Transnational Insurgency: Irish America, the IRA, and Northern Ireland’s Troubles

Danielle A. Zach

Prepared for and presented at the CUNY Graduate Center’s Politics and Protest Workshop on December 1, 2016.
Transnational Insurgency: Irish America, the IRA, and Northern Ireland’s Troubles

Just days after September 11, British politicians seized the opportunity to remind the US government of its own thirty-year-long “terrorist” problem with roots on American soil. Predictably the Northern Ireland Secretary’s public call on the Bush administration to crackdown on the Irish Northern Aid Committee (Noraid), the Irish Republican movement’s US-based fundraising arm, did not garner much attention from Washington as it launched its Global War on Terror. A decade later, Wikileaks released a secret CIA memo revealing that the US government was belatedly engaging in some self-reflection on its own “export of terrorism.” It highlighted Irish-American support for the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) during Northern Ireland’s “Troubles” (1969–1998) via Noraid as a prime example of how US citizens are not immune to “the allure of radicalism and terrorism.”1 While “not very revelatory,”2 as one news article put it, the memo nonetheless made obvious that transnational radicalism is not a new phenomenon, and that “contrary to common belief, [it] has not only been associated with Islamic radicals or those of Middle Eastern, African, or South Asian ethnic origin.”3

Scholars and policy experts concerned with civil wars, however, have long been concerned with the cross-border ties between armed groups and geographically dispersed populations. Along with Northern Ireland,4 studies have connected diasporic communities to violence in such war zones as Chechnya;5 Croatia/former Yugoslavia;6 Darfur;7 El Salvador;8 Ethiopia/Eritrea;9 Lebanon;10 Israel/Palestine;11 Nagorno-Karabakh;12 Kosovo;13
Kurdistan/Turkey;\textsuperscript{14} the Punjab;\textsuperscript{15} Somalia;\textsuperscript{16} and Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{17} Seeking to quantitatively test the relationship between diasporic financing and armed conflict across cases, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler’s widely cited \textit{Greed and Grievance in Civil War} finds a positive relationship between diaspora size (a proxy for financing) and the recurrence of civil war.\textsuperscript{18} Indeed, they assert that diasporic financing exhibits by far the strongest effect on the risk of recurrent conflict, and that the actual risk of relapse is six times higher in societies with the largest US-based diasporas.\textsuperscript{19} A Rand report even speculates that diasporas have become the main financers of insurgencies since the end of the cold war.\textsuperscript{20} Such communities are especially important when alternative sources for financing war (such as a powerful state patron or natural resources) are absent.

Financing is the key mechanism of \textit{direct} influence precisely because money more easily crosses borders than weapons,\textsuperscript{21} and contributing monetarily does not entail the high risks of participating as a combatant or in arms smuggling operations. While a committed few engage in such activities, financing can be mobilized at the mass level. Although extortion occurs, armed groups rely principally on donations and other “voluntary” contributions rather than on protection money.\textsuperscript{22}

This paper examines patterns of financial support to Noraid during Northern Ireland’s Troubles. In absolute terms, and in comparison to fundraising by other insurgent movements (e.g., Tamil Tigers; Kosovo Liberation Army), the IRA generated little financial support from diaspora communities. One key reason is the success of robust government suppression on both sides of the Atlantic, which limited the armed group’s ability to mobilize grassroots support abroad. At the same time, it was challenged by the dissolution of Irish-American communities stemming from upward social mobility and decreased emigration from Ireland. Despite these challenges from above and below, Noraid outlived the war—indeed it still exists, even if only as
a shell of its former self. How it survived and managed to fund prisoners’ dependents for the war’s duration is the main concern of this analysis. The paper concludes by considering how the findings are relevant to other cases, and a broader concern with how and under what conditions armed insurgents—or “terrorists”—are able to mobilize geographically dispersed “imagined communities” into providing them with sustained material and moral support to achieve their political goals.

Theoretical Framework

Analyzing patterns of long-distance support for armed insurgents should begin with an investigation of the conditions under which core activists mobilize for “the cause.” That is, strategic action must be situated within the broader macro-political context (international relations; host country foreign policy, domestic political institutions, and state capacity; belligerent government strategies vis-à-vis the insurgent movement within its territorial jurisdiction and beyond; and those of the “homeland” government should one exist). This relational, institutional, and policy configuration establishes the parameters for collective action (i.e., opportunities and constraints). Government actors, for example, can deprive diasporic activists of crucial resources such as legitimacy and public voice and create considerable risks and potential costs for movement involvement. On the other hand, they may aid such transnational activism, or at least acquiesce.

While the macro-context can help explain variation among “groups” and change over time, it inevitably cannot explain within-group variation. This requires attention to the availability of communal resources that are vital to a movement. Theorists such as Bob Edwards and John McCarthy would even “expect the spatial distribution of movement mobilization to
correlate more strongly with resource availability than with the spatial distribution of injustice or grievance."\textsuperscript{23} More specifically, they hypothesize: the more abundant social-organizational resources are in a particular locale, the more prevalent movement mobilization will be in that setting.\textsuperscript{24} Such a prediction is consistent with very firmly established findings of social movements scholarship: mobilization often happens through interpersonal networks and existing communal organizational infrastructure (e.g., parishes, neighborhoods, fraternal associations, workplaces).\textsuperscript{25} Thus, in addition to the "opportunity set," analysis of the resources potentially available to activists, including ethnic-based networks and organizations, is essential to understanding patterns of support within and between diasporic movements. The mechanisms inherent in networks, and especially cohesive ethnic networks, or "catnets,"\textsuperscript{26} render them a potentially rich resource for militant activists. The availability of such resources, however, is not necessarily stable. Demographic trends, for example, may impact resource availability.\textsuperscript{27}

These levels of analysis must be complemented by a third—individual agency. The extent to which diasporic militants can tap available resources and generate new ones\textsuperscript{28} is contingent on the strategic capacity of movement leaders, which is not only a matter of skill endowment but also of their prominence within communal networks.\textsuperscript{29} Prominence is not only a measure of how many connections one has but also to whom one is tied and how.\textsuperscript{30} It is the social network analysis equivalent of social capital: "advantage created by a person’s location in a structure of relationships."\textsuperscript{31} Ceteris paribus, one would expect higher levels of mobilization in a locale where a militant activist was prominent than not.

Thus, the complex set of constraints and opportunities that diasporic militants confront, the potential resources available, and their leaders’ strategic capacity are crucial to explaining patterns of mobilization. Such an analysis combines the macro-level context, network structures,
and micro-dynamics. This theoretical framework is applied to answering two puzzles that emerge from close examination of the Irish case. These are presented in the following section, which also summarizes the key arguments of this study.

A Puzzle Within a Puzzle

A 1971 article in the *Observer* (London) titled “Irish Mafia” highlighted the presence of 40 million Irish ethnics in the United States, most of whom it claimed “harbor[ed] bitter memories of the English.” The article’s undercurrent was that these American Irish posed a security threat to the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom, as they undoubtedly would generously fill the coffers of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, which was established in 1970 to aid the Provisional Irish Republican Army’s campaign against British rule in the North of Ireland, principally by providing aid to the families of IRA prisoners.

Such reports, however, proved alarmist; overall Noraid’s declared sums (and even official estimates) of its income and remittances to Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s were paltry relative to the size of the Irish Catholic population in the United States, an estimated 15 to 20 million. As one analyst described, diasporic militants “enlisted but a sliver of Irish America in consistent support. Given the size and resources of Irish America, NORAID’s membership and the amount of its contributions were even in its best days tiny.”

Although the financing was significant—an estimated total of $3.6 million between 1970 and 1991—given the relatively small size of Northern Ireland’s population, this constituted a fraction of the IRA’s $10 million annual budget. These figures also paled in comparison to the income generated by other diasporic populations for insurgent efforts elsewhere.
So why was Noraid only able to enlist a “sliver” of a vast Irish America into supporting its efforts to aid the cause of Irish unification? I argue that coordinated state suppression among three governments with robust capacity created high barriers to collective action. Government policy on both sides of the Atlantic increased legal risk and social costs to supporters of Noraid and limited the movement’s reachability beyond tightly-knit communities. At the same time these communities were dissipating as a result of government immigration policy and upward social mobility, which reduced their economic interdependence and spatially dispersed them, thus diminishing the organizational infrastructure and interpersonal networks that facilitate collective action.

Yet how Noraid endured for the duration of the three-decades-long conflict in the face of these countervailing challenges from above and below presents a second puzzle, which is the main focus of this paper. It argues that the leadership’s network-building strategies both at the interpersonal and organizational levels explain the organization’s resilience. While Noraid actively cultivated interpersonal ties among the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic, its leaders pursued three strategies at the organizational level that would prove crucial to its longevity (centralization, co-optation of existing communal institutions, and brokerage).

Most crucially, Noraid’s leadership brokered relationships with local union bosses in major American cities where the Irish still predominated if not in rank and file at least in leadership. Union leaders not only had the resources to provide support to Noraid, but they also had institutional mechanisms to sanction and reward their rank and file to follow their political directives. At the same time, a number of local branches, especially in the building trades in major US cities, were under government pressure to end nepotistic and patronage practices that resulted in a preponderance of white ethnics, which facilitated collective action by enhancing
intra-group solidarity. This strategy was possible because Noraid’s leaders were prominent within their local communities.

**Noraid**

According to British intelligence, Noraid was “by far the largest overseas contributor to the republican movement,” providing an estimated two-thirds of expenditures on prisoner dependents.\(^{37}\) The focus on prisoner support, as one informant explained, was a way to “tap into the traditional politics of the IRA.” It was “maximum possible buy in, with minimal political opposition”—a way to maintain legality and “broaden the circle” of support by appealing to communal norms of mutual assistance. In the words of another, the organization was formed with the intention of being “palatable to the American public.”\(^{38}\)

Although in 1971 Noraid registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA)—which subjects organizations to government scrutiny of their expenditures, remittances, income, and activities—as a legal non-profit organization providing support to the families of IRA prisoners, Irish, British, and US officials were convinced that it was merely an IRA front.\(^{39}\) As Jack Holland contends, whether or not Noraid actually used funds to purchase weapons or directly funneled money to IRA coffers is irrelevant: money is fungible—resources spent to support the dependents of IRA prisoners freed up funds to be used for weapons and other supplies.\(^{40}\) Thus, prisoner support was militarily strategic as it “lift[ed] the burden of the IRA to support prisoners.”\(^{41}\) And in the words of Noraid leader Michael Flannery, soldiers relieved of financial worries regarding their dependents made them “better fighters.”\(^{42}\)

In terms of its fundraising, Noraid was organizationally constructed as star-shaped network (see Figure 1) with money channeled from the 70 to 80 local units to the central office.
in New York City, which would then transmit it abroad. Clustered units in major US cities tended to exhibit relatively high degrees of cooperation, facilitated in part by a regional coordinator. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston were the most lucrative of all.

According to Noraid leader Martin Galvin, “Noraid was sending $600,000 to Ireland in the first years of the conflict but in the mid-seventies this figure dipped to $160,000. During the Hunger Strike of 1981, the figure leapt to $800,000 but afterwards fell back to $300,000.”\textsuperscript{43} Noraid figures of its remittances and expenses as provided to the US Department of Justice as required under FARA depict the same trend.\textsuperscript{44}
Figure 3.10: Noraid Organizational Network, Contributing Units, 1977–1980

Source: Data for this figure were generated from FARA reports from 1977 to 1980. While the exact dates are highly questionable, they do provide a picture of the most financially lucrative units and the actual units that sent money to the central office. Unit size is calculated from the individual unit donations recorded in the files.
Countervailing Forces from Above and Below

Noraid’s geographic base was mostly confined to the last of the “urban villages” remaining in major US cities. This was a result of coordinated government suppression by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland. In a context of robust state counterinsurgency, which created strong disincentives legally, socially, and even materially for aiding the IRA, dense intra-communal ties became even more necessary to bypass the cost and risks associated with participation and thus to mobilize support.

At the same time, Irish-American neighborhoods and organizations were dissolving with upward mobility and a lack of infusion from new arrivals from Ireland. Such processes rendered the vast majority of Irish Americans “unreachable” by republican activists. Dispersion—spatially, occupationally, and socially—weakened the communal organizational infrastructure, a process that was compounded by the 1965 US Immigration and Nationality Act curtailing the flow of migrants from Europe. Disconnected from ethnic-based networks, which contain identity, information, and exchange mechanisms that facilitate collective action, and linked into countervailing social networks that exposed them to cost and risk for supporting “terrorism,” middle-class suburbanites shied away from association with an armed group overwhelmingly portrayed in mainstream media as a bunch of depraved criminals.

