

# Media Blame and Political Violence in Northern Ireland 1994-1998

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# Media & Conflict/Peace

- ▶ Studies mostly qualitative
- ▶ Findings Mostly
  - ▶ That negative framing exacerbates violence.
  - ▶ And that dehumanization exacerbates violence

# Conditions for Conflict & War

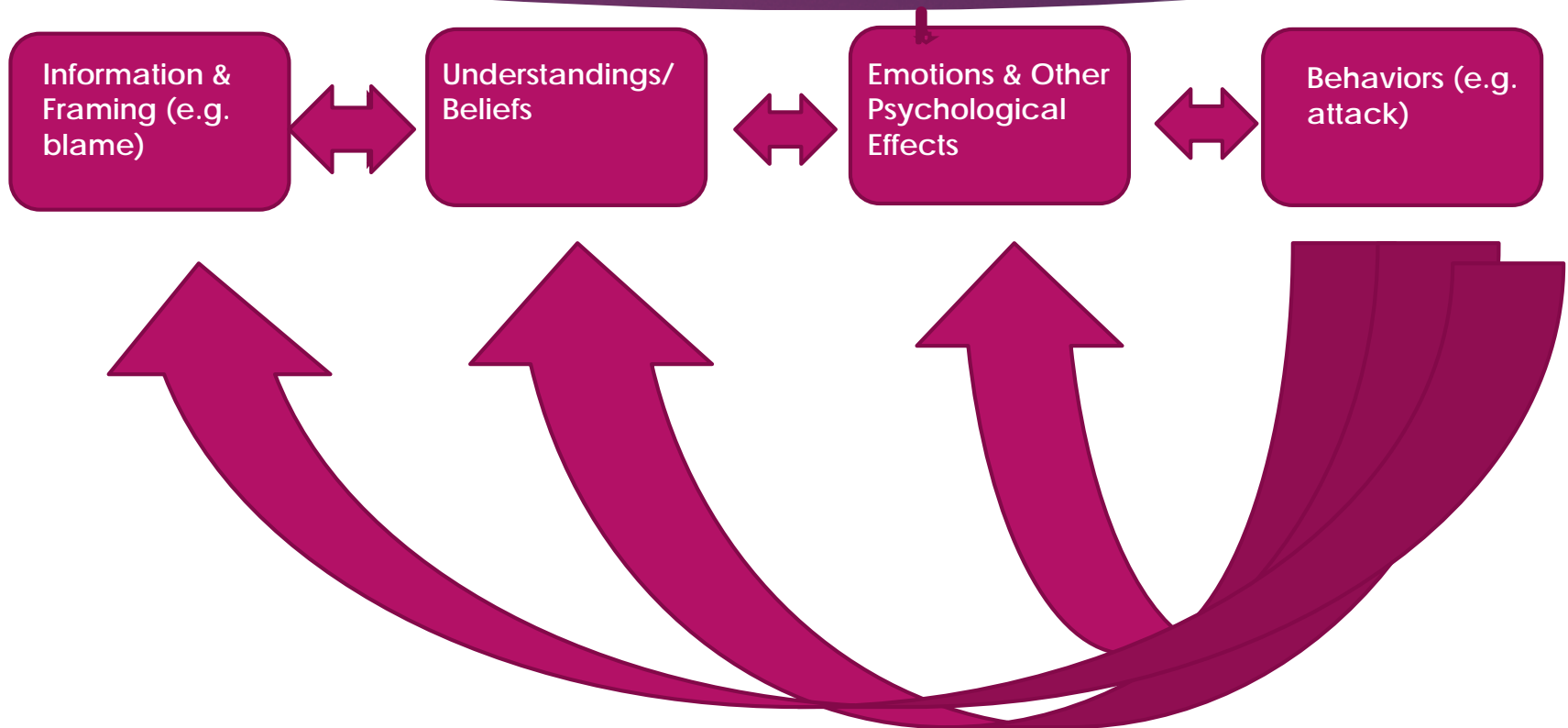
- ▶ At least 2 distinct groups (us v. them)
- ▶ Meanings that justify lethal violence
- ▶ One of those meanings appears to be blame.
- ▶ Why blame?
  - ▶ Lazarus Appraisal Theory of Emotions:



# Emotions and Behavior

- ▶ Relationship often automatic and unconscious b/w emotion and the action/behavior
  - ▶ e.g. fear → fight or flight
  - ▶ anger → attack/fix
  - ▶ hate → destroy
  - ▶ resentment → punish
  - ▶ love → embrace

