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**The International Perception of the Irish Republican Army and Chechen
Insurgency**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors Studies
in International and Global Studies

By
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Spring 2022
International and Global Studies
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
Background	5
Imperial Conquest of Ireland and Chechnya	6
Revolutions, Famine, and Genocide	9
The Violence of the IRA and Chechen Insurgency	14
Methods	19
Limitations	23
Results	24
Articles Published Between 1998 and 2009 (New York Times)	24
Articles Published Between 1998 and 2009 (International Newsstream)	32
Word Frequency Before and After International Events (New York Times)	39
Word Frequency Before and After International Events (International Newsstream)	46
Discussion	53
Conclusion	59
Bibliography	60

Introduction

The Irish Republican Army and Chechen insurgency were groups that defined themselves as separate nations fighting against perceived occupational forces. In their minds, they were not terrorists but freedom fighters doing what was necessary to defend their people against an oppressive regime. The difference between how these groups defined themselves and how the governments they fought against characterized them highlights the importance labels have on the perception of groups commonly associated with terrorism. Media networks are powerful in this regard, as their coverage of these conflicts can shape the ways in which these groups are perceived by their international audiences. Acts of violence external to the conflicts occurring in Northern Ireland and Chechnya shaped the ways in which media networks assigned labels to describe the IRA and Chechen insurgency.

In this paper I will explain how acts of violence external to the Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen conflicts, in this case the September 11 attacks, influenced the description and labeling of the IRA and Chechen insurgency. I begin by describing the similarities between the history of Ireland and Chechnya, and how the commonalities between the actions and motivations of the IRA and Chechen insurgency warrant a cross-comparison in how these organizations were perceived and described by the international media. I then describe the methods in which I used to obtain my quantitative data for this project, including the two searches I conducted into the *New York Times* and International Newsstream databases that examined the change in word frequency to describe the IRA and Chechen fighters across a twelve-year span and four-month span before and after certain international events. Afterwards, I describe the results I obtained from my

searches, explaining the percentage stacked column charts I created as well as the values I obtained from ANOVA tests. I also include a qualitative analysis of certain articles published before and prior to certain events. I then provide a discussion of the results and explain the power of labels, namely how the label of ‘terrorist’ allowed the human rights abuses of the British and Russian governments to be labeled as necessary counterterrorism operations. Finally, I conclude by summarizing my research and reiterating my argument that acts of violence external to the Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen arguments influenced the ways in which media networks assigned labels to the IRA and Chechen insurgency.

Background

Ireland and Chechnya share a history of subjugation to imperial powers – England and Russia respectively – that used force and violence to control the local population of each region. After each territory was conquered, the British Empire and Russian Empire respectively attempted to extinguish Irish and Chechen cultural identity through “assimilation”; Anglicization in the case of the Irish and Russification and later Sovietization in the case of the Chechens. This animosity in Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen relations worsened after the mass death of the Irish during the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s and of the Chechens when they were forcefully deported by the Soviet Union in the 1940s. While both Ireland and Chechnya saw attempts at independence in the early twentieth century, only Ireland achieved partial independence in 1917 while the Chechens did not obtain a sustained form of independence until the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, and even then, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria eventually fell and was never formally recognized as being independent by the Russian

Federation. The desire for a unified Ireland free from English rule and a Chechen Republic separate from Russia motivated the Irish Republican Army and Chechen fighters respectively to commit acts of violence both within their desired areas of independence as well as in their perceived oppressors' territories. Their acts of violence against civilians warranted them international condemnation, and both groups never achieved their goal of a united Ireland and independent Chechnya. The similarities between the Chechen insurgency and Irish Republican Army are notable, which is why a cross-comparison between these groups is warranted.

Imperial Conquest of Ireland and Chechnya

Ireland and Chechnya were both subject to an imperial conquest in which foreign powers seized lands and attempted to reshape the local culture to reflect the customs and norms inherent to the imperial metropole. The Tudor Conquest of Ireland in the early 1500s saw the Kingdom of England recapture territories previously held by the English crown as well as gain control of new Irish territories that were left unconquered from the Anglo-Norman invasion centuries prior. While the conquest itself was a manifestation of “colonization, war, deliberate cultural destruction and massacres,” Tudor officials described the invasion of Ireland as an act of ‘reformation,’ by which they meant “the fundamental overhaul of government, law and society, so as to restore... the state of English rule there.”¹ In addition to politically subjugating and converting Irish Catholics to Protestantism, the Kingdom of England aimed to culturally assimilate and reform the “uncivil natives” by Anglicizing “their apparently barbarous customs, practices, and

¹ Christopher Maginn and Steven G. Ellis, *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland* (Four Courts Press, 2015), 17.

culture.”² The English Crown implemented a system known today as “surrender and regrant,” a policy in which Irish chiefs gave up their Gaelic titles and lordships in exchange for being granted English titles and lordships, with the assumption that these chiefs would enforce English laws and culture onto their Irish subjects.³ Furthermore, while the Kingdom of England enforced imperial policies to assimilate the Irish into English culture, English citizens back home called “for the destruction of the existing Gaelic order and the systematic colonization of Ireland with English settlers.”⁴ This desire for colonization of Irish lands led to English, Scottish, and Welsh settlers to establish communities in the Northern parts of Ireland in the mid- to late-sixteenth-century. Further restrictions and imperial control were placed upon the Irish through the implementation of penal laws in the 1600s, laws which restricted Catholics in a number of ways, such as preventing them from becoming lawyers or joining the Irish Parliament. The Kingdom of Ireland continued to be enforced through this indirect control of imperial subjugation until 1800, when the Acts of Union was signed by both the Irish and British Parliaments. It declared that “in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power and resources of the British Empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.”⁵ This act was signed in part because of an Irish uprising in 1798 which raised concerns for both the British government and Irish

² Kevin Kenny, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28.

³ Christopher Maginn, “‘Surrender and Regrant’ in the Historiography of Sixteenth-Century Ireland,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 4 (January 2007): p. 955, 955.

⁴ Kevin Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29.

⁵ “Act of Union (Ireland) 1800,” effective on January 1, 1801, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aip/Geo3/40/38/data.pdf>.

Protestant minority that Irish Catholics would continue to resist British rule, and that by formally uniting Ireland and Great Britain, a future revolt could be averted.

The way in which the British Empire perceived the Irish as an uncivilized people in need of reform was similar to the mindset of Russian Tsars who championed policies of “Russifying” the people of the Caucasus following the conquest of the Caucasus region. In 1801, Russian Tsar Paul I annexed the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, a former protectorate of the Russian Empire of which the Empire lost control after it was ransacked by the Iranian Shah Mohammad Khan Qajar.⁶ This formal acquisition of a territory informally controlled by the Russian Empire marked the beginning of the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus, a region of land located between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea and south of the Russian Empire’s western border. The Caucasus was and still is inhabited by numerous ethnic groups, and at the time of the Russian Empire’s invasion, the “two largest tribal conglomerations” were the Circassians in the west and the Chechens in the east.⁷ While the people of the Caucasus and their interactions with Russia were romantically described in the works of legendary Russian authors such as Alexander Pushkin and Leo Tolstoy, the reality of the conquest was that it was a bloody conflict in which both Caucasians and Russians “carried out devastating raids on the enemy villages, plundering civilians and burning down their dwellings.”⁸ Russian generals such as Aleksey Petrovich Yermolov, known as the “Iron Fist,” became infamous to the Chechen people as he reportedly slaughtered entire villages and captured

⁶ Thomas De Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2019), 38.

⁷ Brian Glyn Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya: the Russian-Chechen Wars, the Al Qaeda Myth, and the Boston Marathon Bombings* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2015), 9.

⁸ Jane Burbank, Von Mark Hagen, and A. V. Remnev, *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 241.

Chechen women to sell as wives to Russian officers.⁹ Yermolov, like many Russian generals sent to conquer the Caucasus, “set himself the aim of destroying any non-Russian nationality in the country” and used any means necessary to subjugate the Chechens.¹⁰ The Russian Empire’s invasion of the Caucasus met with heavy resistance, leading to legendary fighters such as Imam Shamil spending decades fighting against the Russian Empire, but the majority of the resistance against the empire ended in 1864.¹¹ The decades following the completion of the conquest of the Caucasus saw the Russian Empire attempt the “cultural, linguistic, and religious russification of the Muslim population” of the entirety of the Caucasus.¹²

Revolutions, Famine, and Genocide

The aftermath of the conquest and formal seizure of Irish and Chechen lands by both the British Empire and Russian Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were a period of attempts at independence by Irish and Chechens. While the Russian conquest of the Caucasus saw a region losing its independence in the early nineteenth century, this same period saw a rise in an increased desire for Irish independence and autonomy. Daniel O’Connell, an Irish politician in support of independence, helped secure the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, which did away with many of the penal laws that restricted Catholics in Ireland. The Irish Famine of the 1840s had a significant impact on the Irish nationalist movement, as the famine was “proof of the moral bankruptcy of that

⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰ Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (Taylor and Francis, 2013), 30.

¹¹ Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 25.

¹² Ulrich Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia, 1860–1917,” *Journal of World History* 27, no. 3 (2016): pp. 411-442.

Union and hence the necessity of Irish autonomy or independence.”¹³ Irish proponents of independence perceived this as evidence of the British’s malevolent intentions due to the “‘forced exports’ of grain and other food from Ireland during the famine years, the mass evictions or clearances”¹⁴ There is debate as to whether the Irish famine was an act of intentional genocide by the British government, but many Irish nationalists considered the tragedy as such, and that perception of genocide is just as important as the famine worsened the already strained relationship between England and Ireland.¹⁵ Anger at Britain’s mismanagement of the famine, William Smith O’Brien fought to repeal the Act of Union to secure an independent Ireland but ultimately was unable to make any real legal progress. This led to a rebellion by the Young Ireland movement in which 100 confederates fought with 40 policemen on July 29, 1848 in Ballinacorney.¹⁶ While this rebellion was swiftly put down, British opinion of Ireland continued to deteriorate as them of being undeserving of assistance from the government.¹⁷

The decades that followed the Irish Potato Famine saw an increase in support of home rule, a self-governed Ireland still part of the United Kingdom, by Irish nationalists. After two failed attempts, the third Home Rule Bill was introduced to Parliament in April 1912, and after two years of debate, the Government of Ireland Act was passed in 1914 which would have allowed Ireland self-governance in the United Kingdom. However, the bill was postponed due to the outbreak of the First World War and ultimately was never put

¹³ James Kelly, *Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 3, 1730-1880* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 639.

¹⁴ James S. Donnelly, “The Construction of the Memory of the Famine in Ireland and the Irish Diaspora, 1850–1900,” *Éire-Ireland* 31, no. 1-2 (1996): pp. 26-61, 38.

¹⁵ Maurice Coakley, *Ireland in the World Order a History of Uneven Development* (London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 2012), 121.

¹⁶ Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 227.

¹⁷ Kelly, *Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 3*, 656.

into effect. While the bill was not implemented, its mere passing "led to the formation of and arming of a Unionist paramilitary force of as many as 100,000 men... led by a former British general and an officer corps consisting of many former military and respectable professional men."¹⁸ This Protestant militia, deemed the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), vehemently opposed the Home Rule movement and wished for Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom and its government. While the outbreak of the First World War prevented an initial onset of violence from the UVF, the formation of a Protestant militia opposed to Irish independence prompted Irish Catholics in favor of home rule to also form a militia force, known as the Irish Volunteer Force. The First World War was a powerful motivator for the Irish Volunteer Force, as "a distracted Britain, a powerful German ally, and the promise of weapons, military assistance and diplomatic support practically obliged Irish revolutionaries to rise."¹⁹ The formation of this militia escalated tensions between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland and eventually led to the Easter Rising, a week-long conflict in which 1,000 of the Irish Volunteer Force occupied the General Post Office in Dublin and fought against 20,000 British soldiers.²⁰ By April 29, 1916, the rising was over, Dublin was in ruins, and 500 people (mostly civilians) were dead. Sixteen leaders of the insurrection were executed after the Easter Rising, rendering them martyrs in the eyes of Irish nationalists and further promoting the cause of Irish political independence. The outrage over the executions allowed the Sinn Fein political party to win 73 seats in Parliament, who in January 1919, established the Parliament of

¹⁸ James Dingley, *The IRA the Irish Republican Army* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 3.