Government Suppression

As the armed conflict evolved from 1970 onward, a governmental triad formed to suppress the movement from US shores—that is, to proverbially pollute America’s Irish sea for republican activism. The UK, US, and Irish governments not only had the will and capacity to
stifle mass mobilization within and across borders, but all three countries had democratic legitimacy, which aided their efforts in swaying public opinion firmly against the movement.

All three governments attacked the IRA and Noraid in multiple public arenas—in Congress, in the courts, in the media—to curb American funding for the republican campaign, while the Departments of State and Justice, in collaboration with British officials, waged covert operations to target the diaspora’s radical core and Noraid’s broader membership. Standard techniques used by security forces and intelligence agencies in irregular wars, such as informants, surveillance, undercover work, infiltration, propaganda, and media manipulation, were applied in this case.\textsuperscript{47} Law enforcement tactics directly targeted the IRA and Noraid while propaganda and moral shaming aimed starve them of popular support, financial or otherwise. This mix of coercion and persuasion would prove effective.

Government policies increased the risk not only of joining Noraid but even being associated with it as well as drained movement resources with grand jury intimidation, extradition, deportation, and gunrunning trials, and FARA cases. They also limited the production and flow of republican propaganda and constrained the ability of the IRA and its US-based allies to be effective at generating “consensus mobilization”—sympathy for the cause.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{From Below}

At the same time, the networks and organizations through which republican militants had historically mobilized material support intra-communally were dissipating as a result of two factors: upward social mobility and mass population movements in postwar America; and decreased immigration to the United States stemming from a combination of Congressional quotas and positive economic trends within Ireland itself. Thus, while the movement was
suppressed from above, it was simultaneously confronted with demographic changes among America’s Irish that limited the scope of its reach within that enormous population—about 40 million, about half of whom were Catholic.

By the outbreak of the Troubles, the numbers of foreign-born in the United States from both the Republic and Northern Ireland had already precipitously declined, which meant that immediate kinship ties to the island had dwindled by virtue of the decreased flow and ultimate break in chain migration after the early 1960s. For a movement that depended on locally constructed information about conditions in the North to be passed through interpersonal channels, the shrinking and aging of the foreign-born population meant that there were ever smaller numbers of brokers with direct connections to Northern Ireland or the Republic’s border counties.

At the same time widespread social mobility led to a decrease of occupational clustering in the civil service and skilled trades; the dissipation of Irish neighborhoods with suburbanization; and depletion in the ranks of fraternal institutions that functioned as mutual aid associations. With the aging and death of IRA veterans from the War of Independence (1919–1920), combined with the absence of mass political mobilization across the Atlantic since Ireland’s partition in 1921, the militant organizational infrastructure was emaciated by the 1960s. Similarly, the broader network of cultural and social institutions that fostered collective identity and interpersonal connections on both sides of the Atlantic was in decline.

A network approach to social movements establishes the importance of everyday life “foci” for mobilizing supporters. Yet structural integration and spatial dispersion meant the uncoupling of typical overlapping affiliations in the urban neighborhood: parish, workplace, and cultural associations that formed the basis of communal solidarity. The Irish middle class would
find themselves in thoroughly intermixed suburban towns and jobs where they encountered
associations that did not have predominantly Irish memberships (e.g., the country club, the
parent-teacher association). Thus, their social networks would be more variegated, loosening, if
not obliterating, constraints of moral obligation and reciprocity. At the same time, those who
were sympathetic to the republican movement were more vulnerable to social and economic
costs that could be levied for supporting “terrorists.”

**Noraid’s Survival**

Given the countervailing forces confronting Noraid from above (government
suppression) and from below (communal dispersion), how did Noraid survive for the IRA’s
three-decades-long armed insurgency and manage to send remittances back to Ireland to support
prisoners’ dependents? This section argues that the leadership and activist core engaged in
network-building strategies at both the interpersonal and organizational levels that increased the
organization’s longevity in the face of highly adverse circumstances.

At the interpersonal level, they not only drew upon waning communal ties to mobilize
support but also actively cultivated them through a persistent stream of fundraising events that
celebrated Irish nationalist identity through dance, food, music, and sport.49 Social life in the
dissipating Irish neighborhoods was thus politicized, which generated positive incentives to
support the cause, including intimate friendships, and disincentives not to contribute, such as
shaming or exclusion. Essentially, the events served as social foci from which a closed network
was built and maintained.50 At the same time, Noraid created opportunities for direct personal
connections between Americans and republican prisoners and their families through a number of
initiatives. By personalizing the conflict, Noraid sought to convert them, too, into “transnational
villagers’ imbued with a sense of moral obligation to help those who had become their friends, spouses, or even imagined kin in the North’s Catholic ghettos.

At the organizational level, the movement leadership on both sides of the Atlantic actively sought to centralize efforts in the United States, discouraging competition, although it was not wholly successful at eliminating drainage from its resource pool. Two additional strategies were pursued: co-optation and brokerage. Noraid activists co-opted various elements of established Irish-American institutions, particularly branches of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) and county societies. The leadership also brokered relationships with unions that were Irish-dominated at least in leadership, especially in the building trades. While some rank-and-file union members joined Noraid units, the Noraid leadership strategically honored Irish union leaders at events and included them as committee members for big fundraising efforts and was thereby able to benefit from patronage dynamics within the unions. These men not only had financial resources at their disposal but also informal institutional mechanisms that gave incentive for rank and file and their colleagues to display their loyalty to them by supporting Noraid.

These network-building strategies at the organizational level—centralization, co-optation, and brokerage—were successful overall because Noraid’s leaders in New York (initially all old IRA veterans) and elsewhere were not only directly tied to the republican movement in Ireland, but they were also prominent within their respective Irish-American communities because they had been “joiners.” They tended to have multiple organizational affiliations and held leadership posts that positioned them to exert influence. Lacking in favorable structural opportunities to mobilize broad-based support in cold war America and in material resources, they were rich in
social capital—defined by Ronald Burt and others as advantage from one’s structural position within a network.  

Circles of Trust: The Core and its Resource Base

Collective action studies have illuminated how risk can affect movement participation, both in terms of the willingness of potential recruits to engage in activism of varying levels of commitment as well as whom social movement organizations target for recruitment. It is unsurprising that Noraid chapters screened their potential members and recruited largely through personal contacts, although some units such as those in Bergen County, NJ, and Hartford, CT, placed ads for membership in the *Irish People.* Indeed, Noraid’s constitution stated that “Prospective members should be proposed and seconded by members of the Committee in good standing,” which one informant explained was a security measure. An FBI source, describing Chicago’s lucrative Southside unit, headed by Alex Murphy, detailed:

The largest and strongest unit of the three [in Chicago] is the south side unit. Those who attend the meetings are known to Alex Murphy. If someone who is not known to Murphy attends a meeting, Murphy checks on the person’s background and family. Murphy gives membership cards only to those who have earned his trust.

Gerry Coleman, Noraid executive member since 1989, confirmed:

At that time [in the early 1980s], and this was true, you couldn’t join Noraid. You couldn’t pick a phone up and say, ‘I’d like to come to a meeting.’ It was so secretive, people told me: ‘It’s nice, but you can’t join it.’ It literally was like that. . . . It was mostly people who knew each other, because they had to trust each other.

Jimmy McPaul of the Olney chapter in Philadelphia, who noted that membership cards in his unit had been dispensed with once “things got rough,” similarly asserted: “Someone would have to vouch for you if you were to join Noraid.”
Speaking of his experience in Noraid’s Australian counterpart, Brendan Talton explained the movement as “circles of trust:”

There were people on the fringe, there for events, the food, the beer, they didn’t give a shit about AAI [Australian Aid for Ireland]. Those at the outer circle were there for just that reason. Then there were people who would never do more than attend those functions, but did so to make a statement, to give some contribution by being present. . . . At the highest level were deep connections. [Indeed,] you could not become a member of the leadership unless you had some level of endorsement from back there. You had to be trusted. And there were people within the organization . . . you knew them by their families and what they had done. . . . Diaspora communities tend to be . . . tight. Even within the leadership group, there were circles within circles.  

The Core: “It was a Family Thing”

Noraid’s initial membership was comprised almost exclusively of Irish-born republicans. Many interviewees, however, recalled a substantial Irish-American membership in their respective areas. One Philadelphia leader noted, “If we didn’t have Irish Americans, we’d be done.” Similarly in Queens, NY, Boston, and Connecticut, chapter activists noted a substantial Irish-American presence, including “a number of people who had no lived experience of a relative in Ireland.”

The activist core was comprised of those who were linked to the republican movement in Ireland—the old IRA veterans from the War of Independence and the failed 1950s Border Campaign, immediately surrounded by those with kin relations and friendships in the North’s nationalist communities where the IRA had popular support and/or those with a republican family lineage. The inner executive committee of Noraid was exclusively made up of Irish-born men, noted longtime activist Cathleen O’Brien, whose identities were kept a secret. There was an unspoken sense that they could not totally trust Irish Americans, she explained. Chapter chairmen were also almost always Irish-born. Her father, who headed the Suffolk County
chapter, was an early exception because Michael Flannery knew her grandparents and could verify the family background.\textsuperscript{64}

Those with personal connections to the North comprised the activist cadre. In the words of one Derry-born activist based in the Washington, DC, area:

\begin{quote}
[the US media] made it sound like [the IRA] landed from another planet. The IRA was my nephew who was killed, my neighbor next door, the fellow up the street, the fellow that I liked, the girl I went to school with, that was the IRA—they were all your neighbors. And they wouldn’t have existed, they wouldn’t have been there, if they didn’t have the support of the people.\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

Of the Philadelphia Irish, Clark concluded: the republican network in the 1970s was “not an Aer Lingus tour crowd. It was more like an overseas extension of [Belfast’s] Falls Road ghetto.”\textsuperscript{66}

However, those born in the six counties of Northern Ireland constituted a small proportion of the overall Ireland-born population in major Irish population centers in the United States.\textsuperscript{67} Of the major East Coast standard consolidated statistical areas (SCSAs), only Philadelphia had an NI-born population of more than 10 percent of the total (See Table 5.11), which was about a third less than Boston’s and about seven-and-a-half times less than New York’s foreign-born population from Ireland.\textsuperscript{68} As one Noraid activist from Armagh described of the Bronx chapter: “There was a strong nucleus. . . . There were a number of counties represented [but] very few from the North. I was the token Northerner very often.”\textsuperscript{69}

In addition to those with direct ties to the North were the Irish-born who came from traditional republican families in the 26 counties (of the Republic of Ireland). One Noraid activist in New York City noted that generally, “People from the South were in oblivion. . . . They didn’t want to know” about what was happening in the North; except “if there was a republican tinge in the family, then you’d get an interest, if there was a familial connection.”\textsuperscript{70} Similarly, Mary Sheils Baggarly, a leader in Noraid’s Washington, DC, chapter, explained:
You had the republican faction, you had a people that were republican minded that was handed down from their people. . . . And then you had your Irish that just didn’t care: “We’re alright, we’re over here, we’re doing okay; it’s not happening in the South of Ireland; so don’t bother us; we don’t want to know it.”

Additionally, there was both activism and financial support from Americans with lineages that traced back to members of the old IRA, Cumann na mBhan—the women’s paramilitary auxiliary to the Irish Volunteers that also canvassed for Sinn Féin in the aftermath of the failed 1916 Easter Rising—or both. Baggarly noted, “Any Irish-American support we got, you can be assured that there was some republicanism in that family, that they had it handed down. . . .”

One Noraid member in the Capital District (Albany) Noraid unit and executive committee member noted not only the significance of direct connections between the Noraid leadership and the republican movement in Ireland for fundraising efforts, but also of Americans with long-standing republican roots:

. . . most of the money was raised within the “American shamrock,” Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago with San Francisco being a part of the tail or stem of the shamrock. The reason for success of [Noraid] units was often related to the leadership. Many of the local leaders were native Irish with connections to IRA elements.

He further clarified:

It is important to distinguish between [Noraid’s] work raising money for the families of what we termed political prisoners and those collections that were independently conducted for IRA emissaries raising money for “gear.” Although many [Noraid] members were frequently key to this funding, I remember funds for the IRA “visitors” coming from contacts that went back 60–70 years from 2nd and 3rd generation Irish Americans whose parents or grandparents were involved in the [1916] Rebellion period or otherwise.

At its very core, noted another interviewee, “it was a family thing. Trust is why the MI5 [British Military Intelligence] couldn’t infiltrate.” Among the Noraid rank and file, kin
relationships were not uncommon—spouses, siblings, parents and children, and even more distant relations. In fact, for some activism was a family event.

