

## **The Geographical Spread of State Executions during the Irish Civil War, 1922-1923.\***

Front and centre in most accounts of the Irish civil war are the executions of four leaders of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Mountjoy jail Dublin on December 8, 1922. The men were executed in retaliation for the killing the previous day of a member of parliament, Seán Hales (T.D.). This was a reprisal execution: the four had been imprisoned since the start of the civil war and could not have assisted in the assassination. Their execution was also fratricidal. The night before, one of the men, Liam Mellows, expressed his hope that 'brothers in blood will before long be brothers once more in arms against the oppressor of this country-imperialist England' (O' Dwyer 2006: 68). Three of Seán Hales brothers' in Cork had taken the anti-treaty side in the civil war and pro-Treaty Hales was a personal friend of Richard Barrett, one of the four executed for his assassination.

Yet the December 8 executions did not set the template, in terms of strategic logic, timing, and location for the executions to follow. The four were leaders. In Mann's (2005: 340, 346, 320) study of revolutionary movements, because of leadership changes, ideological splits, or factionalised conflict fratricide also begins in elite division and violence turns inwards as former comrades kill each other. Yet the executions after December 8 differ from Mann's (ibid: 337) model, where state violence primarily involves the purging of elite cadres and the suppression of internal dissent. Only five of the 81 executed men in Ireland were national leaders. A clear majority were of 'other ranks'. The most common rank was private. Given that there

\* I would like to thank Catriona Dowd, Gavin Foster, Niall O' Dochartaigh, Richard McMahon and Jill Stuart for their comments on an earlier version of this article. I also thank Mina Moshkeri for the production of the map.

was no shortage of troublesome mid-ranking and senior officers available for execution the pattern is striking (Keane 2018).

This pattern was bound up with the geography of the civil war. The December 8 executions took place in Dublin. While previous executions of IRA men by the British army had also largely taken place in the capital, few of the executions that took place in 1923 were carried out in Dublin or in the province of Leinster. As the war adapted to local circumstances their logic changed. Historians of the American civil war have focussed how conflict impacts people on the ground: on conflicts of loyalty in borderland areas, on families that become divided, on individuals being forced to take sides (Fellman 1989; Murrell 2005; Shaffer 2003). These are studies of diffusion. This article traces the *origins* of the execution policy to elite politics. Yet my aim is to explain their *diffusion* and, in terms of the methods used to win the war, how it escalated as it spread geographically. After introducing the conflict I map the spread of the executions. Then I locate the origins of the policy in elite politics. Arguably however, guerrilla war explains more about their diffusion after December 8. And since commanders on the ground gained more say in 1923, I consider what the changing relationship between Dublin and these local actors explains about the diffusion of the executions.

### **The civil war.**

The Anglo-Irish Treaty signed on December 6, 1921 created the Irish Free State, constitutionally a British dominion, but possessing considerable legislative powers. The Northern Ireland parliament was given the choice of opting out of the new state: it did so on December 7, 1922. To pro-treaty nationalists the Treaty brought an end to the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland (1800-1921), and would provide a

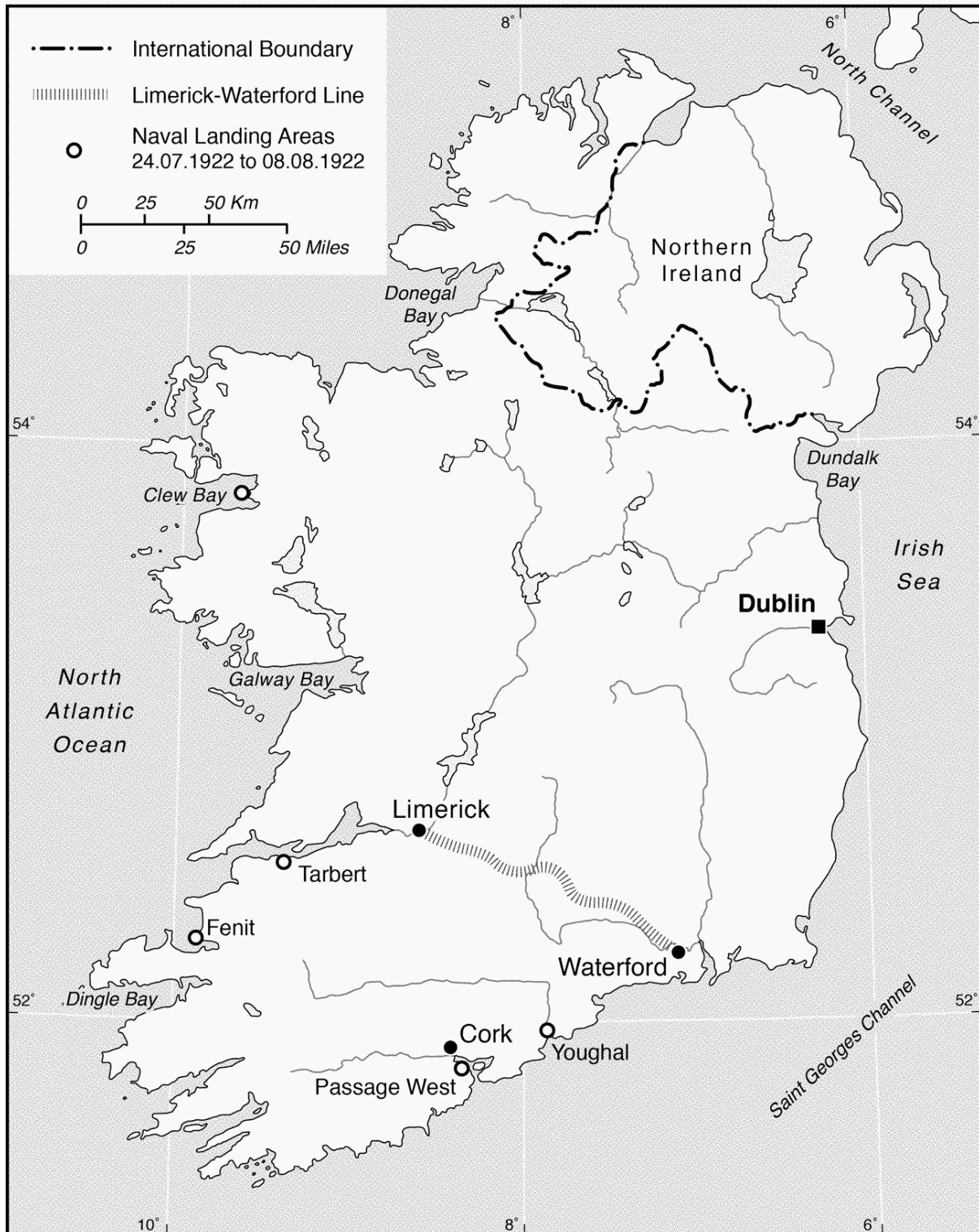
basis for evolution. Anti-treaty republicans saw in the treaty the disestablishment of the 32-county Irish Republic proclaimed during the Easter Rising of 1916 and accused those who signed it of betrayal.

The Treaty was narrowly approved by the Irish parliament, *Dáil Éireann*, on January 7, 1922. The independence movement had split behind two dominant leaders, pro-treaty Michael Collins, and Éamon de Valera, President of the Republic proclaimed in 1916. Yet the public was in favour of peace. The occupation by the anti-Treaty IRA of a number of buildings, including the Four Courts, in Dublin on March 12, 1922 posed a clear challenge to the Provisional Government and to the principle of majority rule. After an election on June 16 - and an ultimatum from the British Government - the government attacked the Four Courts on June 28. What ensued was a war between pro-treaty and anti-Treaty republicans for *de facto* control over the new state. Yet it was also a war about national legitimacy, about which side could define themselves as most democratic and as most Irish.

Map 1 shows the border between Northern Ireland and the Free State. Since partition in 1920 Northern Ireland's security forces had been suppressing the IRA, so the focus of the IRA was southerly. After their defeat in Dublin in early July the IRA retreated south, where it tried to defend fixed positions behind the line on Figure 1 running from Limerick in the west to Waterford in the southeast. Yet map 1 also shows that between July 24 and August 8 government troops landed in Clew Bay in county Mayo, Fenit and Tarbert in Kerry, and Youghal and Passage West in Cork. These naval landings established entry-points behind the Limerick-Waterford line and would separate IRA brigades in the southwest, west and

northwest. The line collapsed. On August 19 IRA Chief of Staff, Liam Lynch, told his men to organise themselves into 'active service units' and to adopt guerrilla tactics.

