has "seen a persistent rise in terrorist activity and ambition in Northern Ireland over the last three years."[5]

The acknowledgement of the rise in dissident Republican activity and the future threat posed by these organisations is consistent with data collected for a research project conducted at the International Center for the Study of Terrorism (ICST) at the Pennsylvania State University. The Violent Dissident Republicanism Project (hereafter *VDR)* began in October 2009 and seeks to provide a greater understanding of the development of violent dissident republicans, their organisations and activities. Through an extensive data collection effort from exclusively open source material,[6] the VDR Project seeks to answer four primary questions:

1. How and why do Irish dissident groups emerge?
2. How can the VDR phenomenon be characterised?
3. Who becomes involved in violent dissident Republicanism?
4. What does VDR activity look like and how has it developed over time?

The project sees the development of a large database on VDR events and personnel, the basic structure of which was described in a previous paper.[7] While the academic literature on VDR groups and activity is still relatively young there have been a number of notable examples of publications that have significantly enhanced our understanding of this developing phenomenon.[8] The literature to date, however, is largely descriptive in nature (though no less valuable as a result), with a significant lack of data to support the claims being made by some. Central to the aims of this research project, and the resulting analysis, is to provide comprehensive quantitative data points that may allow us to further explore some of the issues only implicitly addressed in earlier literature. In particular, the focus of the current article is to draw attention to the increasing nature and extent of violent activity associated with dissident groups through an analysis of VDR activity and

personnel from 1997 to 2010 and to identify patterns of activity that may provide us with an understanding of current and future directions for the dissidents.

Who Are the Dissidents?

The signing of Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and subsequently the St Andrews Agreement in 2006, effectively heralded an end to 'The Troubles'. The largest Irish Republican organisation of the second half of the twentieth century, the Provisional IRA (PIRA) has put its weapons beyond use and declared its full support for the exclusive use of peaceful politics as the strategy to achieve their goals.[9] However, while Northern Ireland is for the first time in a generation ostensibly at peace, there remains a significant and growing threat posed to Northern Irish and British security by dissident Irish Republican organisations. These groups reject the Good Friday Agreement and advocate the continued use of violence to expel British influence from the region.

There are three prominent and active violent dissident Republican organisations today. These represent the primary (though not exclusive) focus of the VDR Project, and are: The Real IRA (RIRA), The Continuity IRA (CIRA) and Oglaigh na hEireann (ONH). In addition to these groups, there are multiple smaller factions that also operate within Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland.[10] Confusion reigns as to the true nature and significance of what has been described as Republican "micro-groups", with allegations that some of these represent proxy or even ghost groups.[11] RIRA, CIRA and ONH, however, have been responsible for the deadliest activity since 1998 and have done more to assert their identities than any of the other, smaller coalitions that have largely centered around a tiny group or people, or specific geographical location.

CIRA emerged as a result of the 1986 split within Provisional Republicanism that also saw the emergence of their political wing Republican Sinn Fein (RSF). While the initial split took place in 1986 the military wing of the dissidents did not become 'active' until the mid-1990s. 2010 saw another divide when the paramilitary CIRA moved out from under the control of the RSF leadership who they believed were stifling them militarily. Eleven years after the initial Continuity split the group that is now known as the RIRA

emerged from a further split within the PIRA. This was nominally due to the rejection of the Mitchell Principles by key core members of the PIRA leadership. The paramilitary split coincided with the separation from Sinn Fein of the 32 County Sovereignty Committee (now 32 County Sovereignty *Movement*), a group commonly thought to be the political voice of RIRA. In the years subsequent to these splits, and beyond PIRA, both paramilitary organisations – CIRA and RIRA - have experienced their own internal conflicts that have resulted in the formation of even more new dissident factions. The most notable of these are two which both use the moniker of ONH, one of which split from the CIRA in Strabane and the other resulted in a more widespread national schism in RIRA. Up until recently it was believed that ONH had no political wing. However, at their 2011 Ard Fheis the 'political pressure group' Republican Network for Unity (RNU) sent 'comradely greetings to Oglaigh Na hEireann.'[12]

The recent dramatic increase in terrorist activity has generated significant debate among government, security officials and scholars about the threat posed by these dissident groups.[13] The nature of these debates has ranged from critical and highly charged questions about the accuracy of the number of attacks, to utter confusion about how the nature of the threat has been characterised (confusion that ONH itself acknowledged as 'useful').[14] An artifact of this confusion in late-2010 saw the advent of a new collective term for the dissidents in the form of 'residual terrorist groups.' This is a phrase that has been promoted by representatives of the British and Irish governments as well as the PSNI. The label was justified by concern about the apparent nobility associated with the term 'dissident'. In his previous capacity as Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs the current leader of Fianna Fail, Michael Martin, actively called for the discontinuation of the term 'dissident': "[It] is a completely inappropriate term…[It] relates to people of conscience during the Cold War, and that term has no application to the kind of indiscriminate bombings which have taken place, or the murder of police officers or British Army personnel. They're betraying the republican tradition."[15]

This argument is not new. For several years, Northern Ireland expert Jonathan Tonge rejected the use of the term 'dissidents,' and in its place refers to Irish Republican

'ultras.'[16] However, we assert that a change in terminology is not only unnecessary and inappropriate but potentially misleading. 'Dissent' does not convey a value judgment on the act of dissidence, or alternatively that from which is been dissented. Consequently usage of the title 'dissident' does not place any value judgment on a group and is used to describe the defining characteristic of an individual or organisation. The question is rather whether or not the act of dissent is the defining characteristic of the organisations being analysed? It is our opinion that the answer to this must be yes. Each of the groups under examination here have, through the act of schism or split, dissented from what is now accepted as 'mainstream' Republicanism. While it is the case that ONH has actually split from *other* modern day dissident groups their most defining feature is still their core assertion of a rejection of Sinn Fein and the mainstream politicisation of Republicanism by its leadership.

All of the dissident groups (including the non-violent dissident groups, addressed later) reject both the Good Friday and St. Andrews agreements. They also reject the acceptance of the PSNI as a legitimate policing force for the six counties of Northern Ireland. Their stated beliefs are that any political settlement short of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and an independent united Ireland fall too far short of their Irish Republican goals and therefore cannot be used as a justification for the permanent cessation of violence.

However, and while we use the 'dissident' label here, this in no way implies homogeneity of organisation, ideological focus or tactical repertoire. We acknowledge that within dissident Irish Republicanism there is ongoing competition and conflict between groups. There are also visible internal conflicts within specific groups, most notably the Continuity IRA. While there have been actions, attacks and statements[17] suggesting the possibility of a dissident coalition[18] the overall picture is one of competition. Though competition does not negate the possibility of dissident co-operation on some levels, it does acknowledge a certain level of autonomy across the groups. In addition, that competition does not permeate only dissident Republicanism, but affects Republicanism and Nationalism on the whole. Each of the currently active movements is in constant competition with each other to gain what little influence may be available within the

Republican community to leverage both membership and support. Through their words and actions each Republican organisation proposes that *they*, and no other group, are the only legitimate Irish Republican group and that they are the ones who will ultimately bring about a united Ireland (one that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, they argue, have failed to deliver).
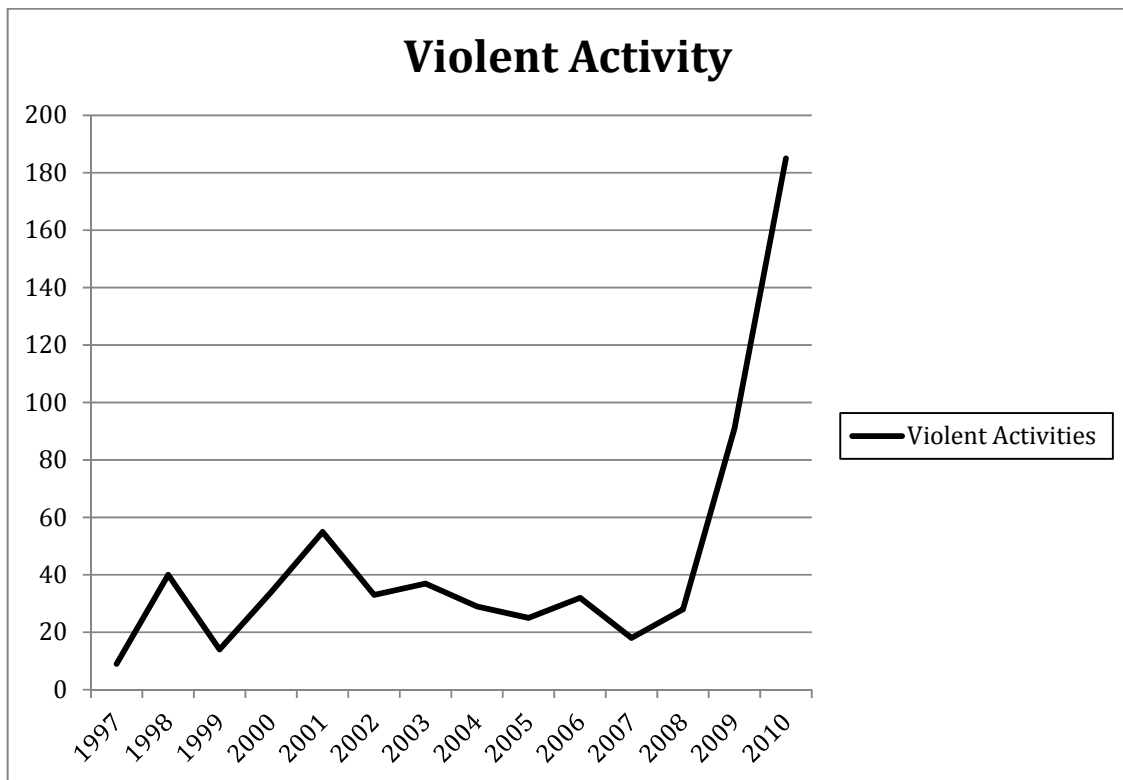
VDR Activity 1997-2010

The VDR database essentially covers dissident activity in a *post-Troubles* Northern Ireland. The events section presents data collected from open sources for violent, non-violent and *threat* of violence events. The data examined in this article will focus on the *violent* activities of VDR groups and individuals. We examine violent activity from 1997 to the 2010, while also highlighting the events at the beginning of 2011, so as to chart the evolution of dissident activity from the year prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement up to the present day.

