

Violence, De-escalation, and
Nationalism:
Northern Ireland and the Basque
Country Compared

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Abstract

The sub-state nationalist conflicts in both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country have undergone significant de-escalation. However, while the transformation of the conflict in Northern Ireland involved a negotiated agreement with the host state, that of the conflict in the Basque Country did not. Thus, if the shape of the outcome represents the dependent variable, exploring these transformations requires an examination of three interrelated independent variable groupings. The first explores the operational capacities of each movement through an examination of their resources, and how access to these resources may have changed over time and impacted the overall strategies. Secondly, an examination of state responses to both the conflict itself as well as to changing movement strategies is undertaken. Finally, the third grouping seeks to explore the dynamics the above variables have on the way in which the sub-state nationalist organizations are led and directed. This project found that while both the Republican Movement and the MLNV experienced motivating pulls toward de-escalation and pursuit of movement goals increasingly dominated by institutional politics (Grouping 1), the differences in the responses of the host States (Grouping 2), and the organizational structures through which movement assessments and decisions are funnelled (Grouping 3), allowed for the MLNV to make the more radical commitment to de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated settlement, while the Republican Movement was able to move the bulk of, but not all, its membership into a negotiated agreement with the British state. The Republican Movement experienced greater optimism for and motivation in negotiations than did the MLNV, while the MLNV experienced greater motivation toward de-escalation more generally.

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Chapter 1: Research Plan

Introduction

Nationalist conflicts, rather than being a thing of the past, are a persistent and ongoing phenomenon. A 2008 report lists 226 ongoing nationalist conflicts (Jones & Libicki, 2008). Nor is it a phenomenon to which democratic states are immune. Even in those states who have managed a relatively successful management strategy - or, more positively - a resolution to such conflicts, the puzzle of how to manage different and often conflicting nationalist identities in divided societies, is an equally ongoing process. As part of this puzzle, this project seeks to explore the process through which militant sub-state nationalist organizations de-escalate.

Recently the conflicts in both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country have seen a dramatic –though not complete – reduction in violence. The conflicts in the two regions have much in common: both have primarily contemporary, 20th century expressions, take place within the context of the developed world, have experienced paramilitary as well as political expressions of secessionist nationalisms, currently take place within a democratic context, and both have experienced a dramatic reduction in violence over the last two decades. However, while one has achieved this reduction in violence through a negotiated agreement, the other has seen no comparable development. The research question is thus:

Why did the de-escalation in the conflict in Northern Ireland involve a formally negotiated agreement, while a similar de-escalation has occurred in the Basque Country without such an agreement?

This project proposes an examination of the strategies of militant nationalist organizations and how they perceive, understand, and act upon structures of political opportunity at critical moments in the conflict/de-escalation process. With this understanding it is hoped that further insight might be gained concerning how processes of de-escalation are shaped, and ultimately, how these processes can be shaped in order to help manage, resolve and transform conflict in divided societies.

Research Puzzle

In light of sub-state nationalisms, the interplay of nationalism, peace, and violence in divided societies is of critical importance to the development and support of democracy. It is this question of finding positive and peaceful expressions for once violent manifestations of sub-state nationalism that is of interest. A recent publication, *How Terrorist Groups End (2008)*, broadly suggests that policing represents the most effective means of bringing terrorist movements to an end. However, when looking at expressions of sub-state nationalisms with violent paramilitary expressions, a number of difficulties with such an approach arise. This is in part evidenced by the fact that of the 226 armed nationalist organizations identified in the report (Jones and Libicki, 2008), 62.4% are identified as either having splintered or as being *unresolved*. Of the identified organizations that 'ended' 60% had peak membership numbers of less than 100, of those whose defeats were attributed to police and military efforts, 71.4% had peak memberships of under 100. Of those organizations whose peak memberships were over 100, only 29.4% were defeated through police or military operations, while 38.2% were victorious and 32.4% negotiated a settlement. Thus, police and military operations were insufficient in 70.6% of the cases in which peak membership exceeds or exceeded, 100.

These statistics represent an interesting puzzle. Of those groups whose campaigns have been brought to some type of conclusion, only in 29.4% of cases was it arguably counter to the intentions of the movement or organization – broadly speaking – to do so. This suggests that in the remainder of cases, de-escalation of conflict was, at least to a degree, impacted by the decisions of the movement itself. Accordingly, the study of two similar processes of de-escalation provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between agency and structure, to link the micro to the macro through an examination of strategic choice, and in so doing help shed some light on the transformation of conflict in divided societies. Recognizing the differences between conflicts that de-escalated through a negotiated

agreement or in the absence of one is a potentially important for contributing to both the depth and breadth of the literature on de-escalation of violent conflict. By taking the time to parse the typology of outcomes, it is held that the field will be better equipped to understand and evaluate the dynamics leading to the de-escalation of violent conflict, in part by broadening the range of perspective cases for analysis and comparison.

If the shape of the outcome represents the dependent variable, exploring these transformations requires an examination of three broad but interrelated independent variable groupings. The first explores the operational capacities of each movement through an examination of their resources, and how access to these resources may have changed over time and impacted the overall movement, and its strategies. Resources in this sense relates to both the tangible and intangible, and is broken down into four independent variables: political viability of constituent organizations, their military viability, and relatedly the support and alliances available to them. Second, given that a conflict necessarily involves more than one participant, an examination of state responses to both the conflict itself as well as to changing movement strategies is undertaken. To this end state responses examined the institutional framework of the state as it relates to the participation of sub-state nationalists in pursuit of movement goals; examine the attempts at engagements made between the State and relevant sub-state nationalist organizations, as well as the concessions and tactics (carrots and sticks) the State has made use of over the course of their interactions as independent variables. Finally, the third grouping seeks to explore in more detail the dynamics the above variables have on the way in which the sub-state nationalist organizations are led and directed. To do this attention must be paid to the ways in which the organizations frame their targets – both in terms of their goals and the target of their strategies - , their organizational structures, the impact of dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion on the constituent organizations, as well as the movement's ability to learn from previous engagements and adapt their

strategies accordingly, as independent variables. In all resources, state responses, and leadership provide a series of effective interacting lenses to explore the dynamics of de-escalation in the selected cases, and how and why the Northern Irish and Basque Country processes took such divergent forms.

Theoretical Framework

Built on Zartman's (1989) theory of ripeness, readiness theory goes a step deeper by 'focus[ing] on the thinking within a single party rather than on the joint thinking of both parties to a conflict' (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1524). While different levels of readiness are needed by parties to consider, become involved in, and stay in negotiations, readiness is needed by both parties to the conflict for negotiations to begin and have a chance at being successful. Readiness

has two components which combine multiplicatively: Motivation (that is, a goal) to end the conflict, which is fed by (a) a sense that the conflict is unwinnable or possess unacceptable costs or risks and /or (b) pressure from powerful third parties such as allies. Optimism about the outcome of conciliation and negotiation. Motivation and optimism are compensatory, in the sense that more of one can substitute for less of the other. However, both must be present, in some degree, for any conciliatory behaviour to be enacted (Pruitt, 2007, p.1525).

Optimism, Pruitt (2007) holds, can result from lowered aspirations, the development of working trust, or the perception that there is a light at the end of the tunnel (p. 1529). Motivation for its part can move a party toward negotiation through discouragement about achieving one's goal; the opportunity for information gathering about the adversary's willingness, positions etc. ; to test the waters based on information gathered; and/or third party mobilization encouraging their allies toward negotiation (Pruitt, 2006 in Pruitt 2007, p. 1529-30).

In exploring the form of de-escalation taken in the two case studies, process tracing is used to examine the readiness of key parties to engage in, and stay through a negotiated agreement to their respective

conflicts. Given, as suggested by the research problem, that violent sub-state nationalist groups appear to have some say in the shape of de-escalation, particular emphasis is placed on examining the process leading to the de-escalatory strategies undertaken by the Republican Movement (RM) in Northern Ireland and *Movimiento de Liberación Nacionalista Vasco* (MLNV Basque Nationalist Liberation Movement). Readiness is examined through an assessment of three groupings of factors: resources (political viability, military viability, support and alliances); state responses (institutions, concessions, engagements, and tactics); and leadership (target framing, organizational structure, fragmentation/cohesion, and learning processes).

This project is not, at its core about *why* the conflicts in question have experienced a de-escalation in violence, it is more concerned with examining why the de-escalations took the form that they have; specifically, why the de-escalation in Northern Ireland took place within the context of a formally negotiated agreement, while that in the Basque Country took place without such an agreement. This project is concerned with the shape of militant nationalist strategy in their interactions with the state surrounding discussions of de-escalation. It is therefore hypothesised that while both the MLNV and RM were possessed of a degree of motivation for a negotiated agreement, differences in State responses to movement strategies and aspirations created a variation in movement optimism for the achievement of a positive outcome in and for, a negotiated agreement. Within the effects of this motivation and optimism, differences in the movement organization leadership structures further meant that the RM was equipped to push the bulk of its membership toward a bilateral strategy of a negotiated agreement at a relatively sharp pace, whereas the MLNV moved more slowly toward a unilateral strategy of de-escalation and an increase in social and institutional activism but with full agreement of its base.

As Lederach (2006) notes, participants in a conflict are themselves potential resources for its resolution. Of interest here is this notion of capturing the potential for action of those individuals already mobilized for conflict, and providing alternative, meaningful, and productive avenues for their input. Yet such agency is not unconstrained. This act of constraining necessarily implies an interaction: "We can never delineate structure or agency in isolation from the other" (Jasper, 2004, p. 478). Despite the enormity of weight structure can bring to bear on an actor's decision, "one of the most important moments, and sources of creativity, is when strategic players manage to break with expectations and make another choice" (Jasper, 2004, p.478). Jasper (2004) argues for the need for a "sociology of strategic choice that pays more attention to meaning and to social and institutional context" (p. 486). Thus, is it attempted to outline here how the social constructionism of social movement theory can be added to a framework of the political opportunity structures of the political process tradition. This is in turn supported by historical institutionalism, can be instrumentalized in cross-national historical comparison of cases, to identify the causal dynamics of a particular decision: in this instance, the move toward de-escalation of the conflict.

Accordingly, historical institutionalism, along with the political process tradition's political opportunity structures, emphasizes the ways in which political and social processes are patterned by institutional arrangements and developments. As an approach, staunch structuralism can be criticized for a static presentation of what are in fact dynamic processes. Critical junctures are used to explain change within historical institutionalism. Critical junctures are moments in history when the constraints of structure are loosened and there is greater room for agency. Soifer (2012) identifies two sets of conditions that allow for such critical junctures. The first set of conditions are permissive conditions. These conditions are "those factors or conditions that change the underlying context to increase the causal power of agency or contingency and thus the prospects for divergence. The mechanism of reproduction of the

previous critical juncture are undermined, and this creates a new context in which divergence from the previous stable pattern can emerge” (Soifer, 2012, p. 1574). Significantly, permissive conditions only mark windows of opportunity; they themselves are necessary but not sufficient components of critical junctures (Soifer, 2012, p. 1575). The second set of conditions refers to productive conditions.

Themselves necessary but not sufficient conditions, productive conditions are defined as “the aspects of a critical juncture that shape the initial outcomes that diverge across cases”; once “constraints have been loosened, productive conditions shape the outcomes that emerge and are “locked in” when the window of opportunity marked by the permissive conditions comes to a close” (Soifer, 2012, p. 1575). Up until the critical juncture, all is not static; it is with the critical juncture that significant changes are initiated or cemented (Hall and Taylor, 1996).

A final theory is added to the theoretical framework with social constructionism. With its emphasis on meaning and interpretation, an appreciation for the dynamic nature of conflict, is incorporated as an attempt to reinsert a measure of insight into questions of perception and subjectivity influencing strategic decisions. As Jasper (2004) argues, “[w]e must recognize that structured arenas shape players, player’s decisions, and the outcomes of interactions, but we cannot assume effects without looking at the choices made, the interactions, and the results” (.p 475). While the above mentioned opportunity structures provide a solid framework for assessing the strategies and outcomes of social movements, they remain incomplete. As Gamson and Meyer (1996) note, there is “a cultural side to opportunity” (276 in Buechler, 2011, p. 155). Lichbach (1995) in exploring potential responses to the collective action dilemmas posed by game theory, argues that it must be acknowledged that people come to social interactions already bound up in a web of social connections and obligations. While strongly capable of analyzing resources, organizations and opportunities, the political process tradition inadequately addressed questions of framing, signification and culture and “social constructionism was presented as

filling gaps, correcting biases, complementing existing work, and restoring a micro-level dimension to social movement theory” (Buechler, 2011, p. 156).

Social constructivism fills an important gap in the political process tradition – it is not enough that political opportunity structures are conducive to social movement challenges, they must be perceived to be so, or capable of being created (Kurzman, 1996). In his study of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Kurzman (1996) argues that the Iranian state was not objectively vulnerable to revolution, but that in response to the growth of the opposition, the political opportunity structures were perceived as changing. The finding, Kurzman (1996) argues, is significant: “The Iranian Revolution may be a case in which people saw that the door was closed, but felt that opposition was powerful enough to open it” (p.129).

As Buechler (2011) suggests, social constructionism provides a means of reconnecting the micro-level dimension of social movement theory to the meso- and macro- levels more typical of historical institutionalism and the political process tradition. In all, as Jasper (2004) suggests a micro-level theory of strategic choice is necessary to develop an interactive and dynamic framework in the study of collective action. This is not to suggest that agency ‘trumps’ structure, but rather that following the constraining and selective influences of historical institutionalism, “if we can’t identify agency, we can’t observe the structures that limit it” (Jasper, 2004,p. 474). Path dependency, critical junctures, feedback loops, veto players, perceptions, frames, and other formal and informal ‘rules of the game’ act in a sense as a funnel through which strategic choices are passed until few, if any significant choices, remain. Thus historical institutionalism, used in conjunction with the political process tradition, and social constructionism of social movement theory, provide a strong framework for investigating changes in the strategic choices of nationalist conflicts – particularly that to de-escalate.

Bennett and Chekel (2014) note that causality is often more complex than dependent and independent variables as often “the events that lie temporally and /or spatially between the independent variable and the dependent variable are *not* fully determined by the specified independent variables and these events *do* have independent effects on the nature, timing, or magnitude of the dependent variable” (p.7). Researchers must thus make decisions on which of these intervening variables are exogenous – too weak, too unpredictable, or too infrequent – and are thus to be left outside the model; and those complimentary variables which are to be included as they impact the main variables “but do so independently, or without interaction effects related to the main variables” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p. 7). As Bennett and Checkel (2014) point out “causal mechanisms are in some sense ultimately unobservable. We do not get to observe causality – we make inferences about it” (p.11). Causal mechanisms are themselves defined as:

Ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities. In doing so, the causal agent changes the affected entities’ characteristics, capacities, or propensities in ways that persist until subsequent causal mechanism act upon them. If we are able to measure changes in the entity being acted upon after the intervention of the causal mechanisms and in temporal or spatial isolation from other mechanisms, then the causal mechanism may be said to have generated the observed change in the entity (Bennet and Checkel, 2014, p.12)

Historically developed conception of statehood patterned the political opportunity structures presented to militant nationalists at the end of the twentieth century. Political opportunity structures (the institutional arrangements, historical precedents and resources (Kitschelt, 1986)) created the permissive conditions for the critical junctures that could have allowed for the negotiation of a formal agreement in the two cases. This is not to suggest that the same political opportunity structures were present in each case. However, in some respects, the militant nationalists in each cases acted as though they were: the

strategies of the militant nationalists in question were remarkably similar. In many respects, the militant nationalists in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country appear to have followed many of the same patterns in their interactions with their respective states. For instance, both Northern Irish and Basque militant nationalisms target the state in their efforts and see the involvement of their opposing state – Great Britain and Spain respectively – as the primary causes of the conflict. Further, as Esser and Bridges (2011) note, in many of the interactions with the state undertaken by the Basque militant nationalists, throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s in particular, a deliberate effort was made to echo the acts of the Northern Irish republican nationalists in an attempt to mimic their success.

It is thus hypothesised here, that the crucial difference between the two cases was not only differing structures of political opportunity creating the permissive conditions for critical junctures, but also the subjective framing of those opportunities. As Kurzman (1996) has noted, subjective understandings of political opportunities must be considered. In the cases selected, it is suggested that militant nationalists in Northern Ireland were able to take Great Britain's narrative and institutional structure into account in their framing of the political opportunities, while militant nationalists in the Basque Country either failed to take Spain and its framing into account, or mistakenly (for much of the period under study at least) believed themselves capable of creating the necessary changes. As such it is argued that in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country political viability of the movement project, combined with increasingly questionable military effectiveness, and strong support for the political project led to shift in alliances that increased the value of the political path and decreased the attractiveness of the military path which increased the motivation for a negotiated end to the conflict. Simultaneously, patterns of state response favourably conditioned Republican optimism for a negotiated end, while largely discouraging that of the MLNV. These dynamics were processed through the respective movements' target framing, and organizational and leadership structures to impact the respective strategies allowing the Republican

Movement to push for a negotiated agreement, while the MLNV has sought to push past a negotiated agreement with a more unilateral strategy, for which de-escalation is an important tactical decision.

Literature Review

While this project does not attempt to delve into the debate as to the root causes of ethnonationalist conflicts, (Chandra, 2006, Peterson, 2002), it does take as a starting point that ethnicity represents a way of seeing the world, rather than a necessarily objective state of being in the world (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov, 2004) and that actors in ethnonationalist conflicts often themselves understand ethnicity as being an innate state of being, and act accordingly (Gil-White, 1999). Thus the managing of in/out group dynamics becomes an important part of how nationalist activists and militants communicate their attentions and structure their actions (Benford and Hunt, 1992). This project also acknowledges the role of state structures in limiting or opening up certain paths or opportunities for actions for those attempting to engage with the state, and suprastate structures such as the European Union (McGarry & O'Leary, 2004; Loughlin, 2001; McGarry & Keating, 2006).

Given its intersocial nature, Kelman (2007) notes that “conflict is shaped by the norms and images at the level of both political leadership and the general public and by the mutual effect of those two levels on each other” (p. 81). Accordingly, Crocker, Hampson, and Adall (2005) highlight the need in peacebuilding processes to engage with those on the ground, and local constituencies. In particular Wood (2001) has demonstrated the importance of insurgent counter elite in influencing both economic and regime elites into negotiation in civil conflict. Kelman (2007) notes the challenges to de-escalation of groups involved in conflict given that the conflict can reinforce ideologies and cognitive structures so that change is exceedingly difficult as it impacts the group's understanding of themselves, the conflict, and the other.

That being said, changes are possible: structure of political opportunities can impact the “political identities invested in the conflict by actors” (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, 30). In this vein, Irvin (1999) identifies levels of regime responsiveness, political competitiveness, and the availability of human and material resources, as influencing strategies of militant nationalists.

Much of social movement theory concerns itself with the processes of group mobilization, but this is not of concern here. In attempting to explore why two sets of militant nationalists would both chose to undertake a process of de-escalation, under different institutional circumstances, the concern here is not so much social movement mobilization but outcomes. Yet, the notion of an ‘outcome’ is itself misleading. When speaking specifically about the outcomes of violent conflict, as is the case in this undertaking, ‘outcome’ implies a fixed ending – a victory, a settlement etc. However, as Keating (2001) points out “nationality conflicts are a form of politics to be negotiated continually rather than a problem to be resolved once and for all, after which ‘normal’ politics can resume” (p.3). Politics, at its most abstract, is essentially about relationships, and the very word implies ongoing interaction of some sort. Accordingly, the outcome being examined in these two cases is “not a static outcome, but a dynamic process” (Lederach, 2006, p. 135). Peace, if it can be identified here as an ideal goal, is itself a social construct, and *peacebuilding* “is about seeking and sustaining processes of change; it is not exclusively, or even primarily, about sustaining outcomes” (Lederach, 2006, p. 135).

Building on the field of labour negotiations and the work of Walton and McKersie’s (1965) typology of negotiation activities, and Iklé’s (1964) typology of objectives, as well as the work of Druckman (1973) on connecting the two models, and later work, such as that of Weiss (1997) have made important contributions to understanding how the process of negotiations can impact the type of agreement

reached. Irmer & Druckman (2009) further delve into how shifting strategies within a negotiation process shape the nature of the agreement reached. However, the literature here is focused on the explaining the type, the shape, and the characteristics of the agreement reached. If no agreement is reached, typically the literature treats this either as a failed negotiation, or simply a stepping stone for a later agreement. While this contributes enormously to our understanding of how and why conflicts can be managed and, ideally, brought to a close, it tells us little about what happens when negotiations fail, but a de-escalation of violent conflict nonetheless takes place. This potentially unnecessarily limits the cases that may be considered as examples for study of de-escalation of violent conflict, as there was no 'victory' in any military or policing sense, nor was there a formally negotiated agreement. A situation in which there was not 'victory', neither was there a formally negotiated agreement, but the groups continue to pursue their goals in the absences of a violent conflict is thus typically excluded from the potential data sets despite its potentially illuminating elements. This is precisely the example demonstrated by the de-escalation of conflict in the Basque Country, and the cause for comparison with the formal agreement that took shape as part of the de-escalation process in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

This notion of dynamism is intimately tied with a second point: as Giugni (1998) highlights, not only does talking about movement 'success' or 'failure' imply a stasis in outcome but it implies a homogeneity in goals. It assumes that a single and unchanging goal or set of goals can be attributed to an entire movement over the duration of its engagement with the opposition; an assumption that often does not reflect the reality of group dynamics. Secondly, how success is understood may vary across participants, opponents and observers. Thirdly, it may fail to take into account the often unintended consequences of movement claims (Giugni, 1998, p. 507). As suggested by path dependency, often social movements have unintended consequences, thus as Andrews (1997) discusses, one must consider both the short

and long-term impacts of movement actions (as cited in Giugni, 1998, p. 510). This is related to Ragin's (1997) focus on causal complexity, "in which the same outcome is often produced by varied and differed combinations and levels of causes, so that a single set of necessary and sufficient conditions for specified outcomes does not exist" (in Goldstone, 2003, p.44). Thus outcomes must be discussed in relation to both the myriad of contributing factors, and in depth historical comparisons conducted to reveal the way specific conditions interacted with one another to bring about a specific outcome in a given context (Jasper, 2004). Accordingly, outcomes themselves must be discussed as, at least in part, less as a fixed target, and more as ongoing processes.

In order to explore how sub-state nationalist actors understood, interacted with and impacted (and were in turn impacted by) processes of de-escalation, a model integrating Irvin's (1999)¹ assessment of militant nationalist organizations with the political process tradition is put forward. This model is subdivided into three interrelated categories: the first focuses on movement resources, understood as military and political viability, size and support from the movement base, and the availability of productive alliances; the second category concerns itself with the state targeted by sub-state nationalists and looks at the impact of state institutions, tactics, attempts at engagements and use of concessions on the movement; the third and final category takes into consideration the movement's organizational structure, degree of cohesion/fragmentation, target framing and successful undertaking of learning processes. While a brief discussion is provided here as to the nature of these variables, a more in depth analysis of their presence and implications takes place within the contextual chapters. In

¹ Irvin (1999) has explored the relationship between paramilitary nationalist movements and militant nationalist political parties in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, and in why these nationalist movement's overtime made an at least partial switch from abstentionist politics and the pre-eminence of the military strategy, to one that allowed a greater role for electoral politics. In particular she highlights the availability of human and material resources, electoral success, and regime responsiveness.

this way the presence or absence of these variables throughout the cases is more clearly illuminated. Further analysis as to their implications is undertaken in Chapter Four.