# How media may impact?



# Blame Frames



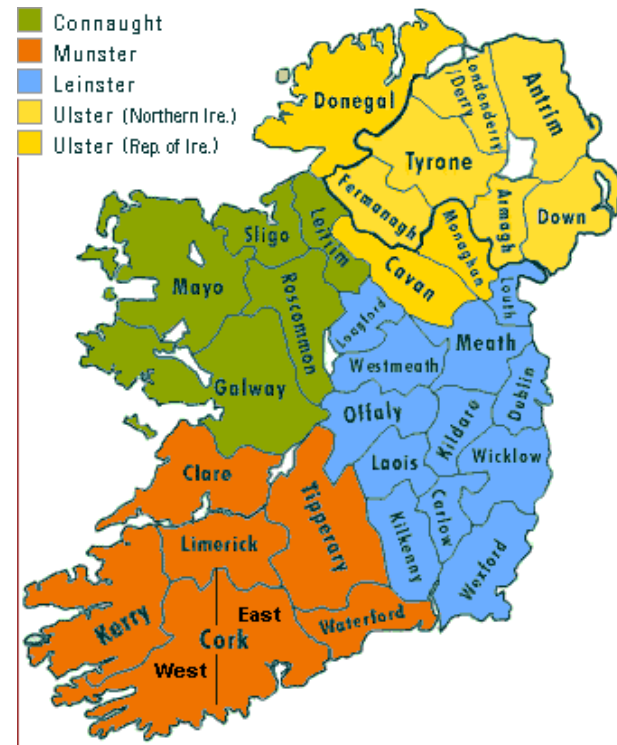
# Northern Ireland Roots of the Conflict

- ▶ British Empire's Plantation of Ulster (1609)
  - ▶ Colonization began w/land confiscations & moving settlers to region
  - ▶ Forbade settlers to hire or house native Irish
- ▶ Easter Rebellion of 1916—Irish Volunteer declared Independence
- ▶ War of Independence continues through mid 1921



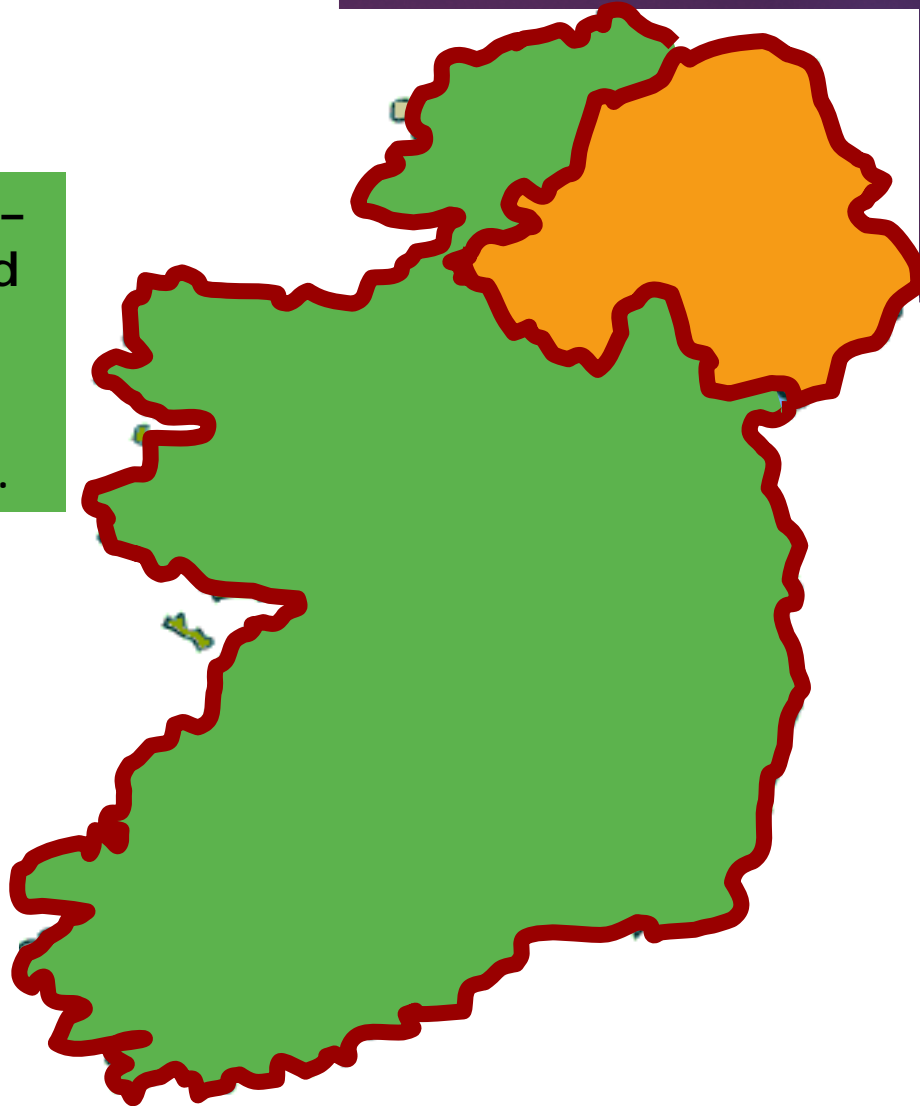
# A Divided Island

- ▶ Peace Treaty b/w Ireland & Crown
  - ▶ But divided the island into 26-county Ireland & 6-county Ulster region that would remain with the Crown
  - ▶ In North, descendants of settlers feared that the Irish activists would succeed in reuniting the island.
  - ▶ Ireland = Catholic; Ulster = mostly Protestant





Nationalists –  
Unite Ireland  
as Ireland/  
Partition is  
Illegitimate.