For the 15 years under analysis the events database has recorded 968 primary events in total; 711 of these have been violent, 187 non-violent and 70 have been labeled as threats of violence.[19] This section focuses on the violent events from 1997 to 2010, with reference to 2011 where appropriate.

As illustrated in Figure 1, there has been a steady stream of violent events since 1997, with 2010 seeing a dramatic increase. This pattern is consistent with increased activity in both 2008 and 2009. 185 violent events were recorded for 2010. The next highest annual rates of 91 in 2009, 55 in 2001 and 40 in 1998, the year of the Omagh bombing. By April 20, 2011 there had already been 73 VDR events recorded for 2011, already making it the third most violent year in our database.

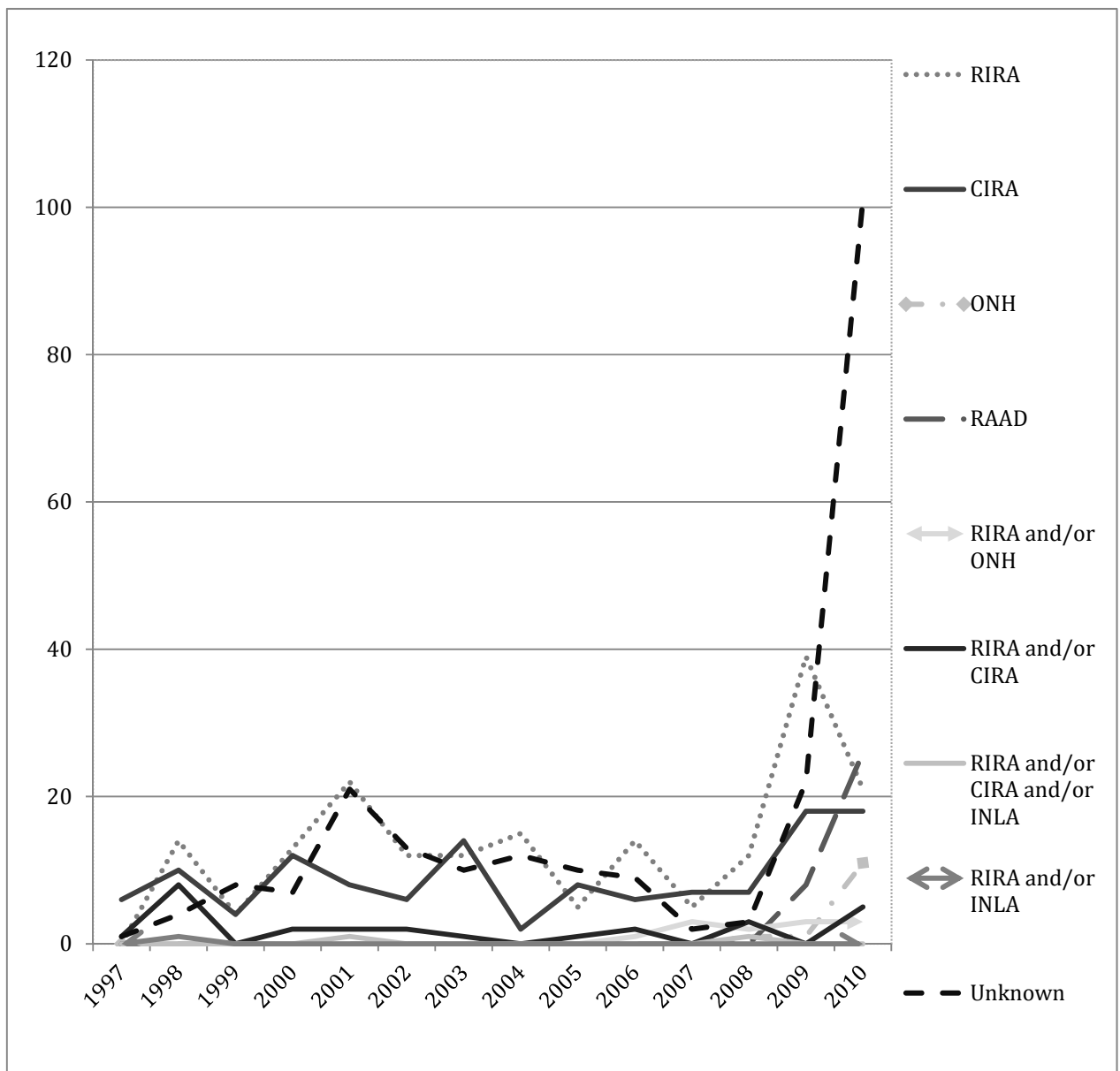**Figure 1: Violent Dissident Republican event activity from 1997 to 2010**

Particular years offer striking observations. Figure 1 displays a significant relative decrease in violent activity for 1999 with only 14 violent dissident attacks recorded, compared to 40 from the year previous. This can be attributed to the extensive counter-dissident activity in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing and the subsequent RIRA ceasefire from September 1998-1999. Considering this, a closer examination of VDR activity shows that 38 of the 40 attacks of that year took place between January and August, with only 2 attacks[20] occurring in the post-Omagh period. CIRA were responsible for both. This would support the fact that national and international pressure, as well as counter-dissident strategies, in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing succeeded in its immediate aim of significantly weakening violent dissident activity.

The massive increase for 2010 aside, we are presented with an overall increase since 2007 that has invariably brought about the change in threat level posed by VDR groups and a recent stronger focus on dissident activity from security forces on both sides of the

border. Attempting to unravel this phenomenon further has given rise to significant challenges.

When we consider group responsibility (see Figure 2) an unclear picture emerges. Of the 185 acts of violence committed in 2010 and attributed broadly to Republican dissidents, 101 have been commited by unknown perpetrators (that is to say, unattributable to any specific dissident grouping). This we can compare to 22 unattributed events in 2009 and a previous peak of 21 events much earlier in 2001.
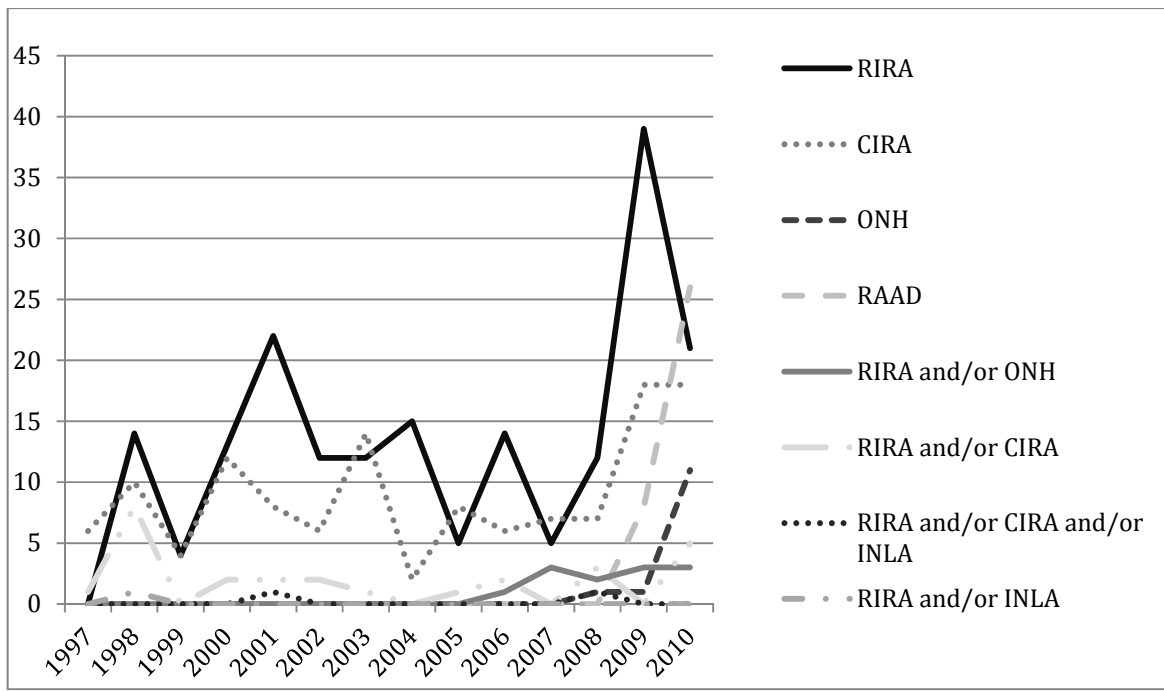
Figure 2: Violent VDR Activity by group

When we consider acts that can be attributed to a group (see Figure 3) some interesting patterns emerge. RIRA has been consistently the most active of all the groups. 2007-2009 saw a significant increase in RIRA activity but was followed by a sudden decline in activity for 2010. There are several hypotheses to consider here. It may be that RIRA is responsible for some of the aforementioned unattributed attacks – this would be consistent with previous patterns of failure to immediately claim responsibility for events.

We suspect, however, a major contributing factor here is the confusion within the media about the emergence of ONH, and that since the formation of that group a number of events may have been wrongfully attributed to one group over the other. We discuss this issue further below.

Figure 3: Violent VDR Activity by group (excluding Unknown)

While the data here may indicate a decrease of RIRA activity for 2010 we do not believe that this represents an *actual* decrease in overall activity by the group. Since 2007 RIRA activity has increased on an annual basis, and we believe that if and when the unattributed attacks are claimed by or attached to a specific group that the data will show the continued rise in RIRA activity. We believe this can also help explain the apparent stagnation in CIRA activity recorded for 2010. Another signal of how dramatic 2010 has been is that even if we completely disregard the 'unknown' event data, 2010 has *still* seen the second highest amount of violent activity by both groups, only surpassed in both cases by 2009.