*Outer Circles*

While the IRA veterans, those connected to the nationalist ghettos in the North, and those from republican families who were “weaned on militant politics”\

75 comprised the heart of the radical movement, ancillary support came from the Irish-born from elsewhere who, according to historian Dennis Clark, “react[ed] to the social pressure of those who were.”\

76 John McCarthy identifies two broad groups of supporters who were integral to the republican movement: Irish who were involved in the building trades or owners of small businesses, especially restaurants and bars, who had “never been to the North or anywhere near it”;\

77 and “second- or third-generation Irish-Americans anxious for an ethnic badge of identity.” The anxiety of this latter group, he argues, was rooted in the entrance of other ethnic groups into “the employment or residential turf earlier dominated by the Irish,” a claim that coincides with Niall Ó Dóchartaigh’s description of its bastions as neighborhoods “in conflict with black Americans over resources.”\

78 “Enthusiasm for what they see as the ‘Irish’ cause,” he further asserts, “is a mechanism whereby they can achieve and assert a sense of solidarity. . . . This is most apparent in the Emerald Societies of various public services [e.g., the New York City Police Department] and public utilities.”\

79 As long-time Noraid executive board member Gerry Coleman described: “That’s who we were, we were transit workers, and cops, and school teachers maybe.”\

80 Similarly Frank Walsh explained: “We didn’t get [many] lawyers or CEOs; we had bus drivers, plumbers, bartenders.” He also noted that the organization had the cooperation of the police, firefighters, and other city
workers; and also those who performed maintenance work in big buildings. Unofficially, explained O’Brien, New York City police and firemen were supportive, and sometimes purchased ad pages in the annual dinner journals. Occasionally their Emerald Societies and pipe bands would make very public displays of solidarity on both sides of the Atlantic, even in the face of condemnation from superiors and politicians.

In Philadelphia, the social composition was the same. As one interviewee noted: “[T]here were not a lot of doctors, lawyers, or professionals. Just poor, hardworking people, some of whom had their own successful businesses such as bar owners. For the ‘lace-curtain Irish,’ Noraid would be beneath them.” He further elaborated, “We had plenty of cops that would come to our affairs; they wouldn’t be members, but they would attend events. The unions and the small businesses, they were the big ones.” Another Philadelphia activist asserted: “The Emerald Society were supporters but not members. They wouldn’t be members because the organization was classified as terrorist.” “The police had to watch what they were doing,” Noraid Mayfair Unit activist Seamus Boyle explained, as likely did other government workers.

Joe McHugh, a former police officer who helped run dinner banquets in Boston and Lynn, Mass., similarly noted that unions would buy tables, especially the carpenters’ unions, and support also came from bar and café owners, construction companies, and restaurant employees. Essentially, those embedded in the local ethnic economy—whether as small business owners or members of Irish-dominated unions, with some support from the disappearing Irish civil service niches—constituted the support base of Irish Northern Aid.

As one interviewee noted, participation in Noraid was about “economics and personal proximity.” He explained, “If you’re from Waterford [in the South of Ireland] and you do not have a direct connection to [the conflict], the national question is [likely] not a question for you.”
. . In the US, [whether it was] depended on one’s proximity to what was occurring [in the North] or other people in the community’’ who had been affected by the violence. Economic prosperity and generational assimilation, he contended, would make people less likely to find common cause with the movement.\textsuperscript{88} Such processes diversified interpersonal networks thus weakening communal identification and norms.

\textbf{Weaving Personal Ties That Bind: From Social Events to Cultivated Direct Connections}

From the outset, Noraid appealed to the Irish community for support through traditional means. It appealed to donors indirectly through solicitations in ethnic newspapers, but more key was its organization of social events such as dinners, dances, raffles, card games, concerts, boat rides, and picnics, which were advertised in the \textit{Irish People}. Noraid tapped directly into Irish communal social life and in turn fostered it. As Frances Duffy noted in Philadelphia, “Noraid brought Irish culture back with the dances and the socials. It got people together.’’\textsuperscript{89}

Bronx unit member Brigid Brannigan and bar owner described both the frequency of events and the reciprocity mechanism among the units: “Weekend after weekend, Saturday and Sunday, for many, many, many years we just went to fundraisers. Weekend after weekend for years, because of course if you belonged to the Bronx chapter and Manhattan supported you then you needed to go to O’Lunney’s [which hosted Manhattan chapter events]; if you went there, then you needed to go to Queens.’’\textsuperscript{90} One Queens activist similarly noted: “There were few weekends in those years that there wasn’t something.” She recalled attending events throughout New York City’s boroughs and in Nassau County, and “they’d come to us. It was the same people every weekend!’’\textsuperscript{91} Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington, DC, area activists described the same fundraising mode through social events. Mayfair unit member Seamus Boyle
explained, “[P]eople in Philadelphia stuck together. We would always check with others’
organizations if you were running a function, fundraiser. We supported each other’s fundraisers.
You were guaranteed a crowd no matter what you ran. . . . When you needed mobilization you
got it. . . .”

The cost of entry was typically just a few dollars—“a cheap night out” in the words of
one organizer. Yet they were lucrative because the cost of throwing such events was not borne
by Noraid alone but rather dispersed among members of the community, including by bar
owners who opened up their pubs as venues and sometimes donated food and liquor, and Irish
musicians, who played without much or even any financial remuneration at dances and benefit
concerts. Sometimes a bar’s patrons were unexpectedly roped into being supporters, as
Brannigan explained:

[M]ost Bronx bars, I don’t remember exceptions, but most bars were very supportive and
would allow us to go around with the can like the Salvation Army . . . or have a night
where people would pay at the door coming in . . . . That’s how we did a lot of
fundraising, just ask for permission and then set up a table at the door. So rather than go
in for free like you would expect to at your corner place . . . we’d say, “We’re having a
Noraid fundraiser tonight.” . . . People would invariably just pull out their money.

The events also provided an opportunity for Noraid to sell merchandise, such as the
record *Ireland Calling*, T-shirts, bumperstickers, plaques, and buttons. These were also peddled
at Irish fairs and other cultural events—sometimes not openly as Noraid in hostile venues.
Washington, DC, activist Patrick Kierny described: “We started the Irish Cultural Society
because Noraid was so demonized that we couldn’t get into Irish festivals.”

It was not just the monetary income that benefited the organization, but rather the sense
of solidarity and social connections that these events fostered. These were sometimes intimate,
as some interviewees recounted marriages and friendships that were created. While they
generated positive social incentives to support the cause, they reinforced the perception of the conflict as an age-old communal struggle.

Trans-Atlantic Connections

While intracommunal connections were cultivated through events in the old urban neighborhoods, Noraid also wove ties across the Atlantic. One means of generating a connection was through objects. Republican supporters, for example, would send leather kits and other materials to prisoners in Long Kesh and elsewhere so that they could make items such as wallets and painted handkerchiefs, and send them back across the Atlantic to be raffled as prizes or auctioned off at Noraid events. Wooden harps were another cherished craft that came out of the prisons. The material items then constituted a symbolic link between prisoners and those who were far removed from the violence. Yet Noraid went farther with generating trans-Atlantic connections.

The prisoner writing campaign was a staple Noraid activity. Prison and cell information about Irish republican prisoners, the “IPOW List” (Irish Prisoners of War), was circulated in the Irish People and elsewhere, and rank and file were encouraged to correspond with prisoners, especially on holidays such as Christmas or for birthdays, the dates of which were included on lists. From the perspective on the other side of the Atlantic, Malachy McAllister, who served seven years in HMP Maze, recalls that the “writing back and forth was a morale boost” for the men.

In the early 1980s, as Noraid began to actively garner support from American-born Irish who had weak or no ties to either side of the border, it strategically fostered relationships among them and republican families in the North so as to personalize the human dimensions of the
conflict. In 1983, it launched an annual tour in which participants would meet and stay with the families of prisoners in the North. The tour itself was promoted as “a chance to see first-hand what life was like for the Irish in British occupied Ireland.”

During the 1985 tour, an FBI source reported that some of the Americans had themselves been “hassled” by the police. Long-time Noraid vice chairman Richard Lawlor vividly recalled the experiences as much more severe:

Martin Galvin started the tour in 1983. I headed the tour in 1984, ‘85, and ‘86. Martin had been banned from the North. In 1984, we had three busloads of people. We were hosted by people everywhere we went. We were there for 10 days. It was a life changing experience for people. Sean Downes had been murdered right in front of me [at an anti-interment rally in North Belfast where Galvin was speaking]. . . . During that time, we had helped to bury an IRA volunteer in Newry, Brendan Waters. . . . [We] formed a human barrier around the casket. . . . The RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] would try to break through our protective circle to remove the beret and gloves from the corpse. Bullets were fired at us that day. I was standing right next to Martin. There were bullets flying. . . . We had people injured. I took a delegation to the American consulate in Belfast who couldn’t give a damn about us, provided no comfort, no support.

As Coleman explained, the tour “was part of the agenda to bring it home a little bit. And the only way to do it was to bring Americans over. They weren’t Noraid people per se. They just wanted to go.” Some were members of more mainstream Irish organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians or the Irish American Unity Conference (IAUC), while others had no affiliation with any communal organization.

Lawlor described the participants as “average everyday working people”: “People who went on the trip,” he explained, “were average . . . cops, firemen, office workers, teachers, real middle-class people—but not upper middle-class people—the regular backbone of America. The majority were of Irish heritage; there were a few who weren’t Irish at all.” An FBI informant reported that of the approximately 115 participants on the 1985 tour, most came from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, California, and possibly Illinois.
Lawlor further elaborated:

The camaraderie was fantastic. Girls met their husbands; lifelong friendships were developed; people kept in contact over the years. It was a morale boost for all of us; it created bonds with people in the North. The idea was that after people came home they would be a lot more motivated. It wasn’t calculated, but the trip itself would produce that outcome…

Martin Galvin, former publicity director of Noraid, similarly remarked: “That was the idea. People would see things on the ground first hand and build a personal attachment, and they would come back and be more active.”

One US-born woman of mixed descent, for example, had been an active member of the Ladies’ Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) in Lynn, Mass., when she applied go on her first Noraid tour in 1985, which she had heard about through word-of-mouth in AOH circles.

Kathleen Savage described:

I had to feel what they were feeling, see the suffering. The family in Newry that put me up with them, their son had brain damage from a brutal beating by the British Army. . . . To hear and see in person. . . . I heard stories and said, “This isn’t made up.” I had a cousin who said that it was all propaganda, that they set it up, the Noraid tours. How could they set that up?

Upon her return, Savage joined the organization as an active member and wholeheartedly engaged in the prisoner correspondence campaign, writing as many as 30 letters per month to republican inmates. She keeps a box of her cherished photos and letters, a testament to the relationships that she had built with families in the North since her first tour some 25 years ago. Savage described becoming embedded in an interpersonal network of friendship and even kin-like ties. Discussing her relationship with the Dillon family, for example, she noted: “I loved them, and they loved me like a daughter. And I would visit their son [Séamus] in [HMP] Maghaberry.”
An advertisement in the *Irish People* explained, “One of the major benefits of the tour . . . stems from tour members being housed with local families. . . . These arrangements have afforded tour members an opportunity to see the six counties from the perspective of ordinary nationalist people. Such arrangements have led to the formation of lasting friendships.”

By contrast, an FBI source described the trips as manipulative, asserting that hosts were “thoroughly coached” in what to say to lodgers in a “standardized pro-PIRA/PSF rhetoric.” It was believed that the tour organizers were effective at instilling a “pro-PIRA/anti-Brit attitude” among the participants. The trips were thus considered a major “propaganda and indoctrination vehicle.” The FBI also saw the tours as a means for participants to make “contacts with PIRA and PSF individuals who have in turn traveled to the US and made contact with them.”

Noraid activists also worked on other initiatives such as the children’s exchange programs, which also were a proactive method to create personal ties between Americans and Northern Ireland.

In the Philadelphia area, Frances Duffy explained:

The children’s programs brought children out; people are still friends with the kids and their parents and the chaperones to the kids. Project Children was hesitant to have political parents on both sides. . . . People here were very accepting of the program. Lots of people wanted to have the kids, and they were not the average people who came to the dances.

In response to Project Children’s exclusion of political prisoners’ children, the Irish Political Prisoners Children’s Holiday was formed in 1983. Coleman recalled:

I worked for this children’s fund, the Political Prisoners’ Children’s Fund, [which] took kids from Belfast, Derry, and Tyrone and brought them to America. It was really done for the parents, because it was usually a mother, and the father in jail. But it could be the mother in jail. And it gave them a little bit of a break. And it exposed people to these kids, and it exposed the kids to us. But I think it was more to influence Americans with these kids.
The Republican Patriarchs, They Were Joiners

While the militant republican leadership in the United States faced countervailing forces in their efforts to forge a movement, they had a distinct advantage at the onset of the Troubles: they had been joiners of communal and other organizations, typical among the immigrant Irish interviewees. They not only had been joiners, they had also held leadership positions within Irish-American organizations that were deeply connected to Irish communities. Former US ambassador to Ireland William V. Shannon once remarked: “It is these shrunken organizations, some of them virtually defunct, that the IRA hardliners . . . captured.” At the same time, Noraid’s leaders in New York were advanced in age and thus retired from their jobs, allowing them to devote their energies full-time to organizing, which was a boon to the movement.