Unionists – Stay  
with  
Britain.  
Separate  
from  
Republic

# The Northern Ireland Communities in Brief

**"Nationalists"**  
-Want to  
unite 6  
counties with  
26 counties  
of the  
Republic of  
Ireland

**"Republicans"** –  
Willing to use  
force to unify  
Ireland

**"Unionists"** –  
Want to stay  
part of Great  
Britain

**"Loyalists"**  
– Willing to  
use force  
to Fight IRA

# Divided Island

- ▶ Theory was would prevent more violence but violence continued in the North.
  - ▶ IRA continued to fight to unite island
  - ▶ Unionists Discriminated against Irish Catholics
  - ▶ Gerrymandered districts
  - ▶ Segregation & refused housing & jobs to them
  - ▶ Interned republicans
  - ▶ Special constables (UVF) to crack down more on them



# The “Troubles”

- ▶ British moved their forces in to get under control
- ▶ Irish Nationalists, inspired by civil rights movement, organized protests & demos,
- ▶ Police mostly suppressed them.
- ▶ Interning suspected republicans



# Bloody Sunday—Mass demonstration in Derry



# Riots & more

- ▶ Loyalists killing Catholics
- ▶ Republicans attacking British soldiers, etc.
- ▶ No-Go Areas
- ▶ IRA became de facto protection for Irish Catholics
- ▶ Battle of the Bogside

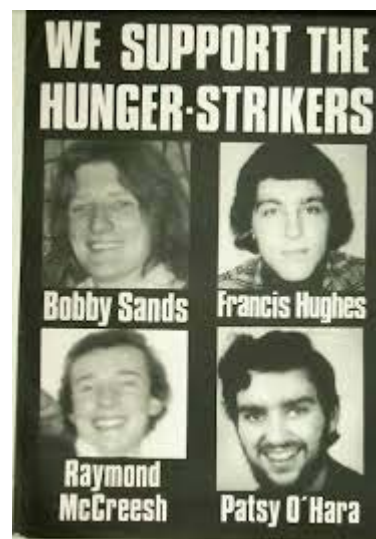


# Prison Protests & Republican Media Campaigns

## Blanket Protest & Dirty Protest



## Hunger Strike



# Frame Wars

## Nationalist & Republican Frames

### Nationalist (e.g. SDLP)

- ▶ 1) Civil & Equal Rights for all campaign
- ▶ 2) Unfair System is to blame
- ▶ 3) Did not condone violence

### Republican (ala SF & IRA):

- ▶ 1) British are to blame for the "Troubles"
- ▶ 2) Occupation & colonization of Ireland
- ▶ 3) A War for independence to reunite Ireland

## Unionist, Loyalist & British Gov Frames

### Unionists (ALA DUP & UUP)

- ▶ 1) Republicans are to blame for the "Troubles."
- ▶ 2) They are "terrorists" & "troublemakers."

### Loyalists (e.g. PUP & UDP)

- ▶ 1) Republicans to blame
- ▶ 2) Must stop them from reuniting Ireland.



# Northern Ireland Media

Publication	Publication schedule	Identity	Ideological Strength	Religious leaning	Approximate Party Affiliation*
Irish News	Morning Daily	Nationalist	Moderate	Catholic	SDLP
Belfast Telegraph	Evening Daily	Unionist (mostly)	Moderate	Protestant (mostly)	UUP & DUP
Ulster News Letter	Morning Daily	Unionist	Strong	Protestant	UUP & DUP
An Phoblacht	Weekly & Fortnightly	Republican	Very strong	Catholic	Sinn Fein
Combat	Monthly (mostly)	Loyalist	Very strong	Protestant	PUP

# Key Data: Newspapers



## RUC MAN IS NOT GUILTY

Checkpoint shooting murder trial

**By Martin Hill**

A POLICE MAN charged with the murder of a young woman at a checkpoint in Belfast has been found not guilty.

The man, who was charged with the murder of a young woman at a checkpoint in Belfast, was found not guilty after a trial at the Belfast Crown Court.

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## Soap star collapses after court verdict

**By Fern Anderson**

CASTLEDOUGH soap star collapsed in court after a verdict was announced.

The star, who was charged with the murder of a young woman at a checkpoint in Belfast, was found not guilty after a trial at the Belfast Crown Court.

## Family criticises judge's decision

**By Martin Hill**

A POLICE MAN charged with the murder of a young woman at a checkpoint in Belfast has been found not guilty.

The man, who was charged with the murder of a young woman at a checkpoint in Belfast, was found not guilty after a trial at the Belfast Crown Court.

