

# When did the Irish-American Diaspora Make a Difference? Influencing US Diplomacy towards Northern Ireland

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*Abstract:*

This article explains the changing relationship between Irish leaders, the Irish-American diaspora, Irish-American political elites, and American diplomacy. Specifically, we explore the transnational advocacy networks (TANSs) associated with the Irish diaspora and their impact on American diplomacy. In the early twentieth century, de Valera failed to mobilize Irish-America to convince President Wilson to recognize the Irish Republic. By the late twentieth century Irish-Americans became effective foreign policy entrepreneurs in Congress re-orienting US diplomacy toward Northern Ireland. Irish political elites utilized both the diaspora and their elite connections to transform the American policy of deference to its Cold War ally to an engaged diplomacy mediating and promoting peace.

*Keywords:* Congressional Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs, Four Horsemen, Irish-American Diaspora, Northern Aid Committee (NO-RAID), Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs)

There is a long history of Irish governmental efforts to mobilize the Irish-American diaspora to influence United States foreign policy. The first President of the Irish Republic travelled throughout the United States (US) seeking to mobilize this diaspora to convince President Wilson to grant diplomatic recognition to the Irish Republic in 1919. Though the mission failed, it symbolized the Irish understanding that the diaspora in America could be used to pressure the US government and thereby shape American foreign policy to its interests. The Irish thus have differentiated the diaspora in the US from the Irish diaspora in other states based on the emerging power of the US in the twentieth century. The belief that the Irish-American diaspora could be utilized to modify American policy on behalf of the Irish cause was

highlighted in more recent years by John Hume's efforts to elicit the support of prominent Irish-Americans and the Irish diaspora in America in support of the Northern Ireland peace process. While analysis of the Irish-American diaspora has most frequently focused on the role of nationalist and republican politicians, Unionists in Northern Ireland have recognized and attempted to mobilize the large Scots-Irish diaspora in the US for their political agenda as well. Increasingly, scholars have identified diasporas as important actors in world politics, and our research seeks to link the transnational advocacy networks (TANs) associated with the Irish diaspora in the United States with the formal diplomacy between the governments of Ireland, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States during the Northern Ireland peace process. As such, this article does not focus on the historical development of the Irish diaspora in America or systematically compare the Irish diaspora in the US with the Irish diaspora in other states. While the Irish diaspora is truly global, the Irish in Britain, Australia, Canada, Latin America and other countries did not exert much influence on the Northern Ireland peace process. Thus, we focus on the Irish diaspora in the US' influence and ability to facilitate an emerging peace process in Northern Ireland. Foreign policy entrepreneurs in the US Congress were the critical intermediaries between Irish nationalist politicians and the Irish diaspora in America that ultimately brought about the change in US policy from one of deference to British policy in Northern Ireland to one of diplomatic engagement, often on behalf of the Irish nationalist/republican cause. This article highlights the complex pattern of cooperation that developed between government representatives and the diaspora in formulating, developing, and changing American foreign policy toward Northern Ireland and how this impacted on the peace process.

### *1. International Relations Theory, Diasporas, Diplomacy, and the Northern Ireland Peace*

Liberal theorists of international relations recognize that individuals can have influence based on their charisma and their ability to promote their interest. In peace processes, despite the importance of structural conditions (Ruane and Todd 2014), leaders are important when they take advantage of opportunities to achieve peace. Ripsman (2016) has identified two stages in peace processes. First, peacemakers from above, leaders of states, negotiate an agreement and then groups in civil society build peace from below. In Northern Ireland, Alderdice (2014) and Dixon (2017) believe political elites were critical in leading the peace process. McLoughlin (2017a) has highlighted the important role John Hume played as the leading nationalist politician in Northern Ireland in convincing American leaders of his vision for peace. Hume was able to both articulate a clear vision for peace based on power-sharing and North-South cooperation in Ireland and act as an effective political agent to achieve this plan