¹⁹ Thomas Bartlett, *Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4, 1880 to the Present* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 263

²⁰ Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity*, 375-376.

the Irish Public and wrote a Declaration of Independence.²¹ From 1918 to 1919, members of the newly formed Irish Republican Army targeted policemen and members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and on January 21, 1919, Sinn Fein declared independence from the United Kingdom. The conflict ended in 1921 with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which partitioned Ireland into the Irish Republic, independent from British Rule, and Northern Ireland, still under British rule. A subgroup broke off from the IRA, becoming known as the anti-Treaty IRA, which fought against the Republic of Ireland from 1922 and 1923.

At around the same time as the Irish Revolution occurred, Russia was going through its own revolution in 1917. The Russian Empire collapsed after the abdication and death of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917, and a Civil War began between the Bolshevik and Tsarist forces. Amidst this conflict, Chechens and other people of the Caucasus were able to achieve a semblance of independence with the establishment of the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus. Chechens saw the chaos of the collapsing Russian Empire as an opportunity to finally break away from Russia. However, Chechens fought on all sides of the conflict, with many fighting for their newly independent republic, while “Russified Chechen lowlanders join[ed] the tsarist Whites and the highlanders support[ed] the Bolshevik Communists.”²² Eventually the Tsarists lost against the Bolsheviks, leading the Soviets to focus their attention on reclaiming former imperial territory in the Caucasus. Out of the numerous territory the Soviet Union controlled, Chechens, “more than any other nation in the multiethnic USSR, actively fought against

²¹ Bartlett, *Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4*, 269.

²² Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya*, 37.

the Soviets' attempts to remold their society."²³ The importance of religion in the Chechen lifestyle stood in contradiction to the atheist worldview of Communists, and several attempts were made to either "Sovietize" the Chechens or simply remove them, as demonstrated in the Second World War.

During the Second World War Chechens were accused without evidence by Joseph Stalin of supporting Nazi Germany, and they subsequently were punished with bombings and deportation. During the war, Soviet intelligence suspected Hasan Israilov, a Chechen resistance fighter, of conducting negotiations with the Nazis, considering this "to be a serious enough threat to bomb [the Chechens] on several occasions during the conflict with the Germans."²⁴ Further steps were taken against the Chechens in the form of Operation Chechevitsa, a military campaign in 1944 during which Soviet soldiers entered Chechen villages and deported Chechens to Siberia. The deportation process included packing Chechens into train carts so tightly that many suffocated to death during the two- to three- week journey, a journey in which the deportees had no access to food, water, or place to relieve themselves.²⁵ The systematic removal of the Chechen people from their homeland was an act of mass killing that constituted as an act of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Chechens would eventually return to their homeland in 1956 after Nikita Khrushchev "cleared them of the false charges of collective treason", but their forceful removal by the Soviet Union only enhanced a sense of nationalism and desire for independence that was brought to fruition by the collapse of the Soviet Union.²⁶

²³ Ibid., 41.

²⁴ Ibid., 47.

²⁵ Ibid., 60

²⁶ Ibid., 77.

The Violence of the IRA and Chechen Insurgency

The Troubles were a period of conflict between Irish nationalists, Ulster loyalists, and British security forces over the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. Irish nationalists wanted Northern Ireland to leave the U.K. and join the Republic of Ireland, while Ulster nationalists wanted Northern Ireland to remain in the U.K.²⁷ While Northern Ireland was predominantly Protestant, the Catholic minority faced unequal treatment in the forms of “housing, job, and electoral practice discrimination” which led to a series of movements and protests throughout Northern Ireland with activists demanding equal treatment.²⁸ These movements orchestrated by Catholic nationalist met heavy resistance from Protestant loyalists and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, oftentimes resulting in riots and violent conflict. The worst of these events was the Battle of Bogside, a three-day riot in Londonderry which left hundreds of Catholics, Protestants, and policemen injured, compelling the British government sent soldiers to quell the violence in Northern Ireland.²⁹ The British soldiers in Northern Ireland were granted the authority to intern without trial, and hundreds of Irish nationalists were arrested without charge or trial.³⁰ This policy led to anti-interment rallies, with one that occurred on January 30, 1972 and ended with British soldiers shooting 26 protesters after members of the crowd began to throw rocks at the soldiers. This event, known as Bloody Sunday, resulted in 13 civilian deaths, which only served to boost the IRA’s numbers and

²⁷ Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey, and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland’s Troubles: The Human Costs* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Pluto Press, 1999), 24.

²⁸ Lorenzo Bosi, *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Social Movements* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 18.

²⁹ Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity*, 465.

³⁰ Bosi, *The Troubles in Northern Ireland and Theories of Movements*, 131.

determination to continue to fight against the perceived British occupying force.³¹ The Troubles continued until 1998, and while most of the violence took place in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republican Army often bombed areas in England in the hopes of forcing the British government to comply with IRA demands to withdraw from Northern Ireland.³²

On April 10, 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was signed between the United Kingdom, Ireland, and several political parties of Northern Ireland, marking an end to most of the violence caused during the Troubles.³³ However, four months after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, a car bombing took place in Omagh, killing almost 30 people and injuring hundreds. The group responsible was the Real Irish Republican Army, a splinter group of the Provisional IRA which was “unhappy with the peace process and the decision of Sinn Fein to sign up to the Mitchell Principles on democracy and non-violence.”³⁴ What little public support this iteration of the IRA had evaporated after the Omagh bombing, causing the Real IRA to call a temporary ceasefire to regroup and decide on a new strategy of armed conflict. When the group returned, its new campaign of violence focused on “the targeting of strategic and symbolic sites in England” such as the BBC Television Centre, Hammersmith Bridge, and Ealing Broadway Station.³⁵ Attacks against civilians were rarer, and the number of casualties in Real IRA attacks never reached the amount seen after the Omagh bombing. One such attack took

³¹ Patrick Hayes and Jim Campbell, *Bloody Sunday: Trauma, Pain & Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2005): 19.

³² Fay, *Northern Ireland's Troubles*, 11.

³³ Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement: Victims, Grievance and Blame* (London: Pluto, 2002), 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁵ John Morrison, “Reality Check: The Real IRA’s Tactical Adaptation and Restraint in the Aftermath of the Omagh Bombing,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14, no. 6 (2020): 158.

place on August 2, 2002, when a 51-year-old construction worker was killed when the Real IRA planted an explosive device at an army base in Londonderry.³⁶ The legacy of the Real IRA continues in the form of the New IRA after the group merged with the Republican Action Against Drugs in July 2012.³⁷

After the Soviet Union fell in 1991, Chechnya, which was a province of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, declared itself independent as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Because Chechnya was not its own Soviet Republic, the newly formed Russian Federation saw Chechnya still as part of Russia and did not recognize its independence, leading to Russia invading Chechnya in 1994 to retake the region.³⁸ This was the first largescale military conflict between Russians and Chechens since the conquest of the Caucasus, with the end result being the Chechens pushing the Russians out of Chechnya in 1996. This conflict restarted again in August 1999, when a group of Chechen militants led by Shamil Basayev invaded Dagestan, a Republic of Russia located in the Northern Caucasus west of the Caspian Sea, to support the Islamist separatists fighting in the region.³⁹ While Russian forces pushed back the militants by the next month, the War of Dagestan, as well as a series of separatist-orchestrated apartment bombings in Russia that occurred during the invasion, served as the catalyst for the second armed conflict between Chechnya and Russia.⁴⁰ During this conflict, most of the large-scale battles took place in Chechnya, a historically contested area and now

³⁶ "Real IRA Blamed as Bomb Kills Civilian at Territorial Army Base," *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, August 2, 2002), <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/aug/02/northernireland.rosiecowan>.

³⁷ John F. Morrison, "Fighting talk: the statements of 'The IRA/New IRA'," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 3 (2016): 599.

³⁸ James Hughes, *Chechnya from Nationalism to Jihad* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 31.

³⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya: the Russian-Chechen Wars, the Al Qaeda Myth, and the Boston Marathon Bombings* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2015), 134.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

Republic of Russia located west of Dagestan in the Northern Caucasus, until the reestablishment of Russian direct rule over the region in May 2000.⁴¹ Unable to fight the Russian military in direct battles, the Chechen rebels began to engage in guerrilla warfare against the reestablished pro-Russian government. This new insurgency phase of the conflict also saw an increase in bombings and hostage-takings carried out by Chechen insurgents as they began to target areas outside of Chechnya in Russia, with the goal of these attacks being to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin into declaring a ceasefire and recognizing Chechen independence. The tactics the insurgents used in these attacks included “suicide bombings, remotely detonated bombs and seizure of hostages.”⁴² Bombings were so common in Russia during the early 2000s that “they often [drew] little mention in the Russian press;” only when there were large numbers of civilian casualties did attacks draw significant attention from the media.⁴³ While suicide and remotely detonated bombings were more frequent than seizure of hostages, hostage-taking often resulted in more casualties, and thus, drew the most attention from Russian and international media. Despite the numerous acts of violence against civilians caused by Chechen rebels in the 2000s, Russia maintained its grip over Chechnya and announced in April 2009 that it would cease military operations in Chechnya later that year, signaling an end to the armed conflict in Chechnya.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Craig Douglas Albert, Mark Freitag, and Christopher Porde, “Remember the Chechens: A Process-Tracing Analysis of the Evolution of Chechen Terrorism,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 24, no. 1 (2020): 71-91. 85.

⁴² Mark Kramer, “Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian–Chechen Conflict,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 2 (2005): 209-290, 216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁴⁴ Michael Schwartz, “Russia Ends Operations in Chechnya,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, April 16, 2009), <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/17/world/europe/17chechnya.html>.

The most infamous attacks enacted by Chechen fighters against Russian civilians were the Moscow theater crisis in 2002 and the Beslan school siege in 2004. Regarding the former incident, on October 23, 2002, Movsar Barayev led a group of Chechen insurgents to the Dubrovka theater in Moscow and took 900 people hostage. The subsequent confrontation between Chechen fighters and Russian special forces resulted in the deaths of 200 hostages, with the special forces being “responsible for the deaths of all but three of the hostages.”⁴⁵ This tragedy was the first event that brought Russo-Chechen conflict to the awareness of a Western audience, an awareness that was amplified by the Beslan hostage crisis. On September 1, 2004, a group of Chechen, Ingush, and Arab fighters took 1,300 hostages in a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, which resulted in the deaths of all the Chechen combatants, “eleven Russian soldiers, and 344 children and parents.”⁴⁶ Similar to the Moscow theater crisis, Russian forces were responsible for most of the deaths when they collapsed a burning roof on top of the hostages. During this attack, President Putin attempted to link the “hostage crisis to America’s separate war on terror against bin Laden’s Al Qaeda” by claiming the perpetrators were “Arabs and Muslim negroes” associated with al-Qaeda.⁴⁷ This attempt to associate Chechen rebels with al-Qaeda was not uncommon for Putin, as he was eager to manipulate the United States into perceiving the insurgents as a common foe of Russia and the U.S.

The organization and actions of the IRA and Chechen fighters, as well as the broader history of the Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen conflicts, bear several similarities that warrant a cross-comparison of the two groups. However, the groups are mirror images of

⁴⁵ Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya*, 186.

⁴⁶ Irina Mukhina, “Islamic Terrorism and the Question of National Liberation, or Problems of Contemporary Chechen Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 6 (2005): 515-532, 524.

⁴⁷ Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya*, 192.

one another, as members of the IRA were predominantly Catholic whereas members of the Chechen insurgency were predominantly Muslim. In addition, Ireland being part of the West and Chechnya being located between Europe and Asia may influence the ways in which these conflicts were perceived. Despite these differences, a comparison of how media networks describe the IRA and Chechen insurgency will demonstrate how acts of violence external to the Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen conflicts influence the labels assigned to IRA members and Chechen fighters.