While the study conducted draws upon Irvin's (1999) work, it goes beyond her model by looking at the factors impacting not only the incentives for maintaining or changing the movement strategy, but also factors impacting strategic assessments as well as the ability of the leaders or leadership group of the movement to implement any such changes. "A social movement is a broad collection of individual and organizational actors unified by historical moment, critical cultural experiences and communication. In social movements a sense of solidarity or unity enables the articulation and realization of profound (even revolutionary) changes in societies and across them" (Comas, Shrivatava, and Martin, 2015, p. 50). As such, they argue that "[b]eneath the high visibility of terror activities, like the tip of the iceberg, is a greater mass of popular energy, political ideologies, social consensus, financial resources, and individual leaders. This underlying physical, social and intellectual infrastructure generates organized forms of terrorism" (Comas et.al., 2015, p. 50). Thus, though more distinctly structured organizations, both the paramilitary organizations in question, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA Basque Homeland and Freedom) and their strategic decisions cannot be fully understood outside of the context and influence of the wider social movements of republicanism and the MLNV respectively.

Resources

In addition to material resources necessary for the pursuit of movement goals, for Jenkins and Perrow (1977), a group's move to collective action or insurgency is brought about by "the amount of social resources available of unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change" (p. 29). The difficulty with an approach directed solely at reducing the military

capacity of the targeted organization, Kriesberg (1998) argues, is that there exist two minimum requirements for the long term resolution of a conflict (in Mansvelt-Beck, 2008): one being small reciprocated steps of cooperation, and two, that neither party to the conflict should fear for its extinction, as such an atmosphere is more likely to lead to intransigent, rather than cooperative, behaviour (Kriesberg, 1998 in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005). Relatedly, the opening up of a political path may be a necessary condition for organizations to transition successfully into democratic politics. Hoglund (2011) argues that state demands for de-escalation, particularly in the form of cease-fires, are likely to be effective in converting terrorist organizations only if "concessions relating to the political conflict are also forthcoming from the other side" (p.236). Donohue and Cristal (2011) note that there is further cause to promote political viability of sub-state nationalist groups as "terrorist groups adopt a more prominent political mission, they become increasingly open to negotiations" (p.77).

The existence of a political will, however, is not sufficient to ensure that such organizations will be able to take advantage of any opportunities brought with political viability. In a study of organizations that attempted at one point to transition from 'representatives of terrorists' to legitimated political parties, Rudolph (2008) found that "The commonality exhibited in all of the groups that made a successful transition was their emphasis on social justice, democratic participation and nationalism. The presence of political ideology and programme are necessary but not sufficient for transition. However, the development of both is necessary for reifying the other variables of transition" (p. 84).

Next, the examination of resources requires a look at the role of military viability of paramilitary and terrorist movements in de-escalation of conflict. Not surprisingly, the degree of military viability impacts the means of a sub-state nationalist movement with violent paramilitary expressions to move toward a de-escalation of violence. However, a de-escalation in violence does not necessarily result in a resolution

of the conflict or the creation of peace. In a 2010 comparison of the ETA and Sendero Luminoso, Zirakzadeh notes that intense state action led many members of both organizations to re-think their engagement, with many retiring or making a move to other forms of political engagement, with one branch of ETA (ETApolitico-militar) dissolving in the 1980s. However, as the project's opening problematique notes, this did not result in an end of the conflict. Sanchez-Cuenca (2007) further notes that despite successes in Spanish state attempts at increased policing, while dissident activity had declined from the rates in earlier decades, a point appeared to have been reached where the balance between arrests and killings seemed to have leveled.

Another aspect contributing to the human and material resources of militant nationalists is that of community support. The groups under investigation readily describe themselves as a type of social movement. Social movements, Tilly and Tarrow (2007) argue, are "a durable comparing of demands that makes use of repeated representations to make itself known to the widest possible public and takes support from existing organisations, networks, traditions and solidarities" (p.111). In examining sub-state insurrectional violence in South Africa, Seidman (2001) notes that "neither networks nor resources alone would have sustained township support, however, if the idea of armed struggle had not retained a place at the symbolic core of the national liberation struggle" (p.423-434). Thus, to maintain the military viability of the paramilitary group and the political viability of the movement project, such movements and organizations are reliant – to an extent- on the support they receive from their constituent communities. As Jenkins and Perrow (1977) expand, grievances are relatively constant for deprived groups but often do not result in collective action. Often this is due to a lack of resources. Beyond this however, they suggest that the success of those instances where collective action is undertaken is related both to the nature of the targeted political entities (state responses in this case) as well as the support it garners outside of itself, i.e. "the way the polity responds to insurgent demands" (p. 251).

A final consideration of the resources available to the nationalist movements to impact and be impacted by processes of de-escalation involves the creation and maintenance of alliances. Central coalition theory (Pruitt 2005a; 2005b; 2007) helps apply readiness theory to multiparty negotiations. Central coalitions tend to combine neutrals, doves, moderates, and hawks from one side in varying combinations. The composition of these coalitions will impact its readiness to negotiate (Pruitt, 2007). Thus consideration must be given to the allies (both present and absent) in the coalitions (sought and achieved) of the RM and MLNV. This is further related to the role of alliances in moving parties toward negotiation process or supporting intractability. Zartman (1992) notes that third parties to negotiations working as mediators or facilitators must not only concern themselves with the parties internal to the conflict, but with the allied states or organizations as well. Along this line it is argued that efforts to exert pressure - whether in terms of threats or inducements (sticks or carrots) - are important as "the likelihood of negotiation increases if terrorist are constrained by a host state that has something to gain or lose" (Zartman, 1992; Zartman and Faure, 2011, p. 12).

Further, when examining the impact of power asymmetry on negotiation practices, Zartman and Rubin (2009) found that asymmetries in resource power did not necessarily translate into asymmetries in the exercise of power as the 'weaker' party employed corresponding strategies, such as drawing on alliances with other actors, to balance resource inequalities. The impact of alliances can both serve to widen the field of parties involved – such as longstanding republican efforts to internationalize the conflict in Northern Ireland, with a particular emphasis on European Union and American involvement – while at the same time, , such outside intervention can also help move the internal parties to more favourable positions concerning negotiations (McGarry & O'Leary 2004). Thus resources, as identified above, combine in such a way as to contribute to the movement's assessment both of the pull factor of

the optimism they may have in reaching a positive outcome in negotiations, and the push factor of assessments of the motivation based on the continued viability of the current strategy, as well as the potential viability of the proposed strategy.

State responses

Given that, as Skocpol (1979) describes, the state is more than simply an arena but “a set of administrative, policing and military organizations headed and more or less well coordinated by an executive authority” (in Katznelson, 1986, p. 321), it is held that the state’s structure and subsequent responses to sub-state nationalist aspirations and actions, play a vital role in determining the dynamics of the nationalist movement. As Amenta and Young (1999) argue “The long term aspects of democratic states that matter most for social mobilization are the institutional framework and means by which citizens can influence the state. Medium-term aspects of the state that matter include state executive bureaucracies – the specific state organizations engaged in democratic political missions. As for the short term [they] argue that policies can re-shape politics” (p.192). Accordingly, this calls for consideration of the role of state institutions, engagements, their use of concessions, and selection of tactics in their responses to sub-state nationalist aspirations.

As Kitschelt (1986) explains, state-wide political properties and policy styles are “of crucial importance because representatives of entirely new demands often cannot participate effectively in highly differentiated policy arenas and instead must appeal to actors and institutions in politics, such as parties, parliaments and courts” (p. 59). For sub-state nationalist movements who question the legitimacy of their host state (and often, seek secession) access to and manoeuvring within these institutions can be difficult. For Mann (1984) the very infrastructure of the state is the source of its

power. Thus, these state institutions are an important site of contestation for sub-state nationalists.

Also at issue in terms of content is determining what, if any, is the value added of offered content when conceded or granted during the formal offer exchanges as opposed to as part of laying the groundwork and creating context. For example, in the case of Northern Ireland, the principle of consent – that Great Britain would abide by the decision of the citizens of Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom or join the Republic of Ireland – was formalized during the formal negotiations and could be presented to the Republican supporters as a concession extracted from Britain as a sign of their success.

In order to better understand how militant nationalists perceive and act upon moments of political opportunity in de-escalation processes, consideration must be given to the nature of settlements, and the practice of negotiations themselves, in terms of parsing context, content and process. According to Irmer and Druckman (2009) settlements and resolutions as the aimed for end product of negotiations differ significantly in nature. Settlements, they argue, are efficient agreements that, despite their efficiency, remain distributive in that the ‘bargaining’ characteristic of distributive processes can lead to outcomes that address parties’ interests. Resolutions on the other hand, are more characteristics of an integrative (problem-solving oriented) negotiation process, and tend to address parties’ needs and values in addition to interests. While already noted that outcome processes of negotiation and attempts at conflict resolution and transformation more accurately account for the continuously revisited peacebuilding process, in the conventional sense, a minimum criteria for a successful negotiation is the production of a document endorsed by a minimum number of parties, agreeing in principle either to a settlement or resolution, or to an agreed set of actions for a way forward. As Zartman and Rubin (2000) note, “[s]uccessful negotiation is a positive sum exercise, in which each party feels better off with the agreement than without one” (p. 286). Irmer and Druckman (2009) further add that characteristics of

comprehensive resolutions include taking into account variables such as implementation, joint projects, underlying issues, demilitarization and constitutional reforms (218).

However, attempting to define the practice of negotiation must take into account not only the signing of the agreement but the processes that allow for that signing to take place. Pre-negotiation, Zartman (2007) holds “begins when one or more parties considers negotiation as a policy option and communicates this intention to other parties. It ends when the parties agree to formal negotiations (an exchange of proposals designed to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome in a situation of interdependent interests) or when one party abandons the consideration of negotiation as an option” (119). This is particularly important as pre-negotiation is about the move of disputing parties from seeing the problem no longer solely as a problem but “turning the problem into a manageable issue susceptible of a negotiation outcome” (Zartman, 2007, p. 123). Accordingly, Zartman (2007) holds that pre-negotiation “is as much a process of finding a solution that is supportable as of finding support for an ideal solution” (p. 123). Nor is the move from pre-negotiation to negotiation necessarily linear. It is conceivable, and even common, for negotiations to be accepted as a potential policy, initiated, then break down, only to later be taken up again. Nor, as can be seen in both the selected cases, does a commitment to negotiation always mean the abandonment of more violent strategies. The IRA has been accused of attempting to use violence and threats of violence as threats and incentives when negotiations were not proceeding in a manner to their liking. Thus the phases of negotiation are fuzzy, but what is clear is that “[p]ractitioners, in particular, emphasize that the usual academic treatment of negotiation as beginning and ending when parties sit down at the table in fact takes no account of the most challenging phase of preparations and therefore misses an important aspect of the process of narrowing disagreement between parties” (Zartman, 2007, p. 117).

Darby and MacGinty (2008) define a peace process as meeting five essential criteria: (a) the willingness of protagonists to negotiate in good faith. This does not guarantee success. There exists a “tension between the negotiators’ needs both to co-operate and to compete with each other. The success or failure of a peace process is determined primarily by the management of this tension” (2000;7); (b) that the process includes key actors; (c) that negotiations address the central issues of the conflict; (d) that force is not used by the negotiators; and (e), that negotiators possess a commitment to a sustained process (p. 7-8). Such processes, the authors note, do not always proceed continuously but often run into periods of stalemate. With that, they note that “a peace process cannot be regarded as complete unless a political and constitutional framework has been agreed. Even if it is, the detailed implementation presents other opportunities for failure” (Darby and MacGinty, 2000, p. 8).

Discussions of context can take a number of forms, from geopolitical factors, power asymmetry to time pressures. Looking at case studies of successfully settled negotiations, Irmer and Druckman (2009) assessed the role of four contextual variables (regime type, geographic proximity, regime stability and alliances) in whether outcomes were comprehensive or distributive. They found that processes more so than contextual variables impacted the type of outcomes achieved. Yet that is not to say that other contextual variables, or these same ones, have no impact on negotiations. Rather, context variables may interact with the process of negotiation – particularly in terms of strategies employed - , and ultimately, impact the outcome (Irmer and Druckman, 2009). Zartman and Rubin (2000) note the role of power asymmetries in impacting the processes of negotiation. The authors determined that “[r]esource power asymmetries do not yield corresponding asymmetries in the exercise of power” (p.286). Rather, power asymmetries, whether aggregate or perceived, impact the strategies available to negotiating parties: “[t]he power of weaker parties in the cases studied derived from their ability to draw on a broad

array or resources. Perhaps the primary source of power – seen as a means of controlling outcomes – was the ability to bring in support from external actors” (Zartman and Rubin, 2000, p. 287).

Furthermore, Stuhlmacher, Gillespie, and Champagne (1998) noted the impact of time pressure on negotiations. They found the presence of time pressure increased the likelihood of an agreement being reached. However, they found that this effect was more sizable with simple rather than complex negotiations, and that it depended on whether or not incentives for performance were provided (Stuhlmacher et al. 1998, p. 111). What is more, the impact of time pressure also varied with the strategies being employed by the parties (Stuhlmacher et al., 1998). Timing as a contextual factor was found to be important by Druckman (2005) who noted the role of events external to the conflict as acting both on the parties internal to the conflict and potential third party interveners. These external event can help "provoke interest and encourage involvement" (Druckman, 2005, p. 203). The timing of offered incentives can also serve to increase the value of promptly delivered incentives (Dorussen, 2001). However, it stands to reason that not all impacts related to timing are inherently positive or useful, as actions and events external to the conflict - such as a renewed perceived threat from another actor, or global economic crisis - could also serve to distract participating parties from their commitment to work toward a settlement, or serve to re-entrench incompatible positions.

Engagement, for its part, is not to be seen as a means through which the state may ‘defeat’ the sub-state nationalist movement. Rather, in keeping with Lederach’s (2006) and Keating’s (2001) expression of nationalism as part of ongoing relation with the state, democracy itself “is not primarily a system of government (parliamentary or presidential) or a means of legitimating the state (Ranciere, 1999, p.99). It is a moment of disruption and a practice of political contestation” (Little & Lloyd, 2009, p.7). As such,

state engagement with sub-state nationalist movements are not to be envisioned here as useful means of eliminating competing claims to nationhood or desires for statehood but rather than seek to 'terminate' the conflict " as much as *regulate* [it] within established boundaries" (Sederberg, 1995, p. 306). Of perhaps foremost importance as a consideration for engagement is the question of recognition: "since terrorist groups, like any other group seek, above all, status and representational recognition, engagement carries them a long way toward their goal" (Zartman and Faure, 2011, p.6). Engagement in talks is not in itself necessarily to be seen as a concession by the state but rather this allows for mutual recognition, the first step, Hoglund (2011) argues, to successful talks (p.240).

When governments do chose to negotiate with a terrorist group, Neumann (2007) argues they must first pose a number of questions. Foremost of these is the viability of the other as a negotiating partner. While some authors suggest looking to the aims and ideology of the group, Neumann (2007) suggests instead examining the group's understanding of the utility of violence as "[t]he distinction between supposedly rational terrorists and irrational ones... if often in the eye of the beholder. If the IRA and ETA appear to be more rational than say, al-Qaeda, it is because their goals – nationalism and separatism – have a long history in Western political thought" (p.129). By examining instead the group's understanding of the utility of violence, the State can better determine if and how negotiations may be brought about (Neumann, 2007, p. 130). Darby and MacGinty (2008) note that consideration must be given to the strategic position of parties prior to any negotiations. As they explain "[s]erious negotiations often do not begin until each side has attempted to maximise its bargaining position through military offensives. Paramilitary groups may attempt to demonstrate their strength and staying power in order to persuade the government that military victory is impossible" (p.5).

Thus contextual variables are particularly significant in how they impact the strategies employed by parties during the negotiation process. As noted, Irmer and Druckman (2009) found that a more problem-solving orientation during negotiations contributes to a more comprehensive agreement. More specifically, Olekalns and Weingart (2008) describe negotiations as an emergent process of mutual adaptation wherein parties can match or mismatch strategy sequences between integrative and distributive strategies at both the individual sequence and negotiation-wide dynamics. They note that challenges to the dominant dynamic - whether distributive or integrative – helps negotiators reach more satisfactory agreements than a consistent commitment to one or the other. This dynamism allows negotiators to avoid the pitfalls of, for example, an all integrative approach which may result in the concession of too many items or issues for one of the parties to consider the outcome optimal or even satisfactory. Strategies contained in negotiation processes also pertain to the use of offers and counter offers. According to Prietula and Weingart (2011), negotiations move between periods of exploratory offers which allow the exchange of information on the values and interests of the parties, and content refinement. This is not a linear process, particularly in complex, multi-issue negotiations.

The state's willingness, perceived or measurable, to make concessions can be an important consideration for sub-state nationalist strategic decision making. Cease-fires and other such confidence building measures are most likely to hold if the parties undertaking the cease-fires see that there is some reward or advantage to laying aside arms. Such was the case with the IRA's breaking of the 1994 cease-fire in 1996 following what was perceived as British refusal to make any meaningful progress towards inclusive all-party talks. Dorussen (2001) argues that "the need for incentives is highest in an adversarial relationship, but in this case incentives are most difficult to design. The distribution of costs and benefits needs to be carefully calibrated and the agreement needs to take care of verification and monitoring. Successful implementation of an agreement builds trust and sets an example for

cooperation in other areas” (p. 254). Correspondingly, a lack of such follow through can damage optimism and motivation for future engagements.

Further, concessions, and conciliatory tactics not only become increasingly significant as the base of movement support grows, but may be considered as a means through which the state can encourage the defection of more moderate elements away from support of paramilitary tactics, as well as working to prevent growth of the support for paramilitary tactics by addressing the roots of the grievances rather than specific demands (Sederberg, 1995). This relates back to the idea of addressing the interests that underlie specific demands. However, it must be noted that, particularly as the perceived significance of the concession grows, the state must also be wary that it does not outpace its own support base’s conception of acceptability.

Concerning the use of state tactics to address the existence of paramilitary violence within the state, Crelinsten and Schmidt (1993) and Simon (1987) note that “external military action or internal police repression may not only damage democratic principles and processes, but also they may fail to lessen the problem of terrorism and could even enflame it further” (as cited in Sederberg, 1995, p. 299). As Jones and Libiki (2008) find, military force is generally ineffective, regardless of its intensity. Yet, the use of policing tactics, for instance, processes of criminalization such as those attempted under Thatcher in Northern Ireland or after the democratic transition in the Basque Country, can be seen as problematic as: “[a] government’s demand for a cease-fire, as well as its designating a group a terrorist organization, enables the government to demonstrate the illegitimacy of a group’s activities. Since meaningful negotiations require the parties’ basic mutual recognition, issues of legitimacy must be dealt with in the pre-negotiation phase” (Hoglund, 2011, p. 240). Hoglund (2011), also notes that policies of

criminalization can serve to isolate terrorist organizations and cause not only fragmentation, but may prevent meaningful interaction with moderate strands that might serve as the basis for a political platform. As Sederberg (1995) argues “a purely repressive strategy aimed at destroying the challenger leadership cadre may well eliminate precisely those moderates most susceptible to conciliatory appeals” (p.307).

In a similar vein, Neumann (2007) notes that the timing of negotiations is also of importance: the terrorist group should be at a critical juncture. He notes that some authors suggest that negotiations should only take place when the group is all but defeated “at which point the terrorist might as well be finished off” (p.132). However, organizations such as these are not unaccustomed to being in positions of near defeat and may “decide to further escalate the violence, wagering they have little to lose from one last push (Neumann, 2007, p. 132). Thus, he argues such a moment of debilitation, rather than being the opportune moment for a final military or policing push, is an opportunity to proceed with negotiations (Neumann, 2007, p. 132-3).

That is not to say that the call for cease-fires is unwarranted or unhelpful in all circumstances. Rather, cease-fires can also be important trust building measures, and if reciprocated by the state, can be important demonstrations that abandoning violence is a potentially rewarding strategy (Zartman and Faure, 2011, p. 281). Moderation, Zartman and Faure (2011) argue, must be a process, before it is a condition. Ceasefires, can not only be an important conciliatory gesture that aids in the building of optimism about negotiations (Pruitt, 2007), but opening talks only after a ceasefire

spurs the politically minded amongst the terrorists to achieve internal cohesion... makes it easier for government to trust that negotiations are meaningful... represents a public commitment to which the terrorists can be held and from whose breach they can be sanctioned... establish[es] in the

minds of the terrorists (and all others...) that the government will not allow major outcomes to be influenced by the use of violence. Lastly, it may help reinforce the perception that the negotiations represent a unique historic opportunity (Neumann, 2007, p. 133-4)

In interacting with sub-state groups, whether through the maintenance of back-channel communications or intermediaries, in the midst of negotiations or not, parties can use the threat of termination as a method of coercion. The intermediary holds “critical information” and as such “the primary parties have incentives not to jeopardize the relationship with the third party. Therefore, even if they are not interested in maintaining good relationships with the other side, or seeking to end violence, or seeking to avoid public blame, the parties have incentives to uphold the relationship with the mediator as a critical source of information” (O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 41).

During negotiations neither side typically wants to take responsibility for a breakdown and will seek to manoeuvre so that the blame falls on their opponents, or that they are able to force their opponents into termination (O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 41). A mediator’s ability to make use of an exit strategy as leverage, Torval and Zartman (2001) note, is impacted by the structural conditions of the conflict: “if the mutually hurting stalemate is present, they will be sensitive to the threat of leaving” (in O’Dochartaigh and Svensson 2013; 43). Further, the credibility of the exit threat by mediators can be undermined by repeated or abortive threats of doing so (Watkins 1999 in O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 43). Arguably the same ‘crying wolf’ credibility question would impact the move of either of the parties to make a similar exit. If the mediator is a public or front channel one, they can further use their publicity to assign blame of a breakdown, an ability of which negotiating parties are well aware (O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p.43). Finally, the authors hold that

[b]eing blamed by the mediator for ending the mediation would put the relationship with the intermediary at risk, and this potential source of information would be difficult to replace or restore. The implication of this is

that mediators are most likely to threaten termination when they can plausibly blame one of the parties for the breakdown and thus credibly raise the prospect of a breakdown of the relationship with the intermediary (O'Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 44).

This understanding of negotiation as emergent and dynamic takes into account process, content and context, and allows for a more nuanced reading of the moments of opportunity which militant activists in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country may have perceived and acted upon over the course of their respective de-escalation processes. Thus an analysis of the negotiation process must reach into the actions prior to first agreed upon meeting between parties for the purpose of negotiation. In this sense the negotiation process under analysis is extended to the beginnings of the de-escalation process. Accordingly, in addition to a movement's self-assessment of the viability of old vs. new strategies in its motivation and optimism for negotiations, further consideration must be given to the way in which interactions with the State also impact movement's assessments of the State as a viable partner for reaching a positive negotiated outcome.

Leadership

While Pruitt (2007) details the importance of the creation of a central coalition for a group's ability to bring its constituents on board both with processes of negotiation and the implementation of any potential agreement, it must be acknowledged that States and those organizations taking leadership roles in sub-state nationalist movements, do not necessarily share the same organizational structures. Arguably, the State has a greater depth and breadth of institutionalised decision-making and leadership structures than do those organizations born, and in many cases, still embedded in social movements. As Lecours (2007) reiterates, like social movements, nationalist movements have leaders and militants "who play to a certain audience with the objective of shaping political preferences and identities" (12). The ability of the leaders and leadership structures of the movement organizations must therefore be

explored for how they impact the movement's ability to capitalise on any changes in optimism or motivation that might lead to a negotiated outcome with the State. Thus, leadership, in this context is subdivided into consideration for the movement's target framing, organizational structure, the dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion, as well as its undergoing of learning processes.