Communal connectedness is not uncommon among social movement leaders generally. As one pair of sociologists note, “social movement leaders often have prior lives that are deeply embedded in community institutions.” Figure 2 depicts the organizational affiliations of the IRA Veteran Four who led Noraid (Michael Flannery, Jack McCarthy, John McGowan, and Matt Higgins), along with two other honorees at Noraid’s first testimonial dinner in 1973. The bipartite graph reveals the direct and indirect ties among the leadership, as well as how organizations were tied together through the memberships of these individuals. Flannery alone has nine affiliations with key communal institutions, in six of which he is the sole connection between the Noraid central office and them, making him the most prominent actor within the network. McCarthy is a “cut point” in the graph, or a broker, with a key Irish-dominated building trades union, which proved to be a robust source of support for Noraid, especially in its early years (See Table 1).
Figure 2: Organizational Affiliations of Noraid’s Testimonial Dinner Honorees, 1973

Note: The red nodes are the individuals whom Noraid honored at its first annual testimonial dinner in 1973. The so-called Veteran Four, the organization’s central office leadership in New York, were all included. In addition, two key leaders in the Irish community in New York City were also among the honorees: the president of the GAA and lease-holder of Gaelic Park stadium, John “Kerry” O’Donnell, and the president of the TWU Local 100, Daniel Gilmartin. Affiliations were drawn from the biographies included in the 1973 Testimonial Dinner journal as well as other sources. Their affiliations are likely incomplete and thus the connections between them.
Strategic Centralization, Co-optation, and Brokerage

This section examines three strategies at the organizational level that explain Noraid’s survival in highly adverse circumstances. First, the republican leadership on both sides of the Atlantic actively sought to centralize fundraising for the cause by minimizing competition with rivals for resources and leakage through personalized channels; second, activists co-opted, and sometimes even appropriated, the resources of existing Irish-American institutions; and third, it developed brokerage relationships with individuals who were “connected” and tapped into patronage systems, particularly in the unions.

Forestalling Competition and Centralizing Fundraising Efforts

The republican leadership in the United States, like other diasporic leaderships, faced internal competition with rival groups for support, the effective management of which was crucial to the organization’s longevity. Noraid initially had to compete with civil rights organizations and later the Irish Republican Clubs (IRC), the support arm of the Official IRA. Noraid prevailed and became the hegemonic militant organization in the United States in the early 1970s—a victory that was aided by generalized American antipathy to the Marxist bent of the IRC and the Provisional IRA’s dominance of the armed movement in the North, from which Noraid derived its legitimacy.

Yet the leadership had to actively maintain this position. Brannigan recalled:

The old timers were dead set on keeping everything very organized. We couldn’t, for example, in the Bronx chapter of Noraid, under Jack McCarthy and Flannery, and John McGowan [and] Matt Higgins . . . under that group, we couldn’t even send out a letter from the Bronx chapter of Noraid, everything had to be filtered; things were very controlled; they wanted to have an image. They were definitely very much within the Catholic Church. They were as fearful as anything of the Left as any outsiders. . . . They were very controlling. . . . In as much they were able to control it after a certain length of
time, authorization to set up chapters, everything, Noraid was very controlled and very organized. . . .121

According to FBI memos, the organization “looked down upon and tried to discourage attempts by other Irish American organizations to raise funds for Irish Nationalists in Ireland.”122 Personal initiatives were also frowned upon, as the Noraid central office did not want competing efforts.123

The Irish National Caucus: From Companion to Competitor

Organizational competitors posed a formidable challenge. Founded in February 1974, the Irish National Caucus (INC) was initially established as an umbrella organization and pro-republican lobbying arm within the US political arena and thus had a clear division of labor with Noraid. Flannery was “always opposed to the formation of the Irish National Caucus,”124 according to Father Sean McManus, national coordinator of the organization. An alternative account of the organization’s formation suggests, however, that Flannery was assured that “a lobby would not take away from the INA [Irish Northern Aid (Noraid)],” and that Noraid and Caucus leaders agreed to work together in early 1974.125

As one historian asserted, “due to the scarcity of active republicans interested in northern issues,”126 there was overlapping membership between the two organizations among rank and file. Patrick Kierney, who had been a member of both organizations, explained, “We turned our hats. At some events we were the Caucus, and others Noraid, depending on the audience.”127 Meanwhile, Olive McKeon, who noted that she helped McManus organize dinner dances, explained that in New York City “it was people who were Northern Aid people that supported the Irish National Caucus.”128
The membership overlap was encouraged by the fact that the Caucus adopted the same organizational structure as Noraid—a central office (eventually located in Washington, DC) and outlying chapters spread across the United States. It had a presence in the Baltimore/Washington, DC, area, where McManus was located from 1972–1975, before his subsequent appointment in Boston, which lasted until late 1978. While some chapters grew out of Noraid units, elsewhere AOH divisions were crucial. Bob Bateman, former INC director, noted that the Caucus was very strong in Massachusetts, where Hibernian divisions were its life blood there, particularly in Lawrence and Lowell.

One former Noraid leader asserted that the Caucus “was not popular in Philadelphia,” which evidence suggests was Noraid’s most lucrative support base. In some places, the emergence of an active branch was strategically forestalled by Noraid members. According to Lawlor, the Caucus did not have a significant presence in Connecticut because some early heads of the Hartford Noraid unit held the charter for a chapter and made sure that nothing was done.

At the leadership level, the two organizations also had overlap in its early years, from 1974 until 1977. The relationship was mutually beneficial in that McManus, as a Catholic priest from the North (County Fermanagh), bestowed moral legitimacy on the cause at the same time that the Catholic Church on both sides of the Atlantic denounced it, while Noraid had deep contacts with the Irish-American community, which McManus lacked as he had just arrived in the United States in October 1972.

In 1977, McManus, who had been referred to as “the Provos chaplain,” publicly veered away from supporting armed struggle as the means to achieve Irish unification, undoubtedly a necessary strategy to make headway with Congress. In September of the following year, the Provisional IRA had declared one Caucus leader persona non grata. Two months later, the
Caucus held its first annual testimonial dinner dance in Queens, the dinner journal of which asserted, “The Caucus has resolutely refused to be dictated to by any group in Ireland.”

According to one former Noraid activist:

I remember McManus coming. He broached the idea of a liaison. He turned around and formed his own organization, with dinners and fundraising. People organizing and fundraising that drained the best talents Noraid had. . . . Mike [Flannery] took exception to this. He was able to drain off quite a lot of support and fundraising. He drained Noraid’s talents; people could organize a dinner . . . and pack the place. There were 8 to 9 tables of union membership alone. People were sending McManus money by themselves; there is no way of tabulating.

The following year, an article in An Phoblacht explaining Provisional Sinn Féin’s hardline during the Caucus-organized peace forum asserted: “It should be remembered that the INC has attempted to milk support and finances away from those genuinely concerned not just about human rights but our national freedom—those in Irish Northern Aid.” In October 1980, the Irish People published an editorial that, according to McManus, “was dictated by the Republican Movement, which declared, ‘the Caucus is an anathema to the Republican Movement in Ireland.’”

McManus and colleagues were not only accused of poaching supporters, including by upstaging Noraid with their own fundraising dinners, but also of sabotage and collaborating with the CIA. In addition to spreading rumors, McManus claims that the republican movement in Ireland also gave Noraid leaders “specific instructions . . . to oppose and obstruct the Caucus in every possible way.” “Many Irish Northern Aid members were privately disgusted about the attacks,” he asserted in his memoir. “They would admit to me that the IRA had sent orders that Irish Northern Aid were to infiltrate, disrupt and destroy Caucus chapters throughout the country—just as the British and Irish Embassies were trying to do.” Wilson contends that
Caucus chapters in New Jersey, Illinois, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania had memberships that opposed the INC’s more moderate line and broke away to form new organizations in 1979.\textsuperscript{142}

A September 1979 article in the \textit{Washington Star} claimed that the split between the INC and Noraid had a negative effect on fundraising for the movement. It asserted: “Irish officials, who seek to keep a lid on the Irish-American community’s support for the IRA, say the decline in funds is the result of a split between the Irish National Caucus . . . and the Irish Northern Aid Committee.”\textsuperscript{143} With the Caucus operating on a platform defined in opposition to Noraid—i.e., a nonviolent organization with “NO FOREIGN PRINCIPAL”\textsuperscript{144}—and mimicking Noraid’s annual dinner, the organization became a competitor for scarce resources.

\textbf{Co-optation/Appropriation}

Co-optation/appropriation is a mechanism of resource access in social movements. Theorists define it as the exploitation “of existing forms of social organization that were not formed for explicit movement purposes.” They differentiate between co-optation, defined as “the transparent, permitted borrowing of resources,” and appropriation, which entails exploiting them surreptitiously.\textsuperscript{145} Noraid activists would use both approaches.

Noraid’s primary purpose of generating financial support for prisoners’ dependents was wholly compatible with the charitable activities that were typical of Irish associations, especially fundraising for vulnerable populations and families in need of assistance, including among their own memberships. For example, as retired Mount Vernon police officer Tony Gormley explained of the Emerald Society: “When someone gets hurt, they take care of their own and step up to the plate and run benefits and get them on their feet.”\textsuperscript{146}
Co-opting the resources—organizational, financial, human, moral—of existing Irish social, cultural, and economic organizations was thus a viable strategy. As Hanley notes, “From its inception, Noraid relied very heavily for support on existing Irish institutions. . . .” One activist estimated that in the Philadelphia area: “About 70 percent of Noraid’s membership had belonged to something.” Yet there is evidence that Noraid members also joined organizations to align other groups with their efforts. An FBI report asserted, “[Noraid] has gotten its members and supporters in places of leadership in several organizations so their influence is . . . greater than their membership size would indicate.”

**AOH and the County Societies**

The Ancient Order of Hibernians, as the largest and highly structured national organization, was perhaps the most pivotal in the long term. In addition to its mutual aid and charity functions discussed in the previous chapter, the active promotion of an end to Ireland’s partition, an initiative titled Freedom For All Ireland, was an integral mandate of the organization. Yet there were deep political divisions within the organization and disputes over priorities among the AOH’s programmatic priorities, of which FFAI was one among others that also included an anti-abortion campaign and immigration reform.

At the national level, the nature and intensity of the AOH’s activism vis-à-vis the Northern Ireland conflict was not consistent. Long-time Hibernian Phil Gallagher noted, “The tone of [the Hibernian] Digest [the AOH’s paper] on the issue changed depending on the editor and militancy of the national presidency.” The republican movement on both sides of the Atlantic strategized to steer the organization at the highest level of leadership. Liam Murphy noted that he never joined Noraid and that his job was essentially to bring the republican
movement program to the AOH as a Hibernian. AOH stalwarts Burke and Murphy would also urge McManus, who was then involved with Noraid, to ‘‘convert’ the AOH’’ leadership in 1974.\textsuperscript{153}

Gallagher further explained that because the ‘‘AOH was an existing network; the advantage was that it’s like a feudal society; the strength is in the local-level divisions.’’\textsuperscript{154} Thus, it was at the local level that the AOH had the most impact on Noraid. As their funding enthusiasm for FFAI initiative varied,\textsuperscript{155} so too did the divisions’ support for Noraid.

Noraid branches thus varied considerably in their success in coopting/appropriating AOH resources. Local AOH divisions in such urban neighborhoods in Inwood and Astoria, for example, would sponsor social events on Noraid’s behalf and turn over their proceeds.\textsuperscript{156} Other divisions, however, were not so helpful or even sympathetic. In New Jersey, there was a ‘‘canyon of difference’’ between Noraid and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. As Dermot Quinn finds: ‘‘The former was attractive to the ‘New Irish’: second- and third-generation immigrants who preferred political engagement to bourgeois assimilation. . . . The latter attracted the ‘Old Irish’: integrated, socially consequential, conservative Catholics.’’\textsuperscript{157} Meanwhile, in Connecticut, Gallagher estimated that there was very little cross-membership between his division and Noraid.\textsuperscript{158}

‘‘A fundamental fact was that where you had an active AOH you always had an active [Noraid unit] and to a lesser extent an [Irish American Unity Conference branch],’’ asserted Mike Cummings, former Noraid executive member. ‘‘[Noraid] units in my memory never grew up without an AOH unit to build upon.’’\textsuperscript{159} ‘‘Most of the founding and other members were either Hibernians (or in NYC, Philadelphia, and Boston and Chicago also Clan na Gael). . . .’’\textsuperscript{160}
Cathleen O’Brien notes that in the Suffolk County, NY, Noraid unit, co-founded by her father and Mike Flannery, for example, “nearly all were members of the AOH.” “It was a strong group” with “many couples,” she noted, “they were friends originally from the Hibernians; and nearly everyone was involved in the church.”  