Map 1: The Limerick-Waterford Line and places of naval landings  
24 July 1922-8 August 1922



The war had become more diffuse in two ways: first in traveling to a new location after the surrender of the Four Courts, and second in terms of expanding in scope with the collapse of the Limerick-Waterford line (Schulte and Weidman (2011: 144, 152). As in conventional civil wars, the conflict first became more diffuse by being relocated. With the guerrilla war, it did so by escalating. As the IRA retreated to its most familiar environs, this led to attacks behind their lines and more localised executions. IRA Commander, Tom Maguire later reflected that 'I was concerned very much by what you termed fragmentation, by the effort to travel around, make contact, and hold our groups together' (O' Gadhra 1999: 139). All the 81 executions were carried out in the second half of the war (November 17, 1922 to May 30 1923). They took place in seventeen counties of men from 21 of the 32 Irish counties. Both in terms of the methods used to win it, and the IRA's campaign of destruction the conflict escalated as it became irregular.

The island's geography had traditionally posed problems for consolidating central authority (Evans 1973: 25). Yet the IRA had made a fundamental mistake by leaving the capital in the hands of their enemies, allowing the Provisional Government to broadcast themselves to the outside world as the lawful government in overall control of the situation (Blake 1986: 36). With Dublin as its epicentre, power was projected north, south, and west as it had been in all previous efforts to subjugate the island. But this was not a half conquest; the writ of the state soon extended into every region of the new state. The Free State would intern more than double the number of people the British had done in the earlier conflict (1919-21). Patrick Mangan was a railway worker executed at the Curragh army base on December 19

1922. His father went insane as a response and was committed to an asylum where he died two years later. His brother Thomas, who also worked on the railways, was interned for over a year, while his sister, a member of *Cumann na mBan* (the IRA's sister organisation), lost her job in a local Christian Brothers School.<sup>1</sup>

Civil wars need not become protracted if the early fighting is for the capital, and if external resources are placed at the state's disposal early on (Herbst 2004: 367). By September 1922 Britain had supplied 27,400 rifles, 6,606 revolvers, and 246 Lewis guns to the Provisional Government (Hopkinson 1988: 125). Moreover, the public became alienated from the IRA when its guerrilla tactics subverted the economic life of the country by destroying roads, bridges, and railway lines. An army report in March 1923 stated that armed opposition could only be found in a few places, and where IRA columns existed it was mainly due to the mountainous terrain.<sup>2</sup> The IRA declared a unilateral ceasefire on April 30 1923. They buried their arms and returned home: there was no formal surrender.

### **The Spread of the Executions.**

As a deterrent the executions prevented the further assassination of members of the parliament. As punishment they allowed the army to punish local IRA men for their actions or those of their comrades. However, the executions also demonstrated (symbolically) the commitment of the treatyite

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Mangan, Military Pension File, DP 2979, [militaryarchives.ie](http://militaryarchives.ie)

<sup>2</sup> 'Report of the Military Situation, 31 March 1923', National Archives: Civil War Army Reports.

elite on the standing of authority in Ireland, and broadcast its 'frame of reference' or 'code of power' (Parsons 1964: 35). For the Provisional Government they were 'an extreme but morally justifiable response to an IRA campaign that sought to overthrow a lawfully constituted state' (Foster 2015: 156). Anti-treatyites countered that the Free State bowed to *force majeure*. One republican poster –'The British Empire Unlimited'- compared the position of two Irish ministers, Kevin O' Higgins and Richard Mulcahy, in a downward chain of authority, to the roles Generals Sir Hamar Greenwood and Nevil MacReady played in the executions after the 1916 Rising.<sup>3</sup>

The executions are no longer a completely taboo subject: most studies of the Irish revolution discuss them. There are two legal histories (Cambell 1994; Enright 2019) and one PhD thesis (Breen Murphy 2010) on the policy. The civil war saw the loss of leaders on both sides, such as Michael Collins and Liam Lynch and historians of the executions also stress the importance of elite psychology. They speak of 'bitterness' (Valiulis 1992: 184) 'hatred' (Coogan 2006: 141) 'ruthlessness' (Ferriter 2015: 281) 'fratricidal violence' (Townshend 2014: 451) 'savagery' (Neeson 1989: 277 ) and 'terror' (Coogan and Morrison 1998: 4). Some ask whether the restraint necessary for the existence of civilised life had also loosened (Foster 2015: 281; Garvin 1996: 93;Townshend 2014; 441).

Less attention has been paid to geography. The executions formed part of 'a war of reconquest' (Keogh 1994: 15-17) and the state's territorial imperative

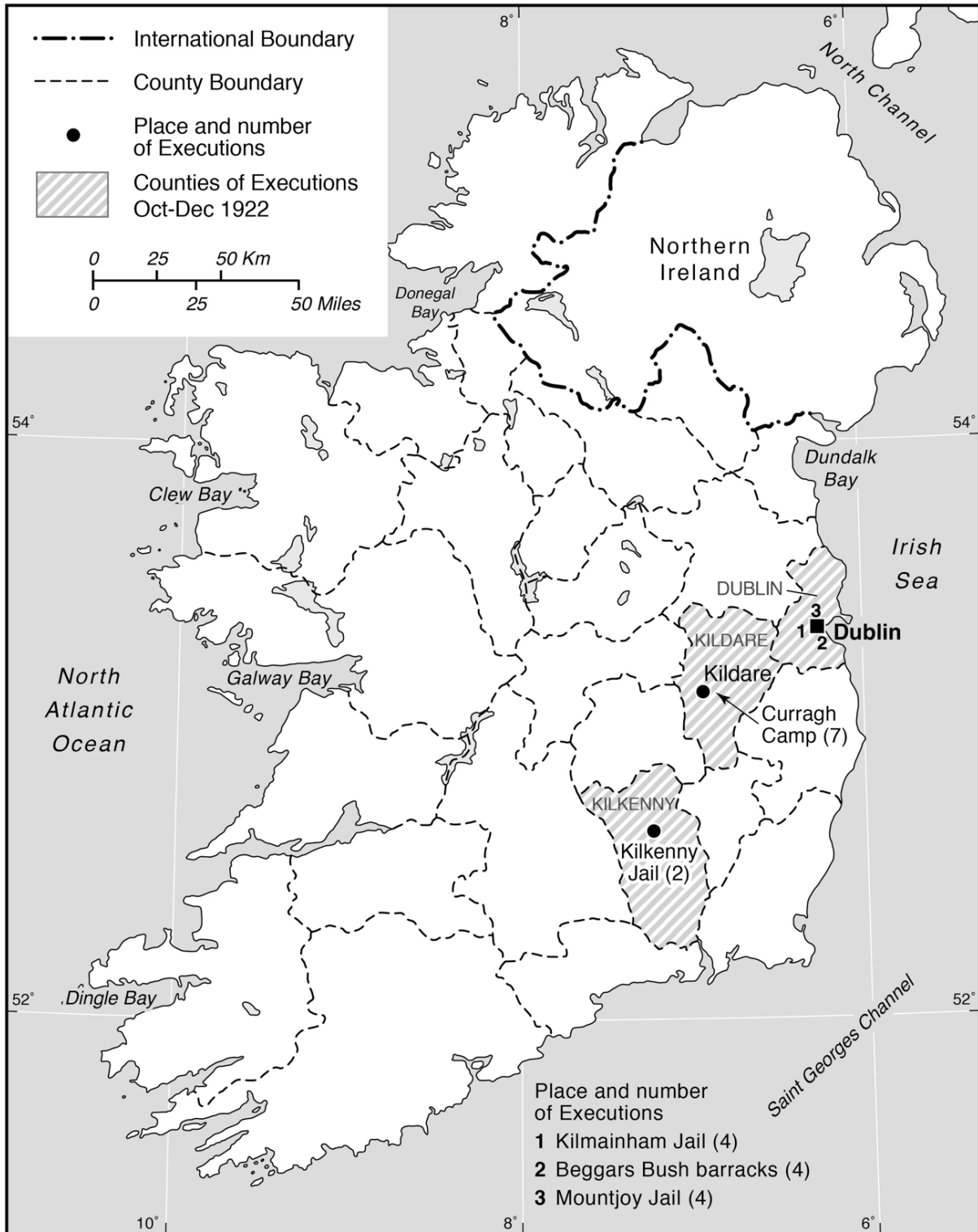
---

<sup>3</sup> 'The British Empire Unlimited', P150/1657, De Valera Papers UCDA.

explains more about their diffusion than elite politics. Indeed mapping their spread in 1922-23 is a way of tracing the expansion of state power. The first phase was from October to December 1922, when the executions were decided at the national level. The strategic hub of any state-building project was first Dublin and the Central Lowland lying north of a line from Galway Bay to Dublin and south of the drumlin belt, (north of which lay Northern Ireland). The first step in the consolidation of state authority was to control this historic 'eastern triangle': the geographical nucleus 'from which men have their best chance of commanding the whole country' (Andrews 1967:21). The first 29 executions of the civil war took place within this eastern triangle. Figure 2. shows their relatively central location.