This project, while drawing on the literature concerning mobilization, is not fundamentally about mobilization. Nevertheless, understanding the motivations for participation in the conflict is necessary for understanding the movement's goals. As Ross (2009) explains "culture orders political priorities (Laitin, 1986, p.11)...defines the symbolic and material objects people consider valuable and worth fighting for/over; the contexts in which such disputes occur, the rules (formal and not) by which politics takes place and who participants in it. In so doing, culture defines interests and how they are to be pursued" (p. 140). Thus, understanding the goals and targets as laid out by the movements over the course of the conflict are instrumental for understanding why and how they adjust or maintain their strategies. As Guigni (1998) noted above, goals and targets of a movement are not always fixed but may fluctuate both in form and priority over time.

Further, as Greig and Diehl (2012) note, the development of a conception of the conflict in a non-violent form, or even its resolution is dependent in part on both parties to the conflict having strong leadership. Organizational structure with leadership structures – whether centralized or diffused – are identified as necessary but not sufficient conditions for the successful transition of terrorist organizations to state legitimized political participation. Heger, Jung, and Wong (2012) argue that organisations that are hierarchically structured offer operational advantages and the ability to deliver more effectively lethal blows to their targets. This is because hierarchy and centralization offer greater possibility of functional

differentiation, clear command and control structures, and accountability (Heger, et al., 2012). While networks may offer more flexibility, capacity for adaptation, and an ease of response to local conditions (Powell, 1996; Powell et al., 1996; Polodny and Page, 1998; in Heger et al., 2012), they may lack the resources and coordinating capacities necessary for larger scale and more lethal attacks. For instance, though al-Qaeda continued to function in the absence of central leadership, its effectiveness was minimal (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones, 2008 in Heger et al., 2012, p. 746) in contrast to the effectiveness of attacks such as 9/11, under centralized leadership (Heger, et al., 2012, p. 746). Comas et.al, (2015) note that organizationally, terrorist groups are not restricted to “goal-directed, rationally managed organizations” (p. 48). Rather, “[t]hey may be networks of connected actors capable of self-organization. They may be embedded in social movements wherein a diffuse sense of grievances aligns organizations, individuals and other formerly inchoate elements. And they are rarely one of these forms. They mutate, adapt, and restructure to remain viable within significant milieu and arenas of operation” (Comas et.al. 2015, p. 48).

Not only is such a structure impactful on a group’s military effectiveness, but it has implications for its viability as a potential negotiating partner. Accountability is important for the identification and punishment of “unfaithful or ineffective agents” both for operational effectiveness (Heger, et al., 2012, p. 748) and for its ability to keep its members on board with and committed to any negotiated agreements reached. This is in turn closely linked to the dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion internal to the organizations. This fragmentation/cohesion factor, it is argued, is also significant in impacting the framing and understandings of the movements of their target states and their ability to learn from lived experiences in interacting with the state. As Zirakzadeh (2002) notes “the recruitment and promotion of top leaders within ETA were relatively unregulated, rapid and almost haphazard...The more rapid, the less supervised and the more inclusive the recruitment process, the greater the chances

that, all things being equal, the perceptions, presumptions and opinions of activist will clash. This natural multiplication of ideas seems to have occurred without serious check within ETA” (p. 88-89) particularly earlier on in its history. Neumann (2007) suggests that associated with this in assessing a group’s suitability as a negotiating partner, is the group’s cohesion. This is particularly important for the group’s ability to hold its members to any agreement that is reached (Neumann, 2007, p. 131).

Given the long term nature of the conflicts examined, and the multiple interactions between the movements and their targets, it may be possible to observe some form of evolution in the movement’s understandings and attitudes towards both their target and their own strategies. State and sub-state actors alike have the opportunity over the course of multiple engagements, and exchanges to deepen their understanding of their adversary as well as better analyse their behaviour. Such interactions can both build and reduce trust for the following engagements. Notably, trust need not be a positive – one side could easily ‘trust’ the other not to follow through on any agreements. In the absence of interpersonal trust or trust based on goodwill (McAllister 1995), Shapiro, Sheppard and Cheraskin (1992) note that parties may learn to develop a ‘knowledge based trust’, based on the predictability of the other party’s behaviour (in Ross and Lacroix, 1996, p. 327). To an extent, it can be expected that if the conflict is not resolved militarily, that readiness to cooperate – at least to a degree – be a factor. Schneckener and Senghass (2003) argue that this “readiness” is founded in “collective learning processes which are initiated and accompanied by procedures and rules....three types of collective learning can be principally distinguished: a) learning because of ‘goodwill’; b) learning because of cost-benefit assessments; c) reluctant learning (i.e. learning through procedures)”(p. 196). A discussion of the leadership frameworks and structures of an organization thus provide a greater understanding as to the ability of the sub-state nationalist movement to create the central coalition necessary for any significant strategic course adjustments, including those of de-escalation and negotiation.

Together, resources, leadership and state responses create the conditions for moments of change in which the sub-state nationalist movements, patterned by their previous interactions with the state, and subjective framing of the state and the opportunities presented, make their decisions toward attempted political resolutions to their violent conflicts.

Empirical Cases

Both the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country have experienced remarkable de-escalations in militant nationalist violence over the past two decades. However, despite the mirroring de-escalation, the patterns of negotiated settlement differ. Northern Ireland successfully negotiated formal agreement in a time of reduced, but still significant and ongoing violence, while the Basque Country has faltered through numerous aborted attempts, but in 2011, when most militant nationalist violence had dissipated, ETA declared a permanent ceasefire in the absence of a formal negotiated agreement. Furthermore, despite this significant difference in process, there remain sufficient commonalities between the two cases to suggest that a great deal can be learned about processes of de-escalation in violent sub-state nationalist conflict, and about the decisions militant nationalist activists take during those processes.

Sporadic political violence remains in Northern Ireland, particularly in the form of protests turned violent, in 2012 there were two confirmed deaths linked to paramilitary activity. The first, in February of 2012 was a civilian killed by the Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD) which targets drug related activities in Northern Ireland, and the second was a prison officer killed in November 2012 by a republican group calling itself “the IRA”, in 2011 a Police Services of Northern Ireland Officer (PSNI) was killed by a pipe bomb believed to be planted by the Real IRA (RIRA), a further two deaths in 2010, an

RIRA and Ulster Volunteer Force member each killed by their respective organizations (CAIN, 2013).

Thus militant violence continues to take its toll, however, in numbers significantly reduced from an average number of 120 per year over the course of the conflict (Smyth, 2006, p.6).

The rate of violence was never so high in the Basque Country as it was in Northern Ireland. ETA, was most active in the 1970s and 1980s when there were an average of 30.4 terrorist related deaths and 39.6 per year respectively. In the 1990s the average dropped to 16.4, and in the first decade of the 21st century the number dropped further to 5.8 deaths per year (COVITE, 2012). Barros and Gil-Alana (2006) further note that although there has been a significant reduction in ETA violence, “the type of killing has been more specialized (politicians, reporters etc). On the other hand, a new phenomenon based on urban guerrilla tactics, and called in Basque *kale borroka* (street fighting) has emerged, creating an atmosphere of violence in the streets” (p. 98).

An examination of the patterns of de-escalations and attempts and formal steps towards de-escalation in the two cases further reveals a strong commonality. It is worth noting, that many of the moves, - ceasefires, announcements, etc – taken by ETA in the late 1990s and early 2000s were designed to mirror those of Northern Ireland, though admittedly without success (Esser and Bridges, 2011). This reflects the idea that the militant nationalists of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country themselves espoused a commonality in their respective conflicts. According to Watson (2007) since the early twentieth century, the IRA was seen by ETA as a symbol and example for Basque nationalism (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 67). More concretely “more recently, ETA and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have maintained a sympathetic relationship – viewing themselves as freedom fighters and sharing military tactics and bomb-making techniques” (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 67).

Methodology and Data Collection

As a starting point this project bases its design on that of most similar systems, as explained by Mill. The line of enquiry investigated here suggests that the militant nationalist activists in the respective contexts had different readings of the situations in which they found themselves and perceived different opportunities and incentives for their changes in strategies. As described in the introduction, the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country are highly similar: both took place in developed, western European states, largely under democratic regimes, while the underlying secessionist nationalism has deeper roots, both have experienced violent 20th century expressions of their conflicts, and both have experienced dramatic reductions in the violence of the conflict. Despite these similarities, the cases differ on a key point of comparison: the shape of the de-escalation – namely, whether with, or without, a negotiated agreement. Methodologically, this project attempts to examine the Republican Movement (RM) (comprising primarily Provisional Sinn Féin (SF) and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA)) and the *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco* (MLNV) (comprising *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA - both ETA militar or ETAm and ETA político-militar ETApM) and the shifting coalition of unions and political parties associated with the *izquierda abertzale*(IA), or Basque Left, such as *Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak* (LAB), *Batasuna*, *Herri Batasuna*, *Sortu* and others) through an analysis of movement behaviour in the available literature combined with narrative analyses, based on in-depth, semi- structured interviews with current and former members of the movements. In order to pursue this enquiry, the study was conducted in three stages: beginning with extensive review of the literature, followed by field interviews, which were coded and analysed through the use of process tracing.

Of importance to this research design is a nuanced understanding of causation. Cartwright (2004) holds that “causation is not a single, monolithic concept” (p.805 as cited in Kurki , 2004, p. 206) and that multiple types of causes interact to help develop the causal analysis (Kurki, 2004, p. 206). Glynnos and

Howarth (2007) examine the roles of case studies and comparative studies. As they argue “ the use of a comparative 'method' to explain why similar structures give rise to different outcomes, or why different systems produce similar effects, ought to be both problem driven and grounded on the interpretation of particular cases” (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 207). Further, the “basis for comparing must comprise thick descriptive interpretation of particular empirical phenomena, self-interpretations included” (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p.207). Articulation, as a part of discourse analysis allows for the linking of theoretical explanation with empirical phenomena. It looks at the way social, political practices, and regimes, interact with one another. The concept of articulation is foregrounded by the authors as a mid-ground between universal laws and the contextualized self-interpretation (Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p.207).

Accordingly, this project accepts at its core the constructed nature of political phenomena and considers both push-pull, and constraining-enabling causes as constitutive of complete analysis of the heterogeneity of causes. Further, it calls for the construction of a thick description from which to analyze and compare. Thus, not only observable objects need be considered but “[r]easons and motivations as well as rules, norms, and discourses can be conceptualized as 'real' and as 'causal' within this framework and, hence, can be accepted as legitimate objects of social science inquiry, even if they are not directly observable or 'stable' in terms of empirical outcomes” (Kurki, 2006, p.211).

As such, the research design proceeded in three steps. The first step consisted of detailed archival research focused on the news, scholarship, and movement publications, both formal and informal. Given the focus of the research question on the process of de-escalation, only materials considered to be from the period of de-escalation are considered. This archival work allowed both for a more textured

understanding of the context, as well as provided points of comparison for responses elicited in the second stage.

For the second step I initiated a series of one-on-one interviews with current and former militant nationalist activists. The existence of organizations of and for nationalist engagement in the two regions facilitated the establishment of contact with potential participants through existing networks, both political organizations, and those not actively engaged with the political process. According to Lederach (1997) mid-level elites by virtue of their positions within organizations or movements, are able to help bridge the gap between elites who are often caught up more fully in the role of ethnic entrepreneur and power politics, and the grassroots involved in the day to day planning of the movement but with less direct input into its overall strategy. Further, unlike elites within the movements, mid-level elites may not be so bounded by their positions (or former positions) as to be unable to speak freely for fear of being taken officially. Accordingly they are well situated to provide a breadth in insight that may not be so readily available in interviewing only members of the elite, or of the grassroots level of membership.

Participants were identified initially by contacting a variety of already established networks within each community. Each participant was interviewed once, and in a location of their choosing. The participants targeted were primarily to be mid- to ground-level militant nationalists, although current or past involvement in a militant nationalist movement or organization of the community in question, was the only minimum criteria. In both cases respondents fell into one of three categories: those holding or having held positions in the movement affiliated political party; those having participated (and in all but one case served prison sentences for involvement) in the paramilitary or youth organization; or those with membership in both at one point in their lives.

Having successfully completed the review for the Research Ethics Board by the fall of 2013, the first round of interviews were conducted between October and January of 2013 in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland this included current members of SF holding some level of public office, former Provisional IRA volunteers, or persons holding current membership in SF (with and without formal positions) and previous membership in the Provisional IRA (and in one case the Republican youth organization). Respondents were largely contacted through local SF offices (SF1 and SF2) in Belfast and through the help of *Coiste na n-Iarchimí* (Ex-Prisoner's Committee) (SF3, SF4, ISF, SFI2, SFI3, SFIR, I1), also in Belfast. Members of the Provisional SF and IRA were selected because of the dominance of these organizations both in the conflict, as well as in the de-escalation process. The respondents were six males, and three females (SF3, ISF, and SFI2), with ages ranging from late 30s to early 60s.

In the Basque Country the respondents' organizational membership was more diversified. Twelve interviews were undertaken between March and July of 2014. The interviews were arranged through intermediaries: either through the friends and family of social acquaintances (ETAPNV, ETA1, MLNVJA, and JAETA) or local academic researchers (ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, S1, SE, BS, SKB, and JEEGELBS). All interviews were conducted in Spanish and the excerpts quoted in the following text represent the author's translation. The exception to this was BS, who chose to respond at times in Castilian, and others in English. When his responses were made in English, no attempt was made by the author to alter his syntax or voice. The interviews were largely conducted in Hegoalde (Spanish Basque Provinces), with the exception of JEEGELBS (Lapurdi in Iparralde-French Basque Provinces- in the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques), in a variety of cities in the provinces of Bizkaia (SE, JAETA, ETAPNV, MLNVJA), Gipuzkoa (ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, BS and S1) and Naffarua (SKB). All interviews were conducted on a

one-on-one basis with the exception of the joint interview of ETA2 and ETA3. Of the respondents only three did not serve jail sentences for their involvement with organizations of the MLNV (S1, BS and ETAPNV). Four of the respondents ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, and ETA4 were involved in exclusively military organizations, while two (S1 and BS) were involved solely in political organizations. The remaining six were involved in both legal and clandestine organizations. The respondents were eight males and four females (S1, JEEGELBS, ETA2 and ETA3) with ages ranging from the mid-30s to late-60s.

I conducted a series of short, survey questions to help generate comparable data points, followed by a series of semi-structured, open ended questions (Druckman, 2005) in order to provide an opportunity for participants to share their narratives and perceptions (Senehi, 2009). For a more detailed breakdown of the respondent memberships, see Appendix 2. Once transcribed, under each question thematic question posed during the interviews, thematic coding was undertaken both inductively and iteratively. While initial coding was based on categories extracted from the literature, as coding progressed, new categories and codes were added as they emerged from the data.

Finally for the analysis, similar categories of coding were applied to the data compiled during the archival stage of the research. With this bank of resources and data process tracing was applied to develop and test hypotheses on the causal mechanisms and relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The research design described above is predicated on the premise that not all that is important and of value in the understanding of the social world is concrete and measurable in the strictly empirical sense. Rather, it supposes that causality is heterogeneous and involves both push-pull, and constraining-enabling factors. Further, it places value on the experiences and interpretations of social actors, and while it suggests the need for the subsequent interpretation and triangulation of those

interpretations by the researcher, it does not suggest that in all things the researcher knows best over the understandings of the participants themselves. With this in mind the primary methodological approach of the project is that of process tracing. Process-tracing is defined as “the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purpose of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanism that might causally explain the case” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p. 7). “The use of process-tracking to test and refine hypotheses about causal mechanisms can clarify the scope of conditions under which a hypothesis is generalizable” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p. 13). Process-tracing can be conducted inductively wherein events are analysed “backwards through time from the outcome of interest to potential antecedent causes, much as a homicide detective might start by trying to piece together the last few hours or days in the life of a victim” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p. 18). In order to do this “One immerses oneself in the details of the case and tries out proto-hypotheses that may either quickly prove to be dead ends or become plausible and worthy of more rigorous testing... the more promising potential explanations uncovered in this way can then be rendered more formal and deductive and tested more rigorously against evidence in the case or in other cases that is independent of the evidence that gave rise to each hypothesis” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p. 18). Thus, Bennett and Checkel (2014) point out that methodologically it is important for process-tracing to “take equifinality seriously and consider the alternative causal pathways through which the outcome of interest might have occurred” (p. 21).

The project as it was envisioned and carried out focused on the strategies of the respective movements and how they understood and adapted to their situations and contexts as they changed. As such, the focus of the narrative of the text is very much that of the movement’s themselves. This is not meant to suggest that the interpretations – of the respondents in particular – are reflective of unbiased, objective truth. Rather, the focus on the movement strategy requires a focus on the factors that contributed to

the decision-making processes within each movement. This choice of lense highlights the movement framings of the conflict , their actions and their opponents. This is reflective of the nature of the question pursued, rather than an assertion by the author about the primacy of the sub-state movement in determining the shape of de-escalation.

Project Overview

The remainder of this project is largely laid out in two phases. Chapters two and three provide an in depth overview and analysis of the individual empirical cases (the Basque Country, followed by the Northern Irish case). Within each, the chapters are divided into a breakdown of each independent variable grouping (resources, state responses, and leadership), before an analytic overview of the case is provided. Chapter Four proceeds with an in depth comparative analysis of the cases along each of the independent variables before drawing and exloring the resulting conclusions. Chapter Five resituates the conclusion within the broader research contexts and lays out preliminary pathways for future investigation.

Chapter Two: *Movimiento de Liberación Nacionalista Vasco* and the Basque Country²

Introduction

ETA's strategy has undergone a series of phases over the course of its history. Initially, (1959-1977) ETA sought to trigger a popular uprising; from 1978 until 1994 ETA shifted focus to a war of attrition in which it sought to force a negotiated settlement with the state; from 1995 until the mid 2000s, ETA sought to build a nationalist block through which to pressure the state for concessions, rather than relying solely on military pressure (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013, p. 97-98). With the failure of talks with the State around 2004-2007, a discussion emerged in the IA around the idea of *unilateralidad*: the idea that the IA would move forward on its own path toward its goals, using solely democratic means, building democratic and social capacity to eventually force the State into action. In 2008 and 2009, ETA was responsible for 58 and 48 injuries, in 32 and 14 incidents. In 2010 and 2011 there was only one attack attributed to ETA each year, only one of which resulted in any injuries (Miller et.al. 2014) (see Appendix). On January 10th 2011, ETA announced that the ceasefire called in September of the previous year was to be permanent and verifiable by international observers (The Guardian, Jan. 10, 2011), and in February of 2014, ETA took the unprecedented step of handing over a share of its armory to international observers (*The Guardian*, Feb. 21, 2014).

ETA activity was at its highest towards the end of the 1970s as they sought to destabilize the *Transición* process in order to force negotiations between ETA and the state. This strategy of using armed struggle in an attempt to force negotiations between ETA and the Spanish state, would run until the mid-1990s (De La Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca, 2013). The 1980s was a time of fluctuation both of ETA's military

² Respondents: BS, SE, ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, MLNVJA, SKB, JEEGELBS, ETAPNV, JAETA, S1 – see Appendix 2

viability as well as its activity. Despite new legislation and intense securitization, by 1982, ETA activity had spiked yet again. Noting that in a two and a half year period prior to the implementation of the new legislation in 1978, the average number of victims of ETA attacks was 3.87 per month, while in the same period following the new legislation, this number jumped to an average of 15.97 victims per month, Irvin (1999) argues that:

although the Basque provinces accounted for only 3.5 percent of Spain's territory and about 7 percent of its population, approximately 17 percent of the state's security force was committed to the region...[and] despite the implementation of numerous measures that imposed considerable costs on the Basque civilian population, the new measures did little to halt ETA's operations during this period (p.195-196).

By 1984, overall ETA activity was declining, spiking again in 1985 before declining toward the end of 1987 (Appendix 5). Yet, despite the near devastating blows delivered to the organization by state security operations, the number of ETA attacks rose significantly in the months leading up to the declaration of a ceasefire in January 1988, reaching levels similar to those of 1980, and surpassing those of any other year of the decade.

While the intensity of ETA's violent activities never reached the scale of, or exacted a toll as heavy as that of the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland (Irvin, 1999), it was nonetheless responsible, or suspected of, well over 2000 incidents; 28 per cent of which resulted in at least one fatality (Miller and Smarick, 2011), with nearly 860 fatalities attributable to ETA and splinter organizations thereof (De La Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013). Between 1960 and 2011, ETA attacks were responsible for the serious injury of another 2,300 to 2,600 individuals, (Landa, 2013, p.12). While ETA has been active since the early 1960s, the intensity of its armed campaign peaked in the late 1970s during the Spanish *Transición*, and has followed a general pattern of decline, with several significant spikes, until the announcement of a

permanent ceasefire in 2010, (Reuters, 2010, Sept. 25 in Miller & Smarick, 2011, p.3), their commitment to which was reaffirmed throughout 2011 (Miller & Smarick, 2011; De La Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013).

Part One: Resources

Political and military viability relate to more than the tangible measurements of the movement's actions such as electoral results or the number of injured or killed. Notably, this also looks at the viability of their methods and projects in terms of the movement's assessments of its ability to move itself towards its goals in terms of support for movement projects as well as particular actions. To this end the material and intangible questions of support necessarily intertwine with those of alliances, military and political viability and vice versa.

a. Political Viability

The increased electoral viability in ETA's political branch is insufficient to account for the gradual diminution of the ETA's armed activity. Rather than electoral results driving de-escalation, HB and its successors can be said to receive an electoral boost in response to ETA's declared ceasefires and periods of reduced violent activity. Highlighting the importance of context, as Zirakzadeh (1991) notes, "it appears that a combination of new political circumstances had caused many individuals to reassess their political choices" (p.200). This brings into question the possibility that with increase in opportunity for the political contestation of what is, in the eyes of the IA and MLNV, an unequivocally political question, the military head of the movement, ETA, reduced its role accordingly. However, these new opportunities emerged in the 1970s, but ETA's permanent ceasefire (which, to date, has held) was not declared until 2011. During this time political representatives of ETA have met with strong, yet at times inconsistent electoral success. Political viability is hereafter explored in two subthemes: electoral viability of the ETA affiliated political parties, and the viability of the nationalist project itself.

Foray into electoral politics

During the Franco dictatorship, electoral participation was not an option for the Basque nationalist project. The Basque Nationalist Party (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco* - PNV) founded in 1895, functioned primarily in exile, while political parties within Spain were, when not outright illegal, largely decorative. From the end of the Civil War until the 1960s expressions of Basque nationalist sentiment, regardless of form were seen as political activities, and “whether carried out by parties or not, were heavily penalized” (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p.135). At this time in Spain “the possibility of any type of legal political action did not exist. There was a dictatorship of the far right and a very strong repression against all political expression” (SE). The viability of the Basque political project was stymied under Franco as the regime’s “continuous and pervasive application of coercive force, effectively limited its discourse with Basques to one of violence, the dichotomization of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ combined explosively with actual individual experiences of violence to distort both the political and social environment” (Llera, Mata, and Irvin, 1993, p.108). Formed in 1959, ETA would come to fill the political void in the nationalist project until the end of the Francoist dictatorship (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p.135). As SE elaborates, from ETA’s inception until democratization “it sought the objectives of independence and socialism through armed action because there was no possibility of participation [...in] democratic projects”. The 1978 Constitution took care to enshrine the right to political parties with Article 6 stating “[p]olitical parties are the expression of political pluralism and manifestations of the will of the people and they are the basic instrument of political participation. Their creation and exercise of their activities are freely permitted to the extent that they respect the Constitution and the law” (Turano, 2003, p.731). Given the indivisibility of the State espoused in the Constitution, secessionist parties are inherently disrespectful of the Constitution. Unsurprisingly, the support for the Constitution was considerably lower in the Basque Country than the rest of Spain. When Franco died in 1975 and Spain began the

process of democratization (*Transición*), debate within ETA came to a head over participation in the new system, ultimately leading to the split into ETAm and ETAp.