## New fear of upsurge in violence

**By Gary Searles, Security Correspondent**

SECURITY officials on both sides of the border were today on the alert for an escalation of loyalist violence.

Police, security, intelligence and military officials were reported to be meeting a vital course today in Belfast to discuss the situation.

The IRA has said it will not be provoked into violence by the potential for a new upsurge in violence.

## Shots lure security forces to bomb trap

**By Martin Hill**

TERRORISTS lured to their security forces into a bomb trap last night.

The IRA has said it will not be provoked into violence by the potential for a new upsurge in violence.

## Denial

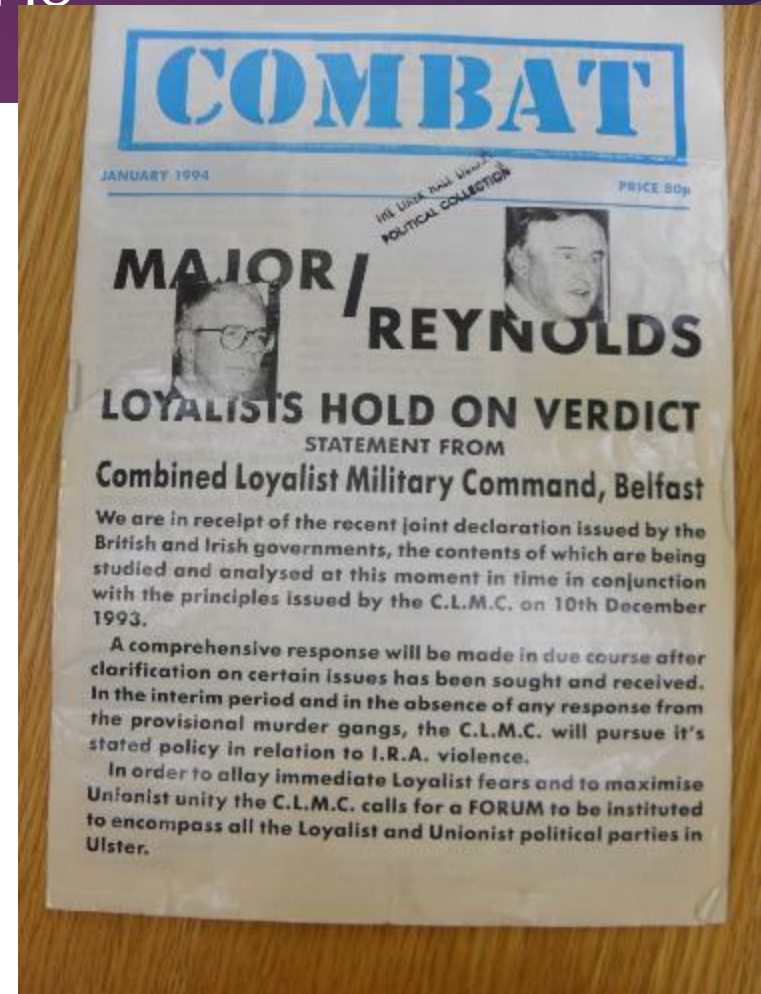
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# The Newspapers