Methods

In order to understand the impact acts of violence had on the perception of the IRA and Chechen insurgency, we must analyze the rhetoric and language found in newspapers and media articles. For the purposes of this project, I utilized the *New York Times* and International Newsstream databases found within the ProQuest Historical Newspapers digital archive and analyzed the shift in language used in articles to describe the Chechen insurgency and the Irish Republican Army. According to internal data from 2018, 27% of the *New York Times*' audience is from abroad, with 16% of subscribers coming from other countries.⁴⁸ However, while the *New York Times* may have an international audience, it is still an American newspaper company and thus not indicative of an international perspective or even a holistic American perspective. To accentuate the data found in this project with more of an international perspective, I used the International Newsstream database, which contains news articles from more than 660 newspapers from

⁴⁸ "New York Times Journalism Is Read in Every Country on Earth," The New York Times Company, November 2, 2018, <https://www.nytc.com/press/new-york-times-journalism-is-read-in-every-country-on-earth/>.

across the world, including the British Broadcasting Company, El Norte, the Jerusalem Post, and the Asian Wall Street Journal.

I conducted two searches into the database: a general search to determine the percentage of articles about the conflicts in Chechnya and Northern Ireland that use certain words such as ‘terrorist’ or ‘separatist’, and a more specific search to assess how frequently those words were used to describe Chechen insurgents and members of the IRA. My first search into the *New York Times* and International Newsstream databases examined articles that contained the phrases “Chechen War” or “Irish Republican Army” and were published between 1998 and 2009. These years were chosen because they encompass the entirety of the armed conflict between Russia and Chechnya from 1999 to 2009. In addition, it includes the Omagh bombing of 1998 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in the same year. After doing a basic search of *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” or “Irish Republican Army,” I began to add keywords to my search using the ‘AND’ Boolean operator. The key words and phrases I was examining were any derived forms of the words ‘terrorist,’ ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ ‘militant,’ ‘rebel,’ and ‘nationalist.’ To ensure derivations of the words appeared in my searches, I shortened the words and included an asterisk at the end when I entered my search into the archive. For example, by typing “Irish Republican Army AND terror*” into the search bar, articles that contained both “Irish Republican Army” and ‘terror,’ ‘terrorist,’ or ‘terrorism’ were included in the results. The shortened form of the words used in these searches were ‘terror*’, ‘separat*’, ‘extrem*’, ‘militant*’, ‘rebel*’, and ‘nationalist*’. After conducting these searches, I created two histograms for both *New York Times* and international articles to represent the total amount of articles that

contained the phrases “Chechen War” or “Irish Republican Army” between 1998 and 2009. I then created fourteen histograms, seven of which displayed the number of *New York Times* articles that contained “Irish Republican Army” or “Chechen War” containing any of the key words, and then seven more histograms displaying the same information from the International Newsstream database. I also created twelve percentage stacked columns to display the percentage of articles that contain each key word for every year for both IRA and Chechen War articles in the *New York Times* and International Newsstream database.

While my first search was helpful in providing a broad overview of the use of certain words in describing and labeling parties in both the Russo-Chechen conflict and the Northern Ireland conflict in articles published between 1998 and 2009, it did not determine how frequently those words were used in the *New York Times* or international articles. This led me to my second search into the *New York Times* and International Newsstream databases, which was examining every *New York Times* and international article written that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” or “Chechen War” published between two months before and two months after certain events. These events include the Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998, the beginning of the Moscow apartment bombings on September 4, 1999, the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the Londonderry bombing on August 1, 2002, and the Moscow hostage crisis on October 23, 2002. I read every article published within that four-month timeframe that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” or “Chechen War” and recorded every time any derived form of the words ‘terrorist,’ ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ ‘militant,’ ‘rebel,’ and ‘nationalist’ were used to describe Chechen insurgents and IRA

members. I then conducted a one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) to determine if there was a significant change in the usage of certain words before and after a given event. An ANOVA is a mathematical formula used to calculate if there are statistically significant differences between the means of different samples. For this study, we are comparing the mean number of times a certain word is used in news articles before a certain event with the mean number of times that same word is used in articles after the same event. An ANOVA produces a p-value, which is the probability of obtaining results that appear significant when they are actually statistically insignificant. For a p-value to be considered significant, it typically must be less than .05, meaning there is less than a 5% chance that the results appear significant when they are actually insignificant. For the purposes of our study, however, we will also note trends with p-values that are less than .2, as this will provide further insights as to the ways in which certain events do or do not shape language used in media articles. A total of twelve ANOVA tests were conducted, based on the sets of data from the *New York Times* and International Newsstream. Regarding the articles the mentioned “Irish Republican Army,” I examined articles published two months before and after the Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998, the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, and the Londonderry bombing on August 1, 2002. Regarding articles that mention “Chechen War,” I examined articles published two months before and after the beginning of the Moscow apartment bombings on September 4, 1999, the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, and the Moscow hostage crisis that began on October 23, 2002. For our tests, there were six dependent variables, them being the number of times ‘terrorist,’ ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ ‘militant,’ ‘rebel,’ or ‘nationalist’ are mentioned in an article. The independent variable

was whether an article was written before or after a given event. If a p-value was considered statistically significant, I then looked at the means of the values before and after the event to determine if the p-value was statistically significant in either a positive or negative direction.

Limitations

A potential limitation and confounding variable of this study is the way in which I searched for articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War.” When collecting data about the IRA, the phrase “Irish Republican Army” was the most correct phrase to use, as that was and is the title of variation iterations of the IRA since its inception to present-day. In contrast, the Chechen insurgency did not have a single name for its fighters, which is why I used the phrase “Chechen War” to search for articles about Chechen fighters. However, the issue with this is that for one group I was studying I used the actual name of the organization in my search, whereas for one group I used an international event. The potential issue is that the term ‘war’ implies conflict between two different nations, and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was never recognized as an independent nation. Thus the term “Chechen War” brings within itself certain connotations and assumptions as to the legitimacy of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, which may have influenced the articles that showed up in my search and thus the quantitative data I collected.

Another limitation is that for my second search, the timeframe was two months before and two months after a given event. This four-month period is relatively short, and thus the change in language I found in some of my calculations may only be indicative of a short, reactionary period that eventually returned to normal and had no longstanding

impact on the depiction of either the IRA or Chechen fighters in international and *New York Times* articles. Future research should broaden the timeline to six months before and six months after a given event, so that a larger collection of data will be taken into account with the ANOVA tests were calculated. This would better inform us of the longstanding impacts acts of violence had on the perception of the IRA and Chechen insurgency. Finally, while the word count for each article was recorded, I could not find a reliable way to incorporate the variable into my ANOVA tests. A longer article would have more opportunities to use certain keywords, meaning that wordcount could be a potential confounding variable for this study. The inclusion of word count into the ANOVA tests may have caused the p-values found to be slightly less significant, or possibly even more significant depending on the number of articles published before and after a certain event.

Results

Articles Published Between 1998 and 2009 (New York Times)

Between 1998 and 2009 1,159 articles were published in the *New York Times* that used the term “Chechen War.” And 1,167 articles were published in the same timespan that used the term “Irish Republican Army.” The following figure displays the number of *New York Times* articles each year that contained either of those terms:

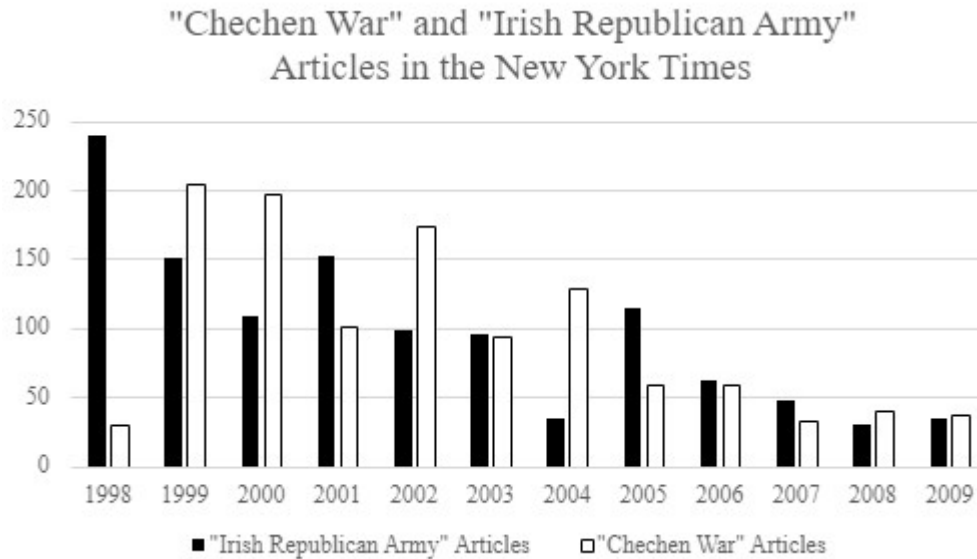


Figure 1: A clustered column chart showing the number of “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by the New York Times between 1998 and 2009.

According to Figure 1, there were significantly more *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” (239) in 1998 compared to articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” (30). The explanation for this discrepancy is likely because both the Good Friday Agreement and Omagh bombing took place in 1998, which would have generated more media attention concerning the IRA. The number of articles that mention “Chechen War” sharply increased after 1998, with the peak number of articles being 1999 and 2000 in our timeline of interest. This is likely because the Russia invaded Chechnya in 1999 and that major combat operations ended in May 2000 with the restoration of the Russian federal government in Chechnya. After 2000, the number of “Chechen War” articles decreased in 2001 before rising again in 2002, decreasing in 2003, and slightly rising again in 2004. The two slight peaks in 2002 and 2004 are likely because these were the years the Moscow theater crisis and Beslan school siege took

place, respectively. These two events were among the most devastating and newsworthy attacks of the insurgency phase of the conflict in Chechnya, which explains why there was a rise in the number of articles written about war in 2002 and 2004. Regarding the IRA, after 1998 the number of articles that mentioned “Irish Republican Army” in the *New York Times* steadily decreased. The explanation for the gradual decrease in the number of articles after 1998 is likely because the period of Troubles had ended, thus the IRA garnered less attention in the media. In addition, unlike how the two upticks for “Chechen War” articles in 2002 and 2004 can be explained by notable terrorist attacks in Russia, no such attacks with the same number of casualties was orchestrated by the Real IRA or any other faction of the IRA. The only similarity between *New York Times* that mention “Chechen War” and those that mention “Irish Republican Army” is found from 2006 to 2009, when both types of articles were roughly equal in number. This was several years after the end of the Troubles as well as heading towards the end of Russian military operations in Chechnya in 2009, which explains why there would have been a low number of total articles about each topic.