As the PNV announced its intentions to contest elections, the *IA* with the Basque left sought to unify in order to represent the interests of the Basque working class forming the *Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista* (Patriotic Socialist Coordinating Council - KAS) in 1975 (Irvin, 1999). KAS's program, *Alternativa KAS*, was laid out as the pre-requisite for an ETA ceasefire and participation of the *IA* in the upcoming elections. In the 1977 general elections, KAS affiliates boycotted the elections while the coalition *Euskadiko Ezkerra* (Basque Left EE), won 5 percent of the vote and one seat in parliament (Irvin, 1999, p. 112). However, despite the modest winnings of EE, participation in the June 1977 elections was so high (76.93 percent EJ-GV, 2016), that it was seen by the *IA* as a signal that the Basque citizens had a strong desire to make use of the electoral system to express their opinions (Casanova, 2007, p. 245). In 1978 the electoral coalition *Herri Batasuna* (Basque Unity - HB) was formed to contest the 1979 elections for the newly established Basque Parliament (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.197). HB was a coalition formed "for the construction of socialism in a free, independent, reunified and Basque-speaking Euskadi" (*Egin* Oct. 25, 1977, p.5 as cited in Irvin, 1999, p. 115). While the coalition had no structured coordinating body, they all pledged to take guidance from the *Alternativa KAS* (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 197).

With the *Transición*, a new Statute of Autonomy was negotiated for the Basque Country. The inability of the PNV and EE to force significant modifications to the Basque Statute of Autonomy to the favour of the Basque national project was seen by ETAm and HB as confirming their lack of faith in the Spanish institutional framework (Irvin, 1999; Casanova, 2007). As one respondent, BS, explained, without the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Basque Country, for bulk of the MLNV, little had

changed in the region. One of the founding members of the Euskal Iraultzarako Alderdia (Basque Revolutionary Party - EIA), in response to the EE's failure to push through more changes to the constitution, declared "EE was no longer a potential base for the construction of a unified Basque left" (Irvin, 1999, p. 115). Yet, HB could not ignore the willingness of the Basque citizenry to participate. Accordingly HB looked to Northern Ireland's Sinn Féin and adopted a policy of contesting elections but abstaining from taking their seats in the Spanish national assembly (Casanova, 2007, p. 246). In 1979 HB would win 15.02 and 15.55 per cent of the Basque vote in the general and municipal elections, respectively (EJ-GV, 2016). With HB the division in ETA was replicated in the party system: "while the polis-milis backed EIA and EE for their commitment to the political organization, the milis supported Herri Batasuna for its intransigence" (Irvin, 1999, p.115). In their first showing at in the parliamentary elections for the Basque Autonomous Community in 1980, HB and EE would earn 16.55 and 14.21 per cent respectively (EJ-GV, 2016).

Since that time, there have been fluctuations in the levels of electoral support for parties favouring the Basque nationalist project with a slight downward trend, particularly during the period of illegalization of HB and its successors, yet both its size (over 60 percent in elections pertaining specifically to the Basque Country) and the resurgence in their support following the ETA ceasefire, demonstrates that these parties continue to garner support in Euskadi, averaging 52.64 percent (EJ-GV, 2016). In 2009, the two largest statewide parties the *Partido Popular* (Popular Party – PP) and *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party – PSOE), signed a pact to maintain joint leadership of the autonomous community (*El País*. Mar. 29, 2009), marking the first time since the implementation of the Statute that the position of president of the Basque country – *lehendakari* - was not held by the PNV. Within the Basque electorate, HB and the PNV have historically drawn support from different demographics – with the PNV's voters 80 percent over 35 years old, with the highest percentage

identifying as upper middle-class, compared to HB's more than 55 percent under 35 and far more likely to identify as working class. Thus, HB was not in as direct competition for votes with the PNV as it was with EE (Irvin, 1999, p. 125).

While HB experienced some fluctuation in electoral results, it remained one of the most successful coalitions (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 199). Results were most consistent at the level of the Basque parliamentary elections, where they fluctuated between a low of 14.65 percent in 1984 and a high of 18.33 percent in 1990. Though fluctuating, this relatively sizeable support - particularly with an organization long associated with a 'terrorist' organization - demonstrates the dissatisfaction with the state institutions (Lecours, 2007, p. 96) and their lack of legitimacy in the Basque Country (Conversi, 1997, p. 159) of many. Further, in his review of the electoral support garnered by political parties associated with the radical end of their political spectrum, Justice (2005) notes that particularly given that supporters of HB have other options for their vote if they chose to support the nationalist project (the PNV and the more leftist *Eusko Alkartasuna* (Basque Solidarity - EA), the fact that so significant a portion of the electorate nonetheless selects HB, is demonstrative of their lack of confidence in the state institutions (p. 94). Despite its associations with ETA and violence, there remains a block of voters who adhere to the HB framing of the nature of the Spanish state.

Within these fluctuations, HB received some of its highest electoral results between 1988 and 1991 at all levels, corresponding to a period of decreased ETA activity in the lead up to, and during the 1988/9 talks between ETA and the State, in Algeria. When the talks failed, ETA2 and ETA3 note, HB took an electoral hit (1.78 to 2.15 percent See Appendix 3). Some analysts further attribute the stalling in HB's electoral growth to the signing in 1988 of the *Pacto de Arujia-Enea*, which, signed by all political parties save HB,

sought to isolate any party seen as sympathetic of ETA's activity, turning HB into a political pariah (Barros and Gil-Alana, 2006; Casanova, 2007). The pact essentially formalized nationalist support in Euskadi into two blocks; those who associated with ETA and those who did not - HB versus everyone else (Lecours, 2007). The effectiveness of this pact began to waver when, in 1992, the PNV was involved in secret negotiations with HB and ETA (Díaz Herrera and Durán, 2001, p. 288-96 in Mansvelt-Beck 2005, p.201), and in 1993 when two of the largest unions in Euskadi, *Eusko Langileen Alkartasuna* (Basque Worker's Solidarity - ELA) and *Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak* (Patriotic Worker's Committees- LAB) broke the pact (Casanova, 2007, p.394). Through the 1990s, HB numbers slipped. However, at the level of the autonomous community elections, HB results remained just .37 percent below their average for this period. HB support saw its most significant drop at the state level, dropping 2.88 percent below its average in 1996. Thus, despite fluctuations, HB results remained relatively constant. In 1997, following the killing of a Spanish Lieutenant Coronel by ETA, illegalization processes were started against both KAS and HB (Casanova, 2007, p. 407; Mansvelt-Beck, 2008; 189), and when HB chose to include a clip of masked *etarras* (ETA militants) in a promotional video, the organization was declared illegal and its leaders arrested (Casanova, 2007, p. 408).

Shortly after the illegalization of HB, *Euskal Herritarok* (Basque Citizens - EH) was formed to contest elections in its place. As Alonso (2013) argues of EH's success: "not violence but the expectation of its end" fueled an increase in EH electoral results (p. 116). The declaration of the ceasefire in September 1998 - the end of which was announced in November of 1999 (Miller and Smarick, 2011) - corresponded with significant electoral recovery for EH. At the municipal level EH received its 19.91 percent of the vote - a more than 5 percent boost, and at the level of the autonomous community, its then second highest return with 17.91 percent (Appendix 3). EH contested the 2001 autonomous community elections, at which point it was punished for the failure of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty and the breaking of

the ceasefire (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013,p. 105), receiving its lowest ever result of 10.12 percent. As ETA2 and ETA3 describe, this electoral punishment was born of a deep disappointment in the failure of the talks, as had been the case following the failed talks in Algeria (Casanova, 2007, p. 352). The failure of the talks, ETA2 and ETA3 suggest, left Basque citizens tired of politics and wondering “how do we turn this around?” Following the arrests of eight members of the international relations team of HB, EH withdrew from the Basque Parliament, did not contest the 2000 general elections, and undertook a yearlong process of debate culminating in the creation of the new coalition *Batasuna* (Unity) in 2001 (Casanova, 2007, p. 450). However, processes of banning from political participation and in 2003, the illegalization of *Batasuna* significantly impacted the viability of the electoral coalition (De La Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca 2013,p. 96). During this period, the *IA* sought to send their supporters to smaller parties sympathetic to the movement goals. For instance *Euskal Herrialdeetako Alderdi Komunista* (Communist Party of the Basque Homelands - EHAK) contested the 2005 Basque Parliamentary elections (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013,p. 99), only to have an investigation aimed at its illegalization undertaken the following September (Casanova, 2007,p. 488). By the 2009 Basque Parliamentary elections the *Ley Orgánica de Partidos Políticos* had been sufficiently enforced to prevent a similar tactic (Alonso 2013; 100; De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013, p. 99). As JEEGELBS notes, these tactics were damaging to *Batasuna* as well as the *IA* and MLNV more broadly.

Further, in 2000 the political party Aralar was formed by members of the *IA* grown critical of ETA’s violence. While Aralar’s presence may have exerted some pressure on *Batasuna* to renounce ETA, De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca’s (2013) point that Aralar’s presence may have forced ETA into calling its 2011 ceasefire may be somewhat overstated. In the Basque Parliamentary elections while *Batasuna* was unable to contest the 2005 elections, it sent its voters to EHAK, which won 12.44 per cent to Aralar’s 2.33 per cent. When in 2009, *Batasuna*’s loophole having been closed, Aralar saw its vote share grow,

but only to 6.03 per cent. This is not to suggest that Aralar's appeal did not give ETA pause. However, *Aralar's* inroads were slight, and with the exception of its stance on violence, it was not in the least incompatible with Batasuna. When Bildu (Gather) was relaunched in 2012 as *Euskal Herria Bildu* (EH Bildu), Aralar was one of the five founding coalition members. While Bale (2007) has argued that the banning of successive versions of ETA's political wing has served to de-radicalize the conflict, both Mansvelt-Beck (2008) and De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2013) have argued that the changes to the parties have been relatively cosmetic - the core goals and postures remain the same. In 2011 the *IA* contested municipal and general elections under the coalitions of Bildu and Amaiur respectively: Bildu pulled in 26.03 percent of the vote and Amaiur 24.39 percent (Appendix 3). The following year in the elections for the Basque parliament, the new coalition EH Bildu received 25 percent of the vote. After a decade of illegalization, the Basque electorate returned to the *IA* parties with results between 8 and 10 percent higher than any previous election (Appendix 3). The period of institutional hardship had not erased the appeal of the MLNV's political aims. The MLNV's electoral results have ebbed and flowed largely in response to the military oversteps, and miss-steps, of ETA. Their viability is such that they have maintained support well above the minimum electoral threshold for representation, and have consistently been awarded seats in various levels of government. Despite these fluctuations, the electoral viability of the MLNV and *IA* parties is suggestive of a root of support for the *IA* goals, as well as the dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Project Viability

The MLNV held conflicting analyses of the new emerging institutional framework during *Transición*. ETAp_m favoured participation in the electoral system, and ETAm held that the institutional framework surrounding electoral politics in Spain was insufficient for the pursuit of the movement goals (Irvin, 1999; Lecours, 2007; Casanova, 2007; Pereira, 2001; Zirakzadeh, 1991). Some, such as Mansvelt-Beck

(2005) and Harmon (2012) argue that the new institutions provided a strong framework for Basque self-governance. Harmon (2012) points to the institutional liberty granted to the new Autonomous Community to develop its own school curriculums that reflects regional history, and promote the instruction and use of the Basque language as evidence of its viability. However, it can be argued that such concessions are merely the acceptance of basic tenets of respect for minority identities rather than evidence of exceptional regional autonomy. That being said, the new Statute of Autonomy was not without its advantages (see Institutions). Lecours (2007) notes that the Statute includes fiscal agreements which allow for the autonomous community to levy the majority of the taxes within its territories. Importantly, the Statute, over time, did provide an arena to help foster and promote nationalist ideas (Lecours, 2007; Mansvelt-Beck, 2008; Harmon, 2012).

This analysis however, was not entirely shared, dividing the nationalist movement into “those who wagered ... that the reform of the *Transición* was sufficient, [...and those] that considered that the demands for democratic liberties were passed over... basically the right of self-determination was not recognized and that the repression and violence [by the state] would continue” (BS). For many, the process, JEEGELBS argues, was effective in putting limits on the extent of possible reforms (see Institutions). Thus, while it was a potentially useful framework for fostering Basque nationalism, it did so within the confines of the state, leaving few avenues for changes that might be used toward autonomy outside of the state structure. Once passed, the PNV and EE sought to maximize the recognition of the right to self-determination within the Statute of Autonomy, but with little success (Casanova, 2007, p. 235) In 1979, the Statute of Autonomy was passed with nearly a 95 percent vote in favour, and with an abstention rate was closer to 40 percent (EJ-GV, 2016).

In 1981, an attempted coup shook the fledgling democracy. Instigated by military colonel and backed by 200 members of the *Guardia Civil* (Spanish military police), it was seen as a response to perceived threats against the unity of the state in the form of increased regionalist demands for greater power, as well as the high level of ETA violence (Lecours, 2007). Following the coup the Law for the Defense of the Constitution was introduced which “defined terrorism as including any attacks on the integrity of the Spanish nation or any effort to secure the independence of any part of its territory, even if nonviolent” (Ivin, 1999, p. 196). For many within the MLNV this new legislation was further proof that the political opportunity afforded by electoral politics was severely limited. Given the limiting framework of the lack of recognition of the right to self-determination in the Statute of Autonomy, the Constitution’s prohibitive clauses on secession, and the repressive legislative framework of the Law for the Defense of the Constitution, the possibility of strong electoral returns for HB could not justify a complete transition from armed struggle to party politics.

The strategy of the MLNV, both politically and militarily, following the *Transición* aimed at destabilizing the State and newly minted institutions. As JEEGELBS recounts, politically the strategy consisted of “massive mobilizations, massive, around Herri Batasuna [...] But the objective above all was to arrive at political negotiations to change the framework no?” It was a strategy she points to as having a degree of success. During the 1980s, HB received strong and relatively consistent electoral results, from the municipal, up to the European parliamentary elections (JEEGELBS). Like Sinn Féin, in 1979, having won 13 percent of the vote, HB announced it would not occupy their seats in the State parliament, choosing instead to use their electoral mandate as evidence of popular discontent with the existing political system (Irvin, 1999, p. 120). Along with the healthy electoral results, the MLNV was able to successfully orchestrate numerous and well attended protests, marches, and mobilizations around *abertzale* issues (Irvin 1999; Pereira, 2001; Casanova, 2007). There were, JEEGELBS notes “mass mobilizations in support

of the rights of prisoners [...] And then there is an armed action that without a doubt, *oséa*³, that keeps the Spanish state, and the politics of Euskal Herria in a state of immobility". ETA activity was at its highest towards the end of the 1970s while, institutionally, the strategy of the MLNV following *Transición* had sought to prevent the cementing of the Statute of Autonomy and maintain a state of instability so as to force a renegotiation of the institutional framework of the Basque Country.

JEEGELBS's summarizes the progression of the political strategy from *Transición* to stalemate. The MLNV around the *Transición* came up with the strategy that aimed, within ten to fifteen years,

to force the state to sit down and reformulate the process, [...]and in the 1990s, it is seen that no. *Oséa*, the *izquierda abertzale* has achieved good electoral returns and maintained political instability in Euskal Herria but the *izquierda abertzale* has not achieved the change in the political statute, and in parallel, the statute is taking root [...] Society is changing and the *izquierda abertzale* found itself on the outside of this process no?

Politically, as militarily, the MLNV found its progress stalled out, and so began a series of tactical adjustments. Chief among these was a revisiting of the strategy of the creation of a nationalist front (see Alliances). It was a process of change to which the MLNV would recommit and re-evaluate to varying degrees over the course of the following fifteen years. This is not, S1 explains, unsurprising; she likens the refocusing of the MLNV strategy to slowly turning a large and heavy boat: "it is not a change that a leader can dictate, it is a process a turning of the whole boat, and as such it needs a great deal of time, of talking to people, of listening and thinking, of discussing". For ETA⁴, the question was slightly different: "the armed struggle is to force the government into a particular situation but if now you can't force it, it's more that...well...it's evident" that adjustments must be made. As conditions became less favourable for armed conflict, and opportunities appeared or seemed possible to create, the movement gradually shifted the weight of importance from the military to the political strategy.

³ *O sea* Informal filler, similar to 'I mean' or 'like'

The notion of a stalemate arises both in the mid-1990s and again in the early 2000s following the illegalization of Batasuna: “There were standstills. That is certain” (S1). For S1 the stalemate came to a head with the State’s moves to prevent HB and its successor parties from participating in electoral politics. The conflict had leveled off, causing the MLNV to re-evaluate its strategy and make adjustments, as JEEGELBS and SI explain. Like JEEGELBS, SI notes, “if [the strategy] has plateaued, we had to make moves to get out of there”. For the stalemate of the 1990s, that move was to try and gather what allies they could to their political project to, as JEEGELBS phrases it: “to generate social density and *abertzale* projects no? This, the State is aware of this, and it undert[ook] a strategy of criminalization against everything, starting in 95, [...] in Aznar’s era bai⁴? Against everything that is *abertzalismo* [...] a process of criminalization of the PNV, and the *abertzale* identity”.

Elected as Prime Minister in 1996, José Maria Aznar’s government had a tendency “to demonize all forms of sub state nationalism and to promote a Castilian-flavoured Spanish nation with a continual stress on unity contributed to a hardening of Basque nationalism” (Lecours, 2007, p. 153). This strategy of illegalization and criminalization, is most clearly exemplified by the banning of HB and its successor parties, and the criminalization process known as 18/98 (Casanova, 2007, p. 407). This was made easier by the MLNV’s own dual political military strategy as the State is able to point to the armed campaign as an “excuse to repress the political sphere of the movement. Thereby, on the one hand, it has the armed struggle controlled, and on the other side it has the possibility of repressing the political movement and preventing it from growing and winning elections in Basque society, no?” (SE) While this renewed offensive by the state would not have, the interviewees argue an impact on the viability of the

⁴ *Bai* – Euskara for yes, used as a filler

movement goals, it would nonetheless have an impact on the viability of the movement's political efforts, particularly its mobilization capacity and, most certainly, its ability to make use of the existing political institutions.

This period of criminalization marked notable difficulties for the pursuit of the MLNV's political project. While she argues that the movement has since recovered, in the years immediately following this new state strategy, the impact, JEEGELBS holds, was significant. Although successive leaderships would fall as a result of the State tactics, she argues that it was in the youth, social and political institutional spheres, and capacity to work that "this did us a terrible damage. But not enough to condition us, I believe, eh?" (JEEGELBS). The capacity to work during the near decade of illegalization stifled the movement's growth "you couldn't work like that and this inability to work raised the need for further adjustments in strategy" (S1), as, S1 argues, in the years following the illegalization, the political work of the movement plateaued once more. While both S1 and JEEGELBS note the political restrictions were enough to warrant course corrections, they were insufficient to call into question the building of a nationalist front and the increase of social density as the movement strategy. Damage was taken, JEEGELBS holds "to the capacity that the *izquierda abertzale* has to establish itself politically, to maintain social and associative density in Euskal Herria, no? and advance its national project, bai?". SE concurs noting that following the illegalization "we functioned for ten years clandestinely [...] there are risks but we [continue] believing that we had a strategy that was viable and valid."

These productive difficulties were amplified by the attacks in New York of September 11th 2001, which put new pressure on the political projects of the IA and MLNV for their association with ETA. As Mansvelt-Beck (2005) notes, with the attacks, global sympathy for terrorism slipped, and support for

harsher state counter-terrorism policies grew. Woodworth (2007) has noted the usefulness of ETA as a threat, for State rhetoric, particularly amongs Spanish conservatives. SE, SKB and ETA1 have espoused that the Spanish state made use of the existence of ETA as a distraction from any meaningful discussion of the Basque conflict, while using it to justify the increasingly broad criminalization of the MLNV and impede the growth of the *abertzale* political project through legal, institutional channels. SE notes this was exacerbated after the attacks of 9/11 not simply allowing for the crackdowns on ETA “but to go after political organizations, the parties, the youth organizations that make up the *izquierda abertzale*.” This State violence, Bengoetxea (2013) notes, goes beyond ETA militants “to include and criminalize its socio-political ‘environment’” (p.49), what is known as *el entorno del entorno* (*El País*, 13 July, 2013, in Bengoetxea, 2013, p. 49). Under such a prescription “there is no need to identify individual criminal acts, since belonging, showing signs of support, sometimes is enough to be brought under the lable “member of a terrorist group”” (Bengoetxea, 2013, p. 50). With this SE holds, the MLNV was forced to operate “clandestinely where we have no possibility of standing for elections, nor do we have the material resources like networks or money, to defend our project”. This forced move into hiding, JEEGELBS argues, while something for which ETA has long been equipped and prepared for, was, as SE suggests, damaging for the organizations more accustomed to working through legal channels. As JEEGELBS attests, ETA “is a clandestine organization but what we were not counting on in the political dynamic was that we would have to go into hiding”.

Despite setbacks throughout the 1990s, with the collapse of the Pacto de Arujia-Enea, the MLNV moved forward with its pursuit of the nationalist front (Casanova, 2007). SKB holds that the MLNV had achieved great success through the re-focus on the political aspects of the nationalist project and the pursuit of a nationalist front. Precisely because of this success, the process of illegalization was so destructive. As SKB notes, the ability of the movement to carry out its strategy of building the Euskadi it envisioned

from the ground up, was seriously impaired when illegalization, such as that pursued against Batasuna in 2003, forced political activists out of the seats they won during previous elections. “This, obviously,” SKB notes “did a lot of damage [...as...] in all almost all the towns you are a considerable force and they wipe you from the map, the capacity to continue working, [...] at the councils you don’t have access to resources”. Though the threshold for the creation of new political parties in Spain is quite low, despite various attempts at reforms, political parties in Spain are highly dependent on State aid (Bertoa, Rodriguez-Teruel, Barbera and Barrio, 2014). Given the conflictual nature of the relationship between the parties of the MLNV and the State, it is not then unsurprising that S1, BS, and SKB make so explicit, there are such differences in the material resources available to themselves and to more established parties. Beyond the seeming impossibility of continuing to work through the political institutions, SKB argues that the process of illegalization of the political parties also had a negative bearing on the commitment of activists to the institutions themselves, and to the work they were doing: “neither can you work through the institutions because, because, ok, they declare you illegal and then you have no rights to them, with the risk that the people face of being sent to jail only for doing political work, oséa, [having] nothing to do with the military strategy” (SKB).