for peace. David Trimble, as leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), took risks for peace by negotiating with and ultimately sharing power with nationalists and even republicans (McDonald 2000; Godson 2004; Millar 2004). He understood that power-sharing was necessary in order to gain the decommissioning of republicans. The peace he advocated allowed Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom, the ultimate goal for unionists. After the electoral demise of Trimble and the UUP, Ian Paisley and subsequent leaders of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) agreed to share power with Sinn Féin in the aftermath of the St. Andrews Agreement. Bertie Ahern and negotiators for the Irish government proved effective in providing a viable mechanism for North-South cooperation while rescinding territorial claims to Northern Ireland and helping to promote the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement (McDermott 2014). Simultaneously, Tony Blair and negotiators for the British government like Jonathan Powell were adept at keeping the negotiations and peace process going even if it meant fudging the truth (Aughey 2002; Gormley-Heenan 2007; Dixon 2014 and 2019). Finally, republican leaders in Northern Ireland, especially Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, demonstrated a willingness to negotiate and ultimately promoted ceasefires, various peace agreements, and disarmament that were critical to the peace process (Hazleton 2000; Stevenson 2011). In sum, effective and talented leaders from multiple political parties and in a number of states contributed to the achievement of peace in Northern Ireland.

Peace, however, is not made by elites alone. Putnam (1988) conceived of diplomacy as a two-level game where governments negotiate with each other and their own constituencies. Liberal international relations theorists have stressed not only the role of elites but the role domestic groups play in the formulation of a state's foreign policy. Applying selectorate theory developed by Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2003), Owsiak (2017) has demonstrated the important role that domestic constituencies played in the Northern Ireland peace process. Diasporas are a specific kind of domestic group that seek to influence a government's foreign policy, especially toward their historic homeland (Shain and Barth 2003; Shain 2007). Diasporas can be a source of conflict (Shain 2002; Adamson 2013) or a source of conflict resolution (Shain 2002; Shain and Aryasinha 2006; Bercovitch 2007; Baser and Swain 2008) depending on how the diaspora views the conditions in its ancestral homeland and the proper role of its new government. A state's effort to utilize a diaspora to assist it in influencing another state is quite similar to historic efforts to use propaganda to achieve influence. However, instead of attempting to reach a large percentage of the other state's population, efforts to utilize a diaspora recognize the important link that those who live in a diaspora have to their ethnic homeland. This can motivate some in the diaspora to influence the government of their new state on issues of special interest to those in the land of their ancestors.

While diasporas can be resources that states seek to mobilize to influence other states, they are also autonomous groups that play an important role in shaping the politics of their adopted homeland. Members of a diaspora may identify with the land of their ancestors, but this does not mean that a diaspora does whatever the historic state or government wishes. The autonomy gained by living in another state frees members of a diaspora from an obligation to do the bidding of the state of their birth or ancestry. Nevertheless, many in a diaspora continue to feel an important connection to the land, territory, and people of their home state. As a result, many scholars have suggested that diasporas play an especially important role in defining and redefining the identity of their home nation (Anderson 1998; Anthias 1998; Ma Mung 2004; Tölölyan 2007; Hickman 2012). Their experience abroad informs the politics of their homeland as emigrant experiences challenge traditional norms and place pressure on the governments of their homeland to offer more economic opportunity and political security to prevent the need for emigration in the future. Inevitably, emigration is a sign of failure in the traditional conception of a state which included a population *within* a given territory. The fact that the physical boundary of the state fails to provide the opportunity or security that its citizens seek inevitably places pressure on states to change policies to accede to the needs of its citizens. Akenson (1996, 10) notes that in the twentieth century emigration has been a sign of failure for numerous Irish governments.

While scholars historically conceived of groups as domestic or internal actors, the increased linkages that exist across states means that scholars no longer conceive of groups as isolated and parochial but as groups who share interests, information and even identities across state borders. This has meant that diasporas can increasingly interact with those living in their home state. Gupta (2017) has applied the concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) to explain the numerous licit, semi-licit, and illicit relationships that existed connecting organizations in the US to nationalist and republican groups in Ireland during the Troubles and the peace process. These networks linked individuals in the US and Ireland through a common interest in Ireland and Irish freedom. A wide array of organizations existed, some autonomously and independently created by individuals in the US but some were sponsored or linked to political groups in Ireland. Networks connecting the Irish diaspora and Irish politicians and interests date back to the late nineteenth century (Keown 2016), but Irish-America and ultimately the US government became motivated to engage and attempt to influence Northern Ireland during the Troubles, especially in the aftermath of the British policy of internment. American groups and prominent Irish-Americans in Congress, especially Senator Ted Kennedy, pressured the Nixon administration to protest British policy as the Troubles intensified (MacLeod 2016, 27).