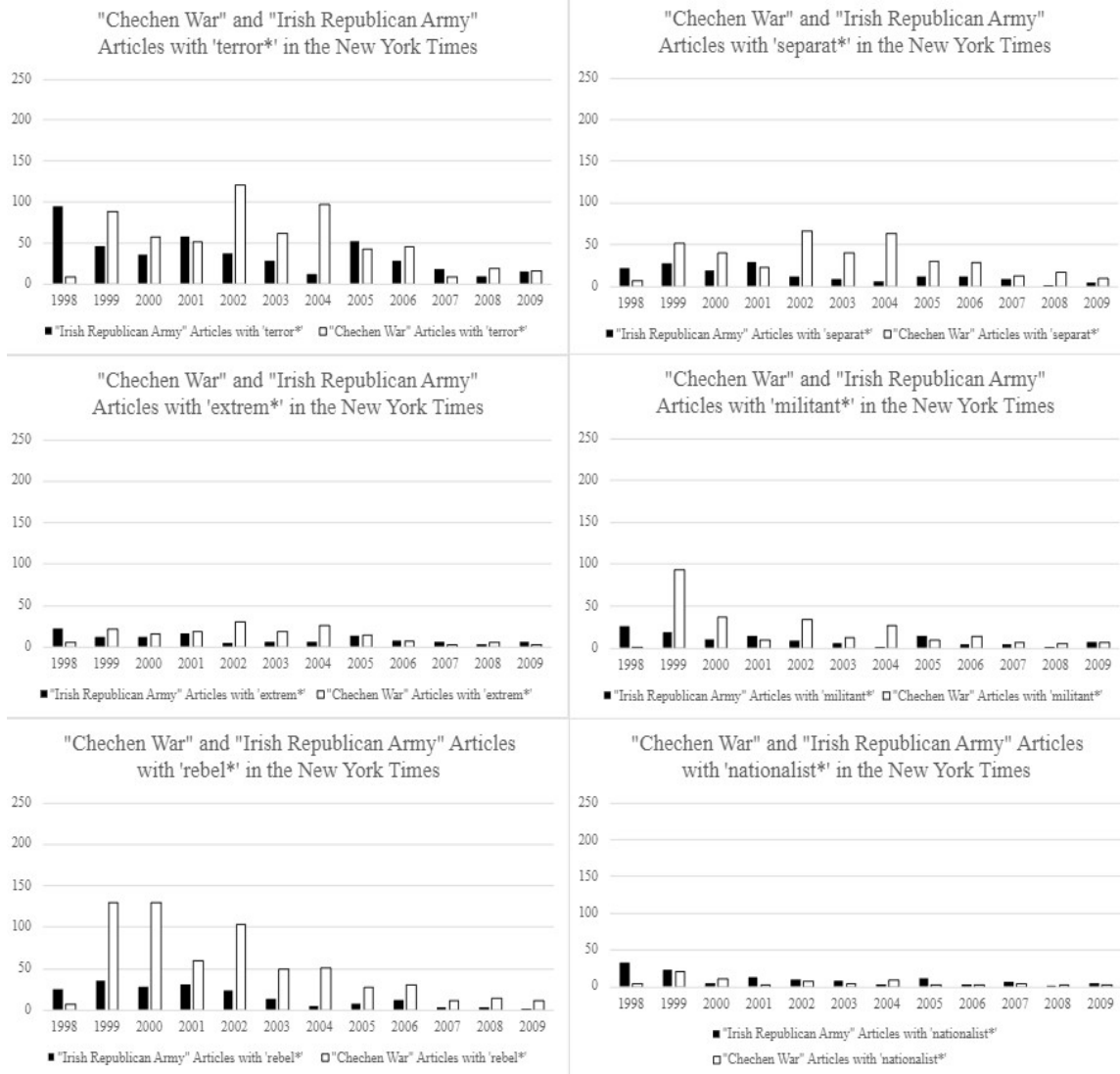


Figure 2: Clustered column charts showing the number of “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by the New York Times between 1998 and 2009 that contain certain words.

The above figure showcases the usage of the previously mentioned key words in *New York Times* articles that mention either the phrase “Chechen War” or “Irish Republican Army.” Of the 1,159 stories published between 1998 and 2009 that mention “Chechen War,” 619 mentioned terrorists, 391 mentioned separatists, 168 mentioned

extremists, 259 mentioned militants, 626 mentioned rebels, and 73 mentioned nationalists. Of the 1,167 “Irish Republican Army” articles that were published within that same timeframe, 417 mentioned terrorists, 157 mentioned separatists, 110 mentioned extremists, 113 mentioned militants, 180 mentioned rebels, and 117 mentioned nationalists. This also includes any derived form of those words present in the articles. Regarding usage of the word ‘terrorist,’ IRA members were described as terrorists in 94 articles in 1998 compared to 9 articles for Chechen fighters. While this may appear to be significant initially, we know there were more articles that mentioned “Irish Republican Army” in 1998 compared to those that mentioned “Chechen War.” The number of articles that that contained both “Chechen War” and ‘terrorist’ sharply increased in 1999, 2002, and 2004, though as we explained previously, this could simply be due to the start of Chechen War, the Moscow hostage crisis, and the Beslan school siege occurring in those years. The number of articles that mention both “Irish Republican Army” and ‘terrorist’ steadily declined after 1998, with only a sharp uptick in 2005 that decreased in the years following. Following 2005, the number of both types of articles that contain the word ‘terrorist’ steadily declined.

Regarding usage of the word ‘separatist,’ articles that mention the phrase “Chechen War” saw increases in 1999, 2002, and 2004 and it appears there were more “Chechen War” articles that contained the word ‘separatist’ when compared to “Irish Republican Army” articles. Regarding usage of the word ‘extremist’, there were minimal number of articles for both the IRA and Chechen War that contained the word ‘extremist,’ and with the exception of 1998 and 2002-2004, the amount of articles were roughly the same. Regarding usage of the word ‘militant,’ after 1998 the number of

articles that mention both “Irish Republican Army” and ‘militant’ steadily decreased, only outnumbering articles that mention both “Chechen War” and ‘militant’ in 1998. The number of “Chechen War” articles that contained ‘militant’ increased dramatically from one article in 1998 to 94 articles in 1999. Even with the assumption that the Russian invasion of Chechnya caused this increase is still unusual. Regarding usage of the word ‘rebel,’ except for 1998, the number of articles that mention both “Chechen War” and ‘rebel’ exceeds the numbers of articles that mention both “Irish Republican Army” and ‘rebel’. The peak of the articles took place in 1999 and 2000, with another peak in 2002, though interestingly there was no significant increase in 2004. Finally, regarding usage of the word ‘nationalist,’ with the exception of 1998, there appears to be a roughly equal number of both types of articles that contain the phrase ‘nationalist.’

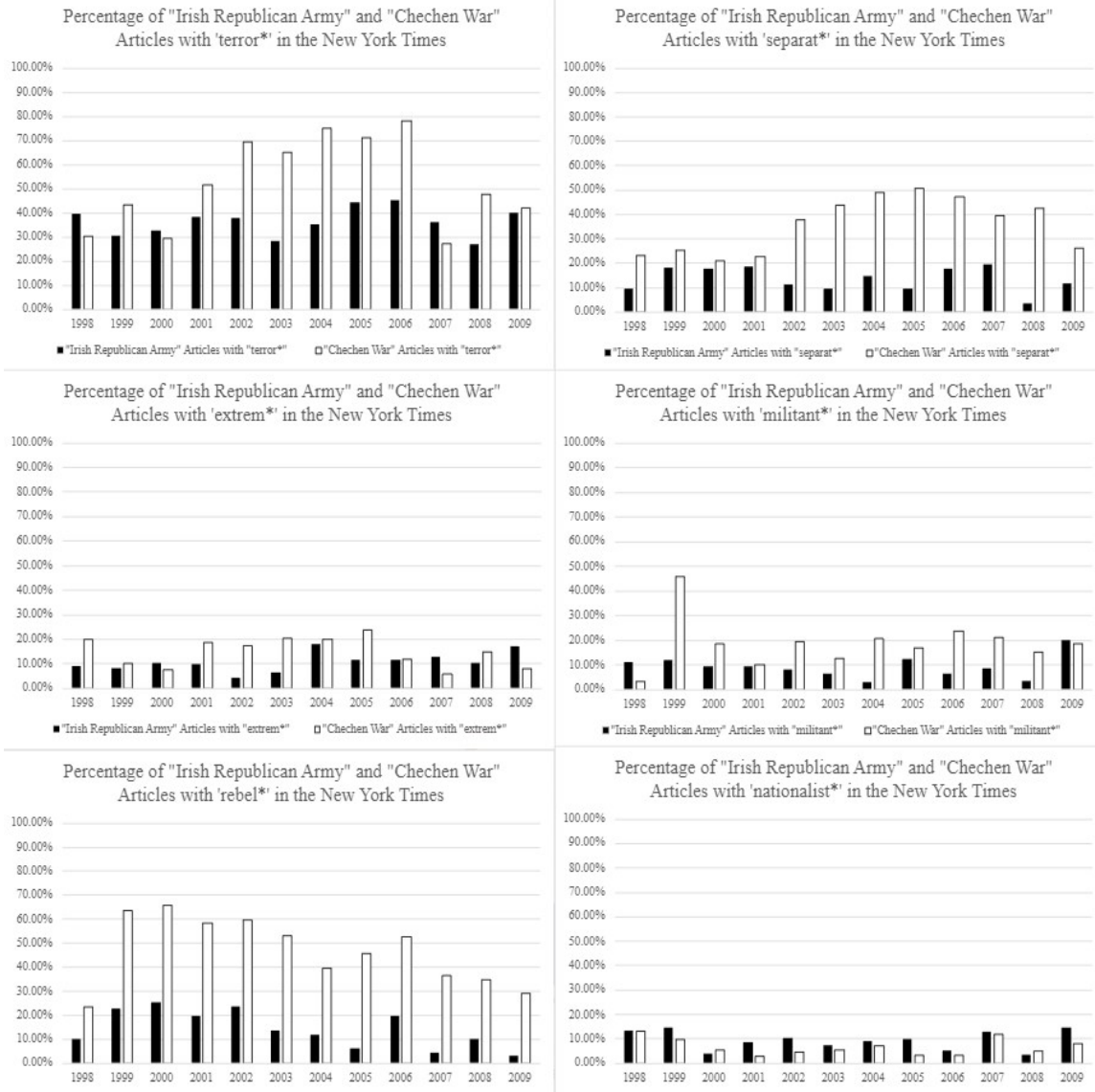


Figure 3: Percentage stacked column charts showing the change in percent usage of certain words in “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by the New York Times between 1998 and 2009.

Figure 3 represents the usage of keywords compared to the rest of the *New York Times* article that mention either “Irish Republican Army” or “Chechen War” as percentages, some of which display significant results. Regarding usage of the word ‘terrorist’ in articles that mention “Irish Republican Army,” the percentages range from a

low of 26.67% in 2008 with a peak of 45.16% in 2006, with an average percent of 33.91%. While there were some increases and decreases, they were not significant enough to display any discernable histogram pattern. In contrast, there are some significant results displayed in the usage of ‘terrorist’ in articles that mention “Chechen War.” For example, Chechen fighters were described as terrorists an average of 38.7% and of the time prior to 2002. From 2001 to 2002, the percentage rose from 29.44% to 51.49%, continuing to rise until it peaked at 77.97% in 2006. An explanation for this shift in language from 2001 to 2002 is that after 9/11, the idea of Islamic militants was on the mind of the media. Chechen fighters being predominantly Muslim, would be associated with al-Qaeda, meaning they would be described as terrorists more often after 9/11.

This discrepancy in word frequency is found with usage of the word ‘separatist’ as well. Regarding the IRA, *New York Times* authors described them as separatists roughly 13.3% of the time, with the peak being 19.15% in 2007 and the low being 3.33% in 2008. In contrast, the usage of separatist in articles that contain the phrase “Chechen War” hovered around 23.07% from 1998-2001 before increasing to 37.93% in 2002 and continued to increase, peaking at 50.85% in 2005. Regarding usage of ‘extremist,’ the average for articles that mention “Irish Republican Army” was 9.86% while the usage of articles that mention “Chechen War” was 14.9%. While there were slight increases and decreases for both types of articles, none of these changes were drastic or appeared significant. Regarding usage of the word ‘militant,’ the number of articles that mention “Irish Republican Army” maintained a relatively low percentage with minimal increases and decreases. For usage of the word ‘militant’ in “Chechen War” articles, there was a sharp increase from 3.33% in 1998 to 45.85% in 1999. This increase is likely due to the

start of the Russian invasion of Chechnya in that year. Because the Republic of Chechnya was not in an active conflict prior to 1999, it is unlikely that its soldiers would have been described as militants since they were not engaged in fighting. While there was consistent usage of the word ‘rebel’ in both types of articles, it should be noted that ‘rebel’ was more often used to describe Chechen fighters than the IRA, as half of the years showcased Chechen fighters being described as rebels at least 50% of the time. This suggests that *New York Times* authors saw Chechens as people resisting a government or occupational force. Finally, there were minimal uses of the word ‘nationalist’ in both articles, though it appears that articles that mentioned “Irish Republican Army” had a slightly higher percentage of ‘nationalist’ articles compared to articles that mention “Chechen War.”