Yet Brigid Brannigan, whose activism in the Bronx dates back to the civil rights movement and the American Congress for Irish Freedom, explained the causal process in the reverse:

For example, the Ancient order of Hibernians, a number of people joined who were involved with Noraid, or who were [just] interested in Irish freedom, had the idea to join the Ancient Order of Hibernians and bring that organization—by joining it—they brought that organization into being a support group.

She further noted:

That was a strategy, certainly. I don’t know that that was any particularly planned strategy. But that just people had that idea and came together, joined AOH, and then the AOH became a strong ancillary organization to Noraid. . . . My memory of it was that there were groups that filled up in the ranks with people who were strongly in support of Irish freedom at the time, and those groups came out at different fundraisers . . . and would buy tickets as a group and support things. It was networking; all networking.  

Similarly, as Roche described, Noraid members “joined with us because we had a network. The AOH had divisions from Maine to California. They didn’t have the network we had”; only individual cells. They “joined the AOH and converted them.”

One Noraid head in New York estimated that as much as 30 percent of Noraid’s membership in the 1980s was comprised of AOH members. Roche estimated the figure at 40 percent. Boyle noted of Philadelphia, “Some of them [initial members of Noraid] were AOH, some of them later joined AOH. . . . I think by the time I left Northern Aid most people belonged to both. There was an awful lot of cross membership. I still have a lot of friends that were in Northern Aid that are members of my division and other divisions in the city.”
Yet in the Bronx, noted an early president of that borough chapter, “A lot of Noraid’s membership did not come from the AOH; it was not the main source.” Rather than the AOH divisions, historian John Ridge explained, “The Irish county associations were more inclined to supply the cadre for the republican movement.” There was a very strong association with funding republican activity from the United States at least since the early twentieth century. And while the leaders of Noraid, such as Michael Flannery, were AOH members, “they were not primarily AOH people. They spent more time working with the county societies.” Unlike the AOH, which in the post–WW II period became mostly American-born, immigrants coming to the United States would more likely find themselves joining the county societies, explained Ridge, where they had friends and neighbors from their home counties and co-members shared the same accent. In many areas, the AOH had become middle class.

The county societies, which like the AOH were also segregated by sex, although they mostly integrated by the mid-1980s, were politically divided on the republican movement. In New York, the Leitrim Association “as a whole were very supportive and generous,” noted one long-time member. When asked which of the county associations from the South would tend to be more supportive of Noraid, former United Irish Counties Association leader, Joe McManus mentioned: Leitrim, Mayo, and Sligo in the west (Connaught), and Cork, Kerry, and Tipperary in the southwest (Munster).

In Philadelphia, the Ulster societies of Donegal, Derry, and Tyrone had overlap with Noraid or had members that would support it, as well as the Mayo society. As one Philadelphia activist noted: “Everyone in the Tyrone society was in Noraid.” Another noted that a lot of the Donegal society membership was also in Noraid, while Frances Duffy singled out the Derry Society. She noted that generally the societies were not active but supportive.
Yet when asked how supportive the county societies were as organizations in New York, Brannigan asserted:

Very little support. Again there were a couple of exceptions. . . . I might think Cork and Leitrim . . . . The counties would . . . have a lot of debate over handing over any amount of money, even making a donation, it always became a controversy as to how the money was being spent and why. . . . It was political, it was entirely a question of “Do we support them? . . . [T]hey’re not like our fathers were, the IRA in the old days was a decent organization; these people are a bunch of terrorists.” So it came down to that kind of judgment, it came down to a Free State kind of mentality, “We’re fine without the six counties; we really don’t need them.” There were harsh decisions made by people who did not want to support [the movement]; they truly saw the IRA as the enemy of Ireland.177

A review of Noraid’s annual testimonial dinner journals from the 1970s and early 1980s reveals that only the Cork, Donegal, and Tipperary associations were fairly regular table patrons at the dinners and purchased ads. Unsurprisingly these were headed by the central office leadership. Less support in the form of ads came from Clare and some of the Ulster counties (Derry, Tyrone, and Monaghan). Other societies seemed to be inclined to take out an ad page if someone from their county was being honored at that year’s particular dinner.

Local Parishes

The extent to which resources could be drawn from the Church and its network of parishes was also highly variable. The Church hierarchy was steadfastly opposed to the insurgency in the North. In the words of Noraid activist Olive McKeon, “They were anti-IRA, and there’s no question about it!” However, she also noted that at the parish level, there was considerable variation in the way that pastors reacted to her chapter’s efforts to mobilize support. According to McKeon, “there were some parishes that allowed us to sell hundreds of raffle tickets,” elsewhere officials threatened to call the police. She recalled, one time it actually
happened, but “when the cops arrived they bought raffle tickets!” “It didn’t mean that people in that parish didn’t support us,” she explained. “It just meant that the pastor of the parish ‘didn’t want to be involved,’ so that was it.”178 Wilson explains, “Although church leaders were careful not to endorse republicanism, a number of priests openly sympathized with the IRA and allowed Noraid to use parish buildings for fund-raising events.”179

The Church and the local parishes generally were not a helpful source of recruitment or support. Union leader Seamus Boyle of Philadelphia explained: “They [the local parish] didn’t get up and preach against it, but if you asked them for something like, whatever it was, prayers, they would never pray for the people in the Troubles of Northern Ireland. You had the odd priest that would . . . ‘the rebel priest,’ as we would say . . . but other than [that] . . . no we never went through the church to try to [mobilize] . . . we found it better to stay away.” Indeed, Belfast-born Thomas Hughes recalls even having been chased away.180

Workplaces: The Case of the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority

The garages and depots of the Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (MABSTOA) are a prime example of how a workspace was put into the service of the cause. The company was heavily Irish at the onset of the Troubles as hiring had long been done on the basis of personal connections. Among its Irish workforce, about 55 percent were US-born and 45 percent were born in Ireland, estimated former supervisor John Dunleavy. As a closed shop, its employees were required to join TWU Local 100, which itself “was an Irish-born union.”

Dunleavy asserted that “a lot of individual transport workers were members or supporters of Noraid.”181 One retired MABSTOA bus driver recounted that “when situations arose, MABSTOA workers would convene meetings in the local garages.”182 Although Dunleavy did
not recall any formal organizing in the depots, he did recall that leaflets were left on lunch tables advertising events.\textsuperscript{183}

Roscommon-born Pascal Morahan, who lived in the Bronx and noted that he had not felt pressured to join Noraid or any other political organization, asserted:

Noraid basically had to do with the TWU. I think most of those people in the TWU seemed to be affiliated more with that [than the carpenters’ union Local 53]. . . . It was easier for them because they it was more of them thinking the same way. You did have a lot of Irish in the TWU. The leader of it was an Irishman, and there were hundreds of Irish bus drivers. Whereas . . . they did agree, it was like one voice there, because it was all agreed to. Whereas in my union [Local 53] it was more diverse; it might not have been accepted. You had English in my local. We were a more diverse union. . . . It was much easier for them because, like I said, you had one voice there, and they all stick together.\textsuperscript{184}

Noraid sympathizers who were dispatchers within MABSTOA, such as Dunleavy and Leitrim-born Frank Beirne, who also headed the AOH New York County Board, were centrally placed within the transit sector, as they had contact with hundreds of employees among whom they could potentially garner loyalty. They had a very distinct organizational advantage, including that some of the nine bus depots were located in Irish neighborhoods in the Bronx and Manhattan, and that the drivers themselves came into contact with clientele on a regular basis.

Morahan explained:

It was easier for those people to organize and get something because they were in the city and so forth. . . . [They] had more time because of their shifts, because of the way they worked and different things. They were more equipped. If they wanted to they could have stopped the city . . . with a transit strike, not show up to work. They didn’t do that.\textsuperscript{185}

\textbf{Brokerage}

Noraid also relied on patronage from powerful Irish leaders, typically local ones, and in turn honored them at testimonial dinners. As one letter addressed to Gerry Adams described of
one Noraid leader in New York: “Pat [O’Connell] has special talent in [fundraising] due to his ability to establish a personal relationship with people in various fields i.e. – union leaders, restaurateurs and leading representatives in industry.” Of critical importance in this regard were union leaders. Figure 1.3 reveals the 1973 honorees and honorary committee affiliations. The figure shows how embedded these individuals (all men this year) were in Irish organizations overall and also which union leaders were brokers in the network. They would play that role not only in New York City, but also in Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco. Indeed as late as 1988, an in-depth Sinn Fein report noted, “One of the main features of INA in SF [San Francisco] is the extent of their contacts within Labour and its members’ involvement…. it would seem that financial support comes from the unions. . . . A lot depends on personal acquaintances.”
Figure 6.2: 1973 Noraid Dinner Affiliations

Source: Data constructed from Noraid’s 1973 Annual Testimonial Dinner Journal and other sources. The red nodes represent the dinner honorees and honorary committee members and while the blue squares represent the organizations. The arrows indicate that a person is affiliated with a particular organization. It is likely that the figure underestimates the connections between individuals as all of the affiliations for each participant are not known. Noraid’s leaders are placed at the center of the graph.
John Kerry O’Donnell, president of the New York Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in the early 1970s and long-time lease holder of the MTA-administered stadium Gaelic Park in the Bronx, sponsored field days to benefit Noraid. Interviewees differed in their perceptions of the role of the GAA as a basis for support. One interviewee explained that the GAA was seen to be infiltrated by informers. Another saw them as fundraising fronts for republicans. At a minimum, the GAA brought their team players, supporters, and spectators together on a regular basis around distinctively Irish sporting events.

Rather than the GAA, it was O’Donnell himself, as the manager of Gaelic Park, where the GAA played its games and was a meeting ground for events, who was crucial. Along with Noraid’s central office leaders, he was honored at Noraid’s first testimonial dinner in 1973. Thereafter, he was consistently an honorary committee member of Northern Aid’s annual testimonial dinners.

Brigid Brannigan noted:

I don’t remember any affiliation of any nature [with the GAA] except Gaelic Park. The owner of Gaelic Park would allow us to have fundraisers. . . . We had some big fundraisers there for sure and raised a lot of money there. [O’Donnell] did let us collect outside on a Sunday afternoon. We would have people with the boxes collecting money, he did allow that. . . . There might have been individual [GAA] players but not as teams.

A cursory review of the dinner journals shows that the GAA would sometimes contribute as would individual county football teams, particularly Leitrim and Donegal, but the support was neither robust nor consistent.
Union Leaders

The crucial network brokers were union leaders, who had both the organization skills and resources to mobilize. There was also the historic connection of Irish nationalism and union activism from which Noraid could draw upon. This connection was articulated in July 1970 in Provisional Sinn Féin’s newspaper *An Phoblacht*—which was initially promoted as Noraid’s newspaper and available at Noraid’s Bronx office. It stated, “The present power position of the trade union movement in U.S. society,” it stated, “is due in no small part due to the part played by former I.R.A. men.”¹⁹²

Noraid testimonial dinner books provide evidence of the intimate connection between Noraid and unions, especially at the local level, in areas where the Irish had historically dominated, such as construction, long shoring, teamstering, utilities, and transit.¹⁹³ As Hanley found, “Trade unions with large Irish memberships or with an Irish leadership such as the New York Transport Workers Union, the Longshoremen . . . and the various construction unions were all early financial contributors to the organization.”¹⁹⁴ Bronx and later Manhattan activist Brigid Brannigan noted:

> Labor unions I believe were strong . . . I think again there was a handful of people in the labor unions who definitely gave both financial support and they did come out at times, the word went out and they would come out to demonstrations in groups and came to fundraisers in large groups . . . And they were also excellent with getting fellas who would come on the run and need jobs. Labor was very good, trade unions, certain people in involved . . . we had a network who could put young fellas to work.¹⁹⁵

The first Noraid testimonial dinner journal of 1973 indicates that the initial support base of the organization in New York City relied on the Cement and Concrete Workers’ Union, especially Local 18A of which Noraid head Jack McCarthy was the former business agent; the Transport Workers Union, particularly Local 100, under the leadership of Sligo-born Daniel
Gilmartin, who was honored that year, and John Lawe who was honored the next. The honorary committee members for 1973 also included leaders in the following building trades, service, and transport unions: Cement and Concrete Workers’ Union 18A; Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32BJ, representing porters and maintenance workers, as well as bus drivers among others; the International TWU; the International Longshoremen’s Association; the Metallic Lathers’ Union Local 46; and the Mason Tenders’ Union Local 33. In the early 1980s, leaders in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Local 608, known as the “Irish Local,” and the Operating Engineers Local 30 were also among the honorary dinner committees. Some of these men also had vertical linkages to city and state union councils and even the national AFL-CIO leadership, which meant that their reach was beyond their individual unions.