As above, a major development for 2010 has been the emergence of ONH and Republican Action Against Drugs (hereafter RAAD) as persistent threats to security. The

2010 data suggests that RAAD was the most active VDR group from this year. However, we believe that when all the 'unknown' events are accounted for that this will no longer be the case. Of all VDR groups, RAAD are quickest to claim responsibility for their actions. It is therefore less likely that the group were responsible for the unattributed attacks in 2010, and more likely that groups such as RIRA, ONH and CIRA are. The emergence and significance of RAAD is discussed later.
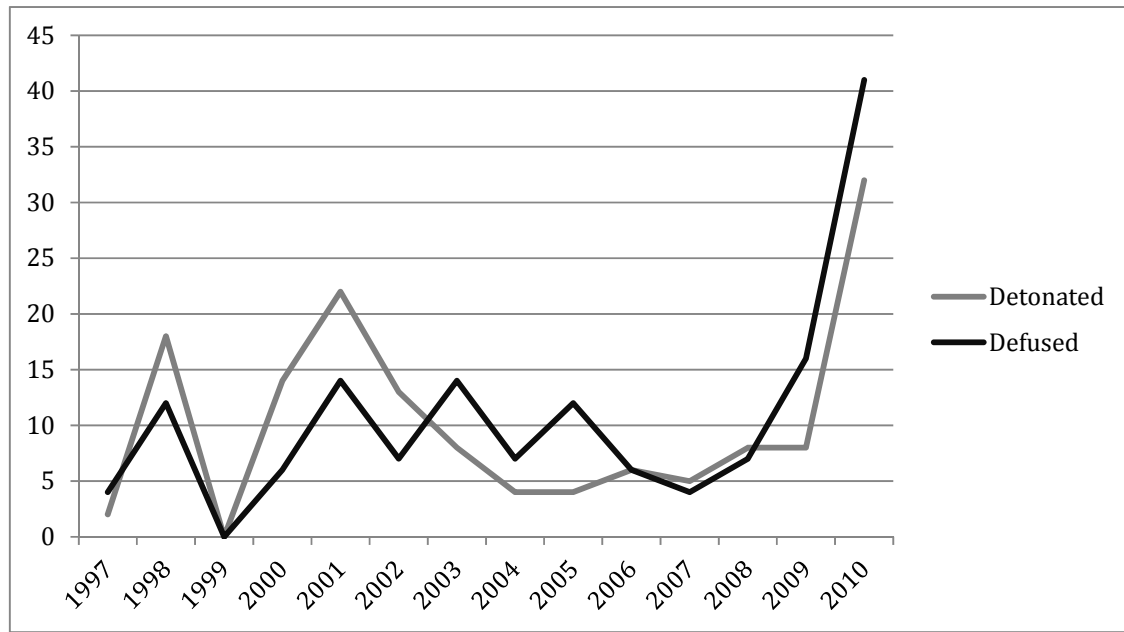
In 2008 and 2009 the database recorded only one violent confirmed ONH event each year. This has increased to eleven confirmed events for 2010. However when the 'unknown' events are factored in we suspect that for all three years ONH activity will be higher than initially apparent. There are three attacks that have been attributed to both the RIRA and ONH in 2010. This may demonstrate the confusion within the media about which specific groups are responsible for particular events. There have been instances where there have been claims and counter-claims by ONH and RIRA. Most notable was in the aftermath of the April car-bomb attack on Palace Barracks in Belfast. RIRA claimed responsibility for this attack before a representative of the Belfast branch of ONH contacted the Belfast Telegraph with a counter-claim, authenticated through the use of a recognised code word.[21] In the absence of this kind of verified claim of responsibility, it is common for attacks to be described in the media as "dissident activity."

However, the multiple group events indicated for this year and others may demonstrate the potential for coalition. While not a predominant policy to work together there have been examples of this on occasions in the past, notably the Omagh bombing in 1998. The operation that claimed 29 lives was a combined action by the CIRA and RIRA with a crossover of organisational members involved in planting the bomb and calling in the inaccurate warning.[22] There have also been recent indications in public statements that the individual groups are more willing to operationally work together.[23]

Bombing Incidents

This increase in attacks from 2007-2010 is echoed specifically through bombs, both detonated and defused (See Figure 4). 2010 alone saw a total of 73 dissident bombing incidents - 41 devices defused by the security forces, and 32 devices that were actually detonated. This is in marked contrast to 24 (16 defused and 8 detonated) in 2009. This increase in high-level activity (the highest year on record since the formation of the dissidents) supports the assumption that 2010 saw a growing sophistication in tactics, technology and determination on the part of the dissidents. This bombing data corroborates the official rise in the threat level.[24]

Figure 4: Bombing Incidents Detonated and Defused

This data, similar to the overall violent data, on the one hand indicates the immediate success of the counter-dissident strategy post-Omagh – it appears that no bombings were even attempted by dissident groupings for all of 1999. However, 2000 saw 14 detonated and 6 defused bombing incidents followed by 22 detonated and 14 defused in 2001. For each year 2003-2010, excluding 2006 and 2007, the number of defused bombs has annually surpassed those detonated. Already by April 20th 2011 there had been 21 bombing incidents, 6 detonations and 15 bombs defused. By the same time date in 2010

there had been 5 detonations and 10 defused. As with the overall violent event data this suggests that 2011 is already fitting into the pattern of an annual rise in VDR activity.

Hoax Devices

A defining tactic of the dissident groups has been to disrupt the normalisation of Northern Irish society. They have aimed to do so through the inducement of fear and the disruption of routine activity through their attacks and the resultant ongoing security alerts that intend to cause routine disturbance. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the dramatic increase in hoax devices planted (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Hoax Devices and Warnings

To successfully bring about a security alert and ensuing widespread disruption does not necessarily require the presence of a viable device. An increase of hoax devices and warnings, from 12 in 2009 to 34 in 2010, indicates that it has been a deliberate core tactic of VDR groups not only to attack with viable devices but also to demonstrate their potential for destruction. The planting of these hoax devices not only disrupts Northern Irish life but also over-extends the security service response units and EOD teams. These

hoax devices have to a significant extent targeted the transport infrastructure of Northern Ireland through their placement on motorways and railway tracks. While it has been a tactic used through the history of Republicanism at no period from 1997 to the present day has it been used so prominently as a tactic than in 2010. Prior to 2009 the highest recorded rate of hoax devices in the present database was 7 in 2003. In fact, it is very likely that there is probably underreporting of these events - due to the non-lethal nature of these devices it is possible that not all of the instances of hoax attacks will be reported in the media, and therefore may not be recorded in the database. By the end of April 2011 there had already been 25 separate hoax devices and warnings reported in Northern Ireland. This is second only, in our data, to 2010 for annual levels of hoax incidents. 12 of these incidents were in the days and weeks after the murder of Ronan Kerr. While some may be indicative of genuine false alarms[25] inevitable in the aftermath of a high profile attack, it is clear from the elaborate nature of some of the devices that these were deliberately planted by the dissident groups to disrupt the normalisation of Northern Irish society.

2010 Violence

While the concentration of violent activity so far has been through bombings and attempted bombings, viable and hoax devices, these do not account for all VDR activity in 2010. Table 1 illustrates that in 2010, there were 46 shootings and punishment attacks, 16 incidents of petrol bombs, 10 assaults, 8 acts of arson and 5 violent robberies.

Table 1: 2010 VDR Activity by Type

Type of VDR Activity	Number of Incidents in 2010
Shootings and Punishment Attacks	46
Defused Bomb Incidents	41
Hoax Incidents	34
Detonated Bomb Incidents	32
Petrol Bomb Incidents	16
Assaults	10
Violent Riots	10
Arson Incidents	8
Violent Robberies	5
Other	13

This data indicates that the strategy of the groups is not just to disrupt normalization through attempted high-level bombings and hoax activity, but also to demonstrate perceived and desired local authority. The rise in punishment attacks reflects the dissidents' method of denouncing the Police Service of Northern Ireland as a legitimate police force. This rise in punishment attacks is nowhere better illustrated than through the recent emergence of the Derry-based group Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD). RAAD represents the latest incarnation of Republican vigilante anti-drug groups. The database recorded 27 confirmed violent actions by this group in 2010 and 9 in 2009, all of which invariably constituted punishment attacks and pipe-bombs targeting known and suspected drug dealers in Republican areas of Derry and the surrounding areas. As with all VDR activity one of the main functions of these actions is to increase levels of both passive and active support from the Republican communities in these areas.[26] They do this under the guise of protecting the communities from 'criminals', and doing the job they claim the PSNI is not. They target and intimidate convicted and suspected drug dealers, often times continuously targeting specific individuals over a long period of time. In 2010, for example, the group targeted Gavin Nixon, a convicted drug dealer from Hazelbank, Derry. Nixon's home was first targeted with a pipe-bomb in June and he was later kidnapped in September. He was subsequently released, releasing a statement

detailing his abduction and calling an end to his involvement in the drug trade. In this statement he also warned all other drug dealers in the area of the potential for similar targeting of them, by RAAD, if they do not cease activity.[27] It is not only drug dealers that are targeted by such attacks. An example was the kneecapping of a 48-year-old convicted sex offender in the Carnhill[28] area of Derry city in October 2010, an attack claimed by the RIRA.[29]

VDR Personnel

We have collected open source information on 641 individuals involved in dissident activity. 181 are classified as 'convicted,'[30] that is, a confirmed conviction for illegal activity in the context of involvement in a dissident Republican movement. According to our data a further 78 are currently charged with VDR offences and are awaiting trial, and 2 charged but who died prior to their court date. In addition, data has also been collected on 24 individuals who were acquitted, and 28 whose charges were dropped prior to trial. There is additional data on 32 known supporters and 'alleged' members of VDR groups and 5 facilitators. The remaining individuals are non-violent dissident Republicans, those who have demonstrated their dissidence through political activity and other non-violent methods. While these individuals are, to our knowledge, not directly involved in violent dissident Republicanism they do provide a rare natural comparison to those who choose to enter violent dissident Republicanism. For a full breakdown of the individual-level data contained within the database see Table 2.

Table 2: VDR Personnel: Type

Status of Personnel	Number of Personnel
Convicted	181
Charged	80
Acquitted	24
Charges Dropped	28
Alleged Members of VDR Group	32
Facilitators of VDR Groups	5
Political Dissident	286
Convicted of Non-VDR Offence	1

Charged of Non-VDR Offence	1
Community Activist	3

Of the currently active groups the two largest affiliations are the RIRA and CIRA (see Table 3). Of those convicted of VDR offences we have accounted for 92 RIRA members, 68 CIRA members and 2 further individuals for whom it is unclear whether they are CIRA- or RIRA-affiliated. While these two groups constitute the largest number of convicted individuals in the database there have also been 2 ONH members and 1 RAAD member, reflective of their recent increased activity as well as the transfer of allegiance of a number of personnel across groups.