As Keck and Sikkink (1998) contend, TANs are likely to develop in states that seek to raise their international standing by a successful interven-

tion. Groups formed autonomously in the US and those that were linked to parties or individuals in Ireland recognized that American engagement in Northern Ireland would be diplomatic and would not be based on the threat of or use of military force. US diplomatic engagement in Northern Ireland was more practical and comparatively less expensive than military interventions that might lead to a quagmire or casualties (Hazleton 2000). Another factor that allowed groups to emerge with influence in the US was the permeability in the welcoming of groups within its territories (Shain and Barth 2003). The United States has historically offered economic hope for many immigrants, inviting many – both legal and undocumented to come to its shores. The United States has arguably been lenient towards the Irish as an immigrant group, favoring them for multiple reasons. Ignatiev (2009) has suggested that the Irish were able to succeed and integrate into American culture and society because of their race. Despite a history of discrimination, especially in the nineteenth century, American society came to accept the Irish, who by the late twentieth century they had emerged as the wealthiest and arguably the most successful ethnic group in the American public. Gupta (2017) stresses that the power of a group or social movement is based on how the state perceives this group, not on how the groups perceives themselves. The Irish were fortunate to have a positive image in American society that allowed them access to power and influence. McCourt (1999) contends that Irish-Americans considered themselves strong and united, superior to other immigrant groups.

We stress the importance of this American diaspora in how Irish officials engaged the US government to support their interests. Irish officials realized that the Irish-American lobby or diaspora could put pressure on the US government to support their objectives. Irish elites, whether they were republicans, nationalists, or unionists, sought to mobilize members of the Irish diaspora. When the Troubles emerged in the late 1960s, Irish elites attempted to connect with Irish-American groups and interested Irish-American elites who could lobby the US government to support policies friendly to their cause. For example, Gupta (2017) highlights the illicit network that emerged in this period to support the Irish Republican Army's (IRA's) bombing campaign against the British. This network heavily relied on support from Irish-American groups like NORAID (Northern Aid Committee) to fund their efforts. NORAID succeeded in attracting support from Irish-Americans who related to the discrimination experienced by Catholics in Northern Ireland based on their own hardship and discrimination in America (Hanley 2004). Gradually, led by John Hume, Irish nationalists mobilized more moderate elements within the Irish-American community to promote a more peaceful intervention by the United States into the conflict (Fitzpatrick 2017; Gupta 2017; McLoughlin 2017a).

The networks connecting Irish-Americans with Irish elites highlight how TANs play an important role because of their position as mediators between

the foreign country and the home country. These networks serve as conduits for information, resources, and services (Gupta 2017). In the case of Northern Ireland, US government officials achieved a better understanding of the Troubles largely thanks to TANs which persuaded them of the importance of ending violence and of seeking a diplomatic solution. Transnational Advocacy Networks, thus, proved to have capacity into modifying material conditions through patronage as well as ideational power in their reframing of the situation for stakeholders (Gupta 2017). During the Clinton administration, the Americans for a New Irish Agenda encouraged the IRA to abandon its armed struggle and prove its credibility. The advent of the ceasefire due, in part, to the lobbying of Irish-American associations gave TANs even more credibility and induced some republicans to give more importance to Irish America (Wilson 1997). As previously stated, the importance that a country gives to a group determines how much power TANs have in influencing in decision-making. As much as the Irish wanted to influence America, they realized the importance of having the US government on their side in the negotiations. This provided the Clinton administration important influence in the shaping of the peace settlement (Guelke 1996). To appreciate fully the role of TANs in the peace process, one must understand the historic development of the Irish diaspora in the United States and the efforts by Irish politicians to utilize this diaspora for Irish political purposes.