The 1978 Constitution sets two limits on the behaviour of political parties: their internal structure must be democratic and they must respect the Constitution and the law (Bertoa et.al., 2014, p. 93). Given both the enshrined indivisibility of the State in the Constitution as well as the broad processes of criminalization meant that the very existence of IA parties toes near the line of acceptable party behaviour. That being said, the Spanish Law of Political Parties differs from those of other European states in that it is not a party’s ideologies that would qualify it for dissolution, but its activities (Bertoal et.al., 2014, p. 96). The penal code as it existed prior to the passing of the 2002 *Ley Orgánica de Partidos Políticos* (LOPP) which led to the illegalization of Batasuna, lists the commission of criminal acts as grounds for

organisational dissolution. The LOPP extends this to the supporting of criminal offenses, excludes those convicted of certain crimes from creating political parties, and disallows the use of any names reminiscent of previously banned parties (Turano, 2003, p. 732-734). Parts of the LOPP “may lend themselves to a wider interpretation than was intended by the drafters” as Carillo (2002) notes some provisions penalizing against the creation of a “culture of confrontation” in pursuit of political goals, making it possible for the whole of the party to be dissolved for the actions of individual members (in Turano, 2003, p. 735). Not only did the ban on Batasuna disenfranchise significant numbers of Basque voters, Woodworth (2007) explains, but “the ban was implemented in a confusing manner and [party leader Arnaldo] Otegi and his colleagues jumped through every available loophole, making an ass of the law” (p. 69). By the time of the 2009 elections, many of these loopholes had been sealed, still leaving a notable portion of the electorate effectively disenfranchised.

As discussed, Bertoa et.al. (2014) suggest that the illegalization had a structural impact on *Sortu* given its rejection of ETA violence and call for ETA’s dissolution, along with changes in leadership. However, ideologically *Sortu* remains committed to the same principles as Batasuna and HB before it. The strategic change is reflective of a long running debate within the movement, and much of the leadership remains in place, and those that are not, are not out of the picture due to exclusively ideological differences, but rather arrests, or jail time. HB and Batasuna are undeniably associated to a degree with ETA, yet “banning groups has never prevented the birth of similar groups espousing the same rhetoric and adopting the same aims and methods” (Rubio, 2002; Turano, 2003, p. 738). Thus, Rubio argues “the move to ban a party is not a politically neutral political process, but a political act brought about at the behest of a particular party in power” (in Turano, 2003, p. 739). Accordingly, as Turano (2003) concludes “troubling perhaps, is that the ability to negotiate with terrorists becomes more difficult if the authorized group is banished from sight. At best the LOPP is a desperate and probably ineffective

measure against terrorism; one can only hope that it will not serve to exacerbate the situation” (p. 739). Building on the processes of criminalization of the late 1990s, the political organizations were now more vulnerable to dissolution if even a fraction of their membership were found guilty of justifying or refusing to denounce actions related to terrorism. As SKB holds, the risk of “being sent to jail for political work” had not only expanded, but so too had the repercussions to the organization to which an activist belonged, and thus to the pursuit of the MLNV political project.

At the same time, the strategic debate on the viability of armed struggle waged within the movement. As SE summarizes “well, we can continue practicing armed struggle, they will not defeat us completely, but neither will we achieve our objectives”. With this debate came a restructuring of the political parties internal to the movement. Whitfield (2015) highlights the emergence of nationalist leader Arnaldo Otegi from jail in 2008 – however briefly – as marking a period of strategic reassessment that would lead to the new direction. Notably, for the respondents, this process was already underway prior to 2008. For JEEGELBS, Lizarra-Garazi, the illegalization and failed talks of Anoeta (see Engagements), were moments of crisis for the MLNV. Yet from each of these crises she argues, the movement ““resurged, ok, reaffirming these strategies and the strategy that, [...we] must try to orchestrate this accumulation of forces, this political relationships and more no? [...] To get more political actors engaged in the process and maybe it will change?” As SKB and BS note, after a few years of illegalization, the movement and the state had reached a stalemate, and so the movement “began to deeply analyze everything, and now [we] can’t move forward anymore, the conceptions that are held when in a situation of confrontation change no?” (BS). SE holds the change in strategy was a response to an analysis of the strategy as it was, and the potential for advancement of the new strategy. This analysis, as he put it, showed that “man these, these are very interesting situations and possibilities that we have in this country.” Accordingly, “the change in strategy, what came of it was a return to a political situation, or a change in rhythm and

well, ok, let's say, new opportunities opened up to, I don't know, to work, to reach agreements with other people and move forward no?"(SKB).

Making the change to the current strategy, sought to remove some of the existing barriers to the political projects while simultaneously taking advantage of the appearance of seemingly new, or growing opportunities. The most pressing existing barrier (over which the movement has strategic control) is removing the State's primary reasoning for the intensity of the criminalization of the political project – namely ETA's armed struggle. Further, over the course of the 1990s, a number of political organizations, moved increasingly away from viewing the Statute of Autonomy as a viable platform from which to pursue increased Basque autonomy and even self-determination. (See Alliances and Institutions). However, so long as the *IA* parties remained associated with the armed conflict, they would be hard pressed to take advantage of this new situation. The removal of armed struggle from the equation, it was hoped, would re-open some of the political institutional avenues to the movement.

On this front, the *IA*'s hopes were initially met with the founding of the political party *Sortu* in February of 2011 as a successor to Batasuna. Unlike its predecessors, *Sortu* stated that it rejected all violence, including that of ETA – a concession S1 admits was difficult for many in the MLNV to endorse, but was nonetheless accepted as a means of preventing its illegalization. Nevertheless, the following month it was ruled that *Sortu*, given that it was a successor of Batasuna, was therefore associated with ETA and subject to the same banning as Batasuna. However, this ruling was overturned in June of 2012 (El País, June 20, 2012). From the time of the legalization of *Sortu*, S1 holds that there has been an easing of the risks to political activists; "we will talk on the phone now, in this sense it has relaxed a great deal [...] but it's still there eh? In the car, you don't carry any papers in case you get pulled over [...] you don't talk

about certain things on the phone because you know it is being recorded” (S1). Thus, while political activists inside the *IA* still feel the pressure of the history of criminalization of the movement, it is, in many senses, as she says, calmer since the change in strategy.

Part of the movement’s strength S1 argues, is in getting their members involved, a strength she argues, not available to most other parties: “what we have is people who put up posters, who protest in their towns. This is a force we cannot lose. And so for this [we must have] patience for a long process, and pedagogy ...because if you are not engaging them they may say ‘I’m done with this’ and go pick up weapons”. This is particularly significant given that while many of the respondents were quick to say that the atmosphere of criminalization political acts, and the sense of the State’s heavy police and military hand have eased, most were equally quick to point out that it remains a concern (see Tactics). As SKB mentioned before, the MLNV cannot rely on institutional means to pursue its goals, because it feels that at all times they are under threat of illegalization and the uprooting of whatever progress they had made. For all that she holds that military and police pressure on the *IA* has eased, S1 notes that at the same time ““we are aware eh? That if we really do our job well, [the repression] could return. It can come back. Yes. Yes. Without picking up weapons eh? As a political organization they can illegalize you because [...] It could come back again” (S1). The framework of the anti-terrorist legislation of the *Transición* period, the LOPP and the centrality of legal concern for the respect and immutability of the Constitution, remain in place; as such, so too does the possibility of renewed pressure against the MLNV and its political projects.

Assessment of the new political strategy

With the declaration of ETA’s permanent ceasefire, the MLNV committed itself fully to a political and social strategy. This has been possible because of the perceived strength of the electoral and political

viability of the MLNV. BS, SE, and SKB highlight the capacity within the movement to work on the construction of the nationalist project, and how the new strategy has, as was hoped, capitalized on the existing support for the movement goals by distancing the movement from the more contentious tactics that had arguably kept many people at bay. Despite the potentially discouraging framework outlined above, as BS notes “we have the exit [success] of right now having the vast majority of our society in favour of the right to self-determination. The movement, we are becoming the second largest movement, political movement, in the country. That’s the level of exit [success] of the strategy”.

Between 1979 and 2000, nationalist parties in the Basque Country have accounted for between 60 and 70 percent of the electoral vote at the municipal, autonomous community, and general election levels (exceptions being the general elections in 2000 and 2008 with numbers closer to 40 percent). These numbers dropped to the 50 -60 percent range during the period of illegalization, but have improved since legalization (see Appendix 3). Two points need be made. First it is unsurprising that nationalist parties receive the least support at the general election level, as voters are likely consider more state wide considerations in their selections. Further as of the 2015 general elections, a new political party *Podemos*, received a notable share of the votes in the Basque Country, potentially at the expense of IA parties, as it is seen as a challenger on the national level to the more established PP and PSOE. That said, as SE explains, the movement not only has popular support, but has managed to create extensive and important networks in support of the movement goals, specifically referencing “a federation of municipal governments throughout the Basque Country”, initially to work on the municipal level concerns, a level at which in 1999 and 2011, they have enjoyed near a quarter of the popular vote (Appendix 3). However, beyond the administration of municipal affairs, as SE lays out, the network of municipal offices is also a key component of the strategy of *unilateralidad*: “we want to take steps, through *unilateralidad* to build our, our own state no?” This capacity, particularly for work in pursuit of the movement goals was, according to SKB severely impaired under the period of ilegalization, but

greatly enhanced by the new strategy. The MLNV SKB argues, has “weathered the storm of being illegal for ten years. [...the MLNV] kept working, and went about reaching agreements with other political forces and was able to form Bildu [...] we have won a great deal quantitatively and politically [...] the political presence of the *izquierda abertzale* is greater than ever.” Though the ability of the movement to work was stifled by the period of exile from electoral politics, he notes that the work that was done during this time has paid off since the commitment to the new strategy took effect.

With the new strategy BS, SE and SKB note that the movement has been able to attract a greater deal of mobilization capacity. As Whitfield (2015) notes, that *Sortu* would declare its unequivocal rejection of violence in pursuit of movement goals, was insufficient for the Spanish state. Further, the electoral support awarded EH Bildu and its supporters by the end of ETA’s campaign, “left [Spaniards] struggling to comprehend that a counterterrorist campaign they had believed would conclude with the “defeat” of ETA had been accompanied by a resurgence of radical nationalism” (p. 9). BS references the strong electoral results, while SE mentions the turn outs for public events in support of nationalism, and SKB notes that with the new strategy “I mean, this way [the movement] was able to accumulate an important social base, that carries out numerous protests, and very powerful”. All of which is necessary, to put pressure on the state, in order for the movement to achieve its goals “we consider that we will not only be a success in terms of a movement, but in terms of a country where there is a democratic affect where everyone can [have a] say” (BS). For MLNVJA, the MLNV has been since its inception, crucial to survival not only of Basque language and culture, but to the Basque nationalist sentiment: “I believe that today, almost everyone understands that the solution is through the recognition of the rights of Euskal Herria. If there has been an advance, and for me this is evident, it has been thanks to the fight of the MLNV.”

In all HB and its successor parties appeared to be rewarded electorally whenever ETA calls a ceasefire (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2013; 105). Yet with the exception of the return to electoral politics following the declaration (and maintenance) of ETA's ceasefire in 2010, the fluctuations in results in elections contested by HB and its successors has remained relatively constant. While the results are sufficient to be meaningful, though not overwhelming, there is no evidence that an increase in the electoral viability of the political branch is a decisive factor in the scaling up or down of ETA's violent activity. That is not to say there is no connection. That HB and its affiliates exist at all is evidence that ETA attributes some degree of importance to the electoral expression of its struggle. Further, there is evidence that, such as in 1998, and 2010, ETA has used the closing of various fronts of conflict as part of an attempt to create conditions under which its electoral branch might succeed. Thus, while the electoral success of HB and its successors is a concern of the ETA dominated MLNV leadership, it has not made its decisions to de-escalate based on an increase in the viability of its political party. Rather, the consistent, (not rising), support garnered by HB and its successors may serve as a contributing, though not causal, factor in ETA's dramatic de-escalation in violence.

Yet within this struggle, it is argued that the tactic of armed action brought the MLNV to a stalemate with the State. As almost all the respondents have articulated in one way or another, they do not believe the State to be interested in a democratic debate on the subject of Basque (or Catalan) self-determination. With the stalemate, ETA1 argues, there was a great deal of interest in maintaining the conflict as a military one, one the State had under relative control because “they know perfectly well that if there is a change, if society begins to speak they will find themselves with a political conflict”. SE concurs “this is one reason that leads us to act unilaterally, [is] that effectively, the analysis is correct,

that in a debate in democratic terms, we have the arguments to win and the State does not.” This understanding of the conflict as political rather than military, would highlight what SKB refers to as the weakness of the state’s political imaginations of Spain, and the dearth of meaningful political arguments against the Basque nationalist political project. Accordingly, the political viability of the MLNV, though insufficient on its own to push the MLNV toward a de-escalation of violence, contributed by providing a sense that there existed the viability – both electorally and in political participation – sufficient, providing a degree of optimism for negotiations and assurance that the project would not collapse in the absence of the armed struggle. That being said, neither was it so strong that, following *Transición* the MLNV – particularly given the PNV’s early constitutionalist stance – felt it sufficient for the achievement of its goals. The jumps in the HB, Batasuna and EH Bildu support are rewards for ETA ceasefires, not their causes.

b. Military Viability

The discussion of the military viability of the MLNV is centered on two themes: the effectiveness of the overall military strategy and the operational capacity of ETA as a military organization. The opening and closing of various fronts of the military campaign was used as a tactic to ratchet up or dial down pressure on the State and its institutions in accordance with the short and long term tactical aims. The assessments of the viability of the military strategy varied along with the particular tactical use.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Military Strategy

In discussing the effectiveness of the military strategy the focus here is on the impact of the military campaign on the creation and maintenance of support for the movement goals, the achievement of State-ETA negotiations in 1988/9 and the process of Lizarra-Garazi a near decade later, as examples of the armed struggle’s effectiveness. In terms of the fallibility of the armed strategy, equally notable are

themes of mistimed and mis-selected targets, the stalemate reached in the 1990s, and the failure of the 2004-7 negotiation process.

Much of the IA credits the work of the MLNV over the past fifty years in shaping and promoting support for the Basque national project (see Support). Douglass and Zulaika (1990) note that ETA has made three notable contributions to the ideological environs of Basque nationalism: the removal of Catholic confessionalism; a disassociation of nationalism and race; and an interest in the working class within a socialist and independent Basque Country. As ETA1 holds, ETA created the political and social space in which the IA – both those branches who supported the armed campaign and those who did not – was able to flourish. ETA2 and ETA3 hold that ETA was a resistance movement at its core. For example, ETA's assassination in December of 1973 of Franco's would be successor Luis Carrero Blanco, Zirakzadeh (1991) notes "gave increased visibility and prestige [to ETA-V] among Basque youths, who were joining the organization in ever increasing numbers" (p.189). This spirit of resistance, SE and MLNVJA argue, imbued the whole of the movement with a sense of the value of ETA's goals – if less often than their methods. As SKB states, 30 years ago it was only ETA that spoke of ideas of independence and self-determination, now these are ideas that are on the table and freely discussed.

ETA has, since its inception held political and socio-cultural considerations and actions built into its structure. ETA's ability to expand its purview to correspond to the social and political interests of its target constituents through military actions has been noted (see Support). As SE and S1 note, the campaign against the Lemoniz reactor expanded ETA's interest to environmental concerns (as well as economic) (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca (2013) note that ETA's campaign against drug dealers had a positive impact on local IA electoral results. ETA, Casanova (2007)

notes, has also intervened militarily on behalf of workers in labour disputes. Such interventions, in addition to the short term aim of for example, ending a labour standoff, also served a broader purpose. These acts also served to promote the longer term aim of enhancing a spirit of contestation both by highlighting the illegitimacy of the State's institutions by their failure to respond to the population's preferences, and by demonstrating the possibility of an alternative and potentially more responsive system. This in turn was meant to contribute to the goal of maintaining and promoting support for Basque national project. Yet, as JEEGELBS discusses, as the new Statute of Autonomy and its corresponding institutions took root, they gained a significant degree of legitimacy in the eyes of both the Basque public and the international community (see Institutions), thus the military campaign was arguably only a partial success in this regard. Nevertheless, the creation and maintenance of a Basque national political space and a spirit of contestation for much of the past half century is seen by the MLNV as evidence of the importance and success of ETA's military campaign.

In terms of ETA's military effectiveness, the Algeria talks (1988-9) are an oft cited example. As ETA4 argues, "when, for political and technical reasons ETA had the capacities to carry out a very strong offensive and cause, well... it hurt the State and its structures" that moved the State to broach the idea of talks. In January of 1988 ETA put forward and the State rebuffed, an offer of negotiation. Throughout the year ETA increased its pressure. In October the highest ransom ever paid to ETA was paid. Held for nearly 300 days despite massive state efforts to locate him, the kidnapped man's release following the sizeable ransom was a statement of force: with it ETA repeated its offer of negotiations and within weeks the talks in Algeria were underway this after a period of organizational debilitation in the mid1980s (Casanova, 2007, p. 339). It was, as ETA2 and ETA3 put it plainly, a key moment. The strategy, SKB notes, was to pressure the State through armed action, to the table. For MLNVJA this was a time in which militarily ETA was able to push the State "against the ropes". The talks in Algeria between ETA and

the State, ETA2 and ETA3 note, were seen as moments of opportunity as the movement “had always had this hope no? When it sat down at the table there, pues⁵, to negotiate, bueno, the recognition of the Basque nation, the recognition of self-determination”. Though ultimately unsuccessful, the fact that the State agreed to sit with representatives of ETA in an official capacity and acknowledge negotiations, is presented by the MLNV as a direct result of the pressure placed upon the State by ETA’s military campaign and evidence of the success of the approach.

A further example of success of the military campaign to the overall strategy of the movement was the signing of the Treaty of Lizarra-Garazi in 1998. While the Treaty was a political one, it was facilitated by the possibility of a ceasefire declaration by ETA; after months of negotiations the Treaty was signed on Sept 12 1998 and ETA made official the ceasefire four days later (*BBC News*, Sept 17, 1998). However, this declaration of a ceasefire was not the only way in which the military campaign was seen as contributing to the Treaty. By 1996, recovering from the lull following a blows to the organization of the *Caída de Bidart*, acts of sabotage were taking place at a rate of 3 per day, despite hundreds of arrests of *abertzale* youths (Casanova, 2007, p. 374). Such was the operational recuperation that in 1995 ETA extended an offer of negotiation to the State. When the State refused, ETA hardened its campaign, ultimately carrying out more than 1000 acts of sabotage, as well as 70 attacks with explosives, car bombs, and grenade launchers, causing five fatalities in 1996 alone (Casanova, 2007, p. 401-412). Qualitatively, SKB holds the use of military tactics around Lizarra- Garazi was somewhat different from those surrounding the talks in Algeria, in that it took into account to a greater degree the impact of military action on the political and social projects working parallel to the armed campaign. In the mid-1990s, JEEGELBS argues, the armed struggle sought to produce possibilities with a shorter term aim –

⁵ *Pues* – filler, similar to ‘well’

that of facilitating within Euskal Herria the conditions for the accumulation of social and political alliances that would lead to the Treaty of Lizarra-Garazi. In conjunction with this, BS notes that the closing of various fronts of the armed campaign was used in the short term as a type of confidence building measure. JEEGELBS agrees, noting that “[With] Lizarra-Garazi the armed campaign is what opened the doors so that the PNV and for Euskal Alkartasuna to involve themselves in the process”. According to Mansvelt Beck (2005), the tactic of street violence which gained momentum in the mid-1990s functioned as a way of hardening lines between various camps of nationalism in an attempt to firm up commitment amongst supporters. Between 1995 and 2010 as part of ETA’s nationalist bloc strategy, ETA sought to “divid[e] Basque society into two blocs, nationalists and non-nationalists” (De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca, 2013, p. 99). These attacks not only represented “soft targets” in the wake of organizational setbacks caused by the *Caída*, but as an ETA prisoner wrote to the leadership, they advanced the nationalist bloc strategy by “exponentially increase[ing] political polarization and forced moderate nationalists towards radical nationalists’ positions on secession’ (ABC, March 9, 1998 in De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca, 2013, p.108). While not as directly attributable to ETA, *kale borroka* had a significant impact on this strategy by governmental accounts Basque youth “carried out approximately 5,000 acts of politically motivated destruction of property... result[ing] in property damages in excess of \$24 million. In addition, [...to] more than 650 street attacks on political opponents in the year 2000 alone” (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 84).

In an analysis spanning 1975-1991, Enders and Sandler (1996) found that an “average year worth of terrorism led to a persistent negative impact on foreign direct investment of 13.5 per cent for Spain” (in Pestana, 2003, p. 404). Abadie and Gardeazabel (2001) further concluded that between the Basque region and a synthetic region without terrorism there existed an average 10 percent gap in per capita GDP (in Pestana, 2003, p. 404). Thus, the economic impact of ETA’s military campaign was not

insignificant. This then provided ETA with some degree of leverage over the State as long as these figures were damaging, the State would have an interest in ending the conflict. Thus, for all that ETA suffered a serious organizational setback, its military viability was such that it maintained a painful pressure on the Spanish state, and Basque society.

Beyond the success of both the individual military operations and the overall strategy, there need be highlighted a number of failings of the military strategy, questioning the selection and timing of certain targets, and the effectiveness of employing military pressure at certain key moments, with Douglass and Zulaika (1990) noting ETA's tendency to focus on highly symbolic targets rather than indiscriminate violence, for much of its history. For ETAPNV at the beginning of the 1990s, ETA had been handed too much control over the movement, and thus its overall strategy. As a long serving ETA leadership was apprehended in 1992 in the *Caída de Bidart*, leadership roles within ETA, ETA4 and ETA1 note, were left to inexperienced and more radicalized elements of the membership (Zirakzadeh, 2002). This was a blow, JAETA argues, to the plan at the time to ratchet up military pressure on the State in advance of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Though the military tactics may have changed with the new leadership – as ETA4 notes *kale borroka* increasingly reinforced and even substituted for more traditional operations – military pressure remained a key component to the overall political and military strategy. Yet the less discriminating nature of *kale borroka* left the MLNV open to accusations that Basque society, rather than the Spanish state, bore the brunt of this punishment (Mansvelt-Beck 2005).

The emphasis on the military branch of the movement ETAPNV discusses, in the context of the political nature of the Lizarra- Garazi Treaty began, in JEEGELBS' eyes, to highlight the multiple contradictions internal to the movement. The rupture of the ETA ceasefire was met with a great deal of

disappointment in the Basque population – as both ETA2 and ETA3 mention, and the electoral results aptly illustrated. The return to armed struggle was not, as JEEGELBS notes, an uncontested decision, and while it failed to provoke a fracture within the movement, there were many within the movement who thought that the PNV should have been allowed greater room to manoeuvre and that ETA's resumption of activity was at best, rash. This reliance on the military pressure and the internal contradictions it generated, only became more intense during the 2004-2007 negotiation process. March 22nd 2006 saw ETA's first declaration of a 'permanent' ceasefire, with the aim of facilitating negotiations with the State (Lecours, 2007, p. 109). As BS explains part of the strategy was "“to enter in to the process of 2006 was basically in showing willingness to go to a process of dialogue and negotiation. [...] ETA declared the closing of the Catalan front, ETA declared the closing to the front against the prison officers”". According to SE de-escalations of the military campaign at various points was used to not only avoid an action sparking renewed anger and reticence amongst State actors, but also to provide a period of calm to 'settle' tensions, at least to some degree. There were times, as BS and SE note, when ceasefires both official and unofficial, were used to set the stage for negotiation "“through truces and sometimes even truces that were undeclared of two or three months without armed action [it was attempted] to create an atmosphere of less emotional pressure” (SE).

Having declared its acceptance of the Anoeta Proposal in 2005 (see Engagements), ETA reduced (but did not halt) its activity, before declaring a permanent ceasefire in March (Alonso, 2013) and announcing in June the closing of the front against politicians (Casanova, 2007, p. 470). While the State repeated to the press the impossibility of talks with ongoing ETA activity, ETA grew frustrated with what it saw as unfulfilled government promises. In late September a commando cell made off with 10 tonnes of dynamite in a raid in Brittany (Casanova, 2007, p. 459), and in October a cell stole 300 pistols from a French arms warehouse (Casanova, 2007, p. 470-490). Days later a third and much delayed meeting

took place with the State, though centered largely on both sides' unfulfilled promises (Casanova, 2007, p. 493). ETA had successfully made use of, BS and SE suggest, the opening and closing of various fronts to attempt to both set the stage for negotiations as well as remind the State of its operational capacity. However, by the end of the year ETA, many of the respondents argue, would make a serious mistake.