Map 2: Places and numbers of executions October to December 1922



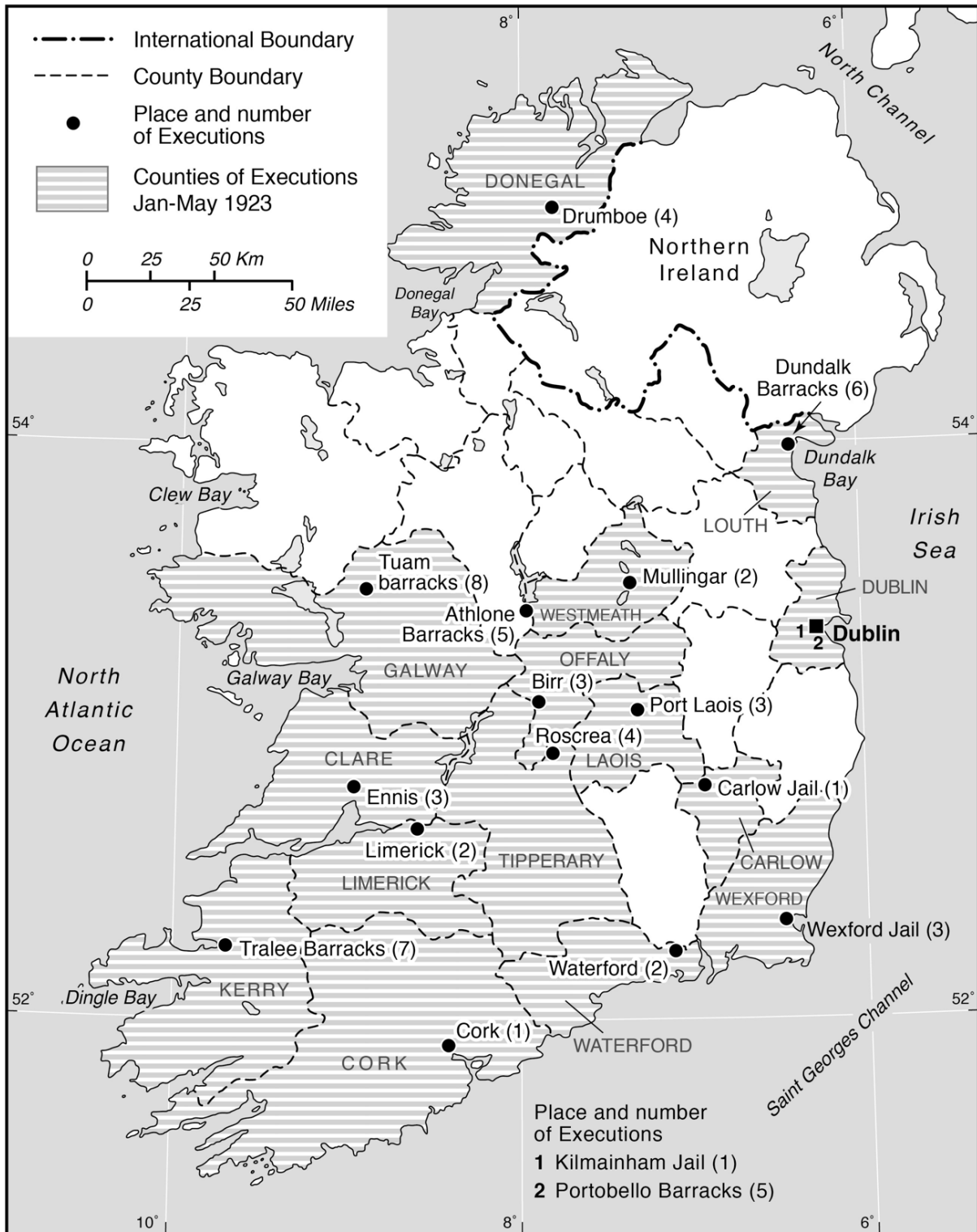
Sources: 'Executions by Provisional or Saorstát Éireann Governments, 1922-24'. (TSCH S 1884 A), National Archives Dublin; (P150/1657), Eamon de Valera Papers, UCD Archives, Dublin; (TCD 7808/324) Erskine Childers Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Trinity College Dublin.

The second phase began on January 11, 1923 when the decision was taken to decentralise responsibility to committees of officers at the battalion level, resulting in more localised executions. Twenty-one men were executed in 1922, a further sixty in 1923. Figure 3 shows their territorial reach. Between November 17, 1922 and April 26, 1923 35 executions took place in the eastern command area, 20 in the western command area, 19 in the southern command area, and seven in the Curragh.<sup>4</sup> Indeed the new state executed many more IRA prisoners in a year than the British Army had done between 1916 and 1921. The latter's were concentrated in Dublin, the Free State was more determined to dominate rural areas. When the IRA split over the Treaty, the First Western division was the only one along the western seaboard not to go anti-treaty: pro-treaty strength was concentrated on the east coast, the midlands, and the border counties. Before January 11 no executions had taken place in the western counties of Clare, Galway, Kerry Limerick and Mayo: subsequently there were twenty.

---

<sup>4</sup> "Executions by Provisional or *Saorstát Éireann* Governments 1922-24", TSCH S 1884 A, National Archives.

Map 3: Places and Number of Executions January- May 1923



Sources: 'Executions by Provisional or Saorstát Éireann Governments, 1922-24'. (TSCH S 1884 A), National Archives Dublin; (P150/1657), Eamon de Valera Papers, UCD Archives, Dublin; (TCD 7808/324) Erskine Childers Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Trinity College Dublin.

One can also identify a third stage when local factors influenced their location *within* counties. When General Paddy O' Daly became commanding officer of the National Army in Kerry he decided to have four men from different areas of the county executed as a deterrent against further IRA activity. The men chosen to face the firing squad on January 20, 1923 at Ballymullen Gaol Tralee were from Ballycarbery, Castleisland, Causeway and Knockeendubh (near Killarney) (Horgan 2015: 291). In county Tipperary the same month, four IRA men who had been sentenced to death were transferred from Templemore, where the people were reportedly angry, to the pro-treaty town of Roscrea. They were executed at Roscrea Castle on January 15.

The executions on December 8 had broadcast state power territorially; Richard Barrett was from Munster, Liam Mellows (T.D.) represented Connaught, Joe McKelvey was from Ulster and Rory O' Connor was from Leinster. However, at the decisive meeting of the cabinet and the army council on January 11 Minister for Home Affairs, Kevin O'Higgins, complained that the psychological effect of an execution in Dublin is very slight in Wexford, Galway or Waterford (O' Halpin 1989:32). By the end of the civil war executions had taken place in the four corners of the state: counties Donegal, Kerry, Louth and Wexford. Republican historian Dorothy MacArdle (1937: 863-4) first noted the territorial logic. January 1923 saw executions take place in every direction, North, South, East and West: three in Dundalk on the 13<sup>th</sup>, four in Roscrea and one in Carlow on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and eleven (2 in Limerick, 4 in Tralee, and five in Athlone) on the 20<sup>th</sup>. She claimed that victims were chosen from the centre of each district where the IRA was operating with success.

Broadcasting state power over territory has been a problem for many new states, especially those with huge territories, dispersed populations and culturally distinct groups (Herbst 2004: 36). In Ireland the obstacles were the local power of the IRA and the public's alleged lack of civic virtue in not supporting the authorities. The executions broadcast power across three types of boundary. The territorial boundary refers to the way they were spread throughout the territory of the state, making the presence of the state felt at the local level. In terms of social boundaries, those killed were mainly young working class men, adding credence to the view that the republican cause was 'back to the men of no property'.<sup>5</sup> In terms of organisational boundaries, most protagonists had been members of the same organisations when the civil war started. The executions constituted a point of 'no-return' since they demonstrated that the government was willing to back its own propaganda with ruthless measures against its former comrades.