## *2. The Irish Diaspora in the United States*

Since the United States is a democracy, domestic groups associate freely and thereby influence the foreign policy of the state. One such means of association is organizing based on national origin through diaspora groups. Of all the diaspora groups in the US, the Irish are one of the most famous and studied because of the large number of people who have emigrated from Ireland over the past few centuries and the disparate contributions the Irish have made in America. The prominence of the Irish diaspora in the US and around the world has led historians to increase their focus and attention on both the process of leaving, crossing, and arriving as well as whether how this diaspora segregated, integrated or modulated between their new homes and Ireland (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008). Studies of more recent migration patterns and experiences, especially those from Northern Ireland, emphasize the connectedness of those who migrated in the twentieth century, how they impacted on their native lands and how members of the diaspora frequently return (Trew 2013). Increasingly, historians compare the Irish in America to the Irish diaspora in other parts of the world identifying similarities and differences based on their destination (Kenny 2003). Akenson (1996) has stressed that the Irish in America are part of a complex grouping who can only be truly understood based on their common connection with

other members of the Irish diaspora and on their connection to the home of their origin, Ireland. He also contends that the Irish in North America are in some ways quite distinct from the overall Irish diaspora that has settled in many other parts of the world (Akenson 1996, 218-219).

While most popular accounts of Irish emigration focus on the Famine and its effect on large scale migration of Catholics from the 1840s to World War I (Akenson 1996, 6), an earlier wave of Protestant migration primarily from Northern Ireland came in the eighteenth and early decades on the nineteenth century (Miller 1985; Griffin 2001; Miller 2006; Doan 2012; Hofstra 2012; Bankhurst 2013). This part of the Irish diaspora is less studied because it integrated into American society earlier than the later primarily Catholic wave of migration. Nevertheless, Delaney (2014) and others emphasize the dual traditions of the Irish diaspora in America. Lambkin (2018) argues partition has served to undermine the process of understanding the Irish diaspora from an All-Ireland perspective and tended to replicate the dual narrative of Irish migration. While many of the early Protestant migrants to America might have been better understood as Republicans in their lifetimes, increasingly scholars are recognizing the networks that attempt to link unionists in Northern Ireland with their Scots-Irish descendants. The attempt to re-establish a link between unionists in Northern Ireland and their diaspora in America has been part of a slow process of redefining unionist identity in the wake of the Northern Ireland peace process (Radford 2001; McCall 2002; Stapleton 2006; White, Wiedenhoft Murphy, and Peden 2016). Despite this effort, unionists have been less successful in forging an effective diasporic connection with Scots-Irish in America than the continuing link between nationalists and Catholic Irish-Americans (Ó Dochartaigh 2009).

Fitzgerald (2008) speaks of transnationalists as people who want to recreate community, a sense of belonging, within the foreign country because they were lost in their own nation-state. The Irish in America did just this by forming several groups that spanned different realms of society. The Irish-American population was organized for political advocacy in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Wilson 1995), the American Congress for Irish Freedom (ACIF) (Wilson 1995), *Seanóglaiigh na hÉireann* (which took the place of the old veterans' association) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995), the National Association for Irish Justice (NAIJ) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Wilson 1995), the National Association for Irish Freedom (NAIF) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Wilson 1995), the Irish National Caucus (INC) (Wilson 1995; Guelke 2012; Gupta 2017), the Committee for Justice in Northern Ireland (CJNI) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Wilson 1995), the Irish Action Committee (IAC) (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Wilson 1995), Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA) (Guelke 1996; Wilson 1997; Guelke 2012), the American Committee for Ulster Justice (ACUJ) (Funchion 1983; Wilson 1995) and, more recently, in the Friends of Sinn Féin and other groups organized to sup-

port political parties in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Irish Americans also were connected through illicit networks mainly through the IRA with NO-RAID (Ó Dochartaigh 1995; Guelke 2012; Cooper 2015; Gupta 2017). The quantity and diversity of TANs that linked Irish groups with Irish-America in the late twentieth century symbolized the fractured nature of Irish America by this era. Nevertheless, the large population of Americans who identified with Ireland and the increasingly prominent role they played in society were prerequisites for the assertion of this diaspora in the politics of the peace process (O'Dowd 2000), but the critical intervening factor that facilitated the transformation of American foreign policy toward Northern Ireland was not just the presence of a diverse and large Irish-American population but a group of leaders who emerged in American national government that were effective agents in promoting changes in US policy that facilitated peace.