Articles Published Between 1998 and 2009 (International Newsstream)

Regarding international newspapers published between 1998 and 2009, 6,005 articles contained the phrase “Chechen War” and 4,835 articles contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army.” The following figure displays the number of international articles each year:

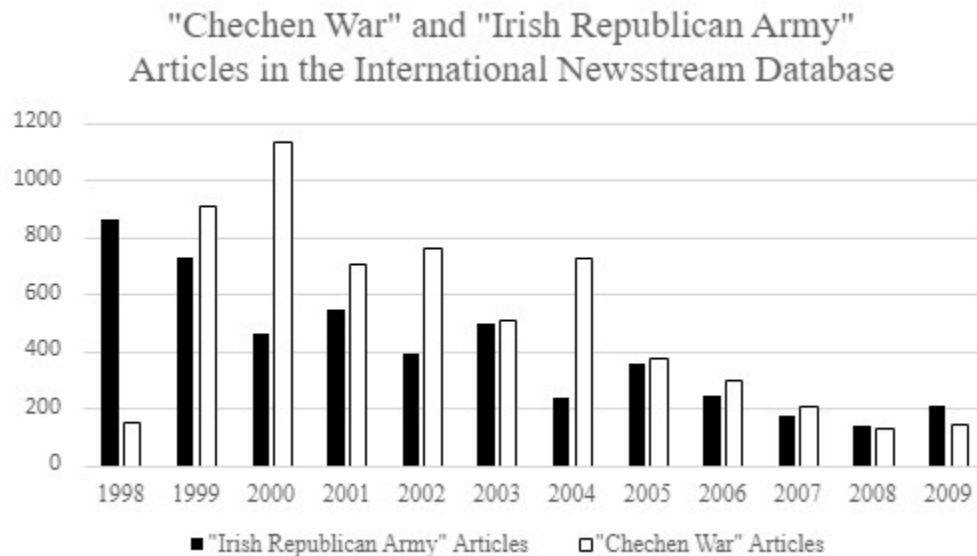


Figure 4: A clustered column chart showing the number of “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by international newspapers between 1998 and 2009.

The histogram pattern of Figure 4 is similar to that of Figure 1. The beginning of both figures both have a high number of articles that contained “Irish Republican Army” in 1998 that gradually decrease throughout the following years. In addition, Figure 4 also features a sharp uptick in articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” from 1998 to 1999. However, a notable difference between international publishers and the *New York Times* is that there does not seem to be as much of an increase in “Chechen War” articles from 2001 to 2002 in international articles when compared to *New York Times* articles. For Figure 1, I speculated that the increase from 2001 to 2002 was because of 9/11, but that argument is not as compelling in this case as it was for the *New York Times*.

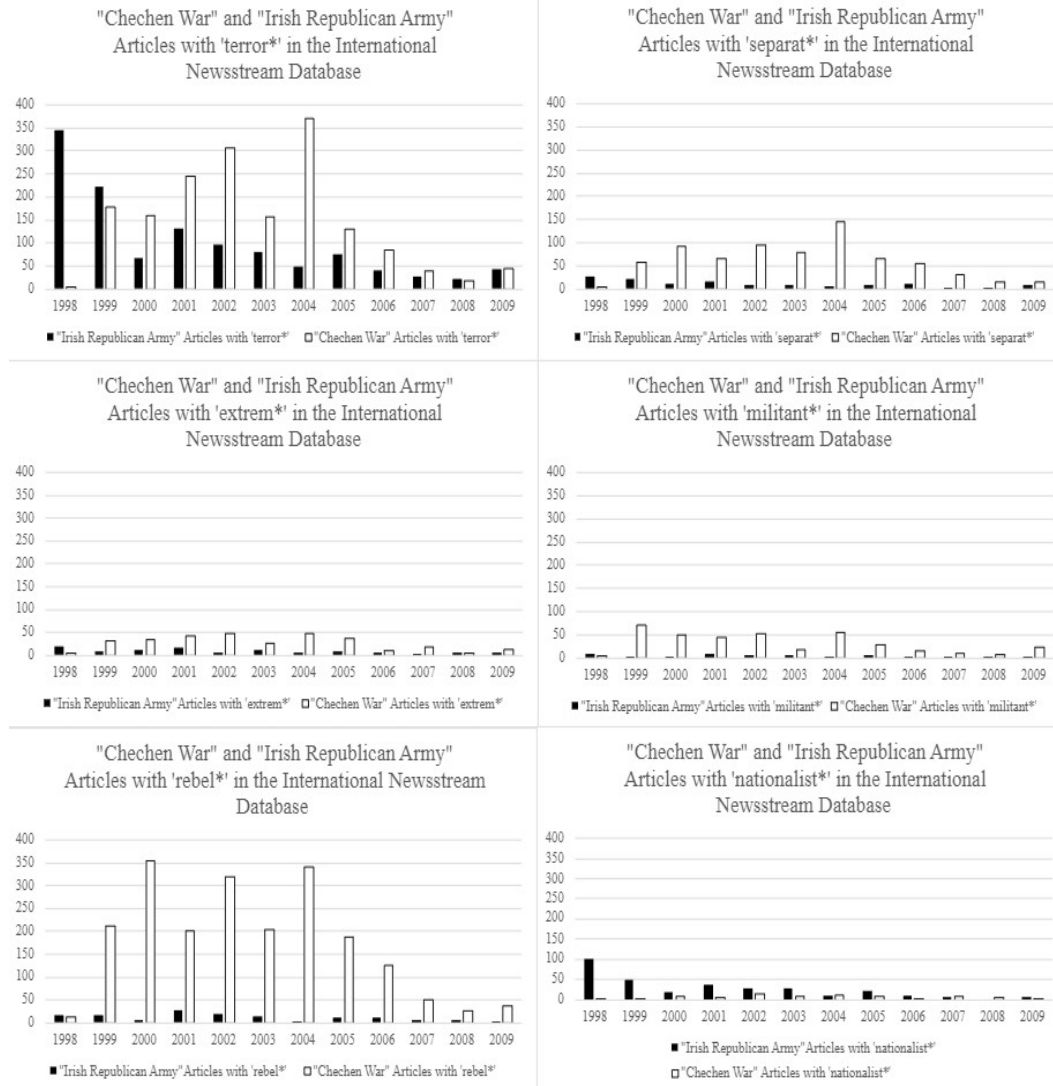


Figure 5: Clustered column charts showing the number of “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by international newspapers between 1998 and 2009 that contain certain words.

Figure 5 shows the usage of the keywords in international articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” or “Irish Republican Army.” Regarding usage of the word terrorism, the histogram pattern of “Irish Republican Army” and “Chechen War” article appear to be opposites, with the former articles starting high and gradually decreasing

whereas the latter increases rapidly. At 344 articles, “Irish Republican Army” articles massively outweighs the six “Chechen War” articles in 1998. Similar to our explanation with the *New York Times*, this discrepancy is likely due to the Good Friday Agreement and Omagh bombing both taking place in 1998 rather than there actually being a discrepancy in languages. After 1998, the number “Irish Republican Army” articles that contain the word ‘terrorist’ decreases rapidly and then gradually. Regarding “Chechen War” articles that contain the word ‘terrorist,’ there was a sharp increase from 6 articles in 1998 to 179 articles in 1999. As has been repeated, this most likely to due to the Moscow apartment bombings and Russian invasion of Chechnya in 1999. The articles then started increasing significantly from 2000, increasing from 160 articles in 2000 to 346 in 2002. This increase is likely because of the 9/11 attacks and then because of the Moscow hostage crisis in 2002. The number of articles decreases by half from 2002 from and then more than double from 2003 to 2004. The decrease from 2002 to 2003 could possibly explained by a lack of deadly attacks, while the increase from 2003 to 2004 can be explained from the Beslan school siege. The articles then decreased dramatically from 2005 to 2009. The number of “Irish Republican Army” and “Chechen War” articles began to even out from 2007 to 2009.

Due to the lack of the number of articles in ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ ‘militant,’ and ‘rebel’ to describe the IRA, no histogram pattern can be determined as there was never a year in which one of the words was used in more than fifty articles. More will be gleamed with the percentage stacked columns when they are directly compared to the Figure 4. More significant patterns were displayed by the “Chechen War” articles. Regarding usage of separatist in “Chechen War” articles, the number of articles start off low In 1998 and

then gradually increase and peak in 2004, then beginning to decrease after 2005. This same increase and decrease can be said for “Chechen War” chart displaying usage of ‘extremist.’ Regarding “Chechen War” articles that contain ‘militant,’ the number of articles increase dramatically from 4 articles in 1998 to 72 articles in 1999. The articles steadily decrease after 1999 before sharply decreasing after 2005. Regarding usage of ‘rebel’ in “Chechen War” articles, the number of articles increased dramatically from 12 in 1998 to 212 in 1999. The number of articles peak in 2000, 2002, and 2004 before decreases after 2005. These peaks are likely due to major combat operations ending in 2000, the Moscow school siege in 2002, and the Beslan school siege in 2004. Finally, regarding usage of nationalist, there were hardly any articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” which also described Chechens as ‘nationalist.’ In contrast, there were a high number of articles that contained both the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and ‘nationalist’ in 1998 before decreasing quickly after 1998.

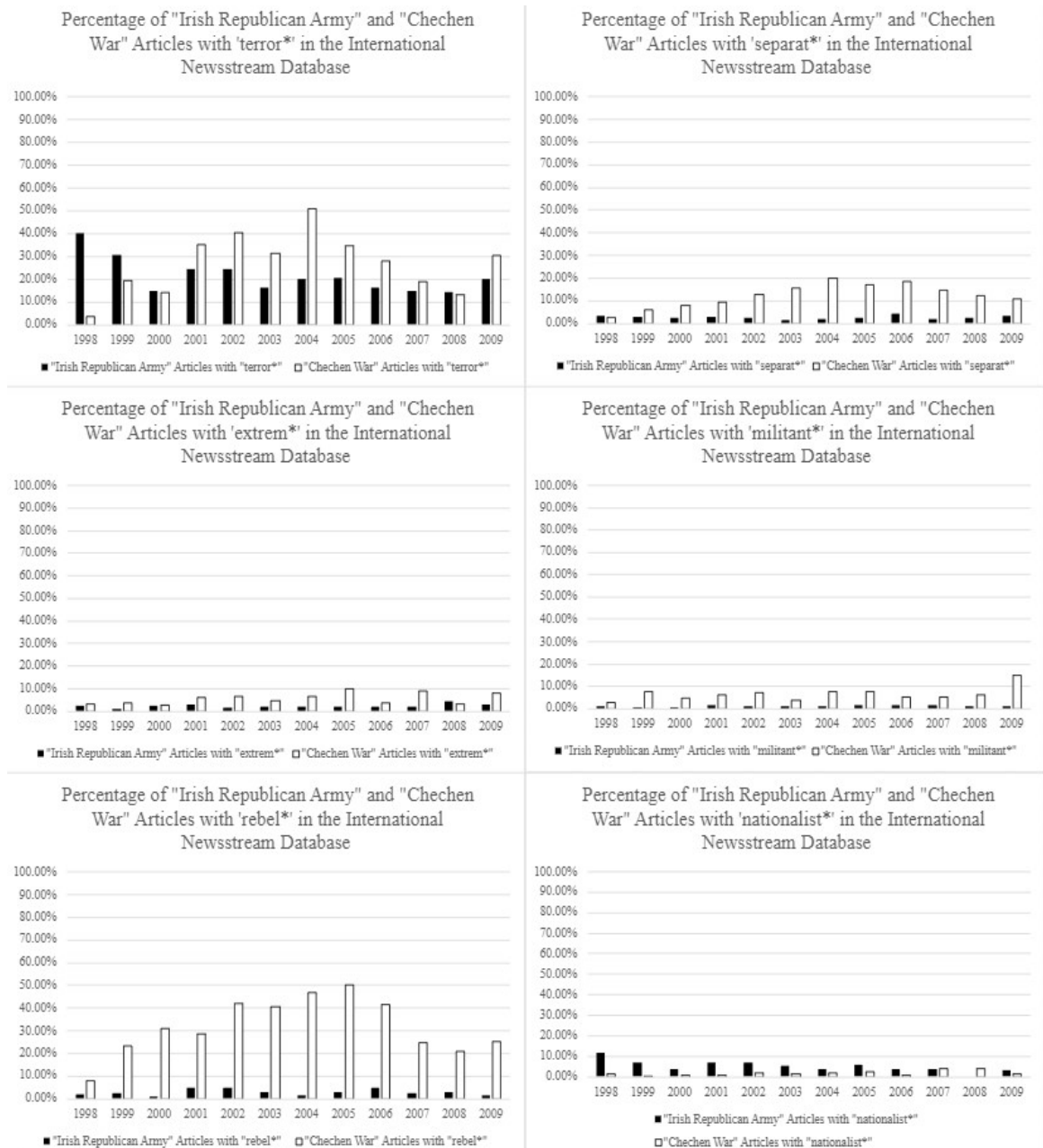


Figure 6: Percentage stacked column charts showing the change in percent usage of certain words in “Chechen War” and “Irish Republican Army” articles published by international newspapers between 1998 and 2009