Given the bitterness of the Treaty split, it is not hard to explain why the executions were introduced: explaining their spatial diffusion is the purpose here. I first trace the origins of the policy to elite politics. Then I consider what guerrilla war conditions explain about their diffusion. Finally, since commanders on the ground had such a say in 1923, I ask how much their changing relationship with Dublin tells us.

### **'Fratricidal Flipping', Centralization and Elite Politics.**

Staniland (2012) suggests that 'fratricidal flipping' may begin when, during a peace process, some leaders of an insurgent organization decide that the

---

<sup>5</sup> The phrase, used by the executed Liam Mellows, was first coined in the eighteenth century by one of the founders of the United Irishmen, Wolfe Tone.

centralization of authority is necessary to achieve their goals. He relates 'fratricidal flipping' to the process of 'ethnic defection' to a state. By 'ethnic defection' he means that some insurgents go over to the state's side and 'flip' by turning against former comrades. The decision to sign the Treaty was not *ethnic* defection –the pro-Treatyites were nationalists who valued full Irish independence - but their acceptance of the Treaty raised similar accusations 'of betrayal, of selling out, or becoming puppets in the hands of the state'. The choice of some IRA men to turn their guns on their former comrades, and their possession of intelligence later had a decisive impact militarily.

Staniland outlines three scenarios: (1) *ex ante* political disagreements will drive defection by moderates, particularly during peace processes; (2) defection is the result of deliberate state policies of manipulation and repression; (3) insurgent forces use force against part of their own movement when it serves strategic goals, such as the consolidation of central authority and army discipline (Staniland 2012: 19-21).

Both *ex ante* political differences, and British policies of divide and rule explain the transition from Treaty to civil war in 1922. Yet the pro-treatyite desire to consolidate power explains the origins of the execution policy. It gained momentum in the context of the re-organisation of institutions and the process of legitimation, both part of the process of centralising power (Janos 1964: 130-40).

The executions became the instrument of a small group of men, insecure in their power, and sceptical of the civic virtues of the population they ruled over. They departed from the firm but conciliatory policies of Michael Collins, Commander in Chief of the National Army. He remained against executions up to his death

in an ambush on August 22, 1922. Collins had occupied a dual role: head of a democratically elected government, and President of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, formed in 1858. During the summer of 1922 he had seemed bent on entrusting key posts within the Free State to other republican brothers (Regan 2007: 339-40). The most dramatic sign that this revolutionary fraternity would not last was the execution of four leaders of the Brotherhood on December 8, 1922.

The new civilian leaders clearly had less tolerance for the shady interconnections between governmental and non-governmental organisations. On September 27, 1922 the Provisional Government passed a Special Powers Resolution that allowed the military to detain persons taken in arms who had been caught participating in arson, looting, or attacks on private property, or attacking Free State military forces. They were to be tried secretly by military tribunals with the authority to pass death sentences. The accused had a right to representation by legal staff within the army. The first batch took place in Dublin on November 17 when James Fisher, Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig, and John Gaffney were executed in Kilmainham Jail. The men were very young; Fisher only eighteen.

The official statement on the executions, which took place on December 8, said that the four leaders had been killed as 'a reprisal' for the assassination of Seán Hales the previous day, and as a 'solemn warning' against others. In late September 1922 the IRA Chief of Staff, Liam Lynch, had decided that those who voted for the executions, and 'aggressive Free State supporters' were 'legitimate

targets'. After Hales's assassination, senior army officers had requested permission to take out and execute four leaders from the Four Courts garrison: the government authorised them to do so the next morning, fearing that their own supporters would cave in as the IRA began to act on Lynch's orders.<sup>6</sup> The killing of Hales had forced the Provisional Government's hand. William Cosgrave, now President of the Executive Council, claimed that his government had been willing to extend leniency to all remaining prisoners subject to military trials, but Hales's assassination changed things (Knirck 2014: 76).

The Provisional Government then adopted an official hostage policy, under which prisoners would be sentenced to death, but received a stay of execution pending the improvement of order in the areas where they had been active (Breen Murphy 2010: 3). This policy was adopted in Kerry on December 13 1922, and later extended to some other counties. In Kerry General Murphy put up a notice confirming that four of those sentenced to death in the county had had their sentences commuted. Reports from the local Commanding Officer had commented on the favourable condition of the county, leading Richard Mulcahy, Army Chief of Staff, to order that the men be used as hostages. However if, after Thursday December 21, there were ambushes of troops, or interference with railways or private property 'the sentences will be carried out forthwith' (Irish Times, December 1 1922).

---

<sup>6</sup> Blythe, 'Witness Statement'.



The final step in the escalation of the policy was the decision on January 11 to devolve responsibility to local commanders, which resulted in executions in counties Louth, Tipperary, Carlow, Kerry, Tipperary, Westmeath, Waterford, Offaly, Laois, Wexford, Donegal, Galway, and Clare in 1923. At the decisive meeting of the cabinet and the army council Patrick Hogan, the Minister for Agriculture warned of a land war (Regan 1999: 120). Those wanting more severe methods got their way: committees of officers were established at battalion level throughout the country to pass sentences on IRA prisoners. The policy gained a fresh momentum: from early December cases were almost exclusively dispatched by such committees (Breen Murphy 2010: 190). Units of army officers, many not ranked higher than captain, were formed as mobile military tribunals, travelling around rural Ireland to conduct the trials of prisoners that had been apprehended under the September resolution (Walsh 2015: 387). Even sympathisers caught carrying republican propaganda could now find themselves facing a firing squad.

Staniland (2012: 21) suggests that fratricidal conflict can occur either in a top-down fashion, when an insurgent faction decides that victory can best be achieved by the consolidation of power under its aegis, or from below when local feuds escalate into a more general military conflict. The Irish independence movement disintegrated from the top-down; the cabinet, then the *Dáil*, and then the IRA split over the Treaty. Yet local military power was crucial. After the July 1921 truce with the Crown forces local IRA brigades had continued to recruit, to prepare for further warfare, and to take over bases from the departing British troops. When each brigade voted on the Treaty three quarters went anti-treaty, controlling two thirds of

the new state's territory (Hopkinson 1988: Map One). On July 1, 1922 the First Southern Division, (twelve brigades covering Cork, Kerry, Waterford and the western part of Limerick) had 27,277 men on its rolls. The Second Southern (five brigades covering Limerick, Tipperary and Kilkenny) had 8,955 men. Most of these 35,000 plus men were free to take part in the guerrilla war in August.<sup>7</sup>

Since the executions constituted 'a point of no return' within the nationalist movement each step in the implementation of the policy constituted an escalation of the conflict. Most historians back the pro-treatyites: 'at some point or other the government had to meet force with greater force and IRA terror with state terror' (O' Halpin 1999: 37). The executions worked as a deterrent: after Hales's death no other member of the parliament would be killed. They also killed off the possibilities for reconciliation by an elite committed to the norm of civilian supremacy (Regan 1999: 125). Yet elite politics do not explain why the policy gained momentum when it spread territorially or the absence of elite purges. By September 1923 exactly half of the anti-treaty candidates who were elected to the *Dáil* in June 1922 were in custody (Irish Times 29 September 1923). They survived the civil war. There were no further executions of republican elites after the executions in Mountjoy jail on December 8.

### **Guerrilla War.**

---

<sup>7</sup> These, and subsequent figures for the strength of IRA units on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1922 are taken from the IRA rolls in *The Military Pension Archive*, Military Archives, ie. The lists were mainly calculated in 1935.

The execution policy was conceived of, implemented and extended in the context of a guerrilla war. It mattered that Ministers considered this war 'a movement of anarchy', 'a criminal conspiracy against the state', and 'a criminal' rather than a civil war (Knirck 2014: 34-55). Cahir Davitt, First Advocate General, argued that prior to the lapse of the amnesty offer on October 15, 1922, the IRA had tacitly been accorded belligerent rights. After that date they lost those rights, especially as they wore no uniform, carried no military emblems and did not openly carry their arms.<sup>8</sup> The transgression model of civil war violence suggests that those who do not recognize the legal claims of the sovereign place themselves beyond the protection of the laws of regular warfare, and can be treated as criminals (Kalyvas 2006: 62-63). Legal recognition was important: the pre-truce IRA had also been considered illegal by the British authorities. The Catholic bishops' joint pastoral published on October 11, 1922 declared it a matter of 'divine law' that the 'legitimate authority in Ireland just now' was the Provisional Government, that 'the guerrilla warfare now being carried on by the Irregulars was without moral sanction; and therefore that the killing of National Soldiers was murder before God' (Murray 2000: 87). In 1922 the Provisional Government insisted that the press call the anti-treaty IRA 'irregulars'. Besides bearing unauthorised arms, the offences during which people were arrested for trial: aiding the 'irregulars', disrupting railway lines, alleged robbery of a mail van, attempted burglary, theft and armed robbery were also 'irregular.'