When the talks appeared not to advance in accordance with ETA's expectations the ceasefire was broken in dramatic fashion. On December 30th 2006 ETA exploded an ordinance in Madrid's T-4 Barajas Airport killing two. The deaths of working class bystanders with no connection to the 'accepted' State targets, as well as its timing, was met with outrage and confusion. At the time of the attack the *IA* political leaders were sequestered with State representatives and were seemingly equally caught off guard (Casanova, 2007, p.495). In June 2007, one month after the last meetings with State negotiators, and months after Prime Minister Zapatero publicly declared an end to all talks in view of the T-4 attack, ETA declared all fronts against the State to be opened once more (Alonso, 2013, p. 125). S1 confirms the contested nature of this action. For her, and many like her, the logic behind the Barajas bombing does not hold up under examination: even if "you are in agreement more or less with the strategy or no, it's very hard [...] with what appears to be a ceasefire and maybe we will achieve something, not sure what exactly, and then all of a sudden they throw a jug of cold water on us. Later, you understand it... or not." BS clearly outlines the internal dispute as, for HB, this was clearly a "process of dialogue and negotiations. I think that there is a journalist that has said [...] that violence is useful to sit a government [down] but violence is not useful in a peace process to keep them [at] the table. Because what happened when you made the shift is that [...] the political routes of the strategy of peace are absolutely different and if you missed the route you are fucked." Here again the notion of internal contradictions arises; violence is useful for getting the States' attention to the negotiation table, but not for keeping it there. As BS suggests, as the movement placed more emphasis on the political route, the military strategy's usefulness and effectiveness was increasingly suspect. This reduced effectiveness of the

military strategy would be reinforced, many respondents note, by a reduction in ETA's military operational capacity.

Along with a change in the usefulness of military operations in the face of changing strategic priorities, during the 1990s many respondents further point to a reduction in the impact of ETA's military operations in securing the desired response from the State, driving ETA and the Spanish state to a military stalemate. The State reached a degree of comfort with the armed struggle wherein not only did it not feel the violence to be of an intolerable level, but rather it was such that in many ways, the low level of intractable violence served certain State interests (Woodworth, 2007).

Following the *Caída de Bidart* ETA found itself with greatly reduce numbers, particularly, as ETA1 and ETA4 note, of long serving militants. The sense that a stalemate was reached with the State was widespread: "We had to change [strategy] because a painful stalemate was reached" ... "Yes" (ETA2 and ETA3) "Yes. Man. Yes. An impasse." (SKB), "[Impasse] yes. That was the issue". (ETA4). The State, ETA4 holds, had increasing military resources at its disposal while ETA largely did not have the same access to military technology. As SKB explains, thanks to international collaboration and technological development "the State has more resources" with the armed struggle creating a scenario in which "all that is *izquierda abertzale* [is]receiving blows from all sides [...] We didn't have the strength [to win] and they didn't have the strength to finish us off, to wipe us from the map." By the end of the 1990s, MLNVJA argues, while the State was aware of its military advantages, the movement and State alike were aware that this was insufficient to end the conflict. The sense of stalemate would also surface in the IA, particularly within ETA, in the early 2000s. As JEEGELBS mentioned, with the rupture of the ceasefire of Lizarra-Garazi and again with the bombing of Barajas airport and subsequent failure of the

talks, the contradictions surrounding the military strategy became increasingly pronounced. As SKB notes, the stalemate in this form was born of “the rupture of the truce of '98, and from there you see a very strong military offensive on the part of ETA, while it lasted but [...] And well, after a strong offensive, of a year and a half like this, we returned to the situation in which we were before.”

Yet, as JEEGELBS notes, the failure to delegitimize these state institutions militarily combined with a growing 'comfort' as some of the respondents phrased it, on the part of the State with the armed struggle, to exacerbate the concerns over the effectiveness of the military strategy that grew with each military plateau. The State, as ETA2 and ETA3 explain, the state was comfortable. As SE aptly expands “the armed struggle ceased to be a factor of destabilization that created a serious problem for the State, and the State accustomed itself because it had managed, through repression, to achieve, to reduce to an acceptable level, this armed struggle. Although it could not end it”. As Whitfield (2015) expresses, this policing focus “rested on a tacit understanding in some quarters that the continuation of ETA’s violence’s at a manageably low level was possibly the least bad option available” (p. 11). Thus, while neither antagonist could do away with the other completely, ETA's military effectiveness, while enough to pressure, harass and temporarily disrupt, was by this time, incapable of inducing the type of systemic instability called for by the strategy following *Transición*. Accordingly, rather than aiming for State wide destabilization, over the course of the 90s ETA shifted to using armed struggle in a more targeted fashion in an attempt to pressure particular groups at key instances: such as in Lizarra-Garazi.

For the MLNV the armed struggle was increasingly used by the State to justify social and political repression in Euskal Herria, forestall meaningful political debate, as well as the electoral growth of Basque nationalism, along with providing rhetorical ammunition to Spanish nationalist narratives of the value and importance of a great and unitary Spain. Armed action also provided a degree of justification

for processes of criminalization. The IA analysis of this perceived co-optation of the armed struggle by the State further fuelled internal debate on the effectiveness of armed struggle (see Tactics). Thus ETA's violence, it is argued, suited the State's attempts to paint the question of Basque nationalism as the aspirations of a criminal minority to be addressed through the criminal justice system rather than through the political and legislative systems. This is notable in the primacy of the policing approach to the conflict (see Tactics). By emphasizing the criminality of Basque nationalism, the State is better able to forestall growth in nationalist sympathies within the electoral system and better maintain nationalist political isolation. As ETA2 and ETA3 explain "the Spanish state doesn't care if a Guardia Civil has died. The Spanish state only uses this in the media because this is convenient for them". As SE elaborates, the effectiveness of the military strategy was increasingly questionable "the State said [...] they can kill a few *Guardia Civiles*, they can kill a few politicians, but this to me, provides the guarantee that the political process will not evolve in a way that is more dangerous than this, which is the constitution of a sovereigntist majority in the Basque country". Accordingly, the MLNV came to believe that ETA's military campaign provided a rhetorical tool to the State to justify its refusal to engage in a meaningful political debate on the issues of concern to Basque nationalism. In this sense, there was a growing feeling that the military campaign was damaging to the movement's long term goals.

ETA's operational effectiveness

Over the course of its existence, ETA's fortunes have vacillated wildly. As Zirakzadeh explains, already internally divided and reeling from police actions, as early as late 1960s the organization appeared to have been dealt a near fatal blow. For instance, in 1968 ETA killed a police commissioner and reputed torturer of *abertzales*, after which "[T]he Spanish government imposed a state of exception, and more than two thousand Basque residents were arrested, among them numerous *etarras*" including nearly all of the top leaders in Hegoalde (Zirakzdeh, 1991, p.183). Prior to the assassination, ETA membership was

around 600, a number which fell to fewer than 100 in 1970 (Clark, 1984, in Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.189). While ETA itself was 'organizationally devastated' by the State's hard reaction,^h the harsh sentences awarded to the 16 *etarras* held on trial, led to an influx of new recruits (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 184). This pattern of decimation and revitalization would repeat in the following decade. The death of a top and charismatic leader, Eustaquio Mendizabal "Txikia" in 1973 combined with a growing willingness on the part of the French security forces to expel *etarras* from Iparralde, and the increased effectiveness of Spanish police forces, left the apparatus in Hegoalde in 1973 greatly weakened once again (Casanova, 2007, p. 140). Douglass and Zulaika (1990) note that in 1972-1973 there were only four full time *etarras* active in the Spanish provinces. In early 1974 alone nearly 50 militants were arrested (Casanova, 2007, p. 161). Despite their apparent weakness, ETA would produce nearly 50 *ekintzas*⁶ (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990) and was about to carry out one of their most impactful acts – the assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco. With the assassination of Franco's successor at the end of 1973, ETA gained even greater prestige among Basque youths; active membership rose to nearly 200 *etarras* (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 189-190). By early 1978 ETA counted nearly 400 active *etarras* in its ranks in addition to wide spread support networks (Casanova, 2007, p. 238). ETA activity spiked in the summer of 1979 with the breaking of ETAp's ceasefire in an attempt to regain influence in the *IA* in the wake of the EE's poor electoral results (Irvin, 1999, p.121)

The 1980s also saw ETA's fortunes vacillate. Clark (1983) found that by the 1980s, ETA leadership had significant control over its activists, running potential *etarras* through "exhaustive" vetting processes and enforcing loyalty (in Heger, et.al. 2012, p. 762). However, in response to the killing of a military commander in January 1979, the government sent 3,000 more police officers: the number of security forces personnel in Euskadi was now 11,000 (Casanova, 2007, p. 244). At a time of a strong state police

⁶ 'actions'

offensive, not to mention the ongoing operation of the State backed paramilitary hit squads (see Tactics), ETA also lost activists to State amnesty programs: between 1982 and 1986, approximately 250 *etarras* left the movement through these initiatives (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 181). Concurrently, ETAm was undergoing a process of capacity building and restructuring, including the absorption of militants of the *octavos* and *milikis* - groups, having become dissatisfied with ETAp, splintered off over the course of the previous few years (Casanova, 2007). By 1984, ETAp would be dissolved (Zirakzadeh, 1991). Further, ETA was hit hard by new anti-terror legislation at the end of the 1970s. In 1980 alone there were over 2,140 ETA related arrests along with the fatalities of 93 *etarras*, (Egin 1989 in Irvin 1999, p. 194), and by October the number of *etarras* in prison, despite the amnesty decrees of the late 1970s, was the on par with that during the Franco regime (Irvin, 1999, p.194) The number of arrests would remain high throughout the first half of the 1980s, averaging nearly 1,273 from 1980 until 1986, (Egiin 1989 in Irvin, 1999, p. 294) and following the discovery of some ETA documents in 1986, the organization found itself all but dismantled (Irvin 1999; Casanova 2007; Pereira 2001). Such was the impact on the military viability of the organization that in 1984 "Txomin", a key leader in ETAm, conceded that things were not going well. Years later, he added "If we don't negotiate now, within a year the French will have dismantled everything; they will have decimated us, seized our weapons and money and we will not have anything to negotiate" (Clark 1988, p. 168).

In March of 1992 a crippling blow was delivered to the organization with the capture in Bidart, France, of ETA's longest serving leadership (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013, p. 97-98). Following the *Caída de Bidart* ETA had only 12 high ranking active militants, down from 70 in the decade prior (Pereira, 2001, p. 299), rebuilding to an estimated 90 fully trained, full time militants active in the early 2000s (Weinberg and Pedahzur, 2003, p. 152). Examining rates of arrests and recruits, Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) argues that by 1992 ETA could no longer sustain the war of attrition strategy (p. 297). Around this time

the emphasis on *kale borroka* and *acumulación de fuerzas* moved to the fore. Here, he finds that the number of attacks leads to an increase of arrests and increase of arrests to a reduction in attacks (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2007, p. 300). Notably, given the switch to *kale borroka* and the higher proxy involvement of youth both associated with ETA affiliated organizations and not, potentially expands and blurs an accurate reading of ETA's operational capacity. Simultaneously, many high ranking members of were arrested in the late 1990s as well as between 2004-2006, before ETA called a permanent ceasefire in 2010, eighteen years after the *Caída*. Authors such as De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca (2013) attribute the resilience of the organization, at least in part, to the MLNV's "division of labour between the terrorist group and its political branch" with ETA as the unquestioned head (p. 97). Given the significant delay between the blows and the unilateral ceasefire, especially given the relatively successful efforts at rebuilding, and a number of high profile actions in the intervening years, it seems probable that the increased difficulty of operation of which Harmon (2012) and Phayal (2011) speak worked in conjunction with other factors to precipitate the change in ETA's strategy.

This assessment was echoed by the respondents. While respondents have highlighted missteps in the overall military strategy – getting the state vs. keeping the state – they also noted that ETA had made operational mistakes over the course of its years of operations. As ETA1 stated plainly "We made mistakes". As ETA1 explains, one of ETA's concerns, and to his mind one of their successes, was the prevention of a rupture in Basque society such as that experienced in Northern Ireland in terms of inter-communal violence. Lecours (2007) notes "ETA killed between twenty and fifty people every year from 1982 to 1989, but made careful use of this violence insofar as it avoided, at least for the most part, any move that could create a serious backlash against it" (p.89). However, ETA would undertake a number of actions which would trigger significant negative responses. As S1 relates, the Barcelona Hipercor supermarket bombing in 1987, along with the killing of a young PP councillor Miguel Ángel Blanco in

1997 are difficult for even staunch supporters to comprehend. After the spectacular failure of the Hipercor bombing, ETA refocused its efforts on the Basque territories, striking out at security forces and French interests (Casanova, 2007, p. 333). What is more, the killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco sparked the largest anti-ETA societal reaction in the history of the organizations (Casanova, 2007, p. 414). De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca (2013) noted that reactions against ETA were stronger when the victims were less directly associated with the conflict (with the exceptions of drug dealers). As Lecours (2007) notes the strong negative reaction to the attacks were triggered more by the nature of the victims than the actual number of victims (p.98). Such targeting errors, were thus seen by respondents as damaging the overall effectiveness of ETA's military operations. While the 1990s saw a surge of street violence, primarily by *abertzale* youths, the first fatal attacks following the *Caída of Bidart* were carried out not via the messy and imprecise car bombings that had gained popularity in the 1980s (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 76-77) but with firearms, in an attempt to reduce collateral fatalities (Casanova, 2007, p. 378).

The MLNV's assessments of the balance of military capabilities is admitted somewhat reluctantly: as time wore on, though the State was unable to rid itself completely of ETA, it was at an increasing operational advantage. Largely, respondents credited this growing operational differential to increased opportunities for alliances and international cooperation between military and police services afforded to the Spanish state by its growing legitimacy as a democratic state, and particularly after the attacks of 9/11, the decreased opportunity for aid and alliance afforded to *etarras* and their campaigns. As ETAPNV, ETA1, ETA4, JAETA and JEEGELBS all note, the early 1990s was a time of great operational difficulty for ETA. While in the late 1980s, despite a strong government crackdown in the mid-1980s, ETA had resurged with a campaign of sufficient impact as to drive the State to the negotiating table in Algeria. As MLNVJA summarizes, "the whole of the Basque liberation movement was good [...] as ETA was very strong, so, there was a balance of force that is not seen now [...] in the 1980s, the State really

had moments in which it was up against the ropes”. When the talks in Algeria collapsed, ETA “returned to violence convinced that it could force the government back to the negotiating table” (Whitfield, 2015, p. 6). 1991 had seen the number of new militants and cells drop by more than half from the previous year, and with the *Caída de Bidart* in 1992 growth was all but frozen in the year that followed (Casanova, 2007p. 368). While ETA activity would spike shortly thereafter, it would face great operational difficulties under Aznar's policies of criminalization, as JEEGELBS put it, of the *IA* identity. This process, she argues, was not solely a response to ETA activity, but rather was also an opportunity for the State to deflate the Basque political project: “the State is aware of this, and undertakes a process of criminalization against everything [that is *IA*] Osea, in Aznar's era no?” The effectiveness of ETA operations during the 1990s did not reach levels, in terms of injuries or deaths, consistently comparable to the previous decade (see Appendix 5). While the numbers of injured in 1991-1992 were comparable to those figures of the 1980s, when ETA resumed activity, the number of actions, injured and killed were nearly half that of the figures from the first two years.

The process of criminalization was aided by increasing cooperation between French and Spanish police. January 1987 police operations saw the arrest of a key ETA cell, Madrid held that ETA would be ready to accept superficial negotiations given their weakened position. To pressure the organization, it also began a policy of dispersion of ETA prisoners (Casanova, 2007, p. 326). In the 1980s, the Spanish state began to secure counterterrorism support from France (Whitfield, 2015). In October France rounded up and arrested 210 people in Iparralde, many of who were family members of *etarras*. The famed “French sanctuary” was dismantled (Casanova, 2007, p. 333,334). As ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, ETA4 and JEEGELBS recount, the French Basque provinces once served as a haven from which *etarras* could enter into the Spanish provinces to carry out their operations before retreating. For all that the French provinces still offer some protection it has become, as ETA4 explains a less than certain haven. The removal of

Iparralde as a safe haven increases the pressure not just on individual *etarras* but on the organization as a whole (Harmon, 2013) This change in alliance represented not only an increase in the State's resources, but also a significant loss of an important resource for ETA.

With the ceasefire of 1998-1999 following several years of reduced effectiveness, it may have appeared that ETA had lost much operational capacity. However, when ETA broke the ceasefire in 1999, while the total number of incidents and fatalities resumed at roughly pre-ceasefire levels, the number of injured rocketed to levels comparable to ETA's surge leading up to the talks in Algeria (see Appendix 5).

Following the attacks of 9/11 and a renewed emphasis on terrorism, ETA found its legitimacy and thus its material and social support, eroded by association. Further, for all that it has a demonstrated history of rebuilding, ETA was organizationally weakened by the 2000s following a decade of intense policing (Woodworth, 2007). Maintaining the financial resources necessary for an effective military organization is not inexpensive. In 1998 Reuters estimate ETA's annual financial needs at \$30,000,000 US (May 28, 1998). The organization has made use of donations (forced and voluntary), fundraising, syphoning funds from legitimate ETA backed businesses, and kidnapping ransoms to fund their operations (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p 197-203). Despite periodic dismantling by the police investigations, one estimate for the money raised through kidnapping ransoms alone between 1973 and 1997 was \$40million US (Dominguez Irabarren 1998, p. 139; 2000, p. 360 in Mansvelt Beck 2005, p. 197).

Maintaining these income streams arguably became much more difficult following 9/11. SE explains:

“with the collaboration between the states, the repression gets very heavy. The whole world is ready to extradite ETA militants, to collaborate on arrests... There is a very strong international pressure creating a context very unfavourable to the practice of armed struggle.” These increased operational difficulties

were compounded at both the political and military levels by the reduction in available allies and the resources they may have contributed (see Alliances). JEEGELBS concurs, “following 2001 and well, the international repression against armed organizations also accelerated at this time and without a doubt impeded the way of working and the perception of the armed struggle of ETA at the international level bai?” A December 2001 El País article estimated active *etarras* membership at around 250, though this may have included some number of militants engaged in legal operations (in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, 197). As JAETA suggests, not only were there fewer armed organizations in the world with which to make alliances than there were in the 1960s, but the global perception on the use of violence to resolve conflicts had shifted. This increase in operational obstacles can be seen in the frequency, and resultant injuries and fatalities of ETA attacks in the years immediately following (See Appendix 5).

In 2005 as the IA geared up for renewed negotiations with the State, ETA once again ramped up pressure to make its presence felt. However, the organization had taken a hard hit again toward the end of 2003 and in 2004 with the arrests of several key ETA leaders (The Guardian, April 5, 2004). While the number of incidents for the two years following the arrests, rose, but only slightly, the continued prevalence of the practice of *kale borroka* (street fighting) in (Mansvelt-Beck, 2008) saw injuries in 2005 return to levels similar to those of the mid-1990s. Toward the end of 2005 and 2006, ETA violence began to diminish. That violence continued to diminish from there on corresponds to two factors. First, as Whitfield (2015) notes “by the end of 2009, with substantial cooperation from France, some 277 alleged members of ETA had been detained, including its leadership, as well as 195 others on charges related to *kale borroka*” (p. 8), indicative of another buildup of personnel. Secondly, this corresponds to a period of intense debate within the IA as discussions, contacts and negotiations were underway, complete with the intervention of international players, toward a process of negotiation (Casanova, 2007; Engagements).

ETA membership in 2004 was estimated at perhaps 200 active members (Pingree, 2004) and down to 30 full time members by 2006 (Wood, 2006) thanks to joint Spanish and French police operations (in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.64-65). Nonetheless, they note “during the late summer and fall of 2006, youth gangs of ETA sympathizers, presumably frustrated by the many postponements of the official negotiations, engaged in a revived *kale borroka*.” When in 2007 this process too failed in 2008, there was once again a spike in incidents (exceeding those of 2004-2006 but not returning to pre-Lizarra-Garazi levels), and in injuries attributable to ETA (Figure. 1.) Although seriously reduced by Spanish and French police operations, Esser and Bridges (2011) note that “ETA had always been able to recruit new members and continue its violent activities’ making a total State defeat of ETA unlikely” (p. 32).

In 2010 ETA spokespersons announced, that in a decision made several months prior, it was declaring a permanent ceasefire (Miller and Smarick, 2011). ETA, unquestionably, had been much weakened by Spanish police actions (Harmon, 2012). However, while most certainly a factor, this alone does not account for ETA's announcement. ETA has been all but dismantled practically once per decade of its existence yet resurged in one form or another, often with more intensity and lethality than in the years leading up to the blow.

At the same time, as SE, S1, BS and JEEGEBLS note, the strategic debate on the viability of armed struggle waged within the movement: one in which the armed struggle ceased to be a significant factor in the arsenal of the movement, and the political branch sought to accumulate social density to move forward toward the movement's goals, in the absence of direct negotiation with the state:

unilateraildad. Thus the MLNV held that while ETA activity was much muzzled, it maintained a degree of effectiveness capable of causing damage, and therefore the reduction may not be able to be entirely contributed solely to a reduction in operational capacity.

Assessments of the operational viability of the military strategy must take into account the motivation and commitment of the *etarras* themselves. Concerns over activist fear or fatigue, though raised, were awarded little weight in the strategic decision making process (see Support). Given the intractability and duration of the conflict, JAETA holds that the presence of fatigue within the movement is not altogether surprising: “We have spent a lot of years fighting against an enormous wall. And so, yeah, pues, could be that there are moments when we feel punished, we are tired of conflict.” ETA4 notes that with the process of criminalization in the 1990s fewer people were willing to take the risks associated with helping *etarras* by providing lodging or safe passage, which in turn wears on the individual *etarra*. Such long periods of active clandestine operation he argues, not only contributes to the burnout of militants, but provides a greater number of opportunities for the militant to be caught. BS replied “I believe that fear, no. Fatigue, I would not say the fatigue of the movement. I believe it was more social fatigue” (see Support). This weariness had to be taken into account: it affected their access to local support and resources. While ETA’s “fight” may not be over, societal and movement assessments of ETA’s military strategy increasingly called its effectiveness and usefulness into question. That being said, MLNVJA, ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, ETA4 and SE all note that the difficulty and the risks associated with involvement are made clear to potential *etarras* from the beginning who “and so there existed fatigue but it was not a determining factor” (SE). Fear, for its part, while acknowledged as having a strong presence and being an everyday reality for *etarras* is not perceived as contributing to a change in strategy. In so far as impacting strategy, as JAETA says, “it’s not a question of fear, it’s a question of conflict”. MLNVJA holds that there was no increase in risks or in the activist fear of taking part in ETA that led to the change in strategy: “that is to say, the risks, I don’t believe they have increased. In the 1970s and 80s lots of people in the *izquierda abertzale* died. Evil existed. I don’t believe the *izquierda abertzale* would lower the intensity, let’s say, of the conflict on the matter of risks”.