# Paramilitary-Related Publications

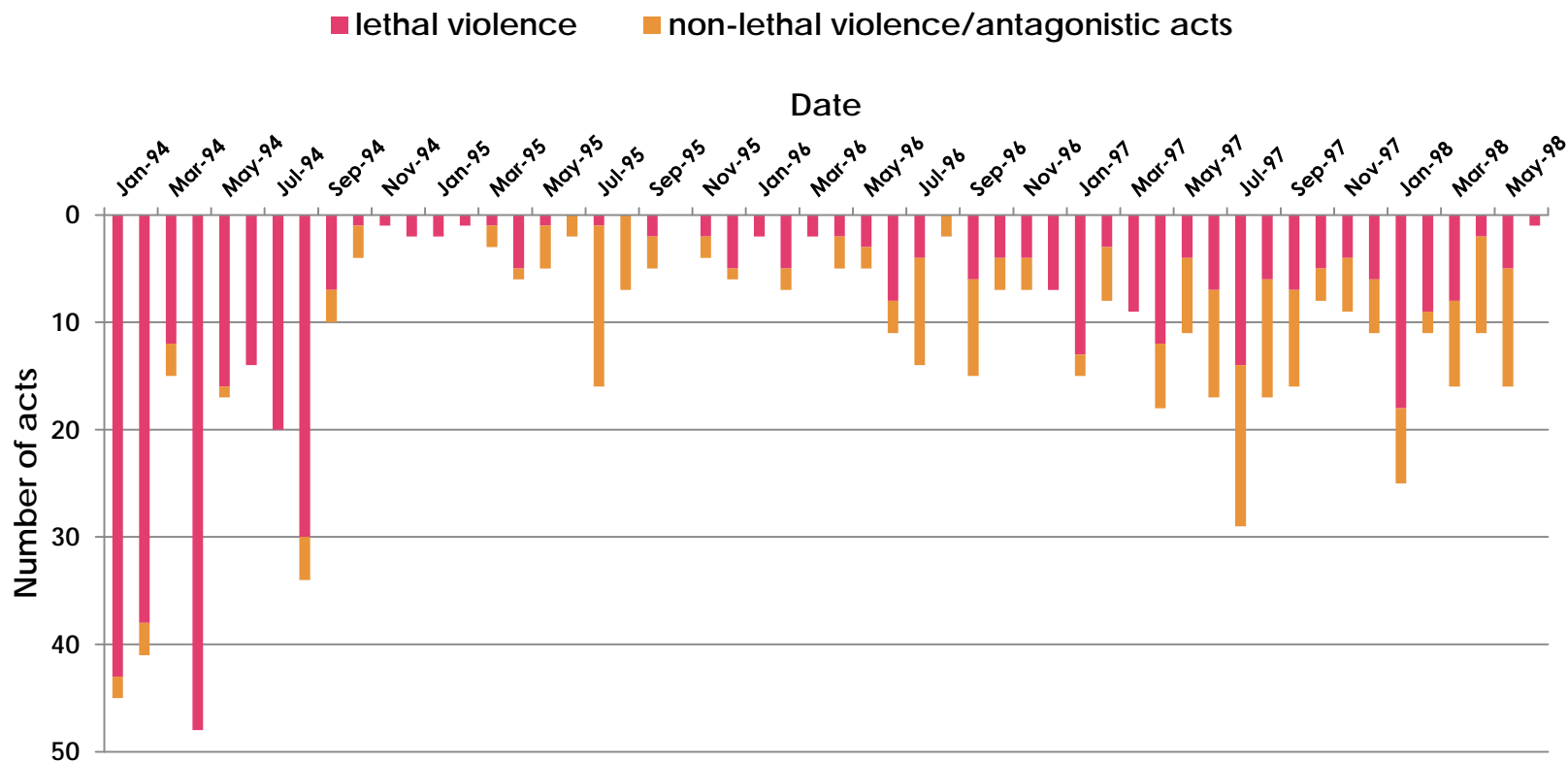


# Violence in Northern Ireland

## Jan 1994 – Jun 1998

- ▶ Northern Ireland Community Relations Dataset
  - ▶ Northern Ireland data from Global Terrorism Database (U Maryland)
  - ▶ Chronology of the Conflict (U Ulster)
  
- ▶ Focus on:
  - ▶ 376 lethal acts or acts of terror (including those that were potentially or intentionally lethal). 229/376 (61%) by republican groups
  - ▶ 117 acts of non-lethal violence (e.g., rock throwing, fist fighting), or antagonistic parades and pickets. 106/117 (91%) by loyalist groups

# Violence in Northern Ireland Jan 1994 – Jun 1998



# Media Dataset

- ▶ Random, stratified sample of articles from the three largest daily newspapers
  - ▶ Irish News, Ulster News Letter, Belfast Telegraph

AND

- ▶ Available copies of two periodicals published by groups affiliated with the paramilitaries.
  - ▶ An Phoblacht, Combat

# Blame Articles (1)

Number (%) of blame articles per issue sampled	Combat (n=19)	An Phoblacht (n=47)	Irish News (n=73)	Ulster News letter (n=74)	Belfast Telegraph (n=77)
<b>Total</b>					
0	3 (15.8)	3 (6.4)	2 (2.7)	4 (5.4)	5 (6.5)
1-2	6 (31.6)	8 (17.0)	15 (20.5)	17 (23.0)	24 (31.1)
3-4	5 (26.3)	24 (51.0)	23 (35.6)	27 (36.5)	27 (35.1)
5+	5 (26.3)	12 (25.5)	33 (41.1)	26 (35.1)	21 (22.3)
<b>Sinn Fein</b>					
0	9 (47.4)	47 (100)	31 (42.5)	28 (37.8)	35 (45.5)
1	6 (31.6)	0 (0)	32 (43.8)	17 (23.0)	18 (23.4)
2+	4 (21.0)	0 (0)	10 (13.7)	29 (39.2)	24 (31.2)
<b>British Government</b>					
0	14 (73.7)	14 (29.8)	31 (42.5)	40 (54.1)	77 (100)
1	4 (21.1)	13 (27.7)	23 (31.5)	24 (32.4)	0 (0)
2+	1 (5.3)	20 (42.5)	19 (26.0)	10 (13.5)	0 (0)