When a powerful union leader was honored at a dinner, support from his particular union tended to increase, as rank and file filled up tables (See Table 1.1) and journal ads were purchased.
**Table 6.1: Affiliations of Union Leader Honorees and Table Patrons at Noraid Annual Testimonial Dinners, 1973–1983**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union Honoree Affiliation</th>
<th>TWU: Cement Local 18A (NYC)</th>
<th>TWU</th>
<th>Intl. Metal Lathers (ML) (DC)</th>
<th>Mason Tenders Local 33 (NYC); SEIU 32BJ (NYC)</th>
<th>Philadelphia Building Trades Council; ML Local 46 (NYC)</th>
<th>Operating Engineers Local 542 (Philadelphia); ML Local 46 (NYC)</th>
<th>Teamsters Local 115 (Philadelphia); UBCJA Local 608 (NYC)</th>
<th>ILA 709 (Boston); Teamsters Local 115</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cement and Concrete Workers Union Local 18A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McCullough (Philadelphia Building Trades Council)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason Tenders Local 33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Lathers' International Union</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Lathers' Union Local 46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber's Union Local 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber's Union Local 690, Philadelphia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEIU 2 (Window Washers)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEIU 32BJ&amp;I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamsters Local 115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamsters Local 500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWU</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBCJA Local 608</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Table constructed from Noraid dinner journals. Data may not be wholly accurate owing to the fact that the patron lists sometimes listed the tables in names of individuals who were members of the union but not identified as such and thus could not be properly coded.
Union activism, however, was not just confined to New York. One staunch former Noraid activist in the area noted: “The unions were heavily Irish at that time. The roofers, the teamsters, the plumbers, and the sheet metal workers; the building trades were consistent, including the carpenters with Seamus Boyle, and concrete workers—John Dougherty’s local.”

As Boyle remarked: “Philadelphia [was] a very Irish town as far as labor goes.”

Journalist Mike Mallowe described the scene at the cabbage and potato dinner in 1973 as follows, “The whole array of building trades in Philadelphia was represented, from painters to operating engineers.” Hosted by the roofers’ union boss John McCullough, a message was delivered from Northern Aid headquarters in the Bronx announcing that “McCullough’s people alone had kicked in more than all the Irish in New York” that year. According to available, although questionable, FARA records from 1977 to 1981, it was the Philadelphia units that were the biggest earners. Indeed, one Philadelphia leader noted that the central office even joked, “What do you have a machine making money over there?” Noraid’s annual testimonial dinner journals confirm Philadelphia’s strength. Of any area outside of New York City, the City of Brotherly Love by far sent the most people for the dinner, even rivaling the New York City units.

McCullough, who was also vice president of the Building Trades Council in Philadelphia with over 60,000 members in 30 trades, was a crucial broker within the Philadelphia network. As Armagh-born Seamus Boyle, who began his career working for one of the most successful and politically influential Irish building contractors in Philadelphia, Matthew McCloskey, and would later become the business agent for Regional Council of Carpenters of Philadelphia and a leader in Carpenters’ Union Local 122, explained:

The unions were very, very involved. . . . Without the unions we would not have been able to pull off what we did. We had the financial support from the unions, the bodies. Really there were people there like John McCullough; if we told John that we need five hundred people tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock, he’d have 600. And it wasn’t through
intimidation. He’d tell the guys “Be there,” and they’d do it. If the boss asked you to do something, you just did it. Then you knew if you were hurting for a job or something like that he’d remember that. That kid came out last Sunday and protested, and he’d tried to help him out. That was with all of us. I guess it was bred into us.²⁰¹

As Boyle further noted, “John McCullough was a legend. He was a real legend. He was very connected [to all the unions]. And very well respected. . . . He was a pivotal person in organizing the unions.”²⁰²

**Micro-dynamics and Network Mechanisms**

This section examines the network mechanisms of socialization, information, reachability, and exchange. Coordinated state suppression of the republican movement from the United States, United Kingdom, and Republic of Ireland made social networks especially crucial to this movement: trust could by-pass risk, locally constructed information from nationalist communities in the North could flow, opportunities for recruitment existed, and social relations altered incentives.

**Identity/Socialization**

Networks are important to movements, analysts have noted, in part because they socialize individuals and thus render them more or less likely to engage in a movement. As Passy notes, prior embeddedness in “formal or informal networks close to [an] issue helps individuals create a salient identity, which facilitates the emergence of a political consciousness related to specific political issues.” Essentially, social networks create a predisposition to participate. She argues, moreover, that the stronger the socialization experience and identification, the more intensely involved an individual will tend to become.²⁰³

48
The Irish case provides evidence that supports this hypothesis. By far, those within the activist core, whether born in the Republic of Ireland or in an immigrant receiving country, had grown up in a republican-minded family. Some of those in the latter category even explicitly used such terms as “brainwashed,” “infected,” and “pre-programmed” to explain their initial predisposition to become involved.

Such identities were maintained because they tended to be joiners of organizations: as Roman Catholics they registered in their local parishes, which defined the boundaries of neighborhoods; as immigrants they became members of fraternal and other associations that helped ease adjustment to life in the United States; and as nationalists they involved themselves in either explicitly republican clubs and societies and/or organizations that revered and actively nurtured fading elements of Irish culture (e.g., the Gaelic language, Gaelic football and hurling, step-dancing, pipe bands). By embedding their children in such a network, by enrolling them in parochial school and distinctively Irish activities, for example, they reproduced socialization within the family and the family as the primary unit around which social life was organized in the neighborhoods.

Cathleen O’Brien, both of whose parents were American-born, for example, noted that although her family had moved to Suffolk County, Long Island, they remained “totally immersed in Irish culture.” Her father was in a pipe band and a member of the AOH; her mother was in the LAOH; and both were active in the Church and Holy Name Society. She was enrolled in Irish step-dancing classes. Similarly, Joe Roche who grew up in Pittsburgh and whose maternal grandfather was Irish-born noted, “My mother had us sign up for the AOH. All my brothers and my father were members. It was necessary that I join at about age 21–22.”
While such embeddedness created the predisposition to become a Noraid activist, being known to one’s community established trust, which became particularly crucial as the three relevant governments increasingly converged on a policy of suppression, including through infiltration. At the same time, families and friends buffered individuals from the public opprobrium that came with supporting Noraid. “In our family,” noted one second-generation interviewee in Boston, “shaming didn’t have an effect on us; the cause was considered to have a whole lot of value. We identified with Irish heroes, ‘the history of suffering consequences’ of political action. Irish songs are about emigration, tragedy and nostalgia.”

Of course the predisposition alone does not explain how individuals did in fact join and/or why those without salient identities engaged less rigorously, by for example attending Noraid social events or simply purchasing ads in dinner journals.

Information

Networks channel information among actors. The denser they are, according to Burt, the more “redundant” the information, which in the case of Noraid would actually be positive given how antagonistic mainstream sources of information were to the republican movement. At the same time, studies suggest that information that comes from close relations also tends to be considered much more credible than impersonal media. “The personal obligations, loyalties, affections, and trust that people have within their social networks,” explains Knoke, “exert powerful persuasive influences that neither radio nor newspapers can match.”

In making a case for local-level analysis, Ó Dochartaigh explained that violent conflict “is intimately bound up with the particular place or ‘space’ in which it occurs.” People experience conflict “through personal and family connections,” and these networks form “part of
a web of local knowledge.”209 Given that in this case “webs of knowledge” extended across borders, it is unsurprising that those with direct connections through family and indirect ones through friends received information about the conflict that differed from mainstream media and consequently constructed alternative understandings about the conflict. New York City activist Brigid Brannigan from Armagh noted:

As active as our network was here, we had just as active a network coming from Ireland. There was a flow of information. I suppose it was certainly on a daily basis. For example, in my own family, I come from an area where I had friends, family, and neighbors who were arrested, so we kept in constant contact . . . daily contact.

Similarly Derry-born Mary Sheils Baggarly, who lived in Washington, DC, explained:

Things were starting to heat up in Ireland. I guess that’s when my Irish Republicanism upbringing kicked in. . . . I would call a neighbor of my mother’s who had a phone, and that’s where I would get a lot of my information from. . . . And you would hear on the news here about what was going on. But what they were reporting in the news here and what I was hearing from Ireland was two different stories.210

One US-born activist in that same area noted:

Washington, DC, was close to Derry because there were people from there. There were quite a few families. They would come here, and we would get the latest information. We’d meet at someone’s house. They had on the spot (as close as it could be in those days) information. . . . There were some Belfast connections; but the strongest connections were to Derry.211

Similarly, activist from Queens Olive McKeon noted: “I heard about what was happening in Northern Ireland through friends, people who had come here from the North.”212

When asked why Irish America was not more supportive of the republican movement, Manhattan bar-owner Hugh Lunney responded:

Lack of knowledge and information, and also British propaganda, disinformation. So many people in America whose parents were involved in the movement going back generations, but they lost touch with the problem in Ireland and a lot of them think the problem has been solved. And you talk about people in America, but I could talk about
people in Ireland. I met someone from Limerick years ago and started talking about the North, and she said, “The North has nothing to do with us.” They were so disconnected. And I blame the government in the South, also.213

O’Brien noted that knowledge about what was happening on the ground was available “if you had friends or family ties in the North; if you were from the South, you didn’t know. There was a major news blackout in the North.”214 The Republic of Ireland censored media, US reporters rarely covered stories on the North from the North and, with the assistance of British Information Services, American media was overwhelmingly biased in its reporting. In such a context, interpersonal networks were even more crucial for information flow from the North’s Catholic ghettos.

One tactic Noraid used to bolster access to local information was to bring out Provo speakers disguised with false identities for private “house parties.” Activists would send invitations to a limited trusted group, and the proverbial hat would be passed around for an expected minimum contribution as they heard first-hand what was happening on the ground.215 Tony Gormley, activist from the Bronx, noted: “when you get something first hand of how people were treated—scooped up off the street; family members in prison or harassed; assassinations with the blessing of the British government, RUC, and B-Specials—[it generates] a lot of sympathy.”216

At an organizational level, membership in a particular county society, most obviously those representing the six counties in the North, provided social space for information. One American-born man from in Philadelphia who lacked any familial connections across the Atlantic noted: “Through the Tyrone society, I knew people who had experienced violence.”217

Sympathetic bars were also crucial information hubs. Bars served as “the principal social center for many working-class Irish Americans and recent immigrants,” explains Wilson.
“These bars provided not only a familiar social outlet but a way in which information about accommodation and employment could be obtained by Irish immigrants.” Yet they were also a source of information about political activities. One bar owner explained how people would gather at the pub and share information about the conflict. Pubs also sold copies of the *Irish People*, which reported on events from a republican perspective and carried information about events within the community. Yet they had another informational dimension: they were what one owner described as a place for “vetting” people. With considerable contacts, the bar owners could confirm the identities of people, which was critical for an organization that was subject to government infiltration.

Reachability

In network analysis terminology, “an actor is ‘reachable’ by another if there exists any set of connections by which we can trace from the source to the target actor.” This amounts to opportunity, what Passy termed the structural-connection function of networks. Social movements scholarship has robustly established the important role of friendships in recruitment. Given that for most of the conflict Noraid largely recruited through personal contacts, it is hardly surprising that this was the case with a number of interviewees.

As one former Philadelphia leader explained, “Danny Cahalane requested me to join Noraid. He did a lot of work on my house for no charge. We all helped one another, more or less, in those days. I knew Danny from the Irish affairs; and we became very, very good friends.” Another Noraid activist from that area noted, “I joined Noraid after the Hunger Strikes in 1981. The reason I joined was because I met Mike Duffy, who did the writers’ campaign to help prisoners. . . . I had been to a few Noraid meetings before then, which I heard
about in the community, the Tyrone Society and elsewhere. . . . I would show up at the protests and pickets. I met Duffy at the Noraid picnic on Father’s Day.”

Irish-born construction worker Tom Egan who was married to a woman from County Armagh, noted, “when a friend asked me[,] I joined Bronx I.N.A. [Irish Northern Aid].”