There are 15 individuals whose affiliation is unknown. Also apparent from the data is the presence of one member of the ostensibly non-violent group Republican Network for Unity (RNU). Overall this data is as expected due to the levels of activity of each group over the years. As indicated earlier, these figures are only indicative of those who have been convicted and sentenced for VDR activity. There are a number of others within the database who will potentially be included into this grouping if and when they are convicted.

Table 3: Convicted VDR personnel affiliation

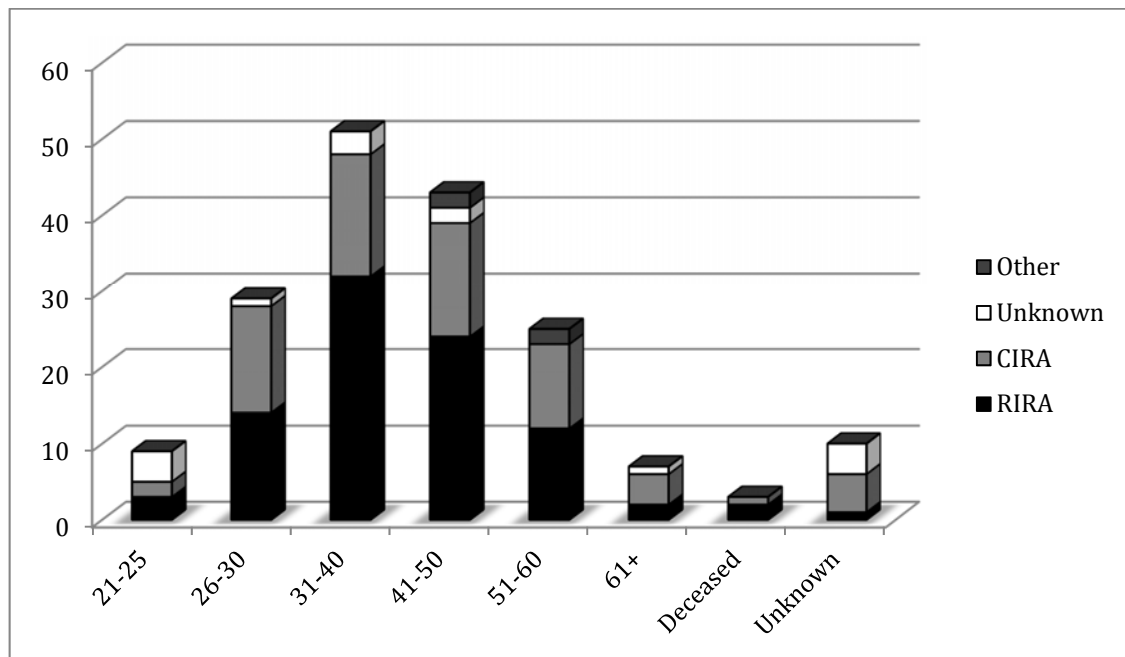| VDR Group	Number of Convicted Personnel
RIRA	92
CIRA	68
ONH	2
RAAD	1
Unknown	15
RNU	1
RIRA or CIRA	2

Gender

Despite recent analysis suggesting increasing evidence of a more predominant front-line role involvement in terrorism by women, even across groups,[31] evidence of this does not currently emerge from the VDR database: VDR activity is significantly male-dominated. Convicted male personnel account for 98.34%. This pattern of male dominance is similarly borne out when looking at the gender make-up of those charged and awaiting trial. Within that grouping 96.05% are male with the remaining 3.95% female.

These gender figures are consistent with previous studies. In his 2004 quantitative evaluation of ETA militants Reinares'[32] data on 625 ETA members active from 1970-1995 suggested 93.6% male membership.[33] His *qualitative* analysis, drawing on interview data, helped interpret this finding, with (exceptions aside) most of the front-line activist roles simply not being available to women and that this helped explain why men were more likely to be associated with violent activity.[34] As the focus of the present study has been on charged and convicted members of VDR groups it is expected that when the overall structure of each terrorist organisation, and the variety of roles within these organisations, is examined more closely that a larger proportion of female members may become apparent.
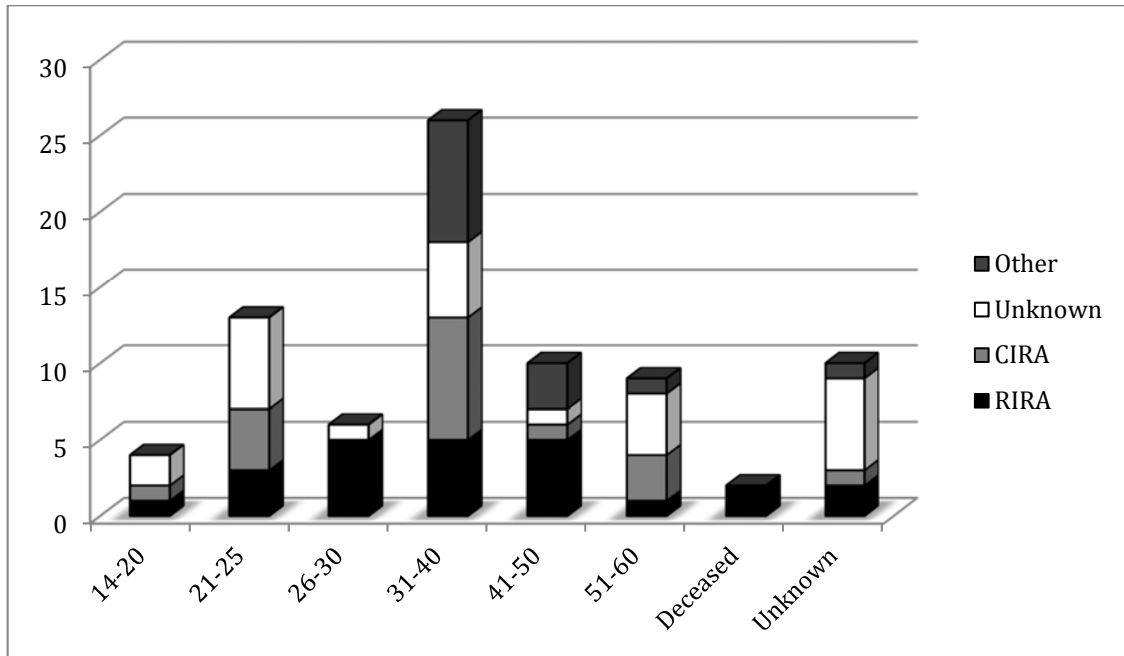
Age

As illustrated in Figure 6, the most concentrated age range across the two biggest groups, CIRA and RIRA, is 31-40, with significantly high levels also between 41-50, 26-30, and 51-60.

Figure 6: Age range of Convicted VDR Personnel as of December 31st 2010

This data suggests two distinct groups of people join VDR groups. The vast majority of younger dissidents aged 21-30, join VDR groups as their first ever experience of Republican activity. The youngest members of the groupings will have had little to no adult experiences of the Troubles, and in some cases have not even been born in Northern Ireland. This issue raises significant questions for an analysis of motivational factors, with dissident leadership figures and those with previous active service in the Provisional IRA and early CIRA exploiting significant opportunities to glorify active involvement in militant Republicanism. This point is further emphasised when the age range of those awaiting trial for VDR offences is analysed (see Figure 7). The 31-40 age range is once again the most representative, however as 14-25 is the next highest age range this re-affirms the hypothesis that an older experienced leadership is recruiting younger, inexperienced individuals.[35] We return to this issue later. By the end of 2010 none of the individuals who have been convicted of VDR offences were under the age of 21. However, 4 individuals charged and awaiting trial were between 14 and 20. This explains the inclusion of this new column in Figure 7.
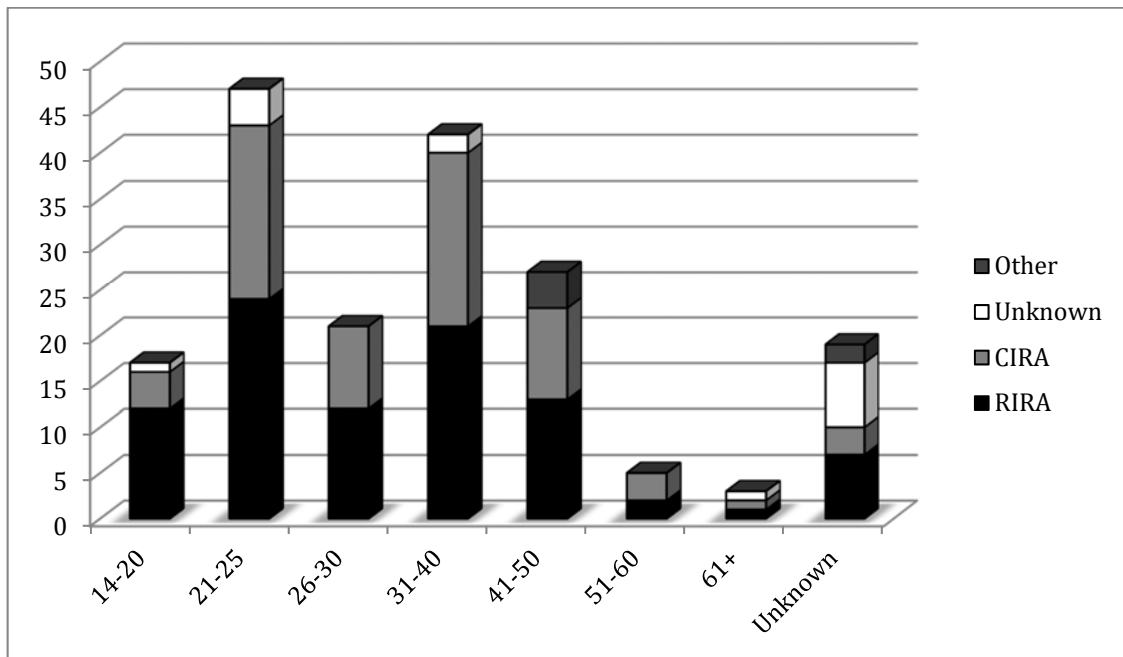
While the data contained in Figure 6 illustrates the recent ages of convicted VDR
personnel Figure 8 presents data depicting the age range of these individuals at the time
of their first conviction. This data shows that the majority of the individuals started their
Republican activity at a young age, with 17 having been convicted between 14 and 20
years of age, a further 47 were convicted for activity conducted while they were in the
age range 21-25 and 21 for activity between 26 and 30.