Figure 6 represents the usage of keywords as percentages. Regarding percentage usage of terrorism, “Irish Republican Army” articles start off with a high percentage of

40% before decreasing throughout the timeline of interest. In contrast, the percentage of “Chechen War” articles that contain terrorism steadily increases after 1998 before peaking in 2004 at 51.03. Regarding percentage use of ‘separatist,’ “Irish Republican Army” articles remained consistently below 5% while IRA articles steadily increased from 2.61% in 1998 to a peak of 20% in 2004 after steadily decreasing to 10.74% in 2009. No significance can be derived from the ‘extremist’ and ‘militant’ percentage stacked columns as the percentages were too low, though it can be said that those two words were used slightly more in “Chechen War” articles than “Irish Republican Army” articles. Apart from the ‘rebel’ chart, all keywords follow a similar pattern to that of Figure 3, meaning that the increases and decreases between years follow a similar pattern between international and *New York Times* authors. “Chechen War” articles saw an increase in usage of the term ‘terrorism’ after 2001 whereas “Irish Republican Army” articles saw a decrease in usage of ‘terrorist’ after 1998. “Chechen War” articles saw a gradual increase in usage of the word ‘separatist’ throughout the timeline whereas IRA members were rarely described as separatists. “Chechen War” articles were slightly more likely to contain ‘extremist’ or ‘militant’ than “Irish Republican Army” articles, albeit the percentages were not that high. “Chechen War” articles were significantly more likely to contain the word ‘rebel’ than “Irish Republican Army” articles, with the peak usage being 50.13% in 2004 while “Irish Republican Army” articles never reached above 5%. The key difference, however, is in the actual percentages. For example, while both international and *New York Times* articles saw an increase in percent usage of the word ‘terrorist’ in “Chechen War” articles, the peak percentage for international authors is

51.03% in 2004. For *New York Times* articles, the peak percentage found also in 2004 is 75.19%, and for the other years ‘terrorist’ is used consistently over 50%.

Word Frequency Before and After International Events (New York Times)

I conducted ANOVA tests to assess if there were any significant changes before and after certain terrorist attacks. To be considered statistically significant, a p-value must be less than .05. The results are displayed below in Figures 7 and 8, and results less than .05 have been bolded.

ANOVA Test Results for Word Usage in IRA Articles in the <i>New York Times</i>			
Key Word	IRA Articles after Omagh Bombing (6/15/1998-10/15/1998)	IRA Articles 9/11 attacks (7/11/2001-11/11/2001)	Chechen War Articles after Moscow Hostage Crisis (8/23/2002-12/23/2002)
Terrorist	.879	.002 (+)	.020 (+)
Separatist	-	-	.004 (+)
Extremist	-	-	.157
Militant	-	.512	.262
Rebel	-	-	.610
Nationalist	-	.953	.214

Figure 7: ANOVA test results indicating whether there were significant changes in usage of certain words in “Irish Republican Army” articles published by the *New York Times*. Significant values ($p < .05$) have been bolded. Significant increasing trends have been marked with a (+) whereas insignificant decreasing trends have been marked with a (-).

ANOVA Test Results for Word Usage in Chechen War Articles in the <i>New York Times</i>			
Key Word	Chechen War Articles after Moscow Bombings (7/4/1999-11/4/1999)	Chechen War Articles after 9/11 attacks (7/11/2001-11/11/2001)	Chechen War Articles after Moscow Hostage Crisis (8/23/2002-12/23/2002)
Terrorist	.024 (+)	.031 (+)	.020 (+)
Separatist	.002 (-)	.282	.004 (+)
Extremist	.855	.504	.157
Militant	.082	.429	.262
Rebel	.039 (-)	.044 (-)	.610
Nationalist	-	-	.214

Figure 8: ANOVA test results indicating whether there were significant changes in usage of certain words in “Chechen War” articles published by the *New York Times*.

Significant values ($p < .05$) have been bolded. Significant increasing trends have been marked with a (+) whereas insignificant decreasing trends have been marked with a (-).

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after the Omagh bombing of 1998, the only p-value calculated was for usage of the word ‘terrorist’ (.879), which was statistically insignificant. Regarding the other keywords, no p-values were calculated, meaning that no *New York Times* author described the IRA as separatists, extremists, militants, rebels, or nationalists two months prior and two months after the Omagh bombing. While the p-value for usage of ‘terrorist’ was statistically insignificant,

this does not mean that the *New York Times* did not describe the IRA as terrorists. The last “Irish Republican Army” article published before the Omagh bombing described the IRA as terrorists five times, and the first “Irish Republican Army” article after the attack contained a map of Ireland with Omagh highlighted couple with a caption stating: “Omagh is trying to find people still missing after the terror bombing.”⁴⁹⁵⁰ This indicates that *New York Times* authors were already describing the IRA as terrorists, just that the Omagh bombing did not cause a shift in their usage of that word.

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” published before and after the Moscow apartment bombings of 1999, the data indicates that there was a significant increase in usage of the word ‘terrorist’ (.024), and a significant decrease in usage of the words ‘separatist’ (.002), and ‘rebel’ (.039). There was a general but statistically insignificant decreasing trend in usage of the word ‘militant’ (.082), and usage of ‘extremist’ (.855) was not statistically significant. A p-value was not calculated for usage of ‘nationalist’ as Chechen fighters were never described as ‘nationalists’ by *New York Times* authors before or after the apartment bombings in Moscow. The increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ and decrease of ‘separatist’ and ‘rebel’ to describe Chechen fighters indicates that *New York Times* authors saw Chechen fighters less as freedom fighters and more as individuals willing to use terrorism to achieve their means. This is not surprising as the killing of civilians to further a political goal would increase instances of the word terrorism. In the first “Chechen War” article

⁴⁹ Sarah Lyall, "Mountbatten Bomber is Freed, Outraging Many in Britain," *New York Times*, Aug 08, 1998, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/mountbatten-bomber-is-freed-outraging-many/docview/431032647/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁵⁰ James F. Clarity, "The Day After in Ulster Town: Now 'it's Back'," *New York Times*, Aug 17, 1998, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/day-after-ulster-town-now-back/docview/431024155/se-2?accountid=8361>.

published after the first apartment bombing on September 4, 1999, ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’ were not mentioned once, with Chechen fighters who were suspected in the attack described as ‘Islamic militants’ or ‘rebels.’⁵¹ Almost two weeks later, in an article about another bombing in the series of attacks, Chechen fighters were not described as rebels once and instead were regarded as terrorists, with statements such as “Terrorism has been declared on the Russian people” and “What had seemed unrelated and unusual exceptions were now seen by many Russians as part of a sinister pattern of terrorism against ordinary people.”⁵² This provides an example of the shift in language from Chechen ‘rebels’ to Chechen ‘terrorists.’

The fact that an attack caused by Chechen fighters resulted in them being more likely to be described as ‘terrorists,’ ‘separatists,’ and ‘militants’ when an attack caused by the IRA resulted in no shift in language suggests that *New York Times* authors were more willing to characterize Chechen as terrorists after they were responsible for an act of violence compared to the IRA. Two counterarguments to this point are that the Moscow hostage crisis resulted in significantly more deaths than the Omagh bombing, possibly suggesting that the more deaths an attack results in, the more likely a shift in language is to occur. Another counterargument is that the Omagh bombing took place before 9/11 whereas the Moscow hostage crisis took place after 9/11, meaning the effect seen in the Moscow hostage crisis is just an after-effect of 9/11. However, if this was the

⁵¹ Michael R. Gordon, "Rebels Attack Caucasus Area; Bomb Kills 30," *New York Times*, Sep 06, 1999, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/rebels-attack-caucasus-area-bomb-kills-30/docview/431244752/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁵² Michael R. Gordon, "Moscow Blast, 3d in 2 Weeks, Kills at Least 95," *New York Times*, Sep 14, 1999, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/moscow-blast-3d-2-weeks-kills-at-least-95/docview/431241827/se-2?accountid=8361>.

case, then 9/11 should have had a significant impact on usage of the words ‘separatist’ and ‘extremist’ just as the Moscow hostage crisis; instead it was just a positive trend.

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after 9/11, the results indicate that there was significant increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ (.002) and that there was no statistically significant change in usage of the words ‘militant’ (.512) and ‘nationalist’ (.953). There were no p-values calculated for ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ or ‘rebel,’ meaning no *New York Times* author described the IRA as those words two months before and two months after 9/11. The results indicate that there after 9/11, there was a shift in language to describe the IRA as terrorists. This suggests that regardless of whether or not a group is directly responsible for an act of violence, that act may still cause a shift in language used to describe that group. Also, while collecting data, I noticed that a bombing orchestrated by the Real IRA took place a month before 9/11 in a West London subway station that wounded six people. *New York Times* authors described the incident as “the Real I.R.A., a dissident Irish Republican Army group opposed to Northern Ireland's 1998 peace accord, has been blamed for a series of explosions in the province and in Britain proper.”⁵³ The Real IRA nor the suspects of the attack were ever described as terrorists or with any of the keywords, including an article on the following day on August 4 which described the Real IRA as a “dissident Irish group opposed to efforts to forge a political situation in Ulster.”⁵⁴ This is notable as an attack on civilians using a bomb was not described as a terrorist attack by the *New York Times* prior to 9/11. In contrast, an article

⁵³ "Blast Wounds 6 Near Subway in West London," *New York Times*, Aug 03, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/blast-wounds-6-near-subway-west-london/docview/431837613/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁵⁴ Seth Mydans et al., "World Briefing: ASIA AFRICA EUROPE," *New York Times* Aug 04, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/world-briefing/docview/92163839/se-2?accountid=8361>.

published nine days after 9/11 titled “The War on Terror is Not New” described the IRA as terrorists four times, stating that “some countries in Europe have been at war with terrorists for decades and they have learned some hard lessons in the process.”⁵⁵ This demonstrates the sudden shift in language international events can cause, as in an article about an act of violence organized by the IRA before 9/11 contained no mention of terrorism, whereas an article about terrorism in general published after 9/11 described the IRA as terrorists.

