Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol.16, No.3 (Autumn 2004), pp.544–566
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DOI: 10.1080/09546550490509865

Frank Cass
Taylor & Francis Group

THE PROCESS OF DEMILITARIZATION AND THE REVERSIBILITY OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Marie Smyth
Senior Fellow, United States Institute of Peace,
Port Glenone, Northern Ireland

The process of militarization has permeated Northern Ireland society both overtly and in more subtle and pervasive ways. Since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, reductions in state military personnel and infrastructure have been made and several acts of paramilitary decommissioning of weapons carried out. However, the political culture and discourse remains combative and bifurcated as the democratic institutions and processes struggle to achieve viability. Support for the Agreement has faltered as the raised expectations of improvements in quality of life, particularly in communities worst affected by the Troubles, have not been met. Vacuums such as the rolelessness amongst former combatants and gaps in policing have contributed to internecine conflict. As in South Africa, there has been a transition from political to criminal violence in local communities. A formal process of demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration of former paramilitary actors, combined with training in political skills would resolve some of these issues and ensure the irreversibility of the peace process itself.

The declaration of war by the United States on Iraq is arguably part of a global trend towards increasing military expenditure and the privileging of military or 'security' solutions over alternative approaches to complex political problems. Yet many would argue that militarization, with the concomitant ubiquity of weapons and fortifications is not merely an effect or by-product of conflict, but also makes a significant contribution to conflict's continuity and escalation. In this article, the significance and consequences of militarization and demilitarization in

Address correspondence to Marie Smyth, 91 Clady Rd., Port Glenone BT44 8LB, Northern Ireland. E-mail: mbe.smyth@tiscali.co.uk

the Northern Ireland conflict are examined, and the impact upon the peace process analyzed.

The effects of the Northern Ireland conflict have been observable in the social, economic, political and demographic complexion of the region. Furthermore, the conflict also led to substantial militarization of Northern Irish society. In the context of Northern Ireland, the term demilitarization has come to mean the reduction of state military and security deployment, operations and installations. Hauswedell and Brown point out that while the term 'demilitarization' usually refers to a broader process, in Northern Ireland it 'predominantly describes the reduction of state forces and their security installations'.[1] This narrower interpretation in the Northern Ireland case perhaps reflects a correspondingly narrow interpretation of the actual process of demilitarization. Although the state has a legitimate right to weaponry unlike paramilitary combatants, in the context of the Agreement, the state, too, is bound to undertake a process of demilitarization. The Good Friday Agreement, binds both the state and nonstate parties to demilitarization, in the form of the reduction of state military installations and troop deployment on the part of the state, and the cessation of paramilitary activity and the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons on the part of nonstate actors. The issue of decommissioning of paramilitary weapons has tended to dominate the Northern Irish debate, at the expense, thus far, of other aspects of demilitarization in the broader sense, according to Hauswedell and Brown.[2]

Since the Agreement, a number of moves have been made by the British government to demilitarize Northern Ireland. At the height of the conflict in 1972, the British government had deployed 43,000 troops in Northern Ireland. At other periods in the Troubles, deployment was substantially lower. The 18,500 troops in Northern Ireland in 1996, following the beginnings of the peace process was the highest deployment since 1982. By 1999, this had been reduced to 15,000, the lowest since 1970, with further reductions to follow. A year later (2000) troop levels had been reduced to 13,500. Between 1994 and 1999, 26 army installations or bases had been closed or demolished. In addition, land requisitioned by the army had been returned, vehicle control zones had been rescinded, barriers and checkpoints had been removed/relaxed, and 102 cross-border roads had been reopened. The use of powers under emergency law was also reduced. For example, between 1994–98 arrests under emergency legislation fell by 60 per cent; searches were reduced by 80 per cent, extensions of detention fell by 50 per cent and several holding centers were closed or earmarked for closure. Increased use of jury trials began to supplant the use of nonjury trials, police and soldiers began to

patrol without flak jackets, and increasingly, the police patrolled without army support. By the end of 2000, the notorious prison, the Maze, previously Long Kesh, which was used for detainees in the early part of the conflict and later for political prisoners, was closed permanently, as was the Crumlin Road prison, which had been used for remand prisoners and those on shorter sentences.

In contrast, progress on paramilitary decommissioning has been patchy. The body established to oversee paramilitary decommissioning has had repeated contact with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and has overseen several acts of decommissioning in the form of putting arms in secure dumps and verifying their security. No other acts of decommissioning by other Republican paramilitaries have taken place. Apart from an early decommissioning gesture by the anti-Agreement Loyalist Volunteer Force, and some contact between the decommissioning body and other Loyalist paramilitaries, Loyalists have not for the most part engaged in decommissioning.

THE NATURE OF MILITARIZATION

In protracted conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and South Africa, where the process of militarization has extended over many years of conflict, overt signs of militarization—the deployment of troops, the installation of checkpoints, watch towers and other surveillance apparatus—transform civilian life. The visitor not used to the appearance of a militarized society is shocked and often intimidated by the appearance and public experience of militarization, manifest in the presence of soldiers, roadblocks and the other paraphernalia of militarization. Yet militarization is more than the visible apparatus of military occupation or policing.