Even though the data indicates that 77 were first convicted for activities while aged 31
and older, the actual figure for first illegal activity is more than likely to be *significantly
lower*. This is due to the fact that this data, as with all our data, is only reflective of the
information that can be supported by secondary sources and therefore this can only be
regarded as age range at first (known) conviction rather than first *actual* illegal
Republican activity, let alone the likely earlier again *age at recruitment*. However, even
with this stipulation the data indicates the range of extensive Republican experience
within the dissident groups. This supports the argument that the dissidents possess not

simply the intention to maintain a sustained paramilitary campaign but their experience
levels indicate a heightened capacity to at least plan for this.

Figure 8: Age Range at First Conviction for VDR Activity

Focusing specifically on those whose first known illegal activity fell within the age range
of 14-20, the first activities of only 2 people in this age-range pre-dates involvement in
VDR activity. This supports for the oft-stated declaration that the leaderships of the
VDR groups are recruiting adolescents who could (by virtue of their age) have had little
to no involvement in 'the Troubles.'

Only five individuals from this 14 to 20 age-range were convicted with specifically
'violent' activity as their first conviction. The most common first convictions for people
in this age group were 'non-violent' ones including weapons possession and the more
generic charge of membership of an illegal organisation. This is especially true for those
at the younger end of this age range. A suitable illustration of this is the 1999 case of the
brothers Vincent (14) and Stephen Kelly (18) who were remanded in custody in 1999
after attending a RIRA lecture and training camp in Stamullen, Co. Meath for which they
both received suspended sentences for 'unlawful drilling and marching.' The younger of

the brothers, Vincent, was later sentenced, aged 21, to 5 years in prison in 2006 for membership of an illegal organisation (RIRA) and weapons possession.[37] While the majority (11) of those aged 14-20 were first convicted of 'non-violent' activity, 7 later went on to be convicted for 'violent' dissident activity. This may indicate a possible trajectory dynamic of membership, with individuals first tasked with 'non-violent' duties before they can be trusted to partake in violent activity.

Current Status and Employment

The need for steady recruitment of new personnel to ensure organisational survival is emphasised when the current status of personnel is examined. 69 personnel are currently serving prison sentences for VDR activity, with one other serving an ordinary criminal sentence. These numbers, with a further 76 on (or awaiting) trial, represent only a portion of the estimated 600 plus 'suspected' dissidents reported by the police.[38] To maintain heightened levels of activity these groups must constantly attract, recruit and train new personnel on the relevant skills required to successfully carry out attacks. Experienced personnel are also required to continue the training of the young recruits in a variety of roles. This requirement of recruiting personnel with a specific skill base is highlighted when the occupations of the personnel is analysed.

While employment data is not available for the majority of the dissidents (a challenge commonly echoed by other researchers, including Reinares), we do have employment data on 56 of the convicted VDR personnel. 60.7% of these were actively employed while simultaneously involved in a VDR group, while 26.8% were unemployed at the time of conviction (see Table 4). The VDR unemployment rates are certainly higher than those observed by Reinares for his ETA sample. In his study he found only 0.6% unemployment at the time of recruitment to the Basque separatist movement.

Table 4: Employment Status of convicted VDR personnel at time of conviction

Employed	60.7%
Unemployed	26.8%
Student	9%
Professional Criminal	3.5%

When the data is analysed by occupation and employment category it indicates that the VDR organisations seek recruits with specialised skillsets (see Table 5) that may prove beneficial to the pursuit of VDR objectives. Of the 56 VDR activists on whom we have employment data, 16.07% were members, or former members, of a legal military organisation, dominantly the Irish Defence Forces. These individuals bring with them formal training in the use of a variety of weapons and explosives. While these skillsets are desirable to the VDR group in a general sense, it is the individual's ability to pass on this training to fellow members and new recruits that can prove most beneficial.

Table 5: Employment Categories of Convicted Personnel

Employment Category	% of VDR Personnel[39]
Construction, maintenance and repair	23.2%
Unemployed	21.4%
Military	16.07%
Service Sector	7.14%
Student	8.93%
Transportation	5.4%
Agriculture	3.5%
Industrial & Non-Specialised Workers	5.4%
Engineering and Surveying	5.4%
Technology	3.5%
Professional Criminal	3.5%
Unemployed Construction, maintenance and repair	3.5%
Civil Servant	3.5%
Entertainment	3.5%
Unemployed Transport	1.75%

Beyond the targeted recruitment of those with military experience, there is a long-standing tradition within Irish Republicanism of targeting individuals with specific skill bases to benefit the implementation of organisational tactics. The largest occupational

sector among VDR recruits represents those in the 'construction, maintenance and repair' category. This sector ranges from construction workers to those in the maintenance and repair trades, e.g. electricians, carpenters and mechanics. 23.2% of the VDR personnel are within this category. These individuals, coupled with the 4% from the engineering and technology sectors, may bring with them significant skillsets for aiding in the manufacturing, development and maintenance of viable explosive devices, as well as other weaponry and training devices.[40] It is our belief that this skill-based recruitment of the VDR organisations has been deliberately conducted so as to provide them with a greater capacity to develop a longer-term (a la 'long war') strategy adopted by the Provisional predecessors. Whether that represents a feasible or notional objective remains to be seen.
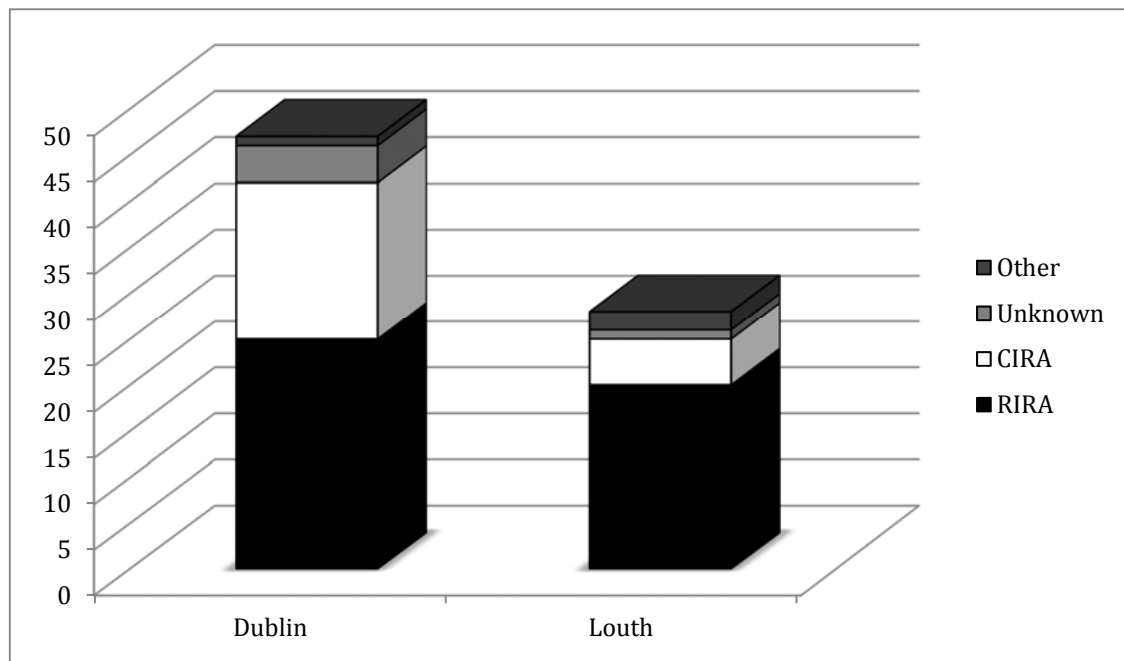
Geographical Region

The events data has shown that, as would be expected, the majority of the executed VDR events take place in Northern Ireland. While there has been a small proportion of violent activity taking place in the Republic of Ireland this has invariably been in connection with feuds with organised crime gangs and unrelated to the political strategies of the VDR groups. Northern Ireland remains their primary operational theater. However, the largest proportion of convicted VDR personnel thus far come from the Republic. 63 convicted RIRA members were from the Republic and 20 in Northern Ireland. Similarly the majority of convicted CIRA members are from the Republic with 46 from the South and 20 from the North. There are also 9 convicted RIRA members who were based in Great Britain, 4 of these in England and 5 in Scotland. (see Table 6).