# Blame Articles (2)

Number (%) of blame articles per issue sampled	Combat (n=19)	An Phoblacht (n=47)	Irish News (n=73)	Ulster News letter (n=74)	Belfast Telegraph (n=77)	
DUP	0	18 (94.7)	40 (85.1)	52 (71.2)	68 (91.9)	65 (84.4)
	1	1 (5.3)	6 (12.8)	15 (20.6)	6 (8.1)	9 (11.7)
	2+	0 (0)	1 (2.1)	6 (8.2)	0 (0)	3 (3.9)
SDLP	0	18 (94.7)	43 (91.5)	66 (90.4)	59 (79.7)	68 (88.3)
	1	1 (5.3)	4 (8.5)	7 (9.6)	14 (18.9)	8 (10.4)
	2+	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.3)
PUP	0	19 (100)	43 (91.5)	67 (91.8)	72 (97.3)	73 (94.8)
	1	0 (0)	4 (8.5)	6 (8.2)	1 (1.4)	3 (3.9)
	2+	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.3)

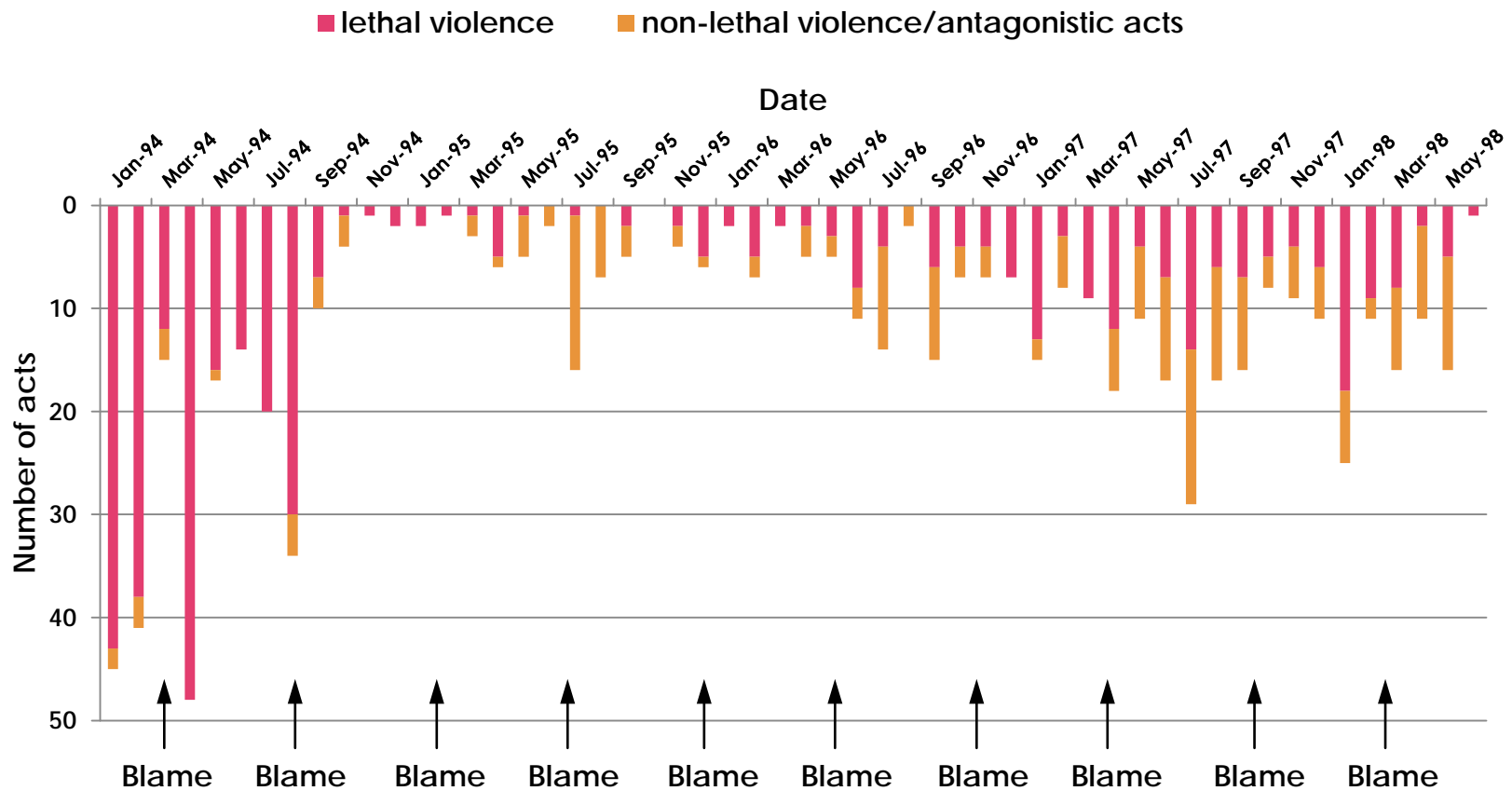
# Blame Articles Summary

- ▶ Vast majority of issues had at least one blame article
  - ▶ Slightly lower for Combat (84% - smaller publication)
- ▶ Sinn Fein / British Government most common targets
  - ▶ 140/290 (48%) issues had articles blaming Sinn Fein
  - ▶ 114/290 (39%) issues had articles blaming British Govt
- ▶ Different publications blamed different political groups
  - ▶ Anphoblacht never blamed Sinn Fein; all others published articles blaming Sinn Fein in at least half of issues sampled
  - ▶ Belfast Telegraph never blamed British Government; others often did (Anphoblacht, 70%; Irish News, 57%; Ulster News Letter, 46%; Combat, 26%)