Militarism has been defined as:

> an inversion of the political end and military means in human politics; the dominance of military men, decisions, methods and goals over civilian; an imbalance in civilian-military relationship is in favor of the military.[3]

Militarization, then, is the process of privileging the military over the civilian, of setting up the imbalance in civilian-military relations. It is a process with profound consequences for both military and civil society. Such consequences will be discussed at length later.

DEMILITARIZATION

In international usage, the term 'demilitarization' encompasses disarmament, demobilization and conversion or reintegration of soldiers

into everyday life. Demilitarization processes supervised by international bodies have tended to focus on combatants and their weapons. Lamb argues that the term's usefulness is that it indicates 'not a static phenomenon but a process'.[4] However, several writers argue for an even broader definition of demilitarization, encompassing much more than the disposal of weaponry, the removal of fortifications, and the demobilization of combatants.

Farr argues that 'demilitarization should be regarded as a broad process of which demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs form only one aspect'.[5] For Farr, demilitarization involves two aspects; the first being the demilitarization of state military apparatus and ideology. For example, the reduction of military expenditure and the freeing up of resources for nonmilitary use, including the reestablishment of civilian state and economic governance. The second and less acknowledged aspect of militarization, according to Farr, is:

> The demilitarization of the broader society, which is central to the process of national rehabilitation. This should be understood as a psychological as well as a practical process.[6]

Subsequently, militarization permeates the ideology and culture of the society, including the culture of politics, education and the media:

> [Militarization] is an issue which is grounded in certain value judgments and beliefs. These values and beliefs, whether held by the general populace, policy makers or both, have their basis in that nation's political and military cultures.[7]

It follows that the process of demilitarization must not only demobilize combatants, decommission weapons, but also address all those aspects of society that have been militarized, including political culture and ideology. This requires what Meyer, describes as a 'paradigm shift'.[8] Meyer was one of the main negotiators for the South African National Party during the negotiations that led to the end of apartheid. He describes how an ideological shift on the part of the National Party negotiators, from the position of protectionism of the white minority's power to a new motivation to find a workable settlement for the future South Africa, was essential to the success of the South African negotiations. Ideologically, they moved from a position where military force was countenanced as an ongoing necessity, to one where they sought to work together with their former enemies to find a long-term peaceful settlement. Meyer argues that such shifts are essential to positive outcomes to peace processes.Yet the militarization of the conflict, the presence of violence, fear and

suspicion predispose negotiators to distrust the opposition, to suspect their motivations and to see compromise as betrayal or folly.

Darby and McGinty in their study of five peace processes including Northern Ireland, argue that they are composed of:

> the state of tension between the *custom of violence* and the *resolution of differences through negotiation*. The relative strength of each ... determines the pace of a peace process and ultimately its success or failure. Its central task is to alter human behaviour from a helpless acceptance of fell deeds to the civilized conduct of human relationships.[9]

Once the peaceful conduct of human relationships is established as a possibility by an Agreement, the daunting task of implementation presents itself. Ideological changes are essential to the success of both negotiation and the implementation of Agreement. Lamb argues that the success of demilitarization is predicated on demobilization followed by 'the deglorification of the armed forces by the media and society in general, the withdrawal of observable military influences in the education system and a sustained reduction in consumerist militarism'.[10] The move away from military frameworks, and from emulating military approaches and military life, the deconstruction of ideas of military heroism and patriotism forms a crucial part of the process of demilitarization at the cultural and ideological level.

Demobilization or demilitarization, then, must reach into all those aspects of civilian life and culture that have become militarized during the conflict, in order to provide the cultural and ideological conditions under which peaceful, democratic and nonmilitary methods of governance can underpin the transition to peace. Without such ideological transformation, the habits of conflict remain, and the military methods and militarized mind-sets that have become normalized will undermine peaceful processes. Additional support to demilitarization processes are required, according to Farr, in order to underpin 'the consolidation of profound change in a post-conflict society'.[11]

EFFECTS OF MILITARIZATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

If militarization is the process whereby militarism permeates societies, in protracted conflicts such as Northern Ireland, militarism has become integrated into daily life. It is normalized, taken for granted, and is thus rendered 'invisible'. To make visible the extent of the militarization of everyday life requires a re-examination of civil society, and of the protagonists to the conflict. Militarism has permeated

Northern Ireland society both overtly and in more subtle and pervasive ways. Darby and McGinty point out that:

> Many people . . . do not live in the war zone, but all are also affected by the custom of violence. This does not mean that large numbers of people become engaged in violent actions. It does not even mean that they acquiesce in those actions. It means that violence and its effects have worked their way into the very fabric of society and become part of normal life so that they become accustomed to the routine use of violence to determine political and social outcomes.[12]

Nor is the effect of militarization limited to ideology or the mind-sets of negotiators. Many aspects of Northern Ireland society—the law, security expenditure, ideology, geographical space, the economy, culture, community and personal life—have been implicated in the process of militarization.