Table 6: Geographical Origins of convicted VDR members[41]

VDR Group	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland	Great Britain	Unknown
RIRA	20	63	9	0
CIRA	20	46	1	1
CIRA or RIRA	1	1	0	0
Other	2	2	0	0
Unknown	4	8	0	3

Figures 9 and 10 outline the convicted VDR personnel by geographical region, specifically at county level. What emerges from this is that while a significant proportion of the convicted VDR personnel were located within the six counties of Northern Ireland the two main county hubs for the groups are within the Republic of Ireland. Of the Southern counties the majority of convicted members particularly in the Real IRA, as shown in Figure 9, are based in Dublin and the border county of Louth.[42] While Dublin has the largest population in Ireland, both north and south, and therefore would be expected to comprise a large membership, Louth has only the twenty-second largest population of the thirty-two counties, and has a smaller population than all but one (Co. Fermanagh) of the Northern Ireland counties.[43]

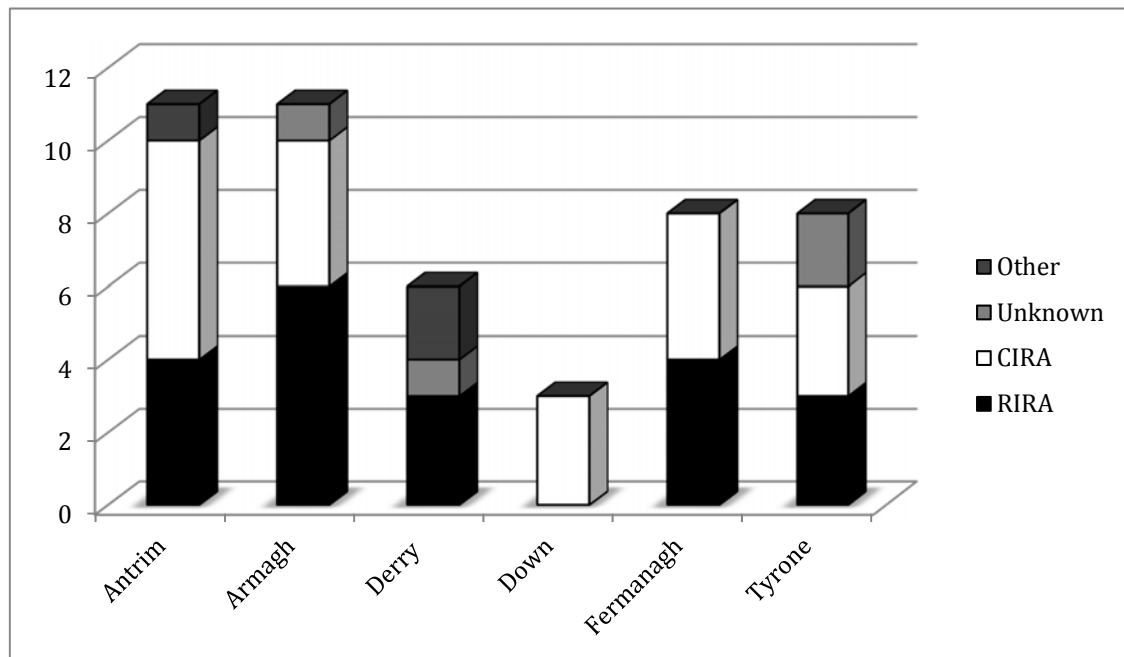**Figure 9: Dublin and Louth based convicted VDR Personnel**

Within Northern Ireland the distribution of convicted membership is more evenly spread, rather than focusing on specific 'hubs' as is apparent in the South, with Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone having the most sizeable VDR populations (see Figure 10). While Tyrone has only 8 convicted dissidents the very recent emergence of a *new* violent

dissident organization in the county, calling themselves simply "the IRA", was reported at the beginning of 2011.[44] It is this group that claimed responsibility for the murder of Ronan Kerr. With the emergence of this new VDR group originating from this county this VDR population is likely to grow in 2011 and the years ahead.

Figure 10: Northern Ireland based convicted VDR personnel

For the RIRA the concentration of their convicted members are from these two counties in the Republic. We have recorded 20 convicted RIRA members in the whole of Northern Ireland, compared to 45 in Louth and Dublin combined. CIRA have 20 convicted members in Northern Ireland and 22 in Louth and Dublin. When all groups are combined there are 47 convicted VDR personnel accounted for across Northern Ireland and 75 in Dublin and Louth.

This disparity between VDR event and personnel locations additional challenges for those tasked with countering VDR activity, especially due to fact that the disparity cannot be understood in the absence of a close examination of cross-border differences. The two main county hubs of VDR group membership are in the Dublin and Louth (with small groupings emerging in Republic of Ireland counties previously unassociated with PIRA

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activity during the Troubles) while the vast majority of the VDR events take place in the six counties of Northern Ireland: recruitment and initial training takes place in one jurisdiction, while direct action (outside of training) predominantly occurs in another. While the Republic of Ireland has not been the target of VDR violence this does not mean that the role of the security services in the south should be solely relegated to countering recruitment and organisational membership. Because of the large proportion of the dissident membership living in the Republic of Ireland this would indicate a strong likelihood that some degree of planning and training for actual VDR attacks has originated there.
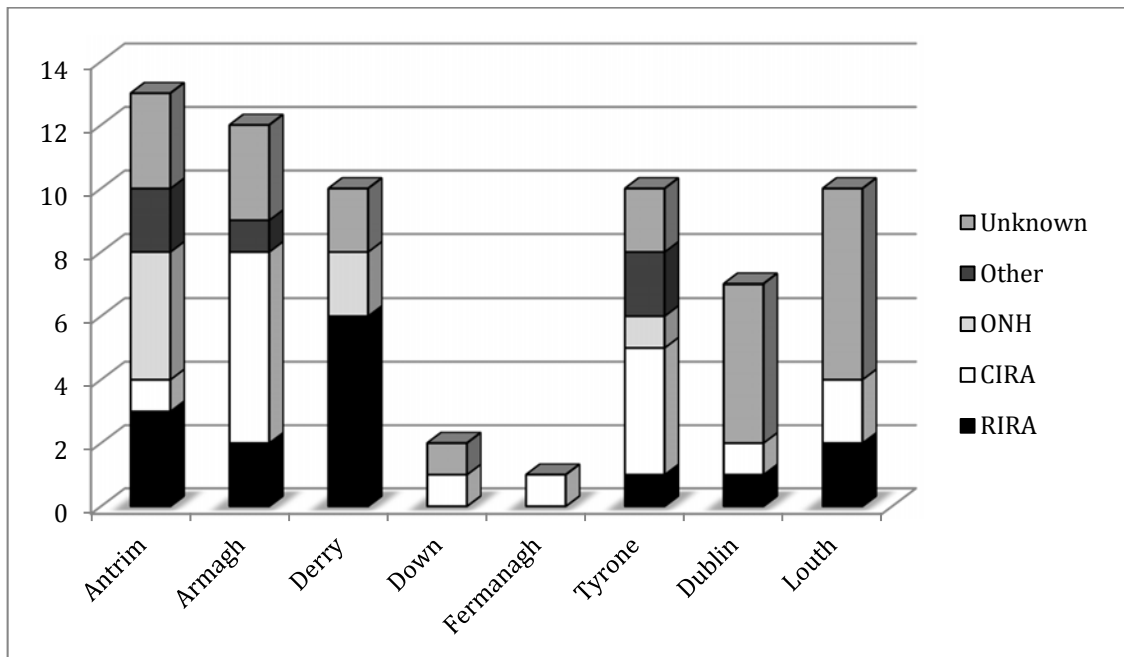
Analysis of convicted VDR personnel by county does not provide an unambiguous depiction of the geographical makeup of VDR personnel. There is often a considerable time period between charge and conviction. We should interpret any data on *charged* individuals with the obvious limitations that accompany that data. It does provide, however, a useful comparison point with the data on convicted members. In this regard a significant change has been observed with respect to the geographical location of convicted and charged VDR personnel. While the convicted personnel, and therefore those partaking in the earlier VDR activity, were predominantly based in the Republic of Ireland this is not reflected in the 'charged' personnel data. As Table 7 shows the majority (59.3%) of those charged and awaiting trial for VDR offences are based in Northern Ireland. If this predominance of Northern Irish personnel is reflected in future convictions it would suggest a significant shift in the location of those engaging in VDR activity. While those engaging in earlier VDR activity were predominantly based in the Republic of Ireland, especially Dublin and Louth, the 'charged' data could suggest that the VDR groups are now *more* Northern dominated. When this is considered in conjunction with age and past activity data those being charged of VDR activity include a combination of experienced Republicans returning to 'active service' and new recruits with no previous experience of Republican activity.

Table 7: Geographical origins of individuals charged with VDR offences[45]

VDR Group[46]	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland	Great Britain	Unknown
RIRA	12	7	0	2
CIRA	13	7	1	0
ONH	7	0	0	0
Other	5	1	0	0
Unknown	11	15	0	0

Figure 11 further suggests an apparent Northern dominance. While the convicted data was dominated by those from Dublin and Louth this data would suggest that the four counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry and Tyrone, alongside the two southern counties, now provide the majority of VDR personnel. If this is borne out in convictions we will be provided with evidence of a major shift in the operational make-up of VDR groups, with inevitable implications for the formulation and evolution of responses to counter this activity.[47]

Figure 11: Northern Ireland, Dublin and Louth based individuals charged with VDR offences

Conclusions

This article represents a snapshot analysis of data from a larger, ongoing research programme, the VDR Project. Though we are seeing evidence of the increasing analysis of the VDR phenomenon, much of what currently exists relies far less on primary source data to help guide the formulation of key analytic questions. The main goal of this article was to provide an overview of critical data points both to supplement existing analysis as well as to facilitate further exploration of this increasing problem. Perhaps the most dramatic immediate finding from the data has been the enormous rise in VDR activity in 2009 and 2010, with at least 185 confirmed violent acts in 2010 alone. This escalation has been observed uniformly across all types of violent activity, both high level and low level, as well as hoax bombings. The data appears to support the argument that the threat posed by VDR organisations remains 'substantial'. No other year of dissident activity has seen as significant an increase in all levels of violent activity as that of 2010. In addition to the common question about whether or not the dissidents have a 'plan' (i.e. a longer-term strategy outside of their efforts to disrupt the normalisation process) a more immediate question about 2010 activity has been whether it represents an anomaly or 'blip' as far as the long-term development of VDR groups is concerned. An examination of open source data appears to indicate heightened capacities of VDR groups in both developing operations and members taking part in increased activities. This suggests sustained and focused recruitment, not just of 'fresh skins' (particularly for involvement in hoax operations), but skilled former IRA personnel (strongly suggested by the technological sophistication of recent bombs). This increased level of activity currently shows no sign of abating. In addition to technological innovation, the increase of successfully *detonated* bombs in particular suggests (but is not evidence for) the recruitment of skilled bomb makers in recent times.[48] As with the overall levels of violent activity there is no indication that the increase in bombings and attempted bombings in 2010 represents the zenith of dissident bombing activity.

While the event data indicates that the centre of violent activity is still within Northern Ireland, and that the tactics of the groups are aiming to disrupt the normalisation of this

state, the membership was, previously, primarily from the south. The reason for specific centres of strength in the Republic of Ireland cannot be explained in the same way as equivalent clusters in Northern Ireland. While the early conviction data shows the dominance of Republic of Ireland personnel the current 'charged' data suggests a shift. The 'charged' data suggests that now the majority of the membership is based in Northern Ireland. If this proves true it would demonstrate a significant evolution of the VDR groups.