# Methods

- ▶ Assess associations between
  - (i) a timeline of violence in Northern Ireland from January 1994 until mid-May 1998; and
  - (ii) media reports of blame taken from five Northern Irish newspapers/periodicals
  
- ▶ Do media reports of blame increase violence (subsequent 14 days)?
  - ▶ Lethal and non-lethal violence analyzed separately for loyalist and republican groups (insufficient republican non-lethal violence)
  - ▶ Negative binomial regression controlling for past violence (previous 14 days), calendar year, calendar month

# Violence in Northern Ireland Jan 1994 – Jun 1998



# Media Blame: An Phoblacht (n=47)

	Loyalist Violence	Loyalist Antagonism	Republican Violence
<b>Media Blame</b>			
Sinn Fein	--	--	--
DUP	0.62 (0.20 – 1.90)	1.34 (0.63 – 2.89)	1.71 (0.94 – 3.11)
SDLP	--	1.51 (0.40 – 5.75)	1.03 (0.33 – 3.25)
PUP	--	0.74 (0.12 – 4.65)	--
British Government	0.73 (0.50 – 1.06)	1.14 (0.84 – 1.55)	0.96 (0.73 – 1.27)
<b>Other factors</b>			
Recent Loyalist Violence/Antagonism	1.02 (0.83 – 1.25)	1.06 (0.85 – 1.33)	1.12 (0.97 – 1.29)
Recent Republican Violence/Antagonism	<b>1.14</b> <b>(1.04 – 1.25)</b>	0.84 (0.60 – 1.19)	<b>1.09</b> <b>(1.02 – 1.17)</b>
Month	0.99 (0.88 – 1.12)	1.13 (0.98 – 1.31)	0.98 (0.88 – 1.09)
Year	1.40 (0.97 – 2.01)	1.48 (0.91 – 2.39)	1.05 (0.79 – 1.40)

# Media Blame: Combat (n=19)

	Loyalist Violence	Loyalist Antagonism	Republican Violence
<b>Media Blame</b>			
<b>Sinn Fein</b>	<b>1.71</b> (1.10 – 2.66)	<b>1.60</b> (1.01 – 2.53)	1.01 (0.70 – 1.47)
<b>DUP</b>	3.46 (0.17 – 71.88)	1.46 (0.17 – 12.72)	4.28 (0.39 – 47.13)
<b>SDLP</b>	3.13 (0.35 – 27.88)	--	--
<b>PUP</b>	--	--	--
<b>British Government</b>	<b>3.88</b> (1.26 – 11.96)	0.77 (0.22 – 2.74)	2.72 (0.92 – 8.08)
<b>Other factors</b>			
<b>Recent Loyalist Violence/Antagonism</b>	0.89 (0.58 – 1.37)	1.22 (0.86 – 1.75)	0.84 (0.65 – 1.07)
<b>Recent Republican Violence/Antagonism</b>	0.96 (0.57 – 1.59)	0.86 (0.49 – 1.53)	1.31 (0.96 – 1.79)
<b>Month</b>	0.92 (0.76 – 1.13)	1.09 (0.91 – 1.30)	1.01 (0.88 – 1.17)
<b>Year</b>	1.57 (0.82 – 2.99)	1.61 (0.95 – 2.74)	<b>2.08</b> (1.20 – 3.62)

# Media Blame: Irish News (n=73)

	Loyalist Violence	Loyalist Antagonism	Republican Violence
<b>Media Blame</b>			
Sinn Fein	1.34 (0.95 – 1.88)	1.12 (0.72 – 1.73)	1.15 (0.82 – 1.61)
DUP	1.02 (0.62 – 1.65)	0.55 (0.27 – 1.10)	1.21 (0.78 – 1.91)
SDLP	0.97 (0.29 – 3.20)	1.19 (0.36 – 3.99)	1.21 (0.38 – 3.82)
PUP	2.07 (0.67 – 6.38)	0.85 (0.19 – 3.75)	0.75 (0.22 – 2.56)
British Government	0.76 (0.53 – 1.08)	0.86 (0.60 – 1.24)	0.84 (0.62 – 1.15)
<b>Other factors</b>			
Recent Loyalist Violence/Antagonism	1.08 (0.93 – 1.26)	1.03 (0.87 – 1.22)	1.08 (0.94 – 1.23)
Recent Republican Violence/Antagonism	1.06 (0.96 – 1.17)	0.80 (0.59 – 1.09)	1.01 (0.92 – 1.11)
Month	0.95 (0.85 – 1.07)	1.12 (0.98 – 1.27)	0.86 (0.77 – 0.96)
Year	0.89 (0.69 – 1.14)	<b>1.95</b> <b>(1.41 – 2.71)</b>	0.82 (0.66 – 1.03)