Balcells (2019) poses the question of whether violence is a product of pre-war political differences or of wartime conditions. In 1923 executions were

---

<sup>8</sup> Cahir Davitt, 'Witness Statement by Hon. Justice Cahir Davitt' *Bureau of Military History 1913-1921*. W.S.. 1,1751, 1955, 81-82.

administered not as a response to national politics but in order to shape local political and military realities. While those carried out in 1922 had taken place in or near Dublin, in 1923 they mainly took place outside of Leinster (Foster 2015: 155-6). January 1923, when a total of 34 prisoners were executed was critical. The increase was a response to a campaign of wholesale destruction in December after which some took matters into their own hands (Keogh 1994: 15-16). Finally, after a lull in February 1923, their resumption in March was calculated to achieve 'a satisfactory geographical spread in the interests of deterrence' (Enright 2019:97).

The local power of the IRA now mattered. In Wexford because of a lack of support from Waterford Command, inefficiency, and an uncooperative population, IRA activity had increased well into the new year.<sup>9</sup> The South Wexford Brigade had 1,367 men on the rolls in July 1922, four hundred more than it had had a year earlier. The columns of Thomas O' Sullivan in the New Ross area, and of Bob Lambert around Wexford town, controlled large areas of the countryside in the spring of 1923. One of the most active units was the Kyle flying column in Central Wexford: the three men executed in Wexford town on March 13 were from this unit. Kalyvas (2006: 333-36) suggests that the denser the social contacts at the local level the more the audience for such acts of violence. On April 10, 1923 six men were taken aside in Galway jail and told they would be executed in Tuam the next morning. They were all part of the second western division under Tom Maguire. Tuam was nearer Headford, where most of the men were from, and their execution was a reprisal for the attack on the army barracks there on April 8 (Newall 2015: 28-9).

---

<sup>9</sup> 'South Wexford Brigade General Report', January 17, 1923 (UCD Archives, Moss Twomey Papers, P69/13/4-1).

Kalyvas (2006: 196) argues that in the early stages of civil war - when situations of contested sovereignty exist - indiscriminate violence, including the targeting of civilians is more likely. Selective state violence is more effective after a government has achieved territorial control. More discriminate forms of violence become possible when the population co-operates in terms of providing information, and because proper policing is established in local areas. In Ireland executions had not been needed to establish control; they were a means of consolidating it at the local level. Most took place in rural areas where state control was predominant, not absolute. Due to many of its men being part of the same units before 1921, the army was well-informed about its enemies, their hiding places and tactics. It could more easily distinguish them from the general population than the Crown forces had been able to do.

The executions were a selective form of state violence. The Army Emergency Powers Resolution was to apply only to those found in arms. Of the 81 the number of those sentenced to death for the possession of either ammunition, arms or explosives is 63. Thirteen of these faced another charge, while seven sentences were for taking part in attacks in which soldiers died, for conspiracy to murder or for murder. For bank robberies only 2 were executed (Cambell 1994: 360-372). Those guilty of other offences were generally not put before military courts, despite the Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Hogan, wanting 'immediate and drastic action against people who seized other peoples' land.'<sup>10</sup> Secondly, while the army held many IRA prisoners as hostages, most were spared. Seán Prendergast, an IRA prisoner in Gormonstown internment camp, recalled that the response of the prisoners to the

---

<sup>10</sup> "Special Infantry Corps", Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin.

executions on December 8 was that the state wanted to spread fear and terror.

Anyone could be next.<sup>11</sup> Yet the executions had ceased by June 1923, when more than 12,000 republicans were in jail or internment camps. Most cases brought before the courts (or the ancillary committee system) did not result in executions (Yeates 2015: 258). Moreover, geographic variation was pronounced. A total of 40 men were killed while in army custody in county Kerry (Ryle Dwyer 1996: 364). Yet only one execution took place in neighbouring Cork, the most violent county during the earlier War of Independence. Lastly, 645 women were interned for 'actively assisting' the IRA (Matthews 2012: Appendix One). Their execution was not considered. During the entire war no woman was charged with a capital offence.

Four civilians were executed. Balcells (2010), Gutiérrez-Sanin and Wood (2017) and Steele (2017) consider how political divisions influence violence against civilians during wartime. High levels of prior mobilisation, strong collective identities and the existence of compact populations with clear loyalties can make civilian support a critical resource. In Ireland civilians were generally not targeted. Men were selected for execution not by virtue of their membership of particular groups but after allegations of individual behaviour. In such a non-ethnic (perhaps non-ideological) civil war, while local political opinions were hard to observe the army knew who remained active in the IRA (Steele 2017: 53). Lines of division were also formed late. Tom Maguire reflected that initially 'you might be in touch with personalities on your side today, and tomorrow you could be told that they had gone over to the Free State side' (O'Gadhra 1999: 139). A number who 'flipped' sides

---

<sup>11</sup> Seán Prendergast, 'Witness Statement of Seán Prendergast, Captain IRA Dublin 1921', *Bureau of Military History 1913-1921*. W.S. 755, 1952.

ended up being executed. The five executed for treachery at Portobello Barracks on 8 January were Free State soldiers who chose to aid the IRA. Seven former British soldiers were executed after taking the anti-treaty side.

Those executed were usually young IRA volunteers. The ranks of the IRA had swelled after the truce with Britain. Foster (2015: 35) stresses that prior to 1914 the young had occupied the bottom rung of the social ladder; they were politically non-entities. The *Sinn Féin* independence movement which swept the polls in 1918 then idealised Irish youth in contrast to the corruption of the older 'Home Rule' parliamentary tradition. The civil war saw a return to the pre-war *status quo*. The worst example was when the bodies of three young men, aged 16 to 17, were found in Dublin having been picked up by detectives the previous day for distributing republican leaflets. Most of those executed were under twenty five; a significant minority were also teenagers. A contrast with 1916 suggests itself. The fifteen leaders that were executed after the Easter Rising were mainly well-known figures in the cultural life of the city; both class and race might have suggested they be spared the final punishment for treason. When they were executed they were instantly turned into national martyrs. While those executed in 1922-23 also saw themselves as stepping into this revolutionary tradition of sacrifice, there was no comparable public reaction to their deaths.

T.D.s' lives were usually spared. Tom Maguire, a member of the second *Dáil*, survived after he had been captured by the National Army and sentenced to death. Yet all five of the men executed in Tuam, county Galway, on April 11, (including his teenage brother), were part of his 2nd Western Brigade. Four of the

five men executed in Athlone on January 20 were also members of the western division. Maguire speculated that the authorities found it easier to 'make an example of younger brothers' (O'Gadhra 1999: 141), and government propaganda blamed youthful irresponsibility for prolonging the IRA campaign (Foster 2015: 32). Were such youthful targets an alternative to elite purges? The state was willing to execute leaders. When Senator Bagwell, Chair of the Great Northern Railway, was abducted (and his house burnt down), Commandant General Dan Hogan - with a certain amount of publicity - gathered forty of the most prominent IRA prisoners into Mountjoy jail, suggesting that were Bagwell killed, the number of executions would be far greater than on 8 December. Bagwell was allowed to escape.<sup>12</sup> The IRA's own lack of ruthlessness in not implementing Lynch's orders against parliamentarians best explains the rarity of elite executions. Minister Ernest Blythe recalled the case of T.D. Frank Bulfin, who had attempted to resign from the *Dáil* because he was subject to intimidation by republicans. Bulfin was persuaded to remain, but the incident made Blythe feel that if there had been a big scare following one or two deaths of a T.D. or Senator, 'it would be our duty to apply sufficient terror to counteract it.'<sup>13</sup>

Regan (2013) argues that its association with Bolshevism accounts 'for the ferocity with which the rebellion was put down'. Most executions were of ordinary young men from working class backgrounds. Of the five leaders executed, Erskine Childers was a well-known novelist, Rory O' Connor was a

---

<sup>12</sup> Ernest Blythe, 'Witness Statement by Ernest Blythe', *Bureau of Military History 1913-1921*. W.S. 939, 1954.