To understand the influence of the Irish (nationalist) community in the United States, one has to appreciate how the identity and policy positions of this group evolved during the Troubles. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many in the US came to support the cause of Irish republicans based on the media coverage which focused on the violence perpetrated by British forces in Northern Ireland. This narrative played into the old axiom that all that was necessary for peace in Ireland was to get the Brits out. In this time period, the Irish in America who did not support the IRA were called “lapsed Irishmen” or “lace curtain Irish” and were seen as a disgrace and betrayal to the home country (Wilson 1995). As the Irish in America modified their own conceptions of their identity and their beliefs, the way others, including policy-makers, came to see these groups also changed (Gupta 2017). The Irish in America gained more influence in the US as they became wealthier, took up more prominent positions in business and the professions, and became economically and socially successful. For example, Niall O'Dowd was a publisher of the *Irish Voice*, Chuck Feeney and William Flynn were corporate executives, and Joe Jameson was a labor boss. These represented a new generation of Irish American power brokers proving that Irish-Americans had emerged in leadership roles in society (Hazleton 2000). Diasporas tend to be wealthier than their counterparts at home (Shain and Barth 2003), and in the US context this allowed Irish-Americans to support financially families, civil society projects, illicit groups like the IRA, and political parties in Ireland (Guelke 1996; Almeida 2001).

Beyond becoming a wealthy and successful subgroup of the American population, how and why did members of the Irish-American diaspora with sympathies toward Irish nationalism come to have power and influence? We contend that the critical intervening variable or factor that made Irish nationalists successful in mobilizing the US government to play a role on its behalf were the political elites who the nationalists came to rely upon to modify US policy. Historically, the Irish-American population was espe-

cially well-organized in cities such as Boston, New York, and Chicago. This had allowed the Irish in America to become leaders of urban areas since the early twentieth century. However, it was not till the late twentieth century when Irish-American politicians from a nationalist background became important national leaders in Congress and the Senate. The four critical actors of immense political influence were Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Senator from New York; Hugh Carey, Congressman and then Governor of New York; Ted Kennedy, Senator from Massachusetts; and Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the US House of Representatives from Massachusetts. These Irish-American politicians were called the Four Horsemen. Their roles in government enabled them to influence the US government's foreign policy. Interest on their part in US Foreign policy motivated them to assert their influence on behalf of the Irish cause. As such, they operated as what has been identified as "Congressional Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs" (Carter, Scott, and Rowling 2004; Carter and Scott 2009 and 2010). It was these political elites who effectively translated pressure from Irish-American groups to influence US foreign policy toward Northern Ireland. Tip O'Neill and Ted Kennedy were especially important as they had developed the skills, knowledge, and influence to change US policy toward Northern Ireland to no longer defer to the British regarding Northern Ireland but instead pressure for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. As such, these foreign policy entrepreneurs were able to achieve what Carter and Scott (2009, 27) identify as a "policy correction" based on a recognition that the extant US policy toward Northern Ireland was "ineffective or inappropriate".

What made the appeals of the Four Horsemen for the Irish nationalist cause find receptive responses in the White House? By the late twentieth century, Irish-Americans represented a large voting bloc that could be used by politicians for their campaigns. President Carter utilized the potential of gaining Irish-American votes to justify his positions in the 1976 campaign and once he assumed office (Cooper 2015). McLoughlin (2017b) attributes to him and his work with the Four Horsemen, the initial spark that began the entire peace process. President Clinton catered to the Irish-American lobby in his 1992 campaign promising to consider granting a Visa for Gerry Adams to gain votes from Irish-Americans in the New York Primary against his last remaining rival, Jerry Brown (O'Grady 1996). After assuming office, Clinton became heavily involved in the Northern Ireland peace process, and some see this as a result of his campaign promise and desire to appeal to the large Irish-American Catholic electorate in the US (Hazleton 2000; Lynch 2003; Dixon 2010; Riley 2016, 229). The fact that American politicians, not just the Four Horsemen but also US Presidents, were so strongly connected to TANs organized to influence US foreign policy related to Northern Ireland demonstrated the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in lobbying American decisions regarding Northern Ireland (Cochrane 2010).

It is also important to recognize that the diplomatic effort to promote peace in Northern Ireland fit well within Clinton's overall foreign policy of engagement and enlargement (Soderberg 2005).