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” and were published two months before and after 9/11, the data indicates that there was a statistically significant increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ (.031) and a significant decrease in usage of the word ‘rebel’ (.044). The p-values of ‘separatist’ (.282), ‘extremist’ (.504), and ‘militant’ (.429) were statistically insignificant, and no p-value was calculated for ‘nationalist’ as Chechens were not described as ‘nationalists’ in *New York Times* articles published two months before and after 9/11. Usage of ‘rebel*’ (.842) was not statistically significant, and there was no p-value calculated for ‘nationalist*’ as Chechen fighters were never described as nationalists in the articles during this period. The increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ and decrease in ‘rebel’ to describe Chechen fighters indicates that the September 11th attacks changed perspective of *New York Times* authors as they now saw the Chechen War as part of the new War on Terror. Chechen ‘rebels’ had become Chechen ‘terrorists.’ Only one “Chechen War” article described Chechen fighters as terrorists, whereas one of the first articles published after

⁵⁵ Niall Ferguson, "The War on Terror is Not New: [Op-Ed]," *New York Times*, Sep 20, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/war-on-terror-is-not-new/docview/431859878/se-2?accountid=8361>.

9/11 described Chechen fighters as terrorists twelve times.⁵⁶ Similar to the “Irish Republican Army” articles, *New York Times* authors demonstrated an increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ to describe Chechen fighters after 9/11.

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained that phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after the Londonderry bombing of 2002, no statistically significant p-values were calculated for ‘terrorist’ (.332), ‘rebel’ (.237), or ‘nationalist’ (.238). In addition, no p-values were calculated for ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ or ‘militant.’ The lack of significant p-values for this event is likely because only one civilian was killed during the Londonderry bombing. However, while statistically insignificant, the p-value for ‘terrorist’ for the Londonderry incident was lower than the p-value for the Omagh bombing (.879), which had significantly more deaths. A possible explanation for this is that the Londonderry bombing took place after 9/11, which had an impact on *New York Times* authors usage of the word ‘terrorist’ when describing IRA members.

Regarding word usage in *New York Times* articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” and were published two months before and after the Moscow hostage crisis of 2002, the results indicate there was a statistically significant increase in usage of the words ‘terrorist’ (.020) and ‘separatist’ (.004). There was a general but less significant trend in usage of the word ‘extremist’ (.157), and the p-values of ‘militant’ (.262), ‘rebel’ (.610) and ‘nationalist’ (.214) were all statistically insignificant.

⁵⁶ Steven Erlanger, "THE RUSSIANS: SCHRODER URGES Milder VIEW OF MOSCOW ROLE IN CHECHNYA," *New York Times*, Sep 26, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/russians/docview/92025157/se-2?accountid=8361>.

Word Frequency Before and After International Events (International Newsstream)

I conducted ANOVA tests to assess if there were any significant changes in language used in international articles before and after certain attacks attributed to the IRA and Chechen insurgency. To be considered statistically significant, a p-value must be less than .05. The results are displayed below in Figures 9 and 10, and results less than .05 have been bolded.

ANOVA Test Results for Word Usage in IRA Articles in the International Newsstream Database			
Key Word	IRA Articles after Omagh Bombing (6/15/1998-10/15/1998)	IRA Articles after 9/11 attacks (7/11/2001-11/11/2001)	IRA Articles after Londonderry Bombing (6/1/2002-10/1/2002)
Terrorist	.039 (+)	.141	.497
Separatist	.957	.112	-
Extremist	.920	.452	-
Militant	.750	.822	.331
Rebel	.813	.145	.010 (+)
Nationalist	.068	.663	.637

Figure 9: ANOVA test results indicating whether there were significant changes in usage of certain words in “Irish Republican Army” articles published by international newspapers. Significant values ($p < .05$) have been bolded. Significant increasing trends have been marked with a (+) whereas insignificant decreasing trends have been marked with a (-).

ANOVA Test Results for Word Usage in Chechen War Articles in the International Newsstream Database			
Key Word	Chechen War Articles after Moscow Apartment Bombings (7/4/1999-11/4/1999)	Chechen War Articles after 9/11 attacks (7/11/2001-11/11/2001)	Chechen War Articles after Moscow Hostage Crisis (8/23/2002-12/23/2002)
Terrorist	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)
Separatist	.967	.341	.155
Extremist	.407	.049 (+)	.089
Militant	.837	.035 (+)	.676
Rebel	.004 (-)	.044 (+)	.806
Nationalist	.574	.111	.148

Figure 10: ANOVA test results indicating whether there were significant changes in usage of certain words in “Chechen War” articles published by international newspapers. Significant values ($p < .05$) have been bolded. Significant increasing trends have been marked with a (+) whereas insignificant decreasing trends have been marked with a (-).

Regarding word usage in international articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after the Omagh bombing of 1998, there was a very significant increase in usage of ‘terror’ (.039) as well as an almost significant increasing trend of usage of the word ‘nationalist’ (.068). The p-values of ‘separatist’ (.957), ‘extremist’ (.920), ‘militant’ (.750), and ‘rebel’ (.813) were all statistically insignificant. This contrasts the data found in the *New York Times* in several

ways. Firstly, the data suggests that international news authors were more likely to describe the IRA as terrorists after Omagh bombing when compared to *New York Times* authors. Another key difference in the data is that while there was a lack of statistically significant p-values for the other keywords, the fact that a p-value was calculated at all means that at least some international authors described the IRA as being separatists, extremists, militants, rebels, and nationalists. In contrast, because no p-values were calculated for those words for the *New York Times* data, no *New York Times* authors described the IRA as any of those words two months prior and two months after the Omagh bombing. This means that international authors were much more likely to describe the IRA using politically charged vocabulary when compared to *New York Times* authors. In the first article that reported on the detail of the Omagh bombing, the author stated that “three republican terrorist groups came under immediate suspicion for yesterday’s Omagh bombing” and that “IRA terrorists” were suspected of operating in splinter groups of the IRA.⁵⁷ This shows an immediate response by international authors to describe the IRA as terrorists after the Omagh bombing took place.

Regarding word usage in international articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War’ and were published two months before and after the apartment bombings in Moscow in 1999, there was a highly significant increasing trend in usage of ‘terrorist’ (<.001) but a significant decreasing trend in usage of ‘rebel’ (.004). The change in frequency of the words ‘separatist’ (.967), ‘extremist’ (.407), ‘militant’ (.837) and ‘nationalist’ (.574) were all statistically insignificant. These results are similar to those

⁵⁷ Vikram Dodd, "Outrage in Omagh: For Republican Dissidents the Liberation War Goes on the Suspects/ Vikram Dodd Charts the most Likely Groups Behind the Bomb," *The Observer*, Aug 16, 1998, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/outrage-omagh-republican-dissidents-liberation/docview/250461121/se-2?accountid=8361>.

found in the *New York Times* database in that after the beginning of the Moscow apartment bombings, both international and *New York Times* authors saw Chechen fighters less as rebels fighting against the Russian Federation but more as terrorists willing to use violence against civilians to achieve their goals. An article published eleven days before the first of the apartment bombings described Chechen fighters as rebels 14 times and described Shamil Basayev as a “Chechen commander.”⁵⁸ One of the first articles published after the Moscow apartment bombings described the Chechen fighters as rebels only six times, quoted the Russian government referring to the attack as “a terrorist act” and described Basayev as a “Chechen warlord.”⁵⁹ Finally, one week after the first bombing, an article titled “Russian journalist reveals details about alleged terrorist plot” described the Chechen fighters as terrorists ten times, with no mention of the other key words, including rebel.

Regarding word usage in international articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after 9/11, the suggest a general but statistically insignificant increasing trend in usage of the ‘terrorist’ (.141) and ‘rebel’ (.145), and an also statistically insignificant decreasing trend in usage of ‘separatist’ (.122). The p-values of ‘extremist’ (.452), ‘militant’ (.822), and ‘nationalist’ (.663) were statistically insignificant. in international articles about the IRA after 9/11. This contrasts the data found in *New York Times* database. Because an article about a bombing conducted by the Real IRA was mentioned by the IRA, I examined the same

⁵⁸ Alice Lagnado, "Russia Drifts into Long War in Dagestan: [1 Edition]," *The Scotsman*, Aug 24, 1999, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/russia-drifts-into-long-war-dagestan/docview/326801997/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁵⁹ Andrew Jack, "Army Hostel Bomb Kills 22 in Dagestan: [London Edition]," *Financial Times*, Sep 06, 1999, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/army-hostel-bomb-kills-22-dagestan/docview/248334595/se-2?accountid=8361>.

attack that was published by international authors. The first two articles about the attack did not explicitly describe the Real IRA as terrorists, but provide a comment from “Alan Fry, head of Scotland Yard’s anti-terrorist branch,” who said the attacks resembled others in the past few months.⁶⁰ The statement of ‘anti-terrorist’ implies that the incident was a terrorist attack. The British newspaper *Mail on Sunday* described the Real IRA as terrorists seven times, stating that “the terrorist cell is believed to be behind seven bombings in London in the last few years.”⁶² This shows that even before 9/11, international authors were already describing the IRA as terrorists.

Regarding word usage in international articles that contained the phrase “Chechen War” and were published two months before and after 9/11, the results show that there was a significant increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ (<.001), ‘extremist’ (.049) ‘militant’ (.035), and ‘rebel’ (.044). There was a less significant but still positive trend in usage of ‘nationalist’ (.111) and there was no statistically significant p-value for usage of ‘separatist’ (.341). When compared to the *New York Times*, the data is similar in that both databases indicate a highly significant change in usage of ‘terrorist’ to describe Chechen insurgents after 9/11. However, they differ in that international articles also saw a significant increase in describing Chechen fighters as ‘extremists,’ ‘militants,’ and ‘rebels.’ Notably, the p-values for changes in use of ‘rebel’ to describe Chechen fighters before and after 9/11 is the same for both *New York Times* and international articles,

⁶⁰ "West London's Massive Car Bomb Wounds Seven," China Daily, Aug 04, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/west-londons-massive-car-bomb-wounds-seven/docview/257748454/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁶¹ "Seven Injured as Car Bomb Blasts London: [1 Edition]," The Mercury, Aug 04, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/seven-injured-as-car-bomb-blasts-london/docview/353391857/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁶² "Security Forces 'Know Who the Bomber is' Says IRA Informant Gang Behind New Terror Campaign has Links Throughout the World: [FB Edition]," Mail on Sunday, Aug 05, 2001, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/security-forces-know-who-bomber-is-says-ira/docview/328745227/se-2?accountid=8361>.

however the direction of the value is different. Furthermore, when examining “Chechen War” articles before and after the Moscow apartment bombings, both *New York Times* and international articles saw an increase in usage of ‘terrorist’ and decrease in usage of ‘rebel’ to describe Chechen fighters, meaning one could argue that both types of authors saw Chechen fighters more as violent terrorists willing to use political violence against civilians rather than as rebels trying to achieve independence for their homeland.

However, because three other keywords in addition to ‘terrorist’ saw an increase in usage to describe Chechen fighters in international articles after 9/11, it may mean that international authors were just using more politically charged terms to describe Chechen fighters rather than they saw them more as terrorists.

Regarding word usage in international articles that contained the phrase “Irish Republican Army” and were published two months before and after the Londonderry bombing of 2002, there was a significant increase in usage of the ‘rebel’ (.010) to describe IRA members. The p-values for ‘terrorist’ (.497), ‘militant’ (.331), and ‘nationalist’ (.637) were all statistically insignificant, and no p-values were calculated for ‘separatist’ or ‘extremist’ as those words were never used to describe IRA members in the designated timeframe. The lack of a significant p-value for ‘terrorist’ is likely due to the lack of high civilian casualties in the Londonderry bombing, as well as because international news authors already saw the IRA and its various chapters as terrorists. As to why there was a significant increase in usage of ‘rebel’ to describe the IRA after the Londonderry bombing, of the 72 articles before the bombing, not a single one described the IRA as rebels. Of the 33 articles published after the bombing, three described the IRA as rebels once each, but upon reading each article, most used the term in the context of

the past. For example, one article explaining the history of Northern Ireland stated that that “a small group of Irish rebels took control of parts of Dublin” during the Easter rising of 1916, and another described the IRA as a “rebel organization” in the context of article about the history of the Troubles.⁶³⁶⁴

Regarding international articles that contain the phrase “Chechen War” and were published two months before and after the Moscow hostage crisis of 2002, there was a significant increase in usage of the word ‘terrorist’ (<.001) and a general but insignificant increasing trend regarding ‘separatist’ (.155), ‘extremist’ (.089), and ‘nationalist’ (.148). The p-values of ‘militant’ (.676) and ‘rebel’ (.806) were statistically insignificant. It could be argued that because there was a general increasing trend in usage of ‘separatist,’ ‘extremist,’ and ‘nationalist’ to describe Chechen fighters that international authors were only using politically charged language after 9/11 rather than seeing Chechen fighters as terrorists, similar to the argument made about Chechen War articles after 9/11. However, the p-values for the three other words in this case are just trends and not statistically significant, making this argument less compelling.