LEGAL ASPECTS

Militarization in Northern Ireland has involved not only legal changes, but also the suspension of the rule of law, the introduction of emergency legislation, and alterations to the judicial and prison systems. In Northern Ireland, the Emergency Provisions Act equipped the police and army with special powers of arrest and detention, and with a broad license to take any action they saw fit in the interests of security. It also involved the setting aside of ordinary law and legal process in favor of emergency law, special courts, alterations of the rules of evidence; length of detention, and in some cases the use of detention without trial. This was used in Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s, and can be currently seen in operation in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as part of the U.S.' post September 11 'War Against Terrorism'. Law in conflicted societies is also commonly altered to facilitate surveillance of 'suspect' or insurgent populations. For example, in the Middle East, the use of identity documents for Palestinians together with the ubiquity of Israeli checkpoints regulate the movements of Palestinians. In apartheid-South Africa, pass laws regulated the freedom of movement of the 'Black' and 'Colored' populations. In Northern Ireland, emergency legislation has equipped the security forces with powers to stop, search and detain suspects, and the use of jury trial was set aside as a legal standard, and special no jury 'Diplock courts' introduced. Checkpoints, heavily armed police, house raids, and routine screening, particularly of the Catholic population, operated under these emergency laws for the three decades of the conflict. Marked changes

have occurred since the Good Friday Agreement. While the level of military presence has been substantially reduced, and the police force, for example, no longer routinely wear bullet-proof jackets, watchdogs such as the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission have been appointed to monitor the implementation of new human rights legislation, some other aspects of the judicial and legal system remain unchanged. Comprehensive demilitarization of the legal system would entail, for example, the repeal of emergency law, the release of all untried political prisoners, and the reinstatement of judicial systems characteristic of an open democratic and peaceful society. While political prisoner releases formed part of the Good Friday Agreement, emergency legislation and special courts remain relatively untouched (if less used) thus leaving intact much of the apparatus associated with the conflict.

The prospects for such legal change seem remote for three reasons. First, arguably, the continued existence of emergency legislation in Northern Ireland is consistent with its history, since at no time has the state of Northern Ireland, from its formation in the early 1920s, been without emergency legislation. Second, the post-September 11 global trend is in the opposite legal direction, and emergency legislation arguably curtailing the freedom of movement and human rights of 'suspects' has been introduced in a number of contexts as part of the 'War Against Terrorism'. Given the special relationship between the U.S. and the UK government, it seems unlikely that the UK government will move away from the global trend by repealing emergency legislation in Northern Ireland. Third, and most significantly in terms of Northern Ireland politics, are escalating Unionists protests about the reform of the police and the dismantling of the police reserve. These protests are contextualised in a wider set of Unionist fears that Republicans are not to be trusted; they will return to military means, and that it may well be necessary to call on the state's apparatus of counter-terrorism in the near future. So to dismantle it is premature at best.

THE ECONOMY AND SECURITY EXPENDITURE

Militarization is also manifest in the economy of conflict-ridden societies, in terms of expenditure on defense, on maintaining armies and militias, on munitions and arms taking precedence over areas of social expenditure. Military expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product is high in heavily militarized societies. In the case of Israel, for example, the trend is towards increased militarization. The Bush administration will ask the United States Congress to give

Israel $2.22 billion in military assistance in financial year 2005, an increase of $60 million over 2004, in line with a 1990s Agreement that reduces economic assistance to Israel by $120 million a year while adding $60 million a year to the military component of the package.[13]

Demilitarization involves a decrease in the proportion of expenditure in the purchase of weaponry and ammunition and in public expenditure devoted to armed forces and security. In Northern Ireland, Tomlinson, writing in 1995, was able to describe British government expenditure in Northern Ireland thus:

> Since the onset of direct rule, the 'defeat of terrorism' has been the top public expenditure priority. This has meant a virtually unquestioned budget for the RUC, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Court Service, and those sections of the military and intelligence services deployed on Irish affairs. In addition, public expenditure on economic development, housing and health has been significantly higher per capita than in Britain... Since the early 1970s, of course, counter-insurgency experts have argued that social and economic expenditures and policies ought to be regarded as just another weapon in the defeat of terrorism.[14]

According to Tomlinson, the British subvention increased to £4 billion in 1993 including security expenditure, with security making up a third of expenditure by the early 1990s, and an increasing share of expenditure was being incurred in Britain. However, this pattern changed with the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. On 13 February 2002, Dr John Reid, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland told the Commons:

> Our military expenditure in Northern Ireland in the past 30 years has been astronomical. As a result of the progress that we have made in the peace process... the troop level in Northern Ireland is lower than it has been for 31 years. We have reduced the number of soldiers there from 27,000 to 13,000, with commensurate back up.[15]

RESISTANCE TO CHANGES IN SECURITY EXPENDITURE AND POLICY

Security expenditure in Northern Ireland cannot be seen as a purely economic matter: it is also a political matter, and a highly sensitive one. Such reductions in security expenditure, especially when they apply to the police or prison service in Northern Ireland, have been met with considerable resistance on the part of Unionists, and on the part of the security services themselves. Lady Sylvia

Hermon and David Burnside, both Ulster Unionist Party MPs, are among those Unionists who question whether the police have had sufficient personnel and resources to 'defend law and order' in the light of troop reductions.[16] Other Unionists complain about reform of police, reductions in police numbers, and the new recruitment procedures that dictate half of all new recruits must be drawn from the Catholic community.