For ETA2 and ETA3, much of the fatigue, both within the movement and society more broadly, comes from the fact that: “after so much effort to put it on the table, the Spanish state doesn’t care”. Fatigue, is thus in part born of the apparent inability of the tactic of armed struggle to force any meaningful concessions. This perception that the State is unmoved by the military strategy, for all its damage, is amplified by the sense, as expressed by ETA2, ETA3 and SKB, that the State was also able to use the armed struggle against the movement. As ETA2 and ETA3 mentioned, the State by the early 2000s, was comfortable enough with ETA’s level of violence that it could effectively use ETA military actions for media and propaganda purposes in ways, which (see Tactics) are difficult for the media to counter. SKB concurs, noting that for all the hits the movement received at the hands of the State, with at times immobilizing consequences, the usefulness of armed struggle as a tactic was brought into question. “[Y]ou’re battered from all sides, it became necessary to remove the armed struggle as an excuse for the State to hit [the movement] quite so much.” A move he suggests, that has had some success, although the State continues to attempt to use the threat of armed struggle as a reason to ‘keep hitting’.

The military viability of ETA was never such that it could force the Spanish state from their claimed territory. As a military force ETA had seen its fortunes fluctuate considerably yet managed to rebuild. The Spanish state has sought the extinction of ETA, a not uncommon pursuit as Pruitt (2007) notes. At those points where ETA has entered into negotiations with the state, it has not sought to do so from a position of debilitation but rather one of strength (see Engagements). However, once in negotiations, the MLNV has little confidence that the state will not continue with its attempts to dismantle the organization. Thus, while ETA has on frequent occasions had sufficient viability to increase its options in negotiations, that optimism has not lasted the duration of the engagements. Additionally, the MLNV

increasingly felt that the military campaign was hindering the pursuit of the movement's goals. As such, military viability was insufficient to bring about the movement goals. At the same time, it was sufficient to get the attention of the state for potential negotiations, but insufficient to keep the state there. The military viability of ETA encouraged a de-escalation of violence in pursuit of the movement's goals, but was not, on its own, sufficient to bring about meaningful de-escalation through a negotiated settlement.

c. Support

As ETA2 and ETA3 note, the MLNV views itself as a movement within Basque society, not one apart from it. Three subthemes in particular were recurrent: the commitment of Basque society to the movement projects, the commitment of Basque society to the movement strategy, and the legitimacy of the movement as a political force at home and abroad.

Societal Fatigue of Violence

In the context of any intractable conflict, the question of fatigue requires consideration. As it relates to the conflict in the Basque Country, it appears most prominently as it relates to a social fatigue experienced by Basque society. As MLNVJA, S1, SE and JAETA note, although ETA has only existed since 1959, violent conflict has existed between the Basques and Spanish or external forces for much longer. Llera et al. (1993) note that the "post-war generation of Basque nationalists are the children of a century and a half of civil wars and symbolic violence" (p. 106). As MLNVJA explains "in reality [Euskal Herria] has been suffering several centuries, [...] since the Carlist wars, there has not been a single generation of Basques that has known peace. And this, I believe, has generated a fatigue in society".

Despite the fact that only a fraction of Basque society physically participates in the conflict, oftentimes the physical ramifications of the conflict with the State have extended beyond this small group. JAETA and MLNVJA both link this fatigue at least in part, to a sense of fear within Basque nationalist society: “I believe there is a certain fear in people” (JAETA). MLNVJA is more explicit in ascribing responsibility for this fear; the documented use of torture by the Spanish state, particularly strong during the Franco years, as well as the State’s use of sponsored paramilitary groups such as *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* (GAL) in the 1980s (see Tactics). As ETAPNV noted, for a long time “being nationalists, they were scared”. For him this fear in the nationalist community stemmed both from the State and ETA. ETA3 is cognizant that conflict has generated a great deal of suffering on both sides. As ETAPNV, sums up: “In Euskadi, yes there is fatigue, there is fatigue. A lot of fatigue, a lot of fatigue.”

Arguably, this fatigue, even within MLNV supporters, was not only born of a weariness of conflict, but also out of a sense that, for all the damage ETA can, and has inflicted against the State, the State is unmoved – in the sense that they felt no urgency on the part of the state to seriously consider the movement demands. As MLNVJA and JAETA point out, over the last century in Euskadi, as in Europe, the understanding that war was a way in which problems are solved has diminished. These two factors have combined, the respondents suggest, to reduce support for armed conflict: fatigue of violence and the perception that it had brought no meaningful resolution to the conflict. As MLNVJA notes, along with fatigue this has generated a perception that “pues, we are not reaching our objectives with this method and I think it has more to do with that, a change in society that, well, violence is in no way helping us”. As ETA2 and ETA3 explain: “in the last few years there was a bit of an impasse... (ETA2)” “Yes [...] armed struggle isn’t [used] because you feel like it, but in order to achieve something [...] There has to be a reasons, so after a great deal of effort to put on the table, the State didn’t care”. This weariness, they argue, built up in society. A weariness in part born of the experience of previous intensifications of the

campaign which saw little shift in the stance of the State. This was particularly noticeable, as the IA is in their minds, is an organization within society itself, thus the movement had a responsibility to react to the demands placed on it by society: “The movement changed because the people demanded it. (ETA2) ‘Yes’ (ETA3) “[...] the people seem somewhat tired. So they asked for a change too.’ (ETA2) ‘Yes’ (ETA3) ‘Because they saw that out the other side, there was no way out. [...] the *izquierda abertzale* [...] is not something that is outside of the people, it is within the people, and so this has a great deal of influence” (ETA2).

Given that, as ETA2 and ETA3 held, ETA saw itself as being part of Basque society, this decrease in the social acceptability of violence was something to which, as Lecours (2007) phrases it, ETA “could not remain insensitive” (p. 103). For BS, ETA2 and ETA3, this social fatigue is tied not only to the weight of violence on successive generations, but to raised and dashed hopes: after repeated failed engagements “after having such hope, and then on the part of the State there was no will whatsoever, people say ‘what do we have to do?’ and from this comes the change in strategy” (ETA3). ETA2 agrees, elaborating that for many within not just the MLNV, but Basque society more generally, people were, leading up to the commitment to the new strategy, at a loss, asking “how do we turn this around?” For BS, the support for the *abertzale* project remained, but the social fatigue was clear, a change was made to try to shift the conflict from one of violence, to one of political confrontation.

Impact of ETA

A second important theme concerning support for the movement related to the impact of the MLNV, and ETA more specifically, in shaping Basque society since the 1950s. This impact in turn, was highlighted in three distinct ways: the creation of a new political space, the promotion and safeguarding

of Basque language, culture and identity, and finally, the ways in which mistakes or oversteps by ETA has damaged the movement and its efforts.

ETA1 and SE both note that support for ETA and its goals often crossed identitary lines. In part because the membership was diverse, owing to waves of immigration to the Basque Country throughout the 1960, 70s and 80s (Zabalo, Mateos, and Iraola, 2013) the movement, and ETA in particular, moved to adopt less ethnically exclusive conceptions of what it meant to be Basque, leaning increasingly toward leftist revolutionary ideologies (Douglas and Zulaika, 1990). Particularly in the early years of ETA's existence "stateless nationalisms... gained political legitimacy precisely because they opposed a Fascist dictatorship" (Balfour and Quiroga, 2007, p. 44 in Whitfield, 2015, p. 2). Further, as Casanova (2007) notes, the intensity with which the Franco regime cracked down on *etarras* – suspected and actual – lent legitimacy to their struggle in keeping with ETA's theory of 'action-repression-action. ETA1 notes that so diversified was its membership that even members of the conservative Spanish PP, and members of the *Guardia Civil* had children and family members involved with ETA: "ETA was in all social elements of society in the Basque Country. [...] it was a social movement that was fueled by a number of people stretched across society" (ETA1). In ETA's own perception, Whitfield (2015) notes, the "armed conflict [was] appropriate to a disciplined political-military organization, sustained by the support of a broader social and political movement" (p. 2).

Immigration was a significant reality in the Basque Country: "by the end of the 1970s more than 40 per cent of the region's residents were either immigrants or children of immigrants" (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 68). Yet rather than close itself off to these newcomers, Basque nationalism, through the voicing of class concerns and worker mobilization (Conversi, 1997, p.220) sought to integrate these individuals into the

movement. Based on an analysis of surnames Clark (1984) found that ETA militants with fully Basque parentage accounted for somewhere over 30 percent, with 16.6 per cent of non-Basque origin and the remaining, slightly over half, of mixed parentage (p. 147 in Zabalo et al, 2013, p.518-519). ETA1 summarizes: “The PNV said being Basque, before eh? [...] Having so many Basque names and what not, and ETA, what it says [...] Basque is all those who work in the Basque Country and want to be Basque. [...] And why did they do this? Because in the Basque Country there are many immigrants.” Thus, for the MLNV, it draws its support and its strength from its sense of embeddedness within its host society (see Organizational Structure): as Aretxaga (2005) writes “The ‘terrorists’ and the social environment surrounding them are not socially marginalized or pathological characters, nor abstract and distant external enemies... The ‘terrorists’ turn out to be one’s neighbors, acquaintances or family members – people who are too close and whose lives we know, and we cannot disregard so easily” (p. 166 in Whitfield, 2015, p. 4).

Not only is this important for attracting supporters to the movement and organization’s causes, but, ETA1 argues, for creating a new political space within Euskadi. By adopting a stance more open than that of the more traditional and conservative PNV, ETA1 argues, in providing an alternative for those who wished to identify as Basque, the MLNV forced the PNV to change some of its stances. From this new conception of what it meant to be Basque, ETA1 argues, a new political theory arose within the Basque Country. ETA, he argues, is what has allowed the IA to flourish as a discussion space for thoughts on nationalism, socialism, violence, and institutional politics. As ETA1 explains, the IA “emerged from ETA. ETA did not create it, but ETA did create a space with its theory for people who did not want the armed struggle, eh, who positioned themselves on the sides politically but [had similar goals]. That is not to say, as is now the Spanish reading, that everything is ETA. Everything is not ETA, but yes, there are objectives that coincide [...] with ETA’s struggle was born a new political theory.” Douglass and Zulaika

(1990) similarly argue that the impact of ETA goes beyond the military efforts: ETA is as much a social construct and reference point in the Basque Country as it is an organization. SKB and MLNVJA explain that the impacts of the organization and its success are not defined solely militarily. Prior to the MLNV SKB notes, “the national consciousness and Basque culture had practically disappeared, ETA’s strong rational and a strong cultural movement have given much to the national sentiment no?” MLNVJA, for his part, expands this assessment beyond the role of ETA to include the MLNV, holding that together they are responsible for the relative health of Basque culture, language and political projects - particularly in comparison to other nations, such as Galicia, within Spain. As such, any State attempts to ‘rid itself’ of ETA that focus solely on the military structure are unlikely to succeed for very long, as such a referential organization will likely resprout (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). As noted in *Military Viability*, ETA has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to rebuild even after receiving devastating blows.

To be effective, as ETA1 explains, activism must always have a reference point: “knowing what society will accept. Because if we do things that society does not accept, we are the same [as the State]” (ETA1). As, ETA2 and ETA3, noted, the movement is within society and as such must be sensitive to its demands. Thus, for the most part *ekintzas* were more focused on the symbolism of the act than indiscriminate violence for much of its history (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). In such moments of radicalism, S1 argues, it becomes difficult to understand, let alone accept the violence of the tactic of armed struggle. S1 argues that these mistakes, and their impacts, occur both at the level of the individual and society writ large. However, certain individuals, or the way in which they were treated, call into question the validity of the strategy. Once such act was the 1998 killing of a young Miguel Ángel Blanco (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 185) which was met with widespread rejection given his relative unimportance to the Basque political project, and summary nature of his killing and the disposal of his body. S1 argues, ETA has made prominent mistakes – both in terms of timing and of target. She notes that the episodes such as

the 1987 Hipercor bombing in Catalunya were difficult for many within the movement to accept. Police estimates of the resulting anti-violence protest were as high as 75,000 (*New York Times*, June 23, 1987).

As such, the timing of certain higher profile actions, have damaged the credibility and support of ETA and by association, the MLNV. One such example S1 provides is that of the Barajas T-4 Airport bombing. For all that the deaths associated with the bombing were argued to have been accidental (Casanova, 2007), the fact of the timing of the bombing - during negotiations with the State – and the killing of innocent bystanders, made the act one difficult for movement supporters to understand and was largely met with outrage (see Engagements). In the wake of the bombing, Basque *lehendakari* Ibarretxe again called on ETA to renounce its campaign (*El Mundo*, 11, Jan, 2007), and EA, Aralar, and even the banned Batasuna announced they would join a march demanding dialogue (*El Mundo*, 11, Jan 2007b). However, outside of the Basque Country the response took a different tone. Rather than being a demand for the removal of violence and the addition of dialogue to the conflict, in referring to anti-ETA protests in Madrid as well as Leon, then head of the PP suggested the marches were reflective not so much of anti-ETA sentiment as it was anti-PSOE for having allowed negotiations to take place and ostensibly given the armed group room to manoeuvre (*El Mundo*, 13 Jan, 2007).

The impact of these oversteps, for all that there was a purposefully expected outcome (not always achieved), behind these actions, proved to be mistakes in the minds of many, as S1 explains, for several reasons. The first is the impact on individuals in Basque society as they struggle to match the stated rejection of State violence with the seemingly contradictory and mistargeted violence of ETA. Second, is the broader social rejection of certain actions that manifests in large scale protests and electoral punishment (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013). Thirdly, S1 notes is the increased pressure on the

political and social branches of the *IA* following such heavily recriminated actions by ETA including increased criminalization, surveillance, and damaging State rhetoric. As Casanova (2007), ETA2 and ETA3 noted of the rupture of the 1998-99 ceasefire, as well as of the 2004-2007 process, these failures to move the conflict toward resolution, generated a significant loss of the organization's credibility in the public's eye. Combined, these impacts add to the war weariness of Basque society and the shrinking acceptance of the tactic of armed violence.

Support for Movement Projects

Perhaps the most noticeable marker of the existing support for movement goals is that of electoral viability. As BS notes, the *IA* associated political parties, have at the time of writing, become the second strongest political movement in the Basque Country. Combined with the nationalist PNV, at the level of the autonomous community elections, nationalist parties won over 60 percent of the popular vote in 2012 (See Appendix 3). As Justice (2005) notes, there exist other parties with stances on the constitutionalist/independence and left/right social divide that are similar to HB (such as the EA, which is less constitutionalist and more leftist than the PNV while rejecting the use of violence(Jaúregui, 2006)) to which nationalist minded voters could send their votes, but do not. Further, as demonstrated by the Euskobarometro poll, desire for independence has not experienced a general downward trend mirroring that of ETA activity. Rather in these samples (between 1200 and 1800 individuals depending on year of collection), desire for independence has fluctuated between 55 and 70 percent, averaging around 60 percent (see Appendix 4). Grassroots organizations such as *Gure Esko Dago* (It's in our hands), formed in 2013, holds regular demonstrations in support of the right to decide that routinely draw significant support. For instance, echoing a similar demonstration in Catalunya, in 2014 an estimate 100,000 people took part in a 123km human chain stretching across the Basque Country (*Reuters*, 8 June 2014).

Aside from support for nationalist goals and projects, SE also notes that the MLNV has also generated a great deal of support around questions of prisoner rights and state repression. As Whitfield (2015) explains, the existence of victims of State violence was largely unacknowledged by the state (see Engagements) and

continued to mobilize the radical nationalist community. No less significant was the persistence of credible and repeated denunciations –regularly reinforced by investigations by internal human rights organizations – of the torture of ETA prisoners to extract confessions. Many Basques also saw Spain’s dispersion of political prisoners to locations far removed from their families ... as a vindictive act that meted out additional punishment on the prisoners’ family members (p. 5).

In addition to individual marches for reduction of sentences, or the release of prisoners with medical conditions, yearly protests in Bilbao against the policy of dispersion consistently draws thousands (*El Mundo*, 10 Jan 2015). For SKB, JEEGELBS and JAETA, part of the appeal of the *IA* is its association with a variety of social movements from ecologists, feminists and anti-capitalists etc (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990, p.250). JAETA, likens the movement to a pair of shoes, useful in pursuit of certain goals but not a goal in and of itself. Notably, sources of support in terms of ETA recruits has shifted from those of a primarily working class background in the 1970s and early 1980s to a membership in which over a third of new recruits are of new middle class background by the mid1990s (Reinares, 2004, p. 483). S1 notes the role the MLNV has played in environmental protests during the last decade, with ETA having gained notable support for its role in halting the building of a nuclear power plant (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). This wide range of social justice issues has helped broaden movement support and has allowed, as SKB describes, the movement aims “to go beyond what the political parties are, I mean, it’s more a social movement in this sense”. While not unanimous, and reflective of numerous caveats, support for MLNV projects and goals in the Basque Country remains significant.

Support of strategy

While Basque nationalism saw a revival in the late 19th century, it was not until the Civil War that any form of nationalism espousing violence gained momentum (Conversi, 1997, p. 260). With the loss of the Civil War and the Franco regime at strength, Basque nationalism in the ensuing decades appeared muted. Enthusiasm for armed struggle remained confined to militants until “[s]tate repression at a time when the regime was changing and declining, was the main trigger of the popular support for armed reaction against the dictatorship” (Conversi, 1997, p. 265-266). Overtime, however, public support for armed struggle as a strategy has diminished. An Euskobarómetro poll shows that while complete rejection of ETA and its methods initially represented 23 percent of respondents, in 1981, that percentage grew until 1995 where it has largely held steady fluctuating between 55 and 65 percent of respondents. Those expressing support, either conditional or unconditional, largely hovered around 15 percent experiencing a support hike following the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty. It is also interesting to note that these numbers of disapproval dipped sharply by between 7 and 18 per cent on three occasions – ceasefires corresponding to the talks in Algeria, the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty and the process of 2004-2007 (see Appendix 3). As JAETA and MLNVJA noted above, violence as a means of resolving conflicts, has lost much legitimacy over the last century, in Europe, as in Euskadi. A notion amplified, ETA4 notes, by the increasing association of violence less with the nationalist liberation movements of the 1960s, and more with conceptions of terrorism, particularly since 9/11.

Combined with several missteps such as the Hipercor bombing, and the killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco, the March 2004 train bombings, though now attributed to Al Qaeda, “evoked a strong and united public reaction against terrorist violence throughout Spain, including in the Basque Country” eroding much of the support for the armed struggle (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 64-65; 74). As Whitfield (2015), asserts following the *Caída de Bidart* in 1992, ETA undertook a change in strategy to “socialize the suffering”:

It shifted targets from those associated with Spanish security forces to include politicians, local authorities, businessmen, academics, and journalists. The change contributed to the growing prominence of ETA's victims (victims had been all but invisible in the early years of the transition, partly in reflection of many Basque nationalists' ambivalence toward agents of the Spanish state that ETA targeted), as well as a broader mobilization of civil society against ETA's violence. (Whitfield, 2015, p. 4).

The declining support for violence is likely to have had a highly significant impact on ETA strategy, as discussed by the respondents, and, as Lecours (2007) suggests, the announcement of the 2006 ceasefire – for all that it did not last. De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca's (2013) found some correlation between ETA attacks and Batasuna's electoral returns. Holding all else constant, they find that Batasuna is negatively impacted when ETA levels of violence in a municipality increase, however, it is not a substantial impact and generally concentrated in less populated areas (De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca, 2013, p. 106); exceptions to the minimal nature of the negative reaction are the rupture of the Lizarra-Garazi ceasefire. Within the wider public, a fatigue of violence contributed to the movement decision to revise the strategy. As S1 argues “Basque society supported it. Completely, the decision to lay down arms [...]. We are going to use the democratic path, and they supported it.” ETAPNV, recounting burying his own weapon in the hills upon Franco's death, is adamant that “the people don't want ETA”. Whitfield (2015) notes, ETA's military campaign was impacted by civil society's “slow but powerful mobilization” (p.1) against violence. Such changes in the perceived legitimacy of armed struggle occurred not just amongst its supporters, but among its allies as well (see Alliances).

Critical to the success of any movement strategy ETA2, ETA3 and BS highlight, is the support it receives from not only the movement itself but its public. As ETA2 and ETA3 noted, ETA was never a movement outside of Basque society, but within it, as such, when the society makes a demand of ETA, it has to listen. BS explains when in a “strategy of war”, preoccupations lie with “what the rank and file think [...]”. But when you enter into a process of peace [...] you start analyzing betterly the society as a whole and

you start taking care much more of all those issues. Because basically to succeed, your strategy is based on the support of the vast majority of the people.” Civil society, as Whitfield (2015) maintains, while

slow to mobilize against ETA’s violence... became an important vehicle for wider public rejection of ETA as it actively pursued ways out of the impasse. Civil society actors led the way in articulating the demand for an end to terrorism and in denying the organization the legitimacy it required to pursue its armed struggle. Not be overlooked in this process was the role of the nationalist left constituency played: (p. 14).

S1 also notes that when the strategy change was undertaken, not only was it important to bring along the activists and *etarras* within the movement, but it was crucial that the change and strategy was reflective, as ETA2 and ETA3 note, of what Basque society demanded.

Building legitimacy at home and abroad

One of the ways support impacted the MLNV’s strategy was in the support afforded to its projects and goals by allies. As BS explains, throughout the 1990s many of those political parties and organizations with nationalist leanings who had supported the Statute of Autonomy at the time of *Transición* had begun to reassess their stances. As early as 1986, EA broke with the PNV in large part for its relatively unquestioning support of the constitution (Justice 2005). While Alonso (2004) suggests the PNV’s later move away from Constitutionalism was detrimental to the possibility of the peace in the Basque Country, which is not a sentiment echoed within the MLNV. As SE summarizes, there were many

who held that a Statute of Autonomy was a sufficient instrument to guarantee the autonomy of our people. Well, good. Many sectors undertook a reflection, after all those years and they were convinced that... that it had failed. It had not been satisfactory, that still, in the Basque Country, to make the fundamental decisions the liberty did not exist, and the important decisions in economics, in politics, continued to be taken in Madrid.

This change, BS notes, inspired a tactical reflection within the IA, wherein, the IA now considered that the way forward “would be with these forces no? From here is where the work of trying to develop alliances with the PNV, with ELA, agreements and what not, started” (see Alliances and Institutions).

This new tactic would lead to the signing of the Treaty of Lizarra-Garazi in 1998. With the collapse of Lizarra-Garazi, JEEGELBS and SE argue that there began to creep into the movement with greater force, the notion that the armed struggle was counterproductive. As JEEGELBS notes “from here I believe starts to appear in the *izquierda abertzale* this perspective no? That maybe the armed struggle, eh, more than good, is hurting us”. As Whitfield (2015) recounts “The persistence of ETA had prevented the formation of a broad alliance among Basque nationalists and allowed successive governments in Madrid to dismiss those nationalists’ demands” (p. 11). The failure of successive attempts at negotiations in the mid 2000s, she argues only reinforced this notion. From here SE argues the *IA* began to think that removing the armed struggle would “enable first, political alliances, with other parties and organizations, and secondly, [facilitate] a greater receptivity in society to our project”. As noted, following the Barajas airport bombing, representatives of Batasuna itself called for dialogue to replace violence (*El Mundo*, 11 Jan 2007) – though stopping well short of condemning ETA’s actions. Thus, the removal of the armed struggle as a key component of the strategy was part of a tactic to capitalize more effectively on the possibility of new alliances, while simultaneously creating a greater support within the public to promote the movement projects both directly, and through support of alliances with other parties and organizations. Such opportunities for increased support, SE believes, are being realized: “never have we had such good results or so much social support. And also, the necessity that, that the Statute be renovated, either through independence or well, making a new Statute with more competencies [...] is socially accepted by practically the majority of social actors in the country, no?”