Yet even spatial proximity to an activist was enough to pull some into activism. Armagh-born Brannigan, who could not precisely recall how she became involved, noted that she had been living in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx, which was then still a heavily Irish neighborhood, and came into contact with republican activists, such as bus driver Tom Duffy. Some Irish-born bus drivers whose route extended into Westchester County could also reach the upwardly mobile Irish who suburbanized. Ken Tierney, for example, recalled having joined Irish Freedom News at the encouragement of Duffy, whom he met on his commute.

By contrast, when asked why he did not join the organization, one long-time AOH member from Long Island stated: “I probably didn’t know about Noraid as such. I just didn’t have any real contacts.” And although Gallagher had other reasons for not supporting Noraid, when asked why he did not join, he replied, “No one asked me to.”

**The Bars**

As Clark notes, “Taverns and bars were invaluable places for reaching potential members. The Irish saloonkeeper had played a historic role in the political and nationalist organizing of the past, and his function was just as valid in the 1970s as it had been in the nineteenth century.” Similarly, as Wilson explains, Irish bars were a “focal point of Noraid activities . . . Noraid volunteers held regular collections among the clientele and received
substantial donations from the bar owners themselves.” Consequently, they were “prime recruiting and fund-raising sources for Noraid.”

**Moral and Instrumental Rewards/Sanctions**

Networks establish a set of preferences that shape individual choices about whether or not to contribute to the cause. They create a set of moral, social, and material incentives and disincentives that influence decision-making.

Invoking communal norms of moral obligation to assist those in need was integral in solicitation tactics, as captured by flyers that read: “Appeal to the Irish Conscience to Help Our People in their Hour of Need,” and “Shame the Irish family that doesn’t have a member there.” Father Sean McManus asserted, “I made them feel guilty that they were ignoring their homeland and told them they were aiding British oppression in Ireland by their silence. Soon there was an active chapter of Irish Northern Aid in Baltimore and Washington.” Within MABSTOA, for example, one interviewee noted that there was a sense that “if you didn’t join Noraid, you weren’t a good Irishman.”

The distribution of honor and shame, as Radtke had noted were apparent in the Tamil and Eritrean cases, was the mechanism by which compliance was enforced. Fundraising dinners, particularly Noraid’s annual testimonial dinner which honored influential supporters and sometimes rank and file members, provided not only social incentives to contribute, but also were a forum for doling out shame and honor within the community. The souvenir dinner journal, moreover, printed ads of local businesses and words of support from individuals and organizations, of varying cost depending on the size and page color. One activist noted that there was a sense that when solicited, you “had to give an ad to Noraid or you’d be in trouble.”
Precisely how, he did not elaborate, although by their very nature, the journals were a public display of who purchased an ad page, how substantial a payment was made for the page, and who purchased tables for the dance. This information was, thus, a means to gauge which individuals, families, and organizations deserved honor or approval as supporters.

Because the journals encouraged people to patronize the businesses—such as pubs, construction firms, independent contractors, Irish import shops—that took out ad pages, they also had an instrumental purpose. One Philadelphia area Noraid member asserted, “Some bar owners were supportive. They made it [became successful] because they had an Irish name. The ones with working-class clientele were more likely to be supportive.” Of the Queens area, McKeon noted that some Irish pub owners would not sell copies of the Irish People, which was a clear indication of support, because she or he did not want not to alienate clientele, but would buy ad space in the annual testimonial dinner journal. In this way, she explained, the owner would be able to appeal to clientele that supported Noraid while not alienating those who did not, as those who did not support Noraid would not likely ever see the journal book.

Unions that were dominated by the Irish not only provided an organizational structure to recruit supporters, but they also had innate mechanisms to police their members broadly and particular followings within. The power structure of the unions also fostered constituency building. As Whelan explained:

Union bosses filled up tables at events as a show of their prestige within the union. I would go to the lads and say, “So and so needs your support for the dinner.” Now this was the boss who had assigned them their jobs. Since the boss was responsible for getting them jobs, it was unsaid that they should go and buy tickets.

He further elaborated on the process:

The executive board would receive a letter [about providing support to Noraid]; then the membership would vote on it. Maybe they would pay for one table. But then they would
have to go to the membership to get more tables paid for. Then a leader would get people to organize tables for him. There was constant politics. If [a leader] couldn’t fill three tables, he would be seen as weak [within the union]. You had to protect yourself by doing the best you could to protect [the business agent]. You were tied to [him] because he gave you your jobs. So I would go to [his] supporters and say, “Buy a ticket for the Noraid dance because [the boss] needs your support on this.” And they would go buy tickets for the event.

Union bosses could even compel other forms of activism as illustrated above with the example regarding roofer’s union leader John McCullough and protest participation of rank and file.

**Conclusion**

Instead of static collectivities, this study conceptualized diasporas as fluid constructions, undergoing continuous processes of group-making and -unmaking driven by political and social dynamics within a putative homeland and in countries of settlement (and potentially among other elements of the imagined trans-nation, although this area has not received much attention). Key processes involved in the construction and maintenance of social boundaries are violence, economic competition, internal communal policing, and social pressure, while upward social mobility in host countries, and the concomitant decline of ethnic economies and mutual aid institutions, fuel their dissolution.

It also situated diasporic financing for armed groups abroad as a form of collective action that is contingent on the opportunities and constraints of a multi-level context (or nested political opportunity structure) that is not necessarily static. It then conceptually de-territorialize civil wars by extending Mao’s proverbial sea of insurgent support to potentially include not only populations within contested borders, but also those “inside the people but outside the state.”

---

Such “host” territories were conceived of as ancillary zones of a conflict that varied in their utility as a support base for armed groups based on the configuration of host foreign policy, political institutions, and state capacity. This distinction could be developed into a tripartite typology: transnationalized zones (akin to insurgent-dominated zones in contested states) at one end of the spectrum; re-territorialized zones (akin to state-controlled areas) at the other end; and contested zones (mixed, where both sides vie for support).

As the Irish case illustrated, the “host” state is potentially not the only relevant government actor in ancillary zones. Belligerent governments can exert influence not just by the policies that they adopt within their own territorial jurisdictions and indirectly by influencing host state policy but also directly on the ground, as so aptly illustrated by the United Kingdom’s efforts to suppress American support for the IRA. When such entities exist, the policy and capacity of “homeland” states are also relevant. While the Republic of Ireland deprived the republican movement of legitimacy and effectively stifled mobilization within its borders and transnationally, in other cases home states have promoted “long-distance nationalism” by actively encouraging support for armed actors or passively if they simply are unable to repress them within their jurisdiction.

In making a case for qualitative fieldwork into the dynamics of collective action, however, Doug McAdam has asserted that “the real action in social movements takes place at some level intermediate between the macro and micro,” that is, in the existing associational groups or social networks of relevant populations. By focusing on these socio-organizational

---

resources, and the effects of demographic change on their availability to diasporic radicals, this study has sought to give attention to this level.

More ambitiously, it has endeavored to theoretically and empirically connect all three levels. The Irish case illustrated how coordinated state suppression forced the republican movement to pursue a localized approach—that is, to mobilize “transnational villagers.”

Suppression thus elevated the importance of ethnic organizations and networks, for it was only within social spaces where trust could bypass risk, information could circulate from nationalist communities in the North, and the potential social costs of association with “the outlawed IRA” could be converted into solidary incentives that Noraid could survive. Yet the last of the Irish urban ghettos were disappearing, while their attendant organizational infrastructure was on the decline. These processes were a result of upward social mobility within mainstream American society, a trend compounded by too few new arrivals given US immigration restrictions from Europe in 1965 and the economic boom in Ireland during the 1970s. At the same time, the wave of the 1980s, the so-called New Irish, were an undocumented transient population, who had been socialized in a Europeanizing Ireland and owing to their status and social distance from Irish Americans did not generally join communal institutions.

That the Irish Northern Aid Committee survived given these dual challenges from above and below was quite remarkable. This study argued that the explanation lies in the network-building strategies of Noraid’s leadership, which were effective owing to their personal connections to the IRA leadership across the Atlantic (and hence legitimacy) and their prominence within their local communities. Noraid’s leaders had long been joiners and held leadership positions within an array of communal associations and organizations. Simply stated, they were well connected, and the most lucrative ties of all were to the local Irish union bosses.
who not only had material and organizational resources but also were linked into informal patronage systems that gave them the capacity to reward and sanction their rank and file to participate in fundraising events.

Notes

3 “CIA Red Cell Memorandum.”
6 Hockenos, Homeland Calling.
13 Hockenos, Homeland Calling.
14 Eva Kristine Østergaard-Nielsen, Transnational Politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany (London: Routledge, 2003); Lyon and Üçar, “Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict.”
16 Horst, “The Role of Diasporas in Civil War.”
Cambridge University Press, 1990), 142.

As Knoke explains, patron-client systems are grounded in kinship and entail unconditional reciprocal obligations. Clients exchange loyalty and deference for the protection and material benefits of patrons. Such systems are reinforced by mutual trust and solidarity. David Knoke, Political Networks: The Structural Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 142.

Holland, The American Connection, 61.

Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.
D. Zach
PPW 12/1/16

39 Flannery himself in court testimony maintained that “not one penny” of Noraid collections went to the IRA, although he did separately collect money for the IRA. In the wake of the Hunger Strikes, he stated, “Everybody I met seemed to be giving me money, and exclusively for the IRA.” O’Reilly, Accepting the Challenge, 174–5, quote at 175.

40 Holland, The American Connection, 60.

41 Interview with Brendan Talton (pseudonym), March 30, 2011, New York, NY.


43 Bishop and Mallie, The Provisional IRA, 235.


45 “Urban villagers” is a term coined by Herbert J. Gans in his work, The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1962).


50 Chapter 1 discussed Feld’s definition of social foci. Burt also draws on Feld to discuss the emergence of clusters of dense connection. As he explains, “A social focus is anything that brings people together in an activity with the result (intended or unintended) of facilitating relationships among the people.” As he and Feld note, events—including membership in the same union, church, or voluntary organization—create what is known as a “homophily bias” in networks, which means that relations are more likely between people who share socially significant attributes. . . .” See Ronald S. Burt, Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 12; and Scott Feld, “The Focused Organization of Social Ties,” American Journal of Sociology 86 (1981): 1015–35.


52 Cooption refers to “the transparent, permitted borrowing of resources that have already been aggregated by [non-movement] groups.” By contrast, appropriation refers to surreptitious exploitation, such as infiltration. Bob Edwards and John D. McCarthy, “Resources and Social Movement Mobilization,” in The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 134. Brokerage is simply the tying together of unconnected nodes within a network.

53 In this sense, patronage and brokerage are tied together. “The relationship is one between a social and economic superior who extends favours, often of a material kind, to a poorer person who gives service and esteem to the patron.” It is thus “an asymmetrical, quasi-moral relationship between a person (the patron) who directly provides protection and assistance (patronage) and/or who influences persons who can provide these services (brokerage) to persons (clients).” Quoted in David Morgan, “Cultural Work and Friendship Work: The Case of ‘Bloomsbury,’” Media, Culture and Society 4 (1982): 19.

54 Burt, Brokerage and Closure, 4.

55 See Volumes 1 and 2 of the Irish People.

Murphy was also the head of Chicago’s central board. He was also a good friend of prominent PIRA figure Joe Cahill. US DOJ, FBI, To: Director, FBI; From: SAC, Chicago; August 13, 1987; file no.: 199F-NY-C269194; FOIPA no.: 1146079-001.

Interview with Gerry Coleman, Jersey City, NJ, June 14, 2011.

Interview with Jimmy McPaul, Philadelphia, October 8, 2011.

Interview with Brendan Talton (pseudonym), New York, NY, March 2011.


Interview with Gerard Walsh (pseudonym), Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.

Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.

Interview with Mary Sheils Baggarly, Baltimore, Md., March 19, 2012.

Dennis J. Clark, Irish Blood: Northern Ireland and the American Conscience (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 31. The Falls Road was a largely working-class Catholic community in Belfast that became a bastion of militant nationalist support after attacks by loyalist militias and the British Army’s deployment to the area. During the Troubles, some of the worst violence of the conflict occurred in this area.

In New York it was about 5.3 and in Boston only approximately 3.8. Both the San Francisco and Los Angeles SCSAs also had a larger proportion of immigrants from Northern Ireland, about 9.6 and 19.1 percent, respectively. This figure is an underestimation of those from Ulster. Immigrants from Donegal also had an organized presence in the city, but they are included with figures from the Republic of Ireland.

Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.

Interview with Frank Walsh (pseudonym), Long Island, NY, September 14, 2011.

Interview with Mary Sheils Baggarly, Upper Marlboro, Md., March 19, 2012.

Ibid.

Email correspondence with Michael Cummings, former Noraid executive member, April 24, 2012. Acronym INA (short for Irish Northern Aid Committee) was replaced in these quotes with Noraid for consistency and to reduce confusion.