This pattern of increased violence has already been observed in the first four months of 2011. While there has been a number of attacks already in the year the most prominent was the murder of Catholic PSNI officer Ronan Kerr in Omagh. This led to public outcry on both sides of the border and abroad. However, even though it was clear that the wider society, across all communities, was and is against the continuation of VDR activities the disparate groupings have continued their activities by planting both viable and hoax bombs as well as carrying out a number of low level punishment attacks.

We must consider 2010 in the overall context of developments in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement to gain a more comprehensive picture of the evolution of VDR activity. In the immediate aftermath of the 1998 Omagh bombing there was significant decrease in VDR activity, with no bombings even attempted in 1999. This is a reflection of the significant counter VDR strategies and tactics employed in response to the attacks. However, 2000 and 2001 saw activity increase once more.[49] This indicates success in immediate but not longitudinal counter dissident strategies. While the groups were significantly weakened in the direct aftermath of the bombing they demonstrated a capacity for resurgence. They not only re-activated their campaigns but sought to reinvigorate support in key locations in the Republic of Ireland and to establish training camps. As a post-conflict society, Northern Ireland in particular, however, needs not just an immediate reactive solution to this increasing threat, but a longitudinal and sustained effort that is effective across all time periods not just in the immediate aftermath of significant attacks. A counter-VDR strategy must take into account the constantly changing social and political circumstances across the island of Ireland, and specifically

within Republicanism. One of the most significant changes within Irish Republicanism in recent times has come with Sinn Fein's explicit support of the PSNI. The data suggests that the rise in VDR activity has coincided with this significant action by mainstream Republicanism. To this effect, a counter-dissident strategy will come not only from the security services and armed forces, but perhaps most immediately also from within the Republican and Nationalist communities, the support of which the dissidents will increasingly seek to convert and exploit. The Republican community across Northern Ireland still believe that their true leadership comes from the Republican Movement, which since the mid-1970s has invariably been the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein (and personified through Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams). Throughout the Troubles and the peace process this community has been strongly influenced by the beliefs and actions of the Provisional leadership. It is mostly from within this community that the dissidents are competing with mainstream Republicanism for membership and support. It is more likely that it will be the actions, statements and beliefs of Sinn Fein and former PIRA members that will contribute to deterring young people from joining or supporting the VDR groups than the actions of the British state, its politicians and security forces. It is therefore a universally positive development to hear the continued denunciation of dissident violence from the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, his colleagues within Sinn Fein,[50] and also non-political groupings such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). A key role for the Sinn Fein leadership will likely come from their continued participation in mainstream democratic politics both north and south of the border. The actions and statements of the VDR groups may wish to illustrate the rejection of the politicisation of mainstream Republicanism by the wider Republican population. However, the continued success of a fully politicised Sinn Fein at the polls provides the most significant indication of the delegitimisation of the existence and actions of these groups and their rejection by the vast majority of the Irish Republican population. It is, and likely to remain, a major strategic objective of the dissidents, however, to portray Sinn Fein as a 'nearer' enemy in the short- to medium-term than the British government. It is not inconceivable that Sinn Fein members (ironically, not unlike Catholic recruits to PSNI) are unlikely to emerge unscathed as a target should the dissidents develop the capacity to expand their military repertoire.

It is important to acknowledge also that there are also those individuals and groups within the dissident Republican community who exhibit their dissension through non-violent actions and statements. This article has not addressed these actors, nor have we addressed the broader implications of many of these data points for the development of a counter-VDR strategy. However, it is our opinion that non-violent dissident Republicans have an important role to play in helping counter the rising VDR threat. They provide an alternative venue for those who wish to express their dissident Republican sentiments, but have a potentially critical role to play in channeling visible youth dissent (a common occurrence in post-conflict societies) that is being exploited by VDR leadership in an effort to help swell their ranks and build ground support. On the personnel data there is evidence for two distinct age-ranges present in VDR groups; the younger 14-30 age-group, most of whom are having their first experiences of active Republicanism and the 31-50 category continuing on or revisiting Republican activism. This trend deserves close consideration. The rationale for the engagement of the younger generation in dissident Republican activity is qualitatively different to that of their older comrades.[51] While many of the younger generation are experiencing Republican activism for the first time the majority of the older generation have previously been involved in other Republican movements, predominantly the PIRA. They have left to join, or form, these new organisations, due to their disillusionment with the peace process and what they see as the negative consequences of the politicisation of the Provisional Republican Movement. The cornerstone of any organisation's survival must be the group's ability to recruit these new members, a point further emphasised by the increase in VDR personnel serving lengthy sentences.[52] The nature of involvement and engagement in terrorism leads to a high turnover of membership for multiple reasons that are well documented.[53] This is perhaps especially pertinent for the VDR groups in their early phase of inception due to competition for membership within a finite community, or in a geographical sense, immediately surrounding a particular leadership figure (certainly the case for RIRA and ONH). But for the VDR groups the necessity for survival and progress is not just the simple recruitment of numbers. If the group is to be successful they must recruit members with particular skills to aid and benefit in the training and active service of the

organisation. This is suggested by the emerging data on the occupations of VDR personnel. It may suggest specific targeting of those with formal military training as well as others from a construction and 'trades' background. These two sectors provide the group with the requisite skills to continue their development and maintenance of weaponry and explosives as well as the training of new recruits, a first step in the development of a longer-term strategy that the dissidents are not currently viewed as having the ability to formulate, let alone exploit.

Notes

[1] 'Substantial' is the third ranked threat level in British security with the threat levels from lowest to highest being 'low', 'moderate', 'substantial', 'critical' and 'severe'

[2] "UK: Dissident Republican Threat Level 'Substantial.'" In *RTE,* (28 Sept. 2010) http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0924/ukterrorism.html Accesses Dec. 10, 2010

[3] This is a new term being adopted by the British government and others for what is referred to in this article as violent dissident Republican organisations.

[4] HM Government. *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, (2010), 27-29.

[5] "Jonathan Evans Terrorism Speech" In *The Telegraph*, (Sept. 17, 2010) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/8008252/Jonathan-Evans-terrorism-speech.html. Accessed April 4, 2011

[6] The open sources used in the data collection process are a combination of media articles and reports as well as official documents and reports. The official documents and reports include those by the relevant police services as well and governmental and independent bodies such as the Independent Monitoring Commision (IMC)

[7] John Horgan and Paul Gill. "Who becomes a Dissident? Patterns in the Mobilisation and Recruitment of Violent Dissident Republicans in Northern Ireland." In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, eds. Max Taylor and PM Currie. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, In Press)

[8] See for example Jonathon Tonge. "'They Haven't Gone Away, You Know': Irish Republican 'dissidents' and 'Armed Struggle.'" In *Terrorism and Political Violence, 13(3), (2004)* 671-693; Martyn Frampton. *Legion of the Rearguard: Dissident Irish Republicanism.* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011); Robert White. "Structural Identity Theory and the Post-Recruitment Activism of Irish Republicans: Persistence, Splits, and Dissidents in Social Movement Organizations." In *Social Problems, 57(3), (2010)* pp. 341-370; Margaret Gilmore. "No Way Back? Examining the background and Response to the Rise of Dissident Terrorist Activity in Northern Ireland." In *The Journal of the Royal United Services for Defence and Security Studies, 154(2), (2009)* pp.50-55; James McAuley "'Not Like in the Past': Irish Republican Dissidents and the Ulster Loyalist Response.'" In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, eds. Max Taylor and PM Currie. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, In Press); Henry Patterson. "Beyond the 'Micro Group': The Dissident Republican Challenge. In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, eds. Max Taylor and PM Currie. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, In Press); Jonathon Tonge. "Continuity not Comprimse? Dissident Republicanism and Continuing Violence in Northern Ireland." In *Dissident Irish Republicanism*, eds. Max Taylor and PM Currie. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, In Press).

[9] This is supported by the most recent series of reports by the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC).

[10] For a more extensive list and description of the existing dissident groupings, as well as other relevant organisations, see Martyn Frampton. *The Return of the Militants: Violent Dissident Republicanism.* (London: The International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010), 4-5

[11] The phrase "micro-groups" is one which has been adopted by Sinn Fein in their description, dismissal and condemnation of the continued action of the VDR groups. See for example "Martin McGuinness Distances Himself From Gerry Adams by Issuing a Fuller Condemnation of N Ireland Shootings." In *The Telegraph,* (March 17, 2009). http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ireland/5008395/Martin-McGuinness-distances-himself-from-Gerry-Adams-by-issuing-fuller-condemnation-of-N-Ireland-shootings.html Accessed May 18, 2011.

[12] While Oglaigh na hEireann is a moniker used by all forms of the IRA it is widely believed that these greetings were directed toward the dissident grouping ONH.

[13] E.g. See Currie and Taylor

[14] Brian Rowan, "Dissidents: Interview With Terror Splinter Group." In *The Belfast Telegraph,* (Nov. 3, 2010)*. http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/dissidents-interview-with-terror-splinter-group-14993952.html* Accessed April 18, 2011

[15] Mark Simpson. "Visit Part of New Anti-Dissident Strategy. *BBC,* (Oct. 12 2010) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-11521483 Accessed April 18, 2011

[16] Jonathon Tonge "'They Haven't Gone Away, You Know.' Irish Republican Dissidents and Armed Struggle." *Terrorism and Political Violence, 16(3), (2004),* 671-693.

[17] In an interview on the "Prime Time" programme aired on RTE on April 20, 2011, a Continuity IRA representative stated that "We have a cordial relationship with all the armed groups throughout. Our volunteers as well will be aiding any operations that we are asked to join in. The war will continue and it will escalate."

[18] The most obvious example of this is still the Omagh bombing of 1998 which saw the CIRA and RIRA working together.

[19] This data is correct up to and including April 20, 2011.

[20] One shooting and one mortar attack.