In summary, both international and *New York Times* articles saw an increase in usage of the word ‘terrorist’ to describe Chechen fighters after the beginning of the Moscow apartment bombings in 1999, the September 11 attacks of 2001, and the Moscow hostage crisis of 2002. Regarding the IRA, international authors increased their usage of ‘terrorist’ to describe the IRA after the Omagh bombing while also displaying a

⁶³ "Where did it Come from?" Belfast Telegraph, Sep 17, 2002, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/where-did-come/docview/337130852/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁶⁴ Bruce Wilson, "New IRA History Links Gerry Adams to Murder Squad: [1 - STATE Edition]," *The Advertiser*, Oct 01, 2002, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/new-ira-history-links-gerry-adams-murder-squad/docview/355771384/se-2?accountid=8361>.

increasing but statistically insignificant trend to describe the IRA as terrorists after 9/11. In contrast, the *New York Times* only increased their usage of ‘terrorist’ to describe the IRA after 9/11 rather than after the Omagh or Londonderry bombings. This demonstrates that 9/11, an act external to the Anglo-Irish and Russo-Chechen conflicts, influenced the labels media networks used to describe the IRA and Chechen insurgency.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that 9/11 caused a shift in the *New York Times* and international articles use of certain keywords to describe the IRA and Chechen fighters, supporting my argument that acts of violence not connected with the events in Northern Ireland or Chechnya shaped the description and labeling of events and parties in both conflict areas. Chechen fighters for liberation from Russian occupation became Chechen terrorists, and the IRA who were often described in neutral terms also became seen as terrorists. As to how this relates to pre-existing literature, scholars studying the salience of certain terrorist and security topics in news stories concluded that “how media portray different security risks is dependent on...past experience with a particular security threat, as well as probability of the country being targeted in the future.”⁶⁵ This explains why the *New York Times* in particular became more willing to describe the IRA and Chechen fighters as terrorists after 9/11. Other scholars studying the effect 9/11 had on media discourse found that after the attack on the World Trade Center, international media tended to “negatively depict Islam by associating it with terrorism.”⁶⁶ This helps to explain our findings regarding Chechen insurgents; Chechen rebels were predominantly

⁶⁵ Petra Guasti and Zdenka Mansfeldova, “Perception of Terrorism and Security and the Role of Media,” In *The 7th ECPR General Conference*, Section, vol. 55 (Colchester: ECPR 2013), 23.

⁶⁶ Sofia Hayati Yusof, Fauziah Hassan, Salleh Hassan, and Mohd Nizam Osman, "The Framing of International Media on Islam and Terrorism," *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 8 (2013), 104.

Muslim, so it stands to reason that an increased association between Islam and terrorism in media following 9/11 would result in the rebels being characterized as terrorists in media stories.

My results indicate that 9/11 influenced the labels Chechen fighters were assigned by *New York Times* and international authors and the labels the IRA were assigned by the *New York Times*, and less significantly, international authors in general. The importance of these findings is that labels such as ‘terrorist’ and ‘rebel’ carry connotations that influence the ways in which a person perceives a group assigned those labels. This perception in turn can play a role in international policy, cooperation, and decision-making. In his book *Language Wars*, Jeff Lewis comments on the political nature of terrorism by stating that “the label of ‘terrorist’ is used by adversaries in a violent conflict to demonize their enemies.”⁶⁷ Labelling something as ‘terrorism’ causes whatever and whomever to lose its moral credibility and public support, making it harder for the labelled ‘terrorist’ group to achieve their political goals. The consequences of being labelled as ‘terrorist’ is why the IRA “refer to themselves as an ‘army’ which is fighting a ‘civil war’ against an imperial force” and why “for the British authorities... the IRA’s attacks on noncombatants and their sub-national status condemn them as ‘terrorists.’”⁶⁸ When the IRA are described in news media as terrorists, this hurts their credibility as they are seen as violent actors preying on innocent civilians rather than as soldiers fighting for a lost cause against a tyrannical regime. That is why when international authors describe the IRA as terrorists after the Omagh bombing, and *New York Times* authors after 9/11, this hurts their reputation. A few days after the Omagh bombing, the Real IRA both

⁶⁷ Lewis, *Language Wars*, 53.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

claimed responsibility and apologized for the attack, with a spokesperson stating that “Despite media reports it was not our intention at any time to kill any civilians. It was a commercial target, part of the on-going war against Brits. We offer apologies to the civilians.”⁶⁹ By claiming the attack was an operation in an “on-going war” the Real IRA representative was attempting to legitimize the bombing, an attempt soundly rejected by the British public. It should be noted though, that no such apology was issued for the sole victim of the Londonderry bombing of 2002. While this could be explained that the Real IRA did not feel the need to issue an apology for an attack which resulted in a single casualty, it can also be assumed that because there was not a significant media outcry which resulted in the IRA being described more often as terrorists, there was no need for a spokesperson to issue a statement in order to “save” their reputation.

The label of terrorism is not just a way in which independent media networks describe political violence in the news; it is a tool that governments can use to influence rhetoric and perception regarding foreign policy to place themselves in a more advantageous position. Vladimir Putin demonstrated this tactic during second largescale conflict between the Russian Federation and Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in the 1990s and 2000s. Putin purposefully connotated “Chechen self-determination with Islamic fundamentalist terror” to at first avoid the complex issue of Chechen independence, but then to coax the U.S. into perceiving Chechen fighters as enemies in War on Terror after 9/11.⁷⁰ Putin and his administration aimed to use the label of ‘terrorist’ as a means to fulfill their domestic and international political goals, namely to draw attention away

⁶⁹ "UK Government Condemns Real IRA's Mass Murder Apology." Xinhua News Agency - CEIS, Aug 18, 1998, <https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/uk-government-condemns-real-iras-mass-murder/docview/453961139/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁷⁰ John Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens before and since 9/11,” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 101-116, 114.

from Russia human rights abuses in Chechnya and have both Russian citizens and the West focus more on the acts of violence inflicted upon civilians. Given that both international and *New York Times* articles had a significant increasing trend in usage of the word ‘terrorist’ to describe Chechen fighters after 9/11, the results indicate that Putin succeeded; both the international media system and one of the United States’ most respected newspapers began to characterize the Chechen fighters as terrorists after 9/11. This is not to say the labeling of Chechen insurgents as terrorists by Western media was incorrect or immoral; the Beslan school siege, Moscow theater crisis, and numerous bombings caused by Chechen extremists were all clear examples of terrorism, so the actors who caused those tragedies should be labeled as terrorists. However, it is important to acknowledge that Putin saw an opportunity to transform the political relationship between Russia and the U.S. in the wake of the September 11th, and according to the data in our study, the *New York Times* accommodated this desire, whether or not they were aware of the international political consequences. Putin recognized the United States’ newfound obsession with terrorism in the wake of the September 11th attacks as an opportunity to create a more favorable relationship with the U.S. and to justify Russia’s immoral actions taken during the Second Chechen War. Some international authors recognized this, as year after 9/11 and a few weeks after the Moscow hostage crisis, an author of the New Zealand paper, *The Southland Times*, stated in an article that while the hostage crisis was an act of terrorism, the attack gave Putin the “opportunity to portray all armed Chechens as terrorists, rather than, as the great majority of Chechen troops have been, soldiers battling to free their homeland from the forcefully applied rule of a much larger state.”⁷¹

⁷¹ "Laws for Home and Away: [1 Edition]." *The Southland Times*, Nov 12, 2002,

Another implication of the results is how the history of the Russian-Chechen and Anglo-Irish conflicts will be remembered. The change in language to describe the Chechen War risks discounting the immoral actions taken by the Russian government during the Chechen Wars, and the change in language to describe the IRA risks erasing the violence Ulster Loyalists and the British government inflicted upon Irish civilians during the Troubles. While it is important to recognize the violence Chechen fighters and the IRA have inflicted upon civilians, it is equally important to put those attacks in the context of Russia and Britain's military operations in Chechnya and Northern Ireland. Russian soldiers stationed in Chechnya frequently "engaged in systematic human rights abuses, including torture, rape, forced disappearances, mass arrest operations (zachistki), kidnapping and summary executions."⁷² The Northern Irish government during the Troubles was allowed to intern those suspected of collaborating with the IRA with no charge or trial, and British soldiers used a number of torture techniques against those arrested, including waterboarding, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, and 'Falanga,' using heavy rods to beat one's feet.⁷³ In the context of this study, the recharacterization of Chechen fighters and the IRA as terrorists risks reframing Russia and Britain's human rights abuses as counterterrorism operations. For example, Russia displayed an ineptitude in responding to both the Moscow theater crisis and Beslan school siege. In the theater crisis, Russian special forces deployed a gas that "experts believe it was fentanyl, an extremely lethal opioid/chemical more toxic than those used in World War I," which was

<https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/laws-home-away/docview/330763561/se-2?accountid=8361>.

⁷² Kramer, "Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus," 214.

⁷³ Martin J. McCleery, *Operation Demetrius and Its Aftermath: A New History of the Use of Internment without Trial in Northern Ireland, 1971 - 75* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2020), 67.

the main cause of death for the hostages.⁷⁴ During the Beslan school siege, Russian counterterrorism operatives launched “thermobaric incendiary devices similar to napalm” into the building which killed several hostages, with one survivor remarking that “the roof began to burn when they [the Russian forces] began to fire at it with some projectiles.”⁷⁵ In both of these incidents, the majority of casualties were caused by Russian forces, but in international media, the blame was placed completely on the Chechen terrorists with little mention of how the Russians handled the crises. This is not to shift the blame from Chechens to Russians; the hostages would not have been killed by Russian forces if the Chechens had not taken them hostage. But the reporting influences in how these stories are told, and according to our data, the *New York Times* and international newspapers increasingly referred to Chechens as terrorists after 9/11. This drastic increase in language risks distorting the history of Russia’s human rights abuses in Chechnya and their mishandling of hostage crises.

This is not to say that the actions of the IRA and Chechen fighters were excusable and they should not be described as terrorists. Both groups used violence against civilians in an effort to further their political goals, so they should be described both in media and in history with labels appropriate to their actions. However, we should be aware of the impact these labels have on how the conflicts in which these groups operated in reshapes how those conflicts are seen. These labels risk reconceptualizing the Russo-Chechen and Anglo-Irish conflicts as a battle of good versus evil, which diminishes the actions taken by the British and Russian governments against the Irish and Chechen people.

⁷⁴ Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya*, 186.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 193.

Conclusion

The Irish Republican Army and Chechen fighters styled themselves as soldiers fighting for their home against an oppressive regime. This highlights the importance of the rhetoric used to describe them in media, as labels have the power to either legitimize or invalidate the causes of the IRA and Chechen insurgency. My research into the *New York Times* and International Newsstream databases indicates that the September 11 attacks, even though it was an event that was not connected to the conflicts occurring in Northern Ireland and Chechnya, influenced the way in which media networks described and assigned labels to the Irish Republican Army and Chechen insurgency. The importance of this finding is that the shift in rhetoric and labels can influence the perception of these groups, which in turn can impact global policy decisions and how the history of these conflicts will be remembered.

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