Liam Murphy, New York, NY, June 23, 2011.


McCarthy, “Northern Ireland,” 51.

Interview with Gerry Coleman, Jersey City, NJ, June 14, 2011.

Interview with Frank Walsh (pseudonym), Long Island, NY, September 14, 2011.

Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.

In the 1980s, for example, the NYPD Emerald Society pipe band marched at hunger strike commemorations in the Republic of Ireland. “New York Police Band Members March with IRA Supporters,” Associated Press, August 31, 1985.

Interview with Gerard Walsh (pseudonym), Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

Interview with then AOH president Seamus Boyle, Pleasantville, NY, July 13, 2011.

Olive McKeon noted that when her son came up for an appointment in the fire department, individuals wrote letters in opposition to it because she and her husband had been in jail on various charges surrounding gunrunning. Olive was placed in jail from March to May 1980 for her refusal to testify before a grand jury about her husband’s involvement. Similarly, Frances Duffy’s son, who was a member of the police department, was questioned regarding his parents’ activism. Interview with Olive McKeon, Auburndale, NY, December 13, 2011; and Frances Duffy, Upper Darby, PA, August 15, 2011.

Interview with Joe McHugh, Noraid Lynn unit leader, Swampscott, MA, August 9, 2011.

Interview with Josh Jacobs, member of Cumann na Saorsé Náisiúnta, New York, NY, September 17, 2011.

Interview with Frances Duffy, Upper Darby, Penn., August 15, 2011.
The AOH’s Freedom for All Ireland Committee (FFAI) also encouraged letter writing and circulated a prisoners list. A letter dated October 20, 1980, by FFAI national chairman Martin Higgins was circulated and encouraged members to send Christmas cards to their “brothers and sisters in jail in Northern Ireland” who are “prisoners of war, fighting for human rights and the reunification of Ireland.”

The 1989 tour had 62 participants, only 11 of which were Noraid members. US DOJ, FBI, “1989 Noraid, Belfast, Northern Ireland Tour, August 5–14, 1989,” September 12, 1989; New York, NY; file no.: 199F-NY-C269194; and US DOJ, FBI, “Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA),” To: Director FBI; From: ADIC New York (199F-41); September 12, 1989; file no.: 199F-NY-C269194; FOIPA no.: 1146079-001.

A bipartite graph is one in which there are two sets of nodes. In this case, individuals (the red circles) and organizations (the blue squares) are represented. The edges, or ties, represent membership in a particular organization.

Prominence is a network concept that can be measured. It refers to the location of an actor embedded in a network; a prominent actor is one who is “extensively involved in relationships with other actors” (i.e., one who has many ties). Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 172. There are two measures of prominence: centrality and prestige. Centrality is simply the number of ties that an actor has in a network, while prestige measures the number of ties an actor receives in a directed graph (i.e., one that measures the direction of the ties). The ties presented below are not between individuals directly but between individuals and organizations and contain no actual directed measures.

A social movement encompasses more than one organization, although one particular organization may be at the
center of many activities.

According to one analyst, intense competition among the Sikh separatist leadership led to the demise of the
Khalistan movement in Canada and England. Given that there were as many as a dozen different military outfits
operating in the Punjab, unlike the Tamil Tigers, which was the sole armed insurgent force on the ground in Sri
Lanka, it is unsurprising that internal competition was rampant. See Tatla, The Sikh Diaspora.

McManus, My American Struggle, 82. In an April 2011, the “Fenian Notes” column of Saoirse by Peadar Mac
Fhínín challenged McManus’s account stating that McManus had the backing of Sinn Féin president Ruairí Ó
Brádaigh as well as Flannery (14).


Conversation with Patrick Kierney (pseudonym), June 2011.

Three influential figures in bringing the AOH on board with the Caucus were from Massachusetts. Bob Bateman,
David Burke, and Fred Burns O’Brien were in Division 8 in Lawrence, MA; Patrick Burke of Division 8 was also a
member of the INC Board of Governors. One account notes that Bateman set up a series of meetings in
Massachusetts for Caucus leaders to pitch the organization’s mission to the membership, and there was a positive

Interview with Gerard Walsh (pseudonym), Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

Interview with Richard Lawlor, current Noraid executive board member and long-time Hartford chapter member,
Hartford, Conn., December 1, 2011.

McManus, according to his memoir, was relocated to the United States for his criticism of the Northern Ireland
establishment. His brother Patrick was an IRA volunteer who had been killed in the 1950s Border Campaign, and
his brother Peter was Unity MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the early 1970s. In addition to being a priest,
these familial connections undoubtedly further bolstered his credibility among Noraid’s support base.

Ad for Bronx Unit Noraid Dance featuring Sean McManus as guest speaker, Irish People, April 14, 1973.

This person was Fred Burns O’Brien. McManus, My American Struggle, 134.


Interview with Frank Walsh (pseudonym), Long Island, NY, September 14, 2011.

Reprinted article, titled “The Republican View of the National Caucus” in an unknown source, from An
Phoblacht/Republican News, September 1, 1979. The article noted that the reason why Sinn Féin refused to engage
in peace talks with loyalists was because participation would “positively helps the Brits in projecting their role as a
‘peace-keeping force’ instead of an occupation force.”

McManus, My American Struggle, 156.


McManus, My American Struggle, 157, 156.

Wilson, Irish America, 150. He cites the Irish People, August 18, 1979, as his source.


Interview with Tony Gormley, former Noraid Bronx unit chairman, Yonkers, NY, October 6, 2011.

Edwards and McCarthy note five types of resources: moral (e.g., solidarity, legitimacy); cultural (e.g.,
newspapers, music, film, knowledge of how to run events, technical or strategic know how); social-organizational
resources (e.g., social networks, organizations); human resources (e.g., labor; skill; expertise); material resources
(e.g., money, property, office space). Edwards and McCarthy, “Resources and Social Movement Mobilization,” 125–35.

149 Interview with Jimmy McPaul, Philadelphia, October 8, 2011.
150 US DOJ, FBI, report on Irish Northern Aid Committee, July 26, 1985, FOIPA no. 1146079-001. The original text used INAC, short for Irish Northern Aid Committee, which was replaced here with Noraid for consistency and to reduce confusion.
151 Interview with Phil Gallagher, September 7, 2011.
152 Ibid.
153 McManus, My American Struggle, 82.
154 Ibid.
155 Mike Cummings elaborated: “The structure of the AOH was such that local Divisions were very autonomous and contributions to the Freedom For All Ireland campaign varied considerably.” He further noted that because a portion of the basic membership fee automatically went to the national board that “there was always a corpus of funds for the National Board to distribute regardless of the fundraising enthusiasm of various Divisions across the country.” Email correspondence with Michael Cummings, April 24, 2012.
156 Interview with John Dunleavy, who noted that AOH Division 9 in New York had held fundraising events in support of Noraid, New York, NY, October 21, 2011. Padraic Pearse Division 3’s activities noted in an Irish Echo advertisement, April 15, 1972, 15.
158 When asked if the LAOH was helpful in organizing for Noraid, activists McKeon (Flushing, Queens), Baggarly (Washington, DC), and Savage (Lynn, Mass.) all explained that their respective branches were not helpful in their organizing efforts.
159 Email correspondence with Michael Cummings, April 24, 2012. The brackets substitute Noraid for the abbreviation INA, and IAUC for its spelled out name.
160 Email correspondence with Michael Cummings, May 1, 2012.
161 Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.
162 Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.
163 Conversation with Joe Roche, Baltimore, Md., June 14, 2011.
164 Interview with Gerry Coleman, Jersey City, NJ, June 14, 2011.
165 Conversation with Joe Roche, Baltimore, Md., June 14, 2011.
166 Interview with Seamus Boyle, Pleasantville, NY, July 13, 2011.
167 Interview with Tony Gormley, Yonkers, NY, October 6, 2011.
168 Interview with John Ridge, vice-president of local history, the New York Irish History Roundtable, November 18, 2011.
169 Interview with John Ridge, November 18, 2011.
170 Ibid.
171 In 2011, the Kerrymen’s Association finally agreed to allow women to join.
172 Interview with Tony Gormley, Yonkers, NY, October 6, 2011.
173 Interview with Joe McManus, Long Island City, NY, June 20, 2012.
174 Interview with Connell McCrea, Philadelphia, August 15, 2011.
175 Interview with Jimmy McPaul, Philadelphia, October 8, 2011.
176 Interview with Frances Duffy, Upper Darby, Penn., August 15, 2011.
177 Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.
178 Interview with Olive McKeon, Auburndale, NY, December 13, 2011.
179 Wilson, Irish America and the Ulster Conflict, 66.
180 Interview with Thomas Hughes, Brooklyn, NY, July 7, 2011.
181 Interview with John Dunleavy, TWU Local 100 and AOH Division 9 leader, New York, NY, October 21, 2011.
182 Interview with Seamus Naughton (pseudonym), Bronx, NY, June 29, 2011.
183 Interview with John Dunleavy, New York, NY, October 21, 2011.
Interview with Pascal Morahan, Nanuet, NY, July 20, 2011.


“Northern Aid Games April 9,” Irish Echo, April 1, 1972, 22. O’Donnell was also twice previously GAA president.

Conversation with NYC pub owner Dave McIlroy (pseudonym), July 30, 2011.

Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.


Freeman, In Transit, 30–1.


Interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.

Interview with Gerard Walsh (pseudonym), Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

Interview with Seamus Boyle, Pleasantville, NY, July 13, 2011.


Interview with Gerard Walsh (pseudonym), Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

McCloskey was a close friend of John F. Kennedy, who appointed him ambassador to Ireland during his presidency. He was also a big fundraiser for the Democratic Party and served as treasurer for the Democratic National Committee. See Dennis Clark, The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 159–61.

Interview with Seamus Boyle, Pleasantville, NY, July 13, 2011.

Ibid.


Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.

Conversation with Joe Roche, Baltimore, Md., June 14, 2011.

Interview with Lily Lafferty (pseudonym), Quincy, Mass., August 9, 2011.

Burt, Brokerage and Closure


Niall Ó Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites: Derry and the Birth of the Irish Troubles (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1997), quotes at 4 and 2.

Interview with Mary Sheils Baggarly, Upper Marlboro, Md., March 19, 2012.

Conversation with Patrick Kierny (pseudonym), June 22, 2011.


Interview with Hugh Lunney, New York, NY, December 5, 2011.

Interview with Cathleen O’Brien, Riverdale, NY, July 12, 2011.

Ibid.

Interview with Tony Gormley, Yonkers, NY, October 6, 2011.

Interview with Connell McCrea, Philadelphia, August 15, 2011. He also noted that he initially got his information from newspapers, singling out Jack McKinney as a source. Notably McKinney was a friend of IRA Border Campaign veteran Vincent Conlon and very sympathetic to the cause.

Wilson, Irish Americans and the Ulster Conflict, 44, n. 70.

Conversation with Desmond McIlroy (pseudonym), New York, NY, July 30, 2011.

Robert A. Hanneman and Mark Riddle, Introduction to Social Network Methods, online textbook, Chapter 7.

There are, however, two different approaches to understanding the mechanism: structuralist and rationalist. For the structuralist, networks enable or constrain behavior by establishing “obligations, expectations, entitlements, and influences.” By contrast the rationalists, who take the individual as the unit of analysis, contend the mechanism rests on the expectation of future interaction and amounts to a reward for continued cooperation (in this case friendship). Roger Gould, “Why do Networks Matter?” in Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action, ed. Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 233–57.

Interview with Tommy Flynn, Philadelphia area, October 29, 2011.

Interview with Connell McCrea, Philadelphia, August 15, 2011.

Biographic information on Tomas MacAodagain (Thomas Egan) provided in the Irish Northern Aid Committee’s 1981 Annual Testimonial Dinner Journal.

Interview with Ken Tierney, Bronx, NY, June 7, 2011. “Folklore” has it that Tom Duffy would play an Irish radio program on the bus and would pull over the bus to call into the radio station to comment on the program from a payphone. Interview with Liam Murphy, Yonkers, NY, July 13, 2011; interview with Brigid Brannigan, North Bergen, NJ, December 8, 2011.

Interview with AOH member Tim Myles, New York, NY, July 30, 2011.

Interview with Phil Gallagher, September 7, 2011.

Clark, Irish Blood, 36.

Wilson, Irish America and the Ulster Conflict, 44.

McManus, My American Struggle, 68.

Interview with Seamus Naughton (pseudonym), Bronx, NY, June 29, 2011.

Interview with Joe McManus, Long Island City, NY, June 20, 2012.

Interview with Connell McCrea, Philadelphia, August 15, 2011.

Interview with Olive McKeon, Auburndale, Queens, December 13, 2011.