<sup>13</sup> 'Witness Statement by Ernest Blythe', 174.



trained engineer, and Joseph McKelvy had some accountancy training. Of the 76 victims who were not leaders, only one, John Larkin (son of a Magistrate in Derry), was from a middle class family. The remaining 75 were from ordinary, mainly rural backgrounds. Although not all had work experience, a common occupation was labouring: quite a few were farmers sons. Condemning the first executions (of four young Dubliners) on November 17, the Labour Leader, Thomas Johnson, argued that their disadvantages of youth, social standing and education ought to have been taken into account in the sentencing.<sup>14</sup>

Yet guerrilla war conditions explain more than class. Fear of social disorder had influenced the January 11 meeting. Patrick Hogan thought the land situation so ungovernable that it was up to the army to take actions against people who seized land (Regan 1999: 120). In February the Minister of Defence established the Special Infantry Corps specifically to tackle agrarian disorder. Yet no one was executed for agrarian offences or labour agitation in 1923; or for any of the offences the Corps was established to deal with. The Corp's role was to provide aid to the Civil Power: executions did not fall within its powers. Contrast this approach with the policy on the railways where the state's military interests were at stake. The IRA attacks involved burning carriages and destroying goods in transit, and were on a larger scale than during the war of independence. Four railway workers were executed in Kildare on 19 December, while two more men were executed in Limerick jail on January 20 for their part in the destruction of the railways in the Tuam area.

---

<sup>14</sup> "Executions by Provisional or Saorstát Éireann Governments", TSCH S 1884 A, National Archives.

The authorities tried to depersonalise the executions. The criteria for selecting men remained secret. The notice relatives received was usually in the form of 'remains of ----- confined and buried' with the name of the dead man inserted in the blank.

Remains were interred at the place of execution. The move away from public executions the previous century had largely been driven by a fear of crowds, and the potential to call the legitimacy of the state into question. For similar reasons, the executions were carried out behind closed doors. This strategy nonetheless failed.

The shooting of four Kerry-born IRA men in Drumboe Castle county Donegal on March 14, 1923 after the killing of a Free State soldier is an example. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a team of former British soldiers were brought in to carry out the execution. Yet when the firing squad failed to kill one of the men, Charlie Daly, the officer who oversaw the court-martial and the execution stepped forward to deliver the *coup de grace* with a revolver. This officer was none other than Joe Sweeney, who had been a close student friend of Daly (Griffith and O' Grady 1998: 306). 'Selective violence' should not imply that there was 'nothing personal' about the executions.

Nonetheless, seeing the spread of the executions as a response to guerrilla war conditions explains more about their diffusion than elite politics or class conflict. Moreover, the policy remained selective. The military courts and committees had tried almost 1,200 men, and of these over 400 were sentenced to death (Enright 2019: 6). The majority of this 400 survived. 'Diffusion' can imply a process of contagion: 'in which individuals function outside normative constraint and their actions are propelled by high levels of emotional and psychological strain' (Soule 2004: 244). This approach to the executions is common among historians.

An execution policy 'born in bloodshed and hatred' (Coogan 2006: 138) created a spiral of bitterness and revenge such that the civil war acquired the character of 'a vendetta on a national scale' (Hopkinson 1988: 190). Selective violence suggests a more 'organised, rational and goal oriented' model of diffusion (Soule op. cit).

This diffusion was shaped by the two related dimensions of state power: centralisation and the localisation of violence (Mann 1986: 521). A rapid re-organisation of administrative power had taken place at the centre, especially as the influence of the civilian leaders grew. At the same time, recognising the psychological distance between Dublin and rural Ireland, these leaders devolved the power of execution to army officers at the local command level, feeling that the authority of the state was insufficiently felt there. Garvin (1966: 103) shows that the Irish army wanted to break the hold the local IRA had on shaping people's perceptions of the centre. The next section discusses the relationship between this devolution of initiative and the spread of the executions. As centralisation and the localisation of violence came in tension the result was a lack of control.

### **Principal Agent Problems.**

Once the decision to devolve responsibility was taken in January, the government ('the principal') had ceded the initiative to the commanders on the ground ('the agents'). The execution policy produced 'a principal-agent problem' which became acute in 1923. Such 'problems' revolve on how a principal controls a self-interested agent in possession of superior information (Mitchell 2004:5). The army's legal staff played no role in selecting those to be executed. The approach predicts

problems down the chain of command when commanding officers and their subordinates come to have different preferences as to application of military force.

IRA Commander Tom Maguire reflected,

It is said that the Free State 'provincialized' its killings, both official and unofficial, by having the majority of them carried out away from Dublin, in contrast to the British who had all of theirs, except one in Dublin and Cork. It is my opinion that their objective was to involve all their senior officers in this policy, so that there would be no denying it afterwards. Joe Sweeney carried out executions in Drumboe in Donegal. Dan Hogan had them in Dundalk. Michael McCormick had them in Portlaoise, Birr and Roscrea, Joseph Cummins had them in Wexford, Liam Stack had one in Carlow, Seán MacEoin had them in Athlone and Michael Brennan had them in Tuam, Limerick and Ennis (O' Gadhra 1999: 139-142)

While all executions still had to be approved by the Army Council, local actors increasingly gained the initiative. In Kerry on January 11, 1923, an army poster appeared in Tralee saying that four men had been found guilty of the possession of firearms and sentenced to death. It also warned that the IRA activity in the county had to stop, or the stay on their execution would be removed. In response, the local IRA commander made it known that were the men killed, eight named supporters of the Free State would be shot. The men were never executed. However, on January 20, 1923 four different local men were executed. The night before, Richard Mulcahy - now Commander in Chief - had authorised the execution by signing the back of a brown envelope. This was a response to a request for a deterrent because of the renewed IRA activity in the county; the local commander had simply telegraphed Mulcahy for his approval (Breen Murphy 2010: 3).

The executions which took place in Tuam, Tralee and Ennis in April 1923 were also a response to events determined by the local authorities (Enright, 2019: 106-111) An IRA column led by Michael Pierse in north Kerry had agreed to lay down arms in return for captured men from his column not being executed. When the authorities did execute one of those men, James Hanlon, two of the released men, Reginald Hathaway and Edward Greaney, decided to join a column led by Timothy (Aero) Lyons. This column had several men who had rejected Pierse's peace move. When seven of them were found hiding in the Clashmealcon Caves near Causeway, after one private had been killed in the shooting that ensued, Lyons negotiated a surrender for himself. When he was climbing to safety on April 16 the army either severed the rope or it snapped, and he fell to his death. Two other men had drowned while swimming to freedom. The three surviving men (including Hathaway and Greaney) were executed on April 25.

With the principal agent approach we shift from the language of control to that of revenge. In Kerry, outside the towns, the centre, south, and east of the county remained dominated by IRA units well into 1923, especially in mountainous areas. On March 6 1923 three officers and two privates in the National Army were killed by a booby trap in the village of Knocknagoshel. The two privates, Laurence O' Connor (Causeway) and Michael Galvin (Killarney), as well as Lieutenant Patrick O' Connor (Castleisland), were from the county (*The Kerryman* 16 August 2017). The following day the local commanding officer authorised the use of prisoners to clear mines. This may have been interpreted as a sign that the authorities wanted revenge: over the following four weeks 23 prisoners would be killed, and five more legally executed.

The IRA had become divided into 'the hunters and the hunted'. MacArdle (1992: 6) comments that the National Army was 'fighting for a cause they hated against the cause they loved, hunting and killing their own comrades and leaders'. She recounts the story of Bertie Murphy from Kerry who was seventeen when killed by the Free State soldiers in September 1922. He had become captain of his local *Na Fianna* (the IRA's youth wing) after one of its officers joined the National Army. This officer (named Healy) then searched for him for four months, and was part of the army guard at a local hotel after Murphy had been arrested. The soldiers first used Murphy as a hostage to remove IRA barricades, and eventually shot him in captivity after a group of Free State troops had been ambushed (ibid: 99-100).

One could not distinguish the official executions from other forms of state violence. Kerry Republicans claimed that prisoners were murdered on the roads or in bed, fired on indiscriminately while in prison compounds, or died as a consequence of the mistreatment of the wounded in prison.<sup>15</sup> Principal-agent problems generally emerge when units of the army exploit the distance between them and the central command to carry out acts of violence for private or opportunistic ends. An example was the unlawful killing of men after their capture or surrender. O' Halpin (1999: 35) suggests that as many as 150 IRA men were killed in this way: Enright (2019:6) gives a figure of 125. This was not 'policy', but was tolerated as a 'practice' (Wood 2014: 470-1). One example was Brian MacNeill, son of the Minister of Education, Eoin MacNeill, who appears to have been killed in September 1922 by Free State soldiers after surrendering in arms in Donegal. The Minister chose to believe that this

---

<sup>15</sup> "Annex- propaganda statement" P150/1657, De Valera Papers, UCDA.

account of the death of his son, an IRA Officer in a remote county, was republican propaganda.