Since such reforms and reductions are part of the Good Friday Agreement, and form important parts of the broader context of demilitarization of Northern Ireland, which seem essential to peacebuilding and the establishment of democracy, why do Unionists resist such change?

Unionist resistance is based on several grounds. First and critically, Unionists are chronically unable to trust the IRAs intentions in spite of cease fires and acts of decommissioning. Events such as the discovery of an alleged[17] IRA spy ring in the Assembly which contributed to the suspension of the Assembly in 2002, is the kind of evidence that fuels their mistrust. They suspect Sinn Féin's motives, and believe that the IRA is incapable of the long-term abandonment of armed conflict. The Omagh bomb and the continued increased threat posed by dissident Republican groups, and the threats to independent Catholic members of the new district policing partnerships provides Unionists with grounds to fear that Republicans may not be acting in good faith, and may not be committed to an exclusively peaceful means of political change. Thus, they are reluctant to see the security forces dismantled in the face of what they perceive to be a continuing threat and point to the security situation as a basis for maintaining higher levels of security expenditure.

Objectively, the security situation in Northern Ireland has made variable improvements over the period since the 1994 cease fires. Since the Agreement in 1998, there has been an overall substantial decline in deaths due to conflict, although nonfatal incidents continue to occur, and sectarian violence continues unabated, if not actually increasing. The recurring feuds between Loyalist paramilitary groups accounts for much of the level of Loyalist activity. Most assessments attribute what Republican paramilitary activity there has been largely to dissident Republican groups, rather than to the IRA. However, there is still a general assumption among Unionist politicians that the IRA is still in operation, and the alleged kidnap of dissident Republican Bobby Tohill in Belfast city center[18] fuels their fears that the IRA is still active and recruiting. The main source of the threat to law and order, it seems, has shifted, with Loyalist paramilitary groups accounting for more paramilitary attacks, explosions,

firearms offences, killings and attempted killings than their Republican counterparts. This was acknowledged by Secretary of State Dr John Reid in Parliament:

> The level of troops in Northern Ireland is a direct result of the threats to the lives and the property of the police and the citizenry in Northern Ireland by dissident Republicans in particular, but also by rejectionist Loyalists. They are the people who are refusing to mend their ways and creating an abnormal society in Northern Ireland. We are the people who wish to see normality return.[19]

Second, Unionist resistance to demilitarization is based on the fact that the reduction in security forces and the new recruitment quotas erode traditional employment opportunities for Northern Ireland Protestants. Perhaps more importantly, they erode the Unionist ethos of the police force, by measures such as the removal of Unionist symbols from the insignia in favor of more neutral emblems. Such change is experienced by many Unionists as a loss of political ground. This loss has been occasioned by the Agreement; consequently, Unionist support for the Agreement has been eroded. Continued paramilitary violence provides the rationale for British troops remaining in Northern Ireland and for enhanced levels of policing. However, Unionist resistance to troop reductions and police reform is unlikely to disappear even in the face of reductions in the level of violence, for the reasons stated. Overall, Unionists have a sense of swimming against a demographic tide, which sees their share of the population diminishing, and presents the prospect of an end to the union with Britain. This context of diminishing demographic strength compounds Unionist inability to overcome their suspicion of Republican motivation and fear of IRA resurgence. Their response to this situation has been to insist on further acts of decommissioning of IRA weapons and materiel, and the disbandment of the IRA. The hard line response has been to refuse to sit in the assembly with Sinn Féin until the IRA has disbanded—a position currently promoted by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUPs) Ian Paisley, leader of the largest party elected to the Assembly in the 2003 elections. Even then, the verification of such a move to the satisfaction of Unionists, were it to take place, presents a substantial challenge.

DECOMMISSIONING

Provision is made within the Good Friday Agreement for the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons. The political shifts made by Sinn Féin—away from electoral abstentionism and into accepting

a partitionist Agreement—meant that in the earlier stages of the peace process, retention of weapons was necessary in order to prevent a split with those Republicans within the ranks of the IRA who feared a sell-out. Later in the process, Sinn Féin's increasingly successful electoral performance vindicated its pro-Agreement stance and improved the party's confidence and that of their grass roots support. Protracted negotiations over decommissioning provided Sinn Féin with the time to persuade their grass roots of the merits of decommissioning. Sinn Féin's successful electoral performances were crucial to their ability to persuade the IRA to engage in the decommissioning process, because their electoral performance 'proved the efficacy of Sinn Féin's peace strategy and has given them the political space to disarm without appearing to have surrendered'.[20]

In spite of acts of decommissioning by the IRA, Unionists continue to see the lack of sufficient IRA decommissioning as the main obstacle to political progress. A deal brokered by the British and Irish governments between Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionist Party and involving a significant act of decommissioning by the IRA was designed to rescue the Northern Ireland Assembly. However, the deal collapsed because Unionists complained after the act of decommissioning that they did not have sufficient information about what weapons were decommissioned. Hauswedell and Brown observe:

> Decommissioning was the quicksand in which the pro-Agreement Unionist leadership began to disappear, a nagging irritant for the Republican grassroots and a useful stick with which anti-Agreement Unionists beat their counterparts.[21]

Unionist fears of the IRA are well founded. They have consistently presented the largest security threat throughout the period of the conflict. Republican paramilitaries in general have been responsible for the largest share of political deaths in Northern Ireland. However, it is not only the scale of IRA violence that leads Unionists to mistrust Republicans, nor is it attributable to IRA failures to keep the 1994 and subsequent cease fires. Rather, it is the inability of Unionists to make the ideological shift from 'helpless acceptance of fell deeds of the past' to 'the civilized conduct of human relationships'.[22] They are stuck in 'the custom of violence' and although they participated in a 'resolution of difference through negotiation' their faith in negotiation is weaker than their expectation of further IRA violence. They are unable to fully make Meyer's 'paradigm shift'. The overall Unionist engagement with the broad process of demilitarization is further illustrated by their attitude to Loyalist paramilitary decommissioning. Loyalist decommissioning could be argued to be less

politically urgent, since Loyalist paramilitaries have been, until the peace process, less prolific in their use of political violence. Nonetheless, Loyalist decommissioning is acknowledged as an essential part of any comprehensive demilitarization process. The urgency of disposing of the issue of IRA decommissioning and/or disbandment, however, has been increased by the electoral success of Sinn Féin, who emerged as the preeminent party on the Nationalist side in the 2003 elections, thus entitled to several ministerial positions in any new Assembly. That the largest political party on the Nationalist side should retain what many refer to as 'a private army' is intolerable to many, and indicates in their eyes a less than total commitment to democratic politics on the part of Sinn Féin. Republicans, on the other hand, argue that IRA disbandment or decommissioning is impeded by continuing Loyalist violence, particularly along interfaces, in a context where the IRA has been cast as the defenders of their communities.

Loyalist decommissioning, on the other hand, is rarely mentioned. The British government's official position, as stated by British Minister Des Browne is that decommissioning:

> ...is not just a Republican issue, however. We must not lose sight of the need to encourage movement from Loyalists: indeed to some extent that must be our priority.[23]

Prospects for Loyalist Decommissioning

It is clear that the Loyalist paramilitaries have little intention of decommissioning, nor does there seem to be much pressure for them to do so. As the dynamic of the peace process unfolded, Sinn Féin elected representatives who had no option but to address the issue of decommissioning because of their acknowledged links and channels of communication with the IRA, and the considerable pressure exerted by Unionists and the British and Irish governments. With the exception of the one Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) Assembly member and the erstwhile Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), now defunct and unrepresented in the last Assembly, none of the parties on the Unionist side have similar links with the Loyalist paramilitaries. On the contrary, the consistent stance of Unionist-elected representatives, the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, has been to condemn and disown Loyalist paramilitaries. This distancing by mainstream Unionism compounds the political marginalization and disaffection of Loyalist paramilitary groups. Efforts, such as the formation of the Loyalist Commission, to include paramilitary

groupings within a broader Unionist family have been stymied by fierce competitiveness between the two main Loyalist paramilitary groupings, by violent feuds between them and by a further violent division within the ranks of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). Further efforts by the Ulster Political Research Group, associated with the UDA and formed out of the remnants of the UDP, has shown signs of wishing to distance themselves from violence and gangsterism and enter the political arena. However, feuding and killing continues to punctuate politics within Loyalist communities, which continue to manifest signs of demoralization and political marginalization. A further complication is the emergence of allegations of collusion between the security forces and Loyalist paramilitaries, and the delays in publishing the Cory Report into the killings of two human rights lawyers has added to the impression that the state is reluctant to investigate and make public the nature of the relationship between the state and Loyalist paramilitaries.

The electoral failures of these radical Loyalists, particularly the UDA/Ulster Freedom Fighters, have decreased their investment in democratic politics, which in turn provides them with little political incentive to decommission. The political path has not yet provided the political wings of the Loyalist paramilitaries with a viable alternative to violence, since they have failed to parallel the electoral success of Sinn Féin on the Nationalist side. There are several reasons for this: the Unionist electorate's reluctance to vote for those involved in paramilitarism and the fierce and bloody feuds involving killings that have erupted periodically since 2000.

Perhaps most crucial of all, support within the Unionist electorate for the Agreement and its attendant political arrangements is equivocal, and apparently diminishing. Gregory Campbell of the anti-Agreement DUP explained:

> The present system increases Nationalist and Republican confidence because it offers them progress . . . The same cannot be said for the Unionist community . . . Unionists need convincing that an Agreement is capable of addressing Unionist concerns and grievances.[24]

Indeed, it is possible to argue that the personal undertaking on decommissioning given by Tony Blair to David Trimble in order to persuade him to sign the Good Friday Agreement[25] undermined the Agreement itself. The two stumbling blocks to Unionists at that time were political prisoners and decommissioning: the latter issue has dogged the peace process since then.