# Media Blame: Ulster News Letter (n=74)

	Loyalist Violence	Loyalist Antagonism	Republican Violence
<b>Media Blame</b>			
Sinn Fein	1.11 (0.86 – 1.45)	1.15 (0.87 – 1.52)	<b>1.26</b> <b>(1.03 – 1.54)</b>
DUP	0.79 (0.21 – 2.98)	0.22 (0.03 – 1.93)	0.64 (0.18 – 2.28)
SDLP	1.71 (0.94 – 3.11)	1.28 (0.56 – 2.90)	1.56 (0.95 – 2.57)
PUP	--	--	0.47 (0.07 – 3.26)
British Government	0.78 (0.52 – 1.16)	0.80 (0.55 – 1.17)	0.79 (0.56 – 1.11)
<b>Other factors</b>			
Recent Loyalist Violence/Antagonism	1.12 (0.97 – 1.29)	1.14 (0.95 – 1.36)	<b>1.20</b> <b>(1.07 – 1.34)</b>
Recent Republican Violence/Antagonism	1.10 (0.97 – 1.24)	0.77 (0.58 – 1.03)	<b>1.11</b> <b>(1.01 – 1.22)</b>
Month	1.00 (0.89 – 1.12)	<b>1.15</b> <b>(1.02 – 1.31)</b>	0.93 (0.84 – 1.03)
Year	1.03 (0.77 – 1.37)	<b>1.48</b> <b>(1.07 – 2.06)</b>	1.05 (0.82 – 1.36)



# Media Blame: Belfast Telegraph (n=77)

	Loyalist Violence	Loyalist Antagonism	Republican Violence
<b>Media Blame</b>			
Sinn Fein	0.90 (0.69 – 1.16)	<b>1.39</b> <b>(1.09 – 1.77)</b>	0.93 (0.76 – 1.14)
DUP	1.13 (0.56 – 2.27)	1.98 (0.80 – 4.92)	1.02 (0.57 – 1.84)
SDLP	0.75 (0.31 – 1.86)	1.99 (0.79 – 5.00)	1.21 (0.62 – 2.35)
PUP	1.13 (0.35 – 3.59)	1.13 (0.35 – 3.65)	0.78 (0.23 – 2.68)
British Government	--	--	--
<b>Other factors</b>			
Recent Loyalist Violence/Antagonism	1.19 (1.03 – 1.37)	1.14 (0.97 – 1.34)	<b>1.22</b> <b>(1.09 – 1.36)</b>
Recent Republican Violence/Antagonism	1.21 (1.05 – 1.38)	0.76 (0.57 – 1.01)	<b>1.14</b> <b>(1.03 – 1.27)</b>
Month	1.01 (0.90 – 1.13)	1.10 (0.99 – 1.23)	0.96 (0.87 – 1.06)
Year	0.96 (0.71 – 1.31)	<b>1.62</b> <b>(1.14 – 2.28)</b>	1.06 (0.80 – 1.41)

# Summary of Results (1)

- ▶ Media blame had little influence on subsequent violence/antagonism for most publications.
  - ▶ Nothing for *An Phoblacht* and *Irish News*; limited for others (and depended on who was blamed).
- ▶ Blame directed towards Sinn Fein had some impact on later violence
  - ▶ Blame of Sinn Fein by *Combat* increased both lethal and non-lethal violence by Loyalists
  - ▶ Blame of Sinn Fein by the *Belfast Telegraph* increased loyalist non-lethal violence by Loyalists
  - ▶ Blame of Sinn Fein by the *Ulster Newsletter* increased lethal violence by Republicans

## Summary of Results (2)

- ▶ Blame directed towards British Government by *Combat* increased lethal violence by Loyalists
- ▶ Blame directed at the other three political parties had no effect of later violence.
- ▶ Combining lethal and non-lethal violence for analyses produced largely same pattern of findings
  - ▶ Blame of DUP by *An Phoblacht* increased violence by Republicans
  - ▶ Blame of SDLP by *Ulster News Letter* increased violence by Loyalists

# Analytic issues

- ▶ Small sample so underpowered, and stretching limits of regression
  - ▶ Esp. Combat – obtaining more
- ▶ Multiple tests increases risk of Type I errors
  - ▶ Didn't adjust, but did seem to be systematic patterns towards Sinn Fein
- ▶ Lack of regularity prevented time series analyses, and combined analyses across publications

# Conclusions

- ▶ Disseminating blame matters in escalating violence
  - ▶ Fits with psychological theories (blame→aggression)
  - ▶ But who is blamed matters AND
  - ▶ Where blame is disseminated also matters (e.g. which publications)
- ▶ Other factors might have played a role
  - ▶ Political leadership (e.g. Blair & Clinton roles)
  - ▶ Significant events (e.g. ceasefires & peace agreements)
  - ▶ Behind closed doors negotiations
  - ▶ Economic factors?