When the initiative passed to officers on the ground, the army had knowledge of the prior activities of those it sentenced. In January O' Daly wired Mulcahy for his approval to execute 'three exceptionally bad cases.' After a lull in February, Mulcahy himself decided that 'bad cases' should be prepared for execution when the process resumed (Breen Murphy 2010: 193, 214). At the same time those further down the ranks could also spare lives. Arrested in Dublin after an attack on Free State troops, with four men who were executed on November 30, one young man had his death sentence commuted to penal servitude by the authorities, because he was the son of Michael Mallin who had been executed in 1916.<sup>16</sup> Typically, when the army apprehended a group of IRA men, only some were executed. Mick Kennedy had been arrested and convicted of the possession of arms and ammunition with Patrick McNamara, who was executed in Roscrea on January 15 1923. A Free State soldier had intervened and arranged a pardon for Kennedy (O' Dwyer 2006: 186). On January 26 the army executed three young men in county Offaly after a series of robberies. A fourth teenager from the same area was pardoned because of his youth, the alleged intervention of the Catholic Church, and also the possible status of his family who were substantial farmers (McConway 2007).

The principal agent approach assumes an inverse relationship between the degree of accountability within an army and the territorial distance between the principal and its agents. The appointment of Dubliner O' Daly, (formerly a member of Collins' intelligence 'squad') as commanding officer for Kerry in the south-west resulted in a

---

<sup>16</sup> Davitt, Witness Statement, 43 and 55.

series of brutal extra-judicial killings by officers within his inner circle, including the massacre of nine IRA prisoners by tying them to a mine at Ballyseedy on March 7, 1923. When a court of inquiry was established by the army to investigate Ballyseedy, the court President, with two other senior officers of the National army, was O' Daly himself. The result was a whitewash; O' Daly retained his command (Price 2018).

If state violence had an ideal form; it would be top-down, authorised for strategic purposes by an elected government, and carried out within a legal framework by state agents.<sup>17</sup> The principal-agent approach questions whether these criteria can survive the decentralisation of initiative in civil war. At the 2016 commemorative event for Michael Collins, current President M.D. Higgins called for both sides' atrocities to be recognised as cruel, vicious uncontrolled, and at times, informed by vengeance rather than any compassion' (*Irish Times* 21 August 2016). Elements on both sides were 'out of control'. Since the origins of the policy can be traced to Collins's assassination the executions formed part of a chain of reprisals. Dan Breen of the 3rd Tipperary IRA Brigade recalled the situation in Tipperary:

A policy of reprisal and counter-reprisal now held sway and continued in ever-growing intensity until the end of the war. Executions on one side were followed in many cases by executions on the other side, while mansions and houses of prominent supporters of the Irish Free State were given to the flames.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Jean Wood, Presentation, Workshop on State Violence, London School of Economics, June 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Dan Breen, 'Witness Statement by Dan Breen T.D.' *Bureau of Military History 1913-1921*. W.S.1,763, 1959, 137.



Of the Senators (many Protestant), more than 50% (21) lost their country homes. In the year after the Treaty was signed, (up to December 5, 1922), a total of 89 mansions or large country houses were burned down; in the fifteen weeks following December 6, 1922 a total of 103 were destroyed (Clarke 2014: 7). This sectarian turn indicated what could have happened had the war continued (Foster 2015: 281).

The principal-agent model focuses on how violence changes in character as actors respond to the decentralisation of authority during civil war. The diffusion of the executions was a top-down process in the sense that local actors 'emulated' the actions of those in higher positions of authority. The executions on December 8 had signalled to those further down the ranks that the lives of those in captivity were forfeit. They were a clear declaration of intent (Regan, 1999: 112). And when thirty four men were executed for the illegal possession of arms in January, hundreds knew that this charge was equally applicable to them (MacArdle 1937: 863). At the same time the agents also took advantage of the lack of accountability to the centre. The principal-agent model suggests that state violence became more extensive in 1923 because of the greater number of actors that could initiate executions, the greater variety of local factors that could justify such acts, and the loosening of central control when the policy became decentralised. It also became harder to differentiate official executions from other acts of state violence, suggesting that the policy was less 'rational' and 'goal oriented' than 'selective violence' might imply. Ultimately, what brought them to an end was not the resolution of the principal agent problems but the IRA ceasefire.

## **Conclusion.**

Historical debate has considered whether the ends justified the means: whether there was a price to pay for a properly ordered state. The outcome of the successful broadcast of state power would be the acceptance by the people of the right of the governing elite to govern in their name. This requires conformity with specific procedures. The participation of the anti-treatyites in the general election in August 1923, and the entry of the anti-treaty *Fianna Fáil* into *Dáil Éireann* in July 1927 followed the civil war. It is accordingly from a Clausewitzian perspective - of violence being an instrument of politics - that the 81 executions have been defended.<sup>19</sup> However, even when violence may be intended to bring war to an end, it says something about the social and geographical basis of the state. When a state chooses war in pursuit of a particular goal, in the course of fighting that war it also discovers what it is (Dodds 2009: 30).

An elite psychology model informs most work on the executions. Erskine Childers was a leader executed on November 24 1922 for possession of a revolver given to him by Michael Collins!<sup>20</sup> Blythe held him responsible for widening opposition to the Treaty, for poisoning the young minds of those 'ignorant ordinary young fellows' who would also be executed, and had they let Childers live, the pro-treaty position *vis a vis* the army and the public would be impossible. Ever since ancient Rome, a city

---

<sup>19</sup> Many republican sources refer to only 77 executions of IRA men by the state. However, my figures are drawn from three lists which document 81 official executions: "Executions by Provisional or *Saorstát Éireann* Governments, 1922-24"; (TSCH S 1884 A, National Archives, Dublin); (P150/1657, Eamon de Valera Papers, UCD Archives, Dublin); (TCD 7808/324: Childers Papers, Archives and Manuscripts TCD, Dublin).

<sup>20</sup> 'Witness Statement by Ernest Blythe', 186.

which in legend had emerged from an act of murder - of Remus by his twin brother Romulus – fratricide has been associated with foundational violence (Armitage 2017: 10). Yet the execution policy changed as it was adapted to local realities. Most were not of elites or of officers (like Childers), and the avoidance of ‘wholesale political murder’ by both sides is important in assessing the war’s legacy (Regan 1999: 120). The state’s strategy was not about eliminating enemies or former comrades *per se*, but about reminding people of how far the state could go in defence of the Treaty.

Guerrilla war conditions explain more about the spread of the executions than elite politics. No one had been executed before the guerrilla phase: the executions stopped soon after the IRA ceasefire. From the 34 executions in January 1923 some also concluded that the location of a prisoners home was a factor in the courts’ decision as to whether a person was to be executed or not (MacArdle 1937: 864). Yet this remains conjecture. Before the pro-treatyites left office in 1932, they destroyed by fire all the material on the workings of the military courts and tribunals and the reports on the executions. Hence we do not know why certain men were selected, whether people were executed for crimes they themselves committed and whether the accusers personally knew the accused. Much of what was selective about the selective violence is unknowable.

A reflection on the methods and sources used in this article must dwell on this point. Mapping the diffusion of the executions, and studying them in the context of the territorial expansion of the war, provides an ‘objective’ perspective on the policy which contrasts with the elite psychology approach. There is enough in terms of official archives, subsequent interview material and local histories to support that

perspective. At the same time we cannot get inside the minds of the actors at the local level. Critics will pose the question of whether actions were not also dictated by the kind of personal and fraternal ties that made Childers's execution so controversial. In his case there clearly was an intimate connection between perpetrators and victim. But by destroying the records the authorities have protected themselves against similar accusations for other cases.