The ability of numerous Irish-American groups, including elected officials, to utilize St. Patrick's Day as an annual reminder of the need for the US not to forget Ireland and the peace process continues even in an era when the Trump administration has considered ending the role of the US Envoy to Northern Ireland. The St. Patrick's Day tradition became an important part of the peace process when President Clinton publicly greeted Gerry Adams in 1995 (Wilson 1997). While St. Patrick's Day is usually seen as a celebration exclusively for nationalists, David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, first met President Bill Clinton on St. Patrick's Day in 1998, demonstrating St. Patrick's Day could be used by unionists as well to press their agenda (Dixon 2010). Unionist leaders had earlier decided to not attend the event in 1995 as a means of protesting US policy in Northern Ireland (Hazleton 2000). While St. Patrick's Day was typically seen as an opportunity for Irish nationalists to pressure the US government for their cause, under President Bush, the US disinvited Gerry Adams to the White House as part of the St. Patrick's Day celebration to protest against a bank robbery attributed to the IRA and the lack of decommissioning (Clancy 2007). Thus, the celebrations of St. Patrick's Day in the US offer insight into both the specific power of organized networks and the more general sympathy the US government has for the Irish nationalist cause based on the large number of Irish-American voters.

### *3. Irish Diplomacy: utilizing the diaspora and effective foreign policy entrepreneurs*

Because of the history of Irish immigration to America, Irish politicians have come to see the Irish diaspora in the United States as a resource to be utilized to further Ireland's diplomatic goals. Even before Eamon de Valera's famous trip, the Irish while seeking independence saw important allies in the United States (Nyhan Grey 2016). De Valera's extended visit to the United States during the Anglo-Irish War (what Irish nationalists call the War for Independence) in 1919 was based on his belief that his tour across the US would mobilize the Irish-American diaspora to persuade President Wilson to recognize Ireland as an independent state (Ward 1969; Hannigan 2010; Cosi 2016; Keown 2016). As a Democrat, Wilson was dependent on the Irish-American vote in major cities and one could think that he might have succumbed to the pressure of this important constituency (Marnane 2018, 187). In the end, de Valera's visit was unsuccessful in garnering diplomatic recognition for the Irish state (in the aftermath of World War I, the US was just too closely linked with Britain). Despite the failure to gain recognition, de Valera's effort highlights the perception among Irish political elites that the Irish diaspora in America can be useful in furthering their political objectives.

US-Irish diplomatic relations were cordial after the Irish Free State was created with formal diplomatic recognition not coming until 1924 (Whelan 2006). Continuing close relations between the United States and Britain meant that the US would not side against Britain or be used against the British during the Economic War that occurred between Britain and Ireland in the 1930s. As World War II approached, the Irish government's policy of neutrality tended to strain Irish-American relations. While Irish policy was clearly based on seeking to assert its independence from Britain, many in the US would clearly have preferred if the Irish had joined the allied cause (Carter 1977; Duggan 1985). The popularity of neutrality in Ireland during the Emergency or World War II meant that Irish post-war governments continued this policy rather than join the US in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While Irish-American relations remained cordial in the 1950s and 60s, Ireland's peripheral role in the Cold War as a neutral country meant that the US focused little on her in its diplomacy.

When the Troubles emerged in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, the world took notice including the United States. Though it was very unwilling to challenge in any way its closest Cold War ally, the United Kingdom, US government officials and members of the Irish-American community became increasingly concerned with the violence in Northern Ireland. By the time of Jimmy Carter's presidency, Irish officials became increasingly assertive in asking the US government to take a public stance regarding the continuing violence in Northern Ireland (Meagher and McLoughlin 2016). Irish government officials pressured the Reagan administration to have the President use his personal influence with Margaret Thatcher to convince the British to sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement (McLoughlin 2017a, 82).