As noted, the lack of Loyalist decommissioning can be explained in part by their lack of the kind of robust democratic alternative

possessed by Sinn Féin. Loyalist paramilitaries operate in communities that do not support the Good Friday Agreement to the same extent as their Nationalist counterparts. Loyalist communities fear that the union with Britain is not safe, and British reassurances on the subject are not to be trusted. All of this is compounded by relentless demographic change, which has resulted in an ongoing shift in the numerical balance between the Catholic and Protestant population in favor of Catholics. Furthermore, Loyalists have not decommissioned weapons because they have not been required to do so. This has presented little problem for mainstream Unionist politicians, whose focus has been on disarming their traditional enemy, the IRA, not those who, with them, support the union with Britain. Paradoxically, however, this sidestepping of Loyalist decommissioning may have conveyed to Loyalist paramilitaries that they have not been taken seriously, further compounding their sense of political marginalization, a situation not likely to provide incentives to desist from continued paramilitary activity. In one of their 'most pivotal findings', Hauswedell and Brown argue that 'the issue of paramilitary arms [carries] a symbolic value and weight that [goes] far beyond its military potential, serving as the political foundation upon which both conflict parties [anchor] their positions'.[26] They advocate:

> Mainstream Unionism has a responsibility to help groups like the UDA achieve credible political representation; only through the provision of such guidance, succour and support can the paramilitary groups be brought out of the darkness of violence and into the light of the peace process. A growing sense of political inclusion has helped to draw Republicanism into the decommissioning process. Only a similar sense of ownership and inclusion in the political process would assist Loyalists in moving along a similar path.[27]

It seems unlikely that mainstream Unionists will be the agents of such inclusion. Serious internal division within the Ulster Unionist Party that center on support or opposition to the Agreement itself means that they are a force divided on the value of pursuing the peace process as it is set out in the Good Friday Agreement. Furthermore, mainstream Unionism's consistent distancing of itself from paramilitarism or illegal activity makes it unlikely that they will be keen to be seen to sponsor those who have been involved in such activity. Finally, fierce competition for a dwindling Unionist vote in an already desperately divided Unionist political camp makes it seem unlikely that mainstream Unionists will be keen to train up new electoral rivals to join the proliferation of those already in existence. Hauswedell and Brown argue that constitutional participation and

political empowerment are more effective in the creation of conditions in which disarmament can take place. Whilst political exclusion or the threat of exclusion may pressure the representatives of armed groups into action on issues such as decommissioning, it also has the negative effect of limiting their political room for maneuver. In the case of Northern Ireland's Loyalist paramilitaries, electoral success, not merely participation, may be required alongside political pressure before any decommissioning takes place.

Interestingly, there has been no such pressure from Sinn Féin for Loyalist decommissioning, even though the absence of Loyalist decommissioning may render further Republican decommissioning difficult. Traditionally, Republican paramilitaries have provided the defense against Loyalist attacks on Catholic communities. It would be difficult for Republicans to completely decommission all weaponry while interface violence continues, and Loyalist paramilitaries continue to possess and use weapons. The prospects then for Loyalist decommissioning as part of an overall process of demilitarization do not seem good.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

While peace processes in general raise expectation of economic gains, such expectations are often not met. In South Africa, the expectations of township communities that jobs and prosperity would automatically follow on from the end of apartheid has led to substantial disillusionment among poor Blacks with the African National Congress (ANC) government. The relationship between economic investment and peace building is not linear. Darby and McGinty in their study of five peace processes concluded:

> Of the six variables, economic factors appear to have the lowest influence on the success or failure of a peace process. The correlation between background economic conditions and political progress is weak, although economic grievances can fuel opposition to compromise, as it did in Israel/Palestine. The promise of economic regeneration after an accord is often disappointing; even in Northern Ireland . . . its beneficial effect was marginal.[28]

Yet the disappointment of raised expectations of improvements in quality of life in communities worst affected by the conflict can compromise support for the settlement. Some communities, such as those along sectarian interfaces, continue to experience sectarian violence, poverty, and contain substantial numbers of former combatants, many of whom struggle with reintegration into the

community and with finding noncombatant roles within such communities.[29] Such scenarios have undoubtedly contributed to some of the internecine conflict experienced since 2000 in Loyalist communities. Darby and McGinty point out that:

> 'Prudence demands that those who were engaged in war must be provided with jobs and training. The ending of violence leaves an inheritance of high risk. The shrinkage of the security industry—army, police, prison officers, and private security guards—brings onto the unemployment register people skilled in the use of arms. Similarly redundant are the paramilitaries whose lives have been devoted to armed resistance. Their speedy return to civil society is essential, less because they deserve compensation than because they have the means to destabilize the peace process.[30]

These measures, however, may require public expenditure on the part of government or financial support from third parties, and may compose a further drain on the public purse rather than occasion economic growth and prosperity. The peace dividend contributed by the European Union will soon end, and the U.S. has its sights set elsewhere with the wars in Iraq and the Middle East. Northern Ireland's economic well-being was underwritten in the past by financial support which may not be forthcoming in the future. Furthermore, there is reason to worry that the economy has developed a dependency on aid that will compromise its ability to be competitive without such financial assistance.