The principal agent approach provides a good model of the dynamics of diffusion. Soule (2004: 301) considers the question of whether those that adapt a policy at the local level are active or passive agents. The executions are an example of 'reciprocation'; both the principal and the agent had a shared interest in using them to broadcast state power at the local level. The approach also raises issues of accountability and control that are not central to the selective violence model. The autonomy of the agents could mean restraint; often it exasperated the situation of legal uncertainty that made captured men's lives forfeit. Enright (2019: 123) insists on the connection between the unlawful spontaneous killing of prisoners in custody and the official executions. The former happened consistently throughout the war, especially in Dublin and Kerry, and reflected the administrative and legal vacuum the new state was operating in. Cosgrave was rhetorical when he stated that he was prepared to 'exterminate' ten thousand republicans 'if the country is going to live' (Regan 1999: 122). Absent his side's outright military victory, both forms of killing would have continued in tandem.

This 'reciprocation' (between governing elites and Commanders on the ground) raises the question of whether the executions presented a genuine principal-agent 'problem' for the government. There was an 'ever-present division' between the

civilian and military leaderships on this issue (Breen Murphy 2010:225). The executions revealed the workings of the parliamentary state in Ireland: ministers took collective responsibility for the policy and prided themselves on their civic and legal responsibilities. After Hales's assassination, the cabinet made the decision to execute the four leaders because to devolve this power of decision to the army would have been seen as an evasion of ministerial responsibility. The army 'presumably' chose the four men whose execution would have the greatest effect on 'the Irregulars'.<sup>21</sup> Yet Mulcahy's chief concern remained the reputation of the army, and by later refusing to acknowledge any wrong-doing on its part in Kerry he could be accused of a cover-up (Breen Murphy 2010: 224). The tension between Mulcahy and civilian leaders like Kevin O'Higgins over the question of army indiscipline persisted into 1924.

*The Conflict that formed the State and Brother against Brother* are both appropriate book titles for the conflict (Deasy 1994; Clifford 1993). The combination raises the question of why state formation so often involves personal violence: why the impersonal quality of state power produces intimate violence. The new state was born into a situation where military power had become very diffuse and where the ties uniting the movement were tight at every level. After the executions it was natural to conclude that some leaders had gone out of their minds or that the foundations of civilization were weak in Ireland. Yet their diffusion had more to do with the geography of state power and the fact that local military power stood in the way of the new state's territorial imperative. Diffusion in this context was neither top-down or bottom-up, but a dynamic process in which the state succeeded in

---

<sup>21</sup> Blythe Witness Statement, 192.

imposing its will on the countryside, at the price of being dragged into a series of local sometimes disconnected conflicts.

## **References.**

Andrews, John H. (1967) "A Geographer's view of Irish History". in Theodore W. Moody and Francis X. Martin (eds.) *The Course of Irish History*. Cork: Mercier Press:1-12.

Armitage, David (2017) *Civil War: A History in Ideas*. New York: Yale University Press.

Balcells, Laia (2010) "Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars." *International Studies Quarterly* (54): 291-313.

Blake, Francis M. (1986) *The Irish Civil War and what it still Means to the Irish People*. London: Irish Information Centre.

Breen Murphy, Timothy (2010) *The Government's Executions policy during the Irish Civil War 1922-23*. PhD Thesis, National University of Ireland.

Cambell, Colin (1994) *Emergency Law in Ireland, 1918-25*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Clarke, Gemma (2015) *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clifford, Brendan (1993) *The Civil War: The Conflict that Formed the State*. Aubane Historical Society.

Coogan, Tim Pat and George Morrison (1998) *The Irish Civil War*. New York: Roberts Rinehart.

Coogan, Tim Pat (2006) *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Deasy, Liam (1994) *Brother against Brother*. Cork: Mercier.

Dodd, James (2009) *Violence and Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge.

Enright, Seán (2019) *The Irish Civil War: Law, Execution and Atrocity*. Newbridge: Merrion Press.

Fellman, M. (1989) *Inside War: the Guerilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferriter, Diarmuid (2015) "A Nation not a Rabble":The Irish Revolution 1913-23. London: Profile Books.

Foster, Gavin (2015) *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics. Class and Conflict*. London: Palgrave.

Foster, Roy (2015) *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923*. London: Penguin.

Garvin, Tom (1996) *1922: The Birth of Irish Democracy*.Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Griffith, Kenneth and Timothy E. O' Grady, (1998) *Curious Journey: Oral History of Ireland's Unfinished Revolution*. Cork: Mercier Press.

Gutiérrez-Sanin, Francisco and Elisabeth Jean Wood, (2017) "What Should We Mean by "Patterns of Political Violence?: Repertoire, Targeting, Frequency, and Technique." *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (1): 20-41.

Herbst, Jeffrey (2004) "African Militaries and Rebellion: The Political Economy of Threat and Combat Effectiveness." *Journal of Peace Research* 41 (3): 357-369

Hopkinson, Michael (1988) *Green Against Green: The Irish Civil War 1922-23*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Horgan, Tim (2015) *Dying for the Cause: Kerry's Republican Dead*. Cork: Mercier Press.

Janos, Andrew (1964) "Authority and Violence: The Political Framework of Internal War" in Harry Eckstein (ed.) *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*. London: Collier MacMillan: 130-142.

Kalyvas, Stathis (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keane, Michael (2018) "Dependency claims for the Civil War Executed in the Military Service (1916-1923) Pension Collection." *History Ireland* 26 (2):42-45.

Keogh, Dermot (1994) *Twentieth-Century Ireland: nation and state*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Knirck, Jason (2014) *AfterImage of the Revolution: Cumann na nGaedheal and Irish Politics 1922-23*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Macardle, Dorothy (1937) *The Irish Republic*. London: Victor Gollanz.

Macardle, Dorothy (1991) *Tragedies of Kerry, 1922-1923*. Dublin: Irish Freedom Press.

Mann, Michael (1986) *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press

Mann, Michael (2005) *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Matthews, Anne (2012) *Dissidents: Irish Republican Women 1924-1941*. Cork: Mercier Press.

McConway, Philip (2007) "Offaly and the Civil War Executions". *Offaly Tribune* December 26.

Mitchell, Neil (2004) *Agents of Atrocity: Leaders, Followers and the Violation of human Rights in Civil War*. London and New York: Palgrave MacMillan,



Murray, Patrick (2000) *Oracles of God, The Roman Catholic Church and Irish Politics*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Murrell Taylor, Amy (2005) *The Divided Family in Civil War America*. Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press.

Neeson, Eoin (1989) *The Civil War, 1922-23*. Dublin: Poolbeg Press.

Newall, Úna (2015) *The West Must Wait: County Galway and the Irish Free State, 1922-32*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

O'Dwyer, Martin (2016) *Seventy Seven of Mine said Ireland*. Cashel: Deshaoirse.

Ó Gadhra, Nollaig (1999) *Civil War in Connacht 1922-23*. Cork: Mercier Press.

O' Halpin, Eunan (1999) *Defending Ireland: the Irish State and its Enemies since 1922*. Oxford: Oxford: University Press.

Parsons, Talcott (1964) "Some Reflection on the Place of Force in Social Processes". in Harry Eckstein (ed.) *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*: 33-70.

Price, Dominic (2018) "Bloodbath to whitewash: the Civil War crimes of Paddy O' Daly" *Irish Times* January 17.

Regan, John M. (1999) *The Irish Counter-Revolution 1921-1936*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Regan, John M. (2007) Michael Collins, "General Commander-in Chief, as a Historiographical Problem." *History* 92 (307): pp.318-346.

Regan, John M. (2013) in "Bású", *Teilifís na Gaeilge*, Episode 4.

Ryle Dwyer, Timothy (1996) *Tans Terror and Troubles: Kerry's Real Fighting Story*. Cork: Mercier Press.

Schutte, Sebastian and Nils B. Weidmann (2011) "Diffusion patterns of violence in civil wars." *Political Geography* 30 (3): 143-152.

Shaffer, John W. (2003) *Clash of Loyalties: A Border County in the Civil War*.

Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

Soule, Sarah A. (2004) "Diffusion Processes within and across Social Movements" in Snow, David A, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Oxford: Blackwell: 294-311

Staniland, Paul (2012) "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56 (1): 16-40.

Steele, Abbie (2017) *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Townshend, Charles (2014). *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence, 1918-1923*. London: Penguin 2014.

Yeates , Pádraig (2015) *A City in Civil War: Dublin 1921-24*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

Valiulis, Marianne (1992) *Portrait of a Revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the founding of the Irish Free State*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Walsh, Maurice (2016) *Bitter Freedom: Ireland in a Revolutionary World, 1918-1923*. London: Faber and Faber.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean (2014) "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict." *International Review of the Red Cross* 96 (894): 457-478