[21] "Claim and Counter-claim Over Northern Ireland Bomb Attack." In *The Belfast Telegraph*. (April 14, 2011) *http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/claim-and-counterclaim-over-northern-ireland-bomb-attack-14766405.html* Accessed April 18, 2011

[22] "Omagh bomb legal victory: The men behind worst atrocity of the Troubles." In *The Independent. (June 9, 2009) http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/omagh-bomb-legal-victory-the-men-behind-worst-atrocity-of-the-troubles-1700547.html*. Accessed March 20, 2011

[23] See Note 18

[24] There is growing consensus that the bombs being used in VDR attacks are becoming more sophisticated, which in turn suggests the recruitment of skilled and experienced bomb-makers. However this is not an opinion shared by all. Ed

Moloney has suggested that the type of bombs being used in VDR attacks such as the murder of Ronan Kerr, bombs which he refers to as 'up and unders', do not require a great decree of sophistication. He indicates that they were a type of bomb commonly used by the Provisional IRA during the Troubles. See Ed Moloney, "Martin McGuinness, Informers, The Media and why the Dissidents Still Kill People" In *The Broken Elbow* (April 6, 2011) http://thebrokenelbow.com/ Accessed June 1, 2011

[25] For a discussion of the problems caused by both hoax devices and genuine false alarms see Chris Ryder, *A Special Kind of Courage: 321 EOD Squadron-Battling the Bombers.* (London: Metheun, 2006). 50-56

[26] For a discussion of passive and active support see Audrey K. Cronin. "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." *International Security, 31(1), (2006)* 7-48. (p.27)

[27] "RAAD 'Abduct' Convicted Drug Dealer." In *Derry Journal.* (Sept. 10, 2010) *http://www.derryjournal.com/journal/RAAD-39abduct39-convicted-drug-dealer.6524821.jp* Accessed March 20, 2011

[28] Carnhill was targeted by RAAD twice in the middle of April 2011. The same individual was firstly shot a week before a viable pipe bomb was placed outside his house, which led to a police evacuation of the whole estate

[29] Derry Journal. "Real IRA Shot Sex Offender." In *Derry Journal.* (Oct. 26, 2010) http://www.derryjournal.com/journal/Real-IRA-shot-sex-offender.6599213.jp. Accessed March 20, 2011

[30] This includes those who have been convicted of both violent as well of those who have been convicted of non-violent VDR offences. 70 of the convicted individuals were convicted of violent offences and the remaining 110 were convicted of non-violent VDR offences such as group membership. From the total number of convicted individuals 16 were given suspended sentences.

[31] See Mia Bloom. *Bombshell: The Many Face of Women Terrorists.* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2010)

[32] Fernando Reinares. "Who are the Terrorists? Analyzing Changes in Sociological Profile among Members of ETA." In *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism. 27(6), (2004),* 465-488. P. 466.

[33] Within this gender analysis the data for 132 militants was missing

[34] Reinares (2004), p.468

[35] This will only truly be confirmed if and when this age range pattern is similarly borne out in further convictions.

[36] The 2 deceased individuals in this figure indicates 2 RIRA members who died while awaiting trial for VDR offences.

[37] See Henry McDonald. "Boy Soldiers Recruited by the Real IRA." In *The Observer.* (Oct. 24, 1999)

[38] Gerry Moriarty. Dissident paramilitaries see numbers rise to more than 600. In *The Irish Times.* (Oct. 25, 2010).

http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2010/1025/1224281954037.html Accessed March 20 2011

[39] The overall percentage added to over 100% as a result of some of the individuals having more than one job.

[40] While it is our opinion that the this sector is being specifically targeted for the skillset which they can bring to the groups it is also conceivable that this is also reflective of a Catholic males being traditionally over represented in the building and construction sector across the island of Ireland.

[41] See Appendix B for a full breakdown of convicted personnel by VDR group and county

[42] North Louth, particularly Dundalk, played a significant role throughout the Troubles as a base for members of the Provisional IRA who were on the run and has a longstanding role in accommodating violent Republicans. The data indicates that the significance of this county has continued with the activity of the VDR groups. Most notably Michael McKevitt, the former PIRA quartermaster general and first Real IRA Chief of Staff was based in the area. For a detailed analysis of the role which the area has played in violent Republicanism see Toby Harnden. *'Bandit Country': The IRA and South Armagh.* (Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1999)

[43] For a breakdown of the population size of each of the counties in the Republic of Ireland Visit the Central Statistics Office of Ireland Website http://www.cso.ie/statistics/popofeachprovcountycity2006.htm; For a similar breakdown of the population size of each of the counties of Northern Ireland visit the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency website http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp3.htm   Both Accessed April 12, 2011

[44] "Freed Republicans 'May be Sent Back to Prison.'" *Newsletter* (Feb. 7, 2011) *http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/local/freed_republicans_may_be_sent_back_to_prison _1_2387860* Accessed March 21, 2011*; "Dissident Groups Admits Kerr Murder-Report," RTE. (April 22, 2011) http://www.rte.ie/news/2011/0422/kerrr.html* Accessed April 22, 2011

[45] See Appendix C for a full breakdown of charged personnel by VDR group and county

[46] As one individual was located both in Derry and Louth this person was assigned to both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

[47] It is possible that this apparent geographical shift may also be due to a greater police capacity, and a shift in efforts, of both An Garda Siochana and the PSNI. However it is the authors' opinion that the data is more indicative of a regional shift in recruitment and VDR membership.

[48] While there has been an observed intensification of VDR activity from 2007 to the present day, including a rise in the number of 'successful' bombings, this has included an increase in the relative number of 'unsuccessful' bombings. Therefore while there is an observed improvement in the sophistication of VDR operations this is being countered by the continued vigilance of, and co-operation between, the PSNI and An Garda Siochana. This is likely to included both intelligence sharing and infiltration of the active VDR groups by the two separate forces.

[49] See Figures 1, 4 and 5

[50] A clear example of this is McGuinness' declaration that those who were responsible for March 2009 attacks were 'traitors to the island of Ireland.' See "Dissidents behind attacks are traitors, says McGuinness." *The Irish Times.* (March 10, 2009) http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0310/breaking33.html Accessed Jan. 17, 2010

[51] John F. Morrison. "Why Do People Become Dissident Irish Republicans?" In Taylor and Currie (In Press)

[52] See Figure 12

[53] Jeffrey Ian Ross and Ted Robert Gurr. "Why Terrorism Subsides: A Comparative Study of Canada and the United States." *Comparative Politics, 12(2),* (July 1989) 206-227.

Appendix A: Database Structure and Headings

VDR Events Database Headings

1. **Timing**
   - Month
   - Day
   - Year
   - MM/DD/YYYY

2. **Location**
   - Region
   - County
   - City/Town
   - Street
   - Policing District/Division
   - LAT/LONG

3. **Responsibility**
   - VDR Group
   - Claimed
   - Perpetrator's Name

4. **Event Type**
   - Violent/Non-Violent/Threat of Violence
   - Event Type
   - Weapon
   - Number of Devices
   - Number of Locations
   - Other Events Possibly Connected to

5. Direct Victims

- Dead
- Wounded
- Hostage
- Total
- Victim/Target Type
- Age of Victims

6. Summary and Sources

- Event Summary
- Sources

VDR Personnel Database Headings

1. Biographical Data

- ID Number
- Name
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Month of Birth
- Day of Birth
- Year of Birth
- Date of Death
- Age as of December 31st 2010
- Age Range as of December 31st 2010
- Marital Status
- Children

2. Residential Data

- Place of Birth
- Policing District/Division (Place of Birth)
- North/South

- Known Addresses
- Policing District/Division (Known Address)
- County

3. Occupational and Educational Data

- Occupation
- Socio-Economic Status
- Education Level Attained

4. VDR Affiliation

- VDR Group
- Prior Affiliation
- Convicted/Charged/Political

5. VDR Activity and Position

- Age at Recruitment
- Year of Recruitment
- Age Range at Recruitment
- Year of First Known Activity
- Year of First Known Illegal Activity
- Age Range at First Known Illegal Activity
- Type of First Known Illegal Activity
- Year of First Known Current Group Activity
- Age Range at First Known Illegal Group Activity
- Type of First Known Current Group Activity
- Type of First Known Current Group Illegal Activity
- Year of Last Known Illegal Activity
- Type of Last Known Illegal Activity
- Age at Last Known Illegal Activity
- Sub-Grouping
- Position in Movement
- Role in Illegal Activities
- Period of Illegal Activities

6. **Status**
   - Current Status
   - Place of Arrest
   - Policing District/Division of Arrest
   - Length of Sentence
   - Plea
   - Number of VDR Convictions
   - Length of Sentences
   - Date of Charges
   - Date of Convictions
   - Ordinary Criminal Convictions
   - Date of Status Update

7. **Acquaintances**
   - ID No. of Family
   - ID of Acquaintances Pre-Joining
   - ID of Acquaintances Post-Joining
   - Operational Acquaintances
   - Immediate Family
   - Relatives

8. **Summary and Sources**
   - Information
   - Sources

Appendix B: Convicted VDR personnel by County

	CIRA	RIRA	ONH	RAAD	CIRA or RIRA	RNU	Unknown	Total
Antrim	6	4	0	0	1	0	0	11
Armagh	4	6	0	0	0	0	1	11
Carlow	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clare	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cork	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Derry	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	6
Donegal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Down	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Dublin	17	24	1	0	0	0	4	46
Fermanagh	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	8
Kerry	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kildare	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Leitrim	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Limerick	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
Louth	5	20	1	0	1	0	1	28
Meath	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Monaghan	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	4
Sligo	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Tipperary	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tyrone	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	8
Waterford	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Westemeath and Dublin	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wexford	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
Unknown	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	6
Great Britain	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	10

Appendix C: Individuals Charged of VDR Activity by County

	CIRA	RIRA	ONH	RAAD	CIRA or RIRA	RNU	IRA	Eirigi	Unknown	Total
Antrim	1	3	4	0	0	1	0	1	3	13
Armagh	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	12
Carlow	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cavan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Derry	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
Donegal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Down	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Dublin	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	7
Fermanagh	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Galway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Kildare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Louth	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	9
Louth and Derry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Monaghan	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
Tyrone	1	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	10
Waterford	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wexford	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unknown	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Great Britain	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1