IDEOLOGICAL

Protracted and pervasive militarization of everyday life in communities has led to the development of resistance to the rule of law, beyond bearing arms or threatening the state. In militarized communities, a kind of anarchy and resistance to authority of any kind began to prevail. Such communities are also impoverished, and the absence of ordinary policing combined with this attitude creates conditions under which stolen goods are commonly trafficked, electricity supplies are pirated, and civil law is largely disregarded.

The continued influence of militarization on political ideology and culture has impeded peace building and thereby the peace process itself. Politicians, and those who vote for them, often approach political problems with unconsciously militarized thinking. Key political issues are explored primarily in military and physical force terms, at the expense of nonconfrontational or nonviolent solutions. Many political representatives in Northern Ireland have declared themselves

at various times unable to risk trusting in an Agreement with a former enemy, and therefore they refuse to engage in talks. This refusal to negotiate implicitly assumes that the way forward lies in using means other than talking, namely, 'security' or military means. To conclude that an Agreement is not possible because the opponent is incapable of good faith is to conclude that there is only a 'security' solution and leads to refusal to talk, which is part of a militarized mindset.

CULTURAL

The powerful ideological climate of enmity, based on the fear of lethal attack and the mistrust of and antagonism toward the other ensures the malign interpretation even of benign acts. Such an ideological climate influences the interpretation of everyday events and actions, altering the meaning of behavior, language and influencing the significance of relationships. Violence is increasingly tolerated as all become habituated to it. The abnormal becomes normal, gender roles tend to polarize, aggression proliferates and machismo flourishes.[31] The emotional climate of the community shifts and stoicism replaces compassion. Discourse alters: a culture of silence isolates community members from one another on certain issues, while the strong collective bonds of mutual survival simultaneously create a strong collective identity that fosters a powerful sense of camaraderie and belonging, without mitigating the isolation.

Militarization involves not only those actors directly involved in armed combat but the embattled communities from which they are drawn. Militarism becomes entrenched in everyday life, taken for granted, normal. Those with the greatest involvement in the conflict in Northern Ireland were those who were professionally involved in the conflict through their career in the police, army or prison service, or those living in the region's most impoverished communities. These are largely concentrated in urban areas—North and West Belfast—with some in the border regions, and other urban areas such as Strabane and Derry/Londonderry. Militarization of these communities has come about as a result of the use of terror by paramilitary groups or by the state.

The paramilitary group uses terror and the state responds, usually by 'security' measures which typically entail mobilization of armed forces, emergency laws and corresponding curtailment of human rights, all aimed at preempting or deterring further attack. These measures have the secondary consequence of increasing the antipathy of the local population toward the occupying force. The state can also use terror, either deliberately or inadvertently, such as in the use of

house raids, demolitions or the shooting of unarmed civilians. Whether deliberate actions or 'mistakes', the intent behind the acts does not alter their effect on the recipient population. It will invariably be assumed by that population that such acts are deliberately aimed at terrorizing them. Such acts are sometimes inadvertent because the state has difficulty in distinguishing between combatants and noncombatants. Attacks on suspected paramilitary combatants are often seen as attacks on the civilian population. While the population experience military occupation, the occupying security forces have the sense of constant vulnerability during such occupation. All of the community is the enemy, none are trustworthy. The ongoing intimate contact between occupying force and occupied community reinforces enmity because it is characterized by mutual antipathy. The close proximity of occupation provides daily opportunities for violent attack and for such antipathy to be reinforced.

Such communities were (and are) the recruiting grounds for Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries. Paramilitaries were provided there with safe houses, escape routes, and financial and moral support. These communities, particularly on the Republican side, experienced the most intense surveillance, the highest levels of security forces foot patrols, land and house seizures, military installations and watch towers, deployment of surveillance technology, road blocks and house raids and high levels of arrest and imprisonment of residents. They also saw high levels of paramilitary activity, kneecappings and 'punishment' attacks, shootings, bombings, abductions and disappearances. As the Troubles entered its third decade, these areas also had to endure racketeering, drug trafficking and outbreaks of 'anti-social behavior', in the context of continued paramilitary control and the absence of a police force that was acceptable to local people on the ground. The rule of law was, in effect, ignored. Ordinary civil law was (and still is) routinely flouted in such communities. Stolen goods are commonly trafficked, electricity meters doctored, contraband and drugs peddled. Residents are stigmatized, and the communities are considered 'not safe' by outsiders.

The peace process has created vacuums in such communities, such as the rolelessness among former combatants. Other pre-existing problems such as gaps in policing have been exacerbated. Expectations raised by the peace process have not been realized, since many of those geographical communities worst affected by the conflict also suffer from the most intractable socio-economic problems. The peace dividend has not trickled down into them, and as a result, they continue to be breeding grounds for disaffection, paramilitary activity, gangsterism and crime. Where the peace dividend has achieved economic

positive effects, this has served to exacerbate the gap between the middle class and the worst affected communities. Educational underachievement, unemployment, drug and alcohol problems, teenage pregnancy and paramilitary activity continue to be features of life in these areas.[32]

As in South Africa, the transition from political to criminal violence has been accompanied by increases in criminal violence in local communities[33] where there continue to be weapons and the skills to use them. In the absence of other opportunities, and in the context of growing disillusionment with the peace process, particularly in Loyalist areas, it is predictable that crime and social disorder has increased during the peace process.