While the Irish-American diaspora provided little pressure during the George H.W. Bush administration, things rapidly changed with President Clinton. The end of the Cold War meant that the US needed to defer less to the British government, and this allowed the US to become a more effective broker in peace negotiations (Dumbrell 2013). With less international constraints, US government policy was increasingly influenced by domestic considerations. This allowed domestic Irish-American groups to gain influence (O'Cleary 1996) and shift American policy from one of deference to the British government to one of engagement in a Northern Ireland peace process. The Irish government under Albert Reynolds seized the opportunity in the early 1990s to pressure President Clinton and the American government to become more engaged in the emerging peace process. Specifically, the Irish government pressured the US government to give a visa to Gerry Adams, hoping this would both legitimate the republicans in Northern Ireland and encourage them to commit to a ceasefire and negotiations (Clancy 2013). This decision gained widespread support among the Irish-American community as it appealed both to those in the US who continued to support

and identify with the Irish republican cause as well as those who had become more moderate and were searching for means of promoting peace in Northern Ireland. The US government under President Clinton subsequently continued to play an important, if supporting, role by nominating George Mitchell to chair the commission that would set the parameters for paramilitary participation in the negotiations which culminated in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The Irish government continued to utilize the United States as an effective third party in the process of implementing the Good Friday Agreement as well (White and Murphy 2015). Clinton's endless optimism, positive determination, and ability to empathize and relate to the numerous and diverse parties in the conflict, not just siding with the nationalists and republicans, made him an important actor in the peace process (Gartner 2008). Dixon (2019) portrays the US and Clinton's role as purposefully exaggerated so as to influence republicans to abandon the armed struggle. The choreography of the peace process meant that under President George W. Bush, the US government played the role of bad cop encouraging the IRA to decommission while the British and Irish governments played the role of good cop more gently supporting IRA decommissioning (Clancy 2013). While President Bush was much less involved in the Northern Irish peace process than his predecessor, his envoys, Richard Haass and Mitchell Reiss, were given great autonomy to make policy and seek to promote peace and were important if secondary players in the process of seeking to implement the Good Friday Agreement.

Throughout the peace process, a complex and evolving relationship existed between various groups in Northern Ireland and the United States, the Irish government, and the US government. Linking the diasporic and diplomatic relationships provide a means of comprehending the complex interaction that existed between the different parties to the conflict in Northern Ireland and how the US government ultimately intervened when and how it did (White 2017). US government action might have been much less willing to engage diplomatically in Northern Ireland had it not been for the perceived benefits of placating Irish-American voters and their elected representatives. This important constituency in American politics which had developed important urban bases of support by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reached its apex of influence in American national politics in the aftermath of the election of President Kennedy. After his election, a number of Irish-American politicians reached the highest echelon of power within the US political system, including the heretofore mentioned Four Horsemen. Of special importance to the peace process as it unfolded in the 1990s was the assassinated President's brother, Ted Kennedy (Vargo 2019). By the 1990s Senator Kennedy had become one of the most accomplished legislators of the late twentieth century. The Irish government and Irish nationalists, especially John Hume, became effective in convincing Kennedy and other important Irish-American political leaders that the US needed to

play a greater diplomatic role in Northern Ireland (McLoughlin 2017a). They subsequently lobbied a number of administrations effectively to promote a greater US diplomatic role in Northern Ireland, often pressuring their long-time ally, the British government, in the process.

#### 4. Conclusion

In sum, the Irish diaspora in America, organized in a myriad of TANs, and Irish-American political leaders as Congressional Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs became important actors in making peace in Northern Ireland. In the late twentieth century Irish nationalist politicians sought the US government's assistance in mediating the conflict recognizing that the fundamental differences were between unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland. Because the British state had historically sided with unionists, it could not effectively mediate the conflict. From a nationalist and republican perspective, this required the US to challenge the British policy toward Northern Ireland by granting a visa to Gerry Adams, who the British (and the US previously) had classified as a terrorist. While tense diplomatic exchanges ensued between the British and US governments, the granting of the Visa worked to mainstream Irish republicans led by Adams and foster an IRA ceasefire, laying the groundwork for open, direct negotiations between Sinn Féin and the British government. Continuing US diplomatic efforts assisted the local parties as well as the British and Irish governments in reaching a settlement, the Good Friday Agreement. The US government continued to support the Northern Ireland peace process by assisting in the implementation of this Agreement. The complex pattern of interaction between Irish nationalist politicians, the Irish-American diaspora, critical Irish-American politicians and the US government demonstrates that diasporic involvement can work to promote peace even if it confronts and challenges historic diplomatic relationships.

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