Democratization and demilitarization are ideally parallel and twin processes. Some of the disenchantment with the peace process is due, according to some, to the structure of negotiations that led to the Agreement, and to what some see as the lack of accountability of the Assembly. According to some analysts this lack is due to its adherence to the 'consociational' model, which runs the risk of domination by the Executive.[34] Some such as Lijphart would argue that elite domination of the communal 'pillars' is the best option in a divided society, with minimum contact that facilitates elites to make the deals and compromises necessary for the functioning of the society.[35] However, this structure also insulates the elites from wider accountability, thereby compromising participatory democratic principles.

This limitation on accountability limits the prospects of demilitarization in one respect. In her study of Russia, French argues convincingly the interdependence of democratization and demilitarization:

> Without democratization, demilitarization would barely be possible. The shift away from utilizing an outwardly strong military order . . . demon-demonstrates the practical effects of democratization on the priorities valued by both the governmental authorities and society. These new priorities, however, are not yet deeply rooted in the new political and military cultures . . . The potential success is fragile. A retrenchment of democratization and/or demilitarization due to inappropriate or incompatible policies could jeopardize not only the limited benefits thus far attained, but also the stability of [the] nation . . . Democratization has broadened the scope of demilitarization.[36]

ELITES AND DEMOCRATIZATION

In the Northern Ireland peace process, the early and later stages of the Good Friday Agreement were negotiated and conducted by an

elite. Furthermore, some of the precursors to the formal peace process were also conducted in secret. Gilligan[37] points to the limitations in human agency as a problem for the workability of the Agreement. The key role of elites has tended to fuel the tendency among some of the 'spoilers' to disown the Agreement, seeing it as having been negotiated at some distance from the ordinary citizen. The referendum on the Agreement was aimed at redressing this, but as support for the Agreement has slipped, it is clear that it was only partially successful. Indeed some political leaders have been less than enthusiastic about even this minimal level of public participation, preferring continued negotiation among the elite. This has presented problems for the democratization process. French points out that:

> The role of elites in the transition to democracy . . . if more clearly defined than that of the mass public. Elites make the policies, craft the procedures and implement the rules. They are responsible for building the institutions of democracy, for the destruction of [weapons] . . . The mass public on the other hand, is responsible for something deeper and less tangible; it is responsible for the values which legitimize democracy and support demilitarization. Values which are not embodied in the political institutions will not necessarily endure. Even more, institutions which are not backed by a deeper philosophy or commitment are empty and will not survive. This can be termed the statesociety nexus, the root needed for democratization to grow, the soil required for demilitarization to succeed.[38]

Gilligan also points to the 'agnosticism' of the Agreement on key issues such as the constitutional future of Northern Ireland, as a further cause of instability, although such agnosticism was perhaps essential on the most contentious issues.[39]

VULNERABILITY OF PEACE PROCESS

Peace processes, by their very nature, are delicate flowers. Darby and McGinty cite a 1998 remark by Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, 'It is an observable phenomenon in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, that tension and violence tend to rise when compromise is in the air'. They assert that, 'violence and progression towards settlement are the two main determinants of success or failure, and they are inextricably linked'.[40] They delineate the main violent threats to peace processes: political violence on the part of dissents; 'strategic' violence carried out by forces whose political surrogates are at the negotiating table; internal feuding within armed factions; spoiler violence carried out by anti-Agreement paramilitaries; street violence and popular sectarianism;

and criminal violence and activity. Northern Ireland has experienced all of these at various points, and a few others as well.

THE WAY FORWARD

A formal process of demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration of former paramilitary actors, combined with training in political skills would resolve some of these issues and maintain a momentum that is resistant to reversal.

Much is made of the pleasure (and salaries) taken by Northern Ireland politicians who sat in the new Assembly before its collapse. Popular wisdom suggests that the politicians liked the taste of devolved power, and that this will provide them with the incentive to solve recurring problems in the process. However, this in itself is insufficient to ensure continued democratic government in Northern Ireland under the Good Friday Agreement or some other accord. Yet the peace process has succeeded in beginning the process of demilitarization in its broadest sense: politicians who would not talk to each other worked together in Assembly committees. The business of creating democratic practice has begun, although much remains to be achieved. Northern Ireland politicians have succeeded in past negotiations in overcoming their difficulties, and in reaching Agreement have proved enormously difficult for them. The further demilitarization of political culture would improve their chances of success. However, the broad process of demilitarization itself is likely to flourish more quickly in the context of other, more tangible measures. Formal demobilization of armed groups and appropriate sections of the security forces, comprehensive decommissioning involving Loyalist and Republican weapons and material, and political support and training for those who would eschew violence in favor of democratic politics would be concrete measures that would advance further demilitarization and peace-building.

NOTES

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12. Darby and McGinty (note 9) p.260.
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22. Darby and McGinty (note 9) p.260.
23. *Hansard* (13 February 2002).
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26. Hauswedell and Brown (note 1) p.4.
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28. Darby and McGinty (note 9) p.252.
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38. French (note 7) p.6.
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40. Darby and McGinty (note 9) p.252.