The implementation of the unilateral strategy is also aimed at building up support for the movement goals by demonstrating the viability of the imagined Basque state, while simultaneously highlighting the

perceived democratic and social deficits of the Spanish state. The IA aims to shore up this strategy through the expansion expansion of the support base of the political parties of the *izquierda abertzale* from beyond leftist nationalists, to nationalists and leftists. SE notes, one of the movement aims is to expand its influence beyond the nationalist left. As S1 holds “I mean yes, we are pro-independence [...] but the social program, what it is we are doing...our job is to let people see it, to see that with us [a strong social program] can be achieved, and it’s no problem if you don’t see yourself as nationalist, [...] we can work together”. The ideological rift between the Basque capital of Gasteiz (Vitoria) and Madrid, is not, SE notes, wholly based on conflicting identity narratives. Rather, he argues that between the two capitals there remains a socio-political rift as well (see Institutions): “there is a permanent clash not solely on the nationalist, if not also the social front. And we want to demonstrate to people that are not nationalist in the classical sense, that also for them, independence would be a better option for a better life, material, and in accordance with our own idiosyncrasies”. Notably, while the PP has on four occasion since *Transición* led the State government, and on all other occasions remained the opposition party, it was not until the 1990s that it broke 10 percent in the Basque Country, since which time (with the exception of the post-Lizarra-Garazi 2000 elections where it received just over 29 percent), it has fluctuated just under twenty percent of the vote share. At the level of autonomous community elections, it has never exceeded a quarter of the vote share, having peaked in 2001 before dropping off to just under 12 percent in 2012 at the level of the autonomous parliament (EAJ-GV, 2016). Thus, SE argues that beyond this focus on the social programs advanced by the IA parties, there is support for the Right to Decide within society, even amongst those who do not consider themselves pro-independence. Rather, SE argues it is a question of voice “we are convinced that the majority of society wants the right to self-determination. They want to be able to decide. It is a whole other thing, in what way this choice is realized. But to begin with, the majority of society wants to be able to choose”.

Accordingly, the MLNV aims to use a growth in social and democratic support to boost the legitimacy of the movement while undermining that of the state. The movement thus aims to build up their own capacity so that both Basque society and the international community “will discern that there is a serious commitment for our part, on constructing a peace process and a democratic scenario. And as such, in this scenario, the Spanish state will remain, as it does not want to budge, in a weaker political position” (SE). This would SE argues, be facilitated by the removal of armed struggle from the movement arsenal. The presence of armed struggle, he holds, obscured a portion of the support for the MLNV and the *IA* more broadly.

The support claimed by the MLNV for its goals and projects remains considerable. However, it has seen a notable decrease in the acceptance of the military strategy as part of achieving those aims. Thus, support for the MLNV goals and projects can be seen to increase optimism for negotiations as there exists a confidence that they have a mandate to pursue them. Simultaneously, the decrease in support for the armed struggle provides motivation for finding an alternative method with which to pursue movement goals in light of the support they are seen to receive.

d. Alliances

Throughout the 1990s global and local conditions began to weigh heavily on the ability of the MLNV to develop new alliances given its association with violence. With the end of the Cold War, the move towards resolution in South Africa and Northern Ireland, and the increased global pre-occupation with terrorism following 9/11, the number of allies available to the movement was reduced. Concurrently, shifts within Euskadi - changes in the perception surrounding the viability of the Statute of Autonomy as

a vehicle for Basque nationalist aspirations as well as the disintegration of the *Pacto de Arujia-Enea* - opened up the possibilities of new alliances. However, the armed struggle remained an obstacle to the movement's ability to successfully act upon these opportunities. Accordingly, the MLNV underwent a series of tactical changes to its strategy geared at creating more social and political alliances in order to strengthen its political, social, and negotiating capacity.

In response to existing conditions

Given its leftist and revolutionary roots, the MLNV drew a great deal on the national liberation struggles, particularly those of Latin America, for support and inspiration: "ETA's armed struggle could be seen as an expression, let's say, of a people fighting for its independence, there could be sympathies" (SE).

Etarras were known to have received training in both Yemen and Algeria amongst others (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). As time passed, as these struggles, by and large, brought to a close (Cuban revolution, Algerian independence etc.), these allies began to fade. SE, S1, and JAETA, acknowledge the MLNV's shift in allies, but whereas ETAPNV views it as the MLNV's "coming toward democracy" and Europe (where once, he charges, it looked to the Soviet Union), S1 and JAETA perceive it more as allies falling to the struggle. Over the course of its history, ETA has had agreements of both cooperation and solidarity with not only the IRA, but Kurdish separatists and Peru's *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) (U.S. Department of State, 2012, in Comas et.al. 2015, p. 52). As JAETA explains, "it's the world, from Europe down to Alonsótegui [...in] the history of Europe, well, there was at a certain point a communist bloc, there were many armed groups [...] bit by bit they are diminishing no? [...] there isn't much of a *movida* [scene /taste for] armed struggle in these countries now". Particularly in the 1990s, S1 notes "we are aware that... no? That we are alone in the world".

The changing global conditions impacted which organizations and people would ally themselves with the MLNV and ETA, as well as what shape those alliances would take. SE notes that on the international level, following the attack so September 11th and the US led 'war on terror' the MLNV's operational capacity, its access to allies, and its ability to have its voice heard – all of which are deeply interconnected – took a hit: “you had a great deal of difficulties making yourself heard, in making alliances, and with the collaboration between states, the repression became very strong”. This state of limited alliances was both replicated and reinforced within Euskal Herria itself. AS JEEGELBS, ETA1 and ETA4 recount, while ETA had once been able to count on retreating across the border into France for safety, in the years following *Transición* the French and Spanish states increasingly cooperated to the detriment of *etarras*. While *etarras* would continue to seek refuge in France, they would find their welcome increasingly cold, (Casanova, 2007, p. 334). This gradual loss of, if not an ally, then at least someone relatively willing to turn a blind eye to their presence, took a toll on the moral and operational capacity of ETA.

At the same time, parties like the PNV and EA that once threw their support behind the self-governance institutions laid out during the *Transición*, had gradually shifted to a less constitutionalist stance towards the end of the 1990s (see Institutions and Political Viability). The PNV has long favoured attempts to maximize regional autonomy within the context of the existing Statute of Autonomy (Lecours, 2007 p. 96). Rather than taking an explicitly sovereigntist stance, the PNV remained vague enough on their characterization of Euskadi's future to attract a broad support base (Lecours, 2007, p. 85-86). In the ensuing years there were few significant structural changes to the Statute of Autonomy (Lecours, 2007, p. 99). In September 1997 ELA, the country's largest and most powerful labour union, officially announced that “The Statute is Dead” (Casanova, 2007, p. 418). In the mid 1990s ELA and the PNV were involved in a series of talks led by the peacebuilding organization *Elkarri* along with HB and the

statewide party *Izquierda Unida* (United Left -IU) to discuss a resolution of the conflict through dialogue, modeled after the Northern Irish process (Casanova, 2007, p. 383). That same year, the PNV signed the Barcelona Declaration, along with Galician and Catalan nationalist parties, pledging to “promote, throughout Spain and beyond, a multinational rather than mono-national understanding of the country” (Lecours, 2007, p. 101-102). The PNV and EA's sovereigntist turn was further demonstrated by their signing of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty in September 1998, (Lecours, 2007, p. 102) and contesting several elections on a joint platform (Mansvelt- Beck, 2008, p. 155). By its very nature, Lizarra-Garazi was a pact written by nationalists, for nationalists, and so inherently bypassed Madrid and the existing institutions as a viable path forward (Lecours, 2007, p. 102). Despite their continued ideological differences, the PNV's shift away from constitutionalism increased its suitability as a potential ally for HB and Batasuna. This viability may be augmented by the fact that historically the parties have largely drawn support from different demographics and as such are not in direct competition for votes (Irvin, 1999, p. 125).

Further, shortly after the collapse of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty the Ibarretxe Proposal, put forward by then *lehendakari* Ibarretxe was announced, demonstrating a lack of satisfaction with the Statute (Jáuregui, 2006, p. 255). This initiative was formulated as a reform of the existing statute and sought to enhance the autonomy of the Basque Country a significant degree (Muro, 2009, p. 457). While the proposal fell short of calls for independence - and was thus considered insufficient by the MLNV – it was nonetheless met with hostility from Madrid (see Institutions). That same year, building on a 1990 declaration of the Basque Parliament asserting the right to self-determination of the Basque people, and the Ibarretxe Proposal (which clearly delimited the citizens of the autonomous community as the holders of this right) (Jáuregui, 2006, p.249-250), Ibarretxe called for a citizen consultation on the Right to Decide (Casanova, 2007, p. 485). As SKB puts it: “the *izquierda abertzale* understanding has gained

much strength with the politics we have put forward, [...] on the one side, making the distinction between constitutionalists, *españolistas*, and nationalists, nationalist has won a great deal". The new positions of the PNV and EA and their potential as allies, Mansvelt-Beck (2008) argues, helped convince HB and ETA that "their struggle could be won on the issue of independence and that one day the 'construction of an own Basque decision space' would be rewarded with an independent state" (p. 199). While this convergence helped to create the conditions for potential alliances with parties such as the PNV and EA, the change in strategy away from armed struggle (and eventually toward *unilateralidad*) also served as a means by which to reinforce these same conditions and create a deeper pool of potential allies in the pursuit of the movement's goals.

To create the necessary conditions

The notion that ETA would be insufficient to bring about the desired changes is one that came home stronger after the failure of the peace talks in Algeria and the rupture of Lizarra-Garazi. The talks were seen as proof of ETA's military viability (see Military Viability). Yet with them the IA no closer to its goals, BS points to growing support for the tactical goal of the Right to Decide as evidence of the importance of the strategic adjustment undergone by ETA and the MLNV in the mid-1990s: to *acumulación de fuerzas* [accumulation of forces]. This change in strategy was more a course correction than a new course, given that, as early as 1987, ETA had publically declared its intentions to begin broadening its allies (*Zutabe* 45, March 1987, in Casanova, 2007, p. 330). The *acumulación de fuerzas* sought to combine initiatives to build social support with pressures from the armed struggle to create the conditions in which support for the movement's tactical objectives could grow and organizations such as the PNV would be obliged by this to get behind the *abertzale* project while ETA continued applying pressure on the state. This strategy, as Fernandez and Antolín (2000) explain, seeks to align various organizations across the Basque

Country in the master protest frame of Euskadi vs. the Spanish State. This sets up a frame in which a fight for any of the organizations is part of the fight 'for all', and in which all constituent organizations see their goals as achievable through those of the MLNV (Fernandez and Antonlín, 2000, p. 159). In this way, the best way to achieve an environmental goal, for instance, is reframed as better addressed within an independent Basque Country than within the Spanish context. These tensions between the 'national' and the movement goals, while useful means of mobilization can, and has, led to fragmentation amongst the constituent organizations (Fernandez and Antolín, 2000). As SE explained it, *acumulación de fuerzas* was a concept in which "some within the political sphere achieve greater support for the process, for the independence movement, and ETA, through armed action, handles pressuring the State". It was believed that if the conditions were created in which the MLNV could intensify the depth and density of its network of social and political alliances, it would be better able to pressure the State into a negotiated conflict resolution process. This process of attempting to foster and create alliances would target three levels of potential allies over several phases: a focus on the creation of a nationalist political bloc leading up to and surrounding the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty, and a gradual transition to bringing in and adding on international allies, and an emphasis on generating allies across and throughout Basque society, from which germinated the strategy of *unilateralidad*. Throughout these adjustments in course, the scale and intensity of the armed struggle was throttled in and out in response to analyses as to how best to engender the conditions necessary for these alliances.

While ETA may have created a space for new theorizations of social and national conflict, it also highlighted one of the key dividing lines of the nationalist movement of the second half of the 20th century, while creating the other: socio-economics and the use of violence, respectively. ETAPNV holds that under Franco there was a time where ETA and the PNV worked together, before ETA's radicalization. As he sees it: "the objectives are the same. The paths are different. [...] we could die for

Euskadi. But kill, no. Defend myself yes, but I wasn't going to kill anyone". Along with EA, the PNV represented between 37 and 42 percent of the popular vote between 1980 and 1998 at the level of the Basque parliament (EA-GV, 2016). Given that HB received between 15 and 20 percent of that vote over that same period, (EA-GV, 2016) an alliance with other nationalist parties, at least on certain issues, had the potential to provide Basque nationalism with a much stronger voice. Throughout the 1990s, regardless of many and significant ideological differences, the importance of the PNV was becoming clearer to the IA: "we can see clearly that this path, at any given time, the PNV will have to take it with us no?" (S1). Although there was little chance for rapprochement on socio-economic issues, the shared commitment to nationalism offered a potential bridge. From *Transición* EA's and the PNV's commitment to the Statute of Autonomy was seen by the MLNV as an acceptance of the hegemony of the Spanish State, and a commitment to Basque nationalism that fell short of their own. For the EA and the PNV, the refusal of the MLNV to reject ETA's violence ruled out HB as legitimate partner in almost any undertaking; perhaps best exemplified by the EA's and PNV's signing of the *Pacto de Arujia-Enea*.

This began to change with the breakdown of the *Pacto de Arujia-Enea*, and the decreased perception of the viability of the Statute of Autonomy as a framework for the Basque nationalist project (Casanova, 2007). For this shift, there were two important sectors, according to SE the first of which is that the EA and ELA, who initially defended the Statute, "crossed over to opposing it and defending independence. As BS highlights "the PNV 'say that the statute is dead', no they will no longer say Statute". The conditions for these alliances did not yet exist, but following an analysis of the movement strategy, it was decided that an adjustment was needed: "the country had changed" and "It is from here that the work of trying to form alliances with the PNV, with ELA [comes]" (BS). In light of this new scenario, SE

holds what “we have is a strategy that has many elements against it, but the possibility of new opportunities”.

This would not, however, as S1, ETA2 and ETA3 point out, be an easy task – the PNV was comfortable. From the first parliamentary election in the Basque Country, the PNV found itself in the novel and comfortable position of controlling the institutions, development and resources of the State (Casanova, 2007, p. 254). With Lizarra-Garazi “there is, [is] an initial agreement between the Basque nationalist parties of all, the left, the right, the unions, - a social majority signed a political agreement. And, let’s say, that this social majority, demands from the State, that there be a negotiated process and a conflict resolution process” (SE). The drive for this joint approach to resolving the conflict attempted to build on momentum for such alliances following on the perceived success of the Northern Irish process, JEEGELBS notes – a peace process for Euskal Herria born from its own social and political base. While this shift in strategy to both create and monopolize the conditions to expand alliances began in earnest in the mid-1990s, it would undergo several tactical revisions before culminating in the strategy of *unilateralidad* and the calling of ETA’s permanent ceasefire in 2010/2011.

A similar call for a nationalist bloc was made according to JEEGELBS, by ETAm during the *Transición* but the necessary conditions were not present as once ‘radical’ parties sought to adjust to the new institutional processes (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 195). As the possibility for such a nationalist bloc appeared to be taking shape in the 1990s, ETA made a decision to attempt to create the conditions to consolidate such an alliance in 1997-8: “we drop our armed action in the case that the *abertzale* parties and the union organizations, and social organizations, [...] reach an agreement called *estrategía conjunta* [joint

strategy] in order to generate in Euskal Herria and the political sphere, the strength needed so as to be able to negotiate the right to self-determination in the face of the territoriality of the states” (JEEGELBS).

As ETA2 and ETA3 argue, the PNV, given its electoral interests, was comfortable and had to be shaken out of its complacency. In order to do so, in 1998, JEEGELBS notes, ETA called a truce. This closing of fronts to remove the barriers – violence- to a pan-nationalist alliance, also as ETA2 and ETA3 note, was used not just to facilitate an alliance but to remove an “excuse” and oblige the PNV to act: “they are in favour of independence... of the right to decide but....well...” (ETA2) “[...]They have to say something too. Before they said no, we are against violence. Great. [...] The PNV, well, [...]they have to say something too”(ETA3). As they argue, the presence of ETA’s violence allowed the PNV to be ambiguous about the nature of their nationalist aspirations (Lecours, 2007, p. 85-87): it was simply enough for them to say we are anti-ETA. Once, this “excuse” is removed, they argue, the PNV will have to contribute, to “say something” about what they really mean about Basque nationalism. In spite of the decisiveness with which the truce was broken, rather than discredit the importance of forming and maintaining alliances, the failure of Lizarra-Garazi was, as JEEGELBS describes it, traumatic for the *IA*.

It is within the ensuing debates, SE argues, that the seeds for the discussion of *unilateralidad* were planted. Despite its failure to live up to its agreement in the eyes of ETA, the PNV continued to demonstrate its potential as an ally in the negotiations over the budget for the autonomous community in 2001. According to Mansvelt-Beck (2008), the MLNV saw its ideas legitimized by the PNV’s sovereigntist stance, reinforcing their perception of the viability of independence (p. 200). Rather than see the collapse of Lizarra-Garazi as evidence of strategic failure, the MLNV began to re-evaluate the

tactics selected in order to more effectively pursue this strategy. As JEEGELBS argues “it is seen that it is necessary to cement this new scenario of negotiation and resolution more firmly, and as a product of this [came] the unilateral steps the armed organization is taking to generate the conditions necessary for this debate, in the most democratic and effective way possible no?” From this analysis came an affirmation of the importance of widening the *IA* network of alliances: “we cannot only look to the PNV and the *abertzale* parties, we have to open ourselves up to other sectors as well no?” (JEEGELBS). Part of this process involved broadening the pool of international allies that might be brought in to mediate any future negotiation with the State. The involvement of the international community begins to be sought not just as a mediator but also as a means to pressure the State into negotiations and to manage a democratic process of negotiation which the *IA* does not believe the State to be capable of on its own (see Target Framing). Through the involvement of the international community, since the collapse of Lizarra-Garazi, JEEGELBS notes the MLNV sought to highlight the illegitimacy of the State’s position and reinforce this by bringing in other states, international organizations and individuals. This is evidenced in the *IA*’s increasing attempts to involve international players in negotiations, such as during the Loiola process (2004-2007 see Engagements). Esser and Bridges (2011) argue that the attempt to involve third party international mediators did not create the necessary conditions to effectively impact the Spanish State and negotiation process in the way they had the Northern Irish process (see Learning Processes). For instance, they argue that much of the importance of the involvement of Senator George Mitchell, derived not solely from his skill as a mediator, but also from the fact that he brought with him the weight, funds and influence of the United States (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 73).

Yet these attempts at internationalization are not without precedent in the Basque Country. Para-diplomacy, has been aggressively pursued by Basque nationalist governments, as a means of promoting

contacts and relationships with other sub-state nationalist movements, a particular focus of which has been through the European Union (Lecours, 2007, p.122-5). ETA initially rejected integration into the European Union, fearing that integration might lead a weakening of Basque nationalism (Jáuregui, 2006, p. 253). Commitment to the internationalization of the conflict and involvement in the European Union, is typified by the PNV, rather than the MLNV. For its part, ETA has long been much more insular, holding as necessary the principal that it not rely on exterior help, be it Spanish fronts, or international help, and instead to focus on mobilizing the resources and capacity necessary for its struggle from within Euskadi itself (Casanova, 2007, p. 92). As demonstrated by the role of the EU articulated in the Ibarretxe Proposal (Jáuregui, 2006), many see the EU as a means to promote Basque autonomy. Primarily through the Committee of the Regions, both the PNV and Basque governments “have actively and intensively taken part in the discussion of the European Convention” (Jáuregui, 2006, p. 256). Further, as Mansvelt-Beck (2008) points out, it has provided a forum through which to internationalize the conflict. As ETA1 notes, within Europe there are not just lessons for processes of self-determination, but allies “in Europe there are other peoples that are also trying the same [seeking self-determination] and over time an articulation of what to do when the majority of a people no longer want to be there [in the state] is being created” (ETA1). Accordingly, this greater turn to internationalization of the conflict particularly noticeable in early 2000s, while not a significant about face for the PNV, is nonetheless indicative of a change of strategy in the MLNV and its efforts to amass new, and more influential allies.

Fostering social density

Barros and Gil-Alana (2006) argue that in order for ETA to end its armed campaign (a goal more State centric in origin but nonetheless a tactical goal supported by much of the MLNV should it prove a useful strategy), nationalist and non-nationalist parties alike must be involved in any political accords. Whereas the creation of the nationalist front pursued by ETAm during the *Transición* was limited to the Basque

nationalist left, and Lizarra-Garazi arguably to Basque nationalism, and the Basque left, following Lizarra-Garazi, the scope of alliances began to widen even further. The MLNV needed to look beyond its traditional alliance boundaries or risk losing supporters to other parties and movements.

Further, while the fostering of allies was seen as a tactic through which the Basque nationalist strategy could gain allies for its cause, looking to Latin America, also highlighted the importance of allies in their ideological battle, where successes had been achieved “through the formation of broad fronts[...] leftist fronts it which, let’s say, they achieve popular majorities and defeat the government and from there social movements have an in and governments begin a process of transformation” (SE). With such analyses, the *IA*, as JEEGELBS note, sought to expand its network not just to other Basque nationalist parties, but across broader swaths of Basque civil society. The viability of searching for allies is not surprising given the variety of backgrounds in social movements from which the activists and militants entered into the MLNV. For ETA¹, labour activism acted as the point of departure. Labour activism was particularly strong in the Basque region (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 69). This history of activism made, and has continued to make labour organizations power players in the Basque region. Combined with the MLNV’s own history of involvement in labour issues, this highlighted the potential negotiating partners with representative labour organizations as an important component of the *acumulación de fuerzas*.

Given this, the strategy is now, as SKB describes it “an accumulation of forces that forces the state to finally reassess what is happening in Euskal Herria, [...] with the force of large sectors of society no?’ (SKB). Thus, while the *IA* had long fostered connections and drawn activists from a wide variety of social movements, following the failure of Lizarra-Garazi, it began to place more emphasis on attempting to create the conditions in which it might formalize these alliances for the creation of a broad

interconnected social and political front with which to face the State with its demands. In terms of developing this front within Basque civil society, the strategy provided two key advantages: an increased capacity for work and mobilization, and a stronger base for any eventual negotiations with the state.

SE for his part draws particular attention to the left/right and nationalist/non-nationalist divide. He argues that for a long time HB and its successors were behind a barrier along a left/right axis, and a second along a Basque nationalist to Spanish nationalist axis. These fences, he argued, protected the *IA* and allowed it to grow, but it was increasingly realized that these fences also held them back. The *IA* he argues, now sees the necessity of reaching out to those groups with whom they have overlapping interests – those who might see themselves as Basque but not leftists, as well as those who seem themselves as leftist but not Basque. Though Lizarra-Garazi would prove ultimately unsuccessful, with its collapse there were those within the political wings of the MLNV that moved further to crossing the nationalist/non-nationalist divide in search of allies. Notably, Arnaldo Otegi began a series of private meetings with the leader of the Basque Socialist Party (PSE), Jesus Eguiguren, to “analyze the reason for the failure of earlier peace efforts and to explore the possibility of moving beyond the political impasses” (Whitfield, 2015, p.6). In this way, the MLNV, as SE explains, sought to expand its pool of allies beyond the nationalist community. The success of this strategy, is not just, as ETA1 posited, the avoidance of a social rupture on the scale of that experience in Northern Ireland, (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007; Learning Processes) but also that those not born into, or raised into Basque nationalism, might still see some part of the *IA* and the MLNV as serving their own interests, making them a potential ally.

By broadening these interests, the movement not only seeks to broaden its share of the vote, but set the foundations for alliances with organizations and parties with which it can find overlapping interests. It is not enough JEEGELBS argues, that the *IA* have a strong political platform but also a capacity for work that allows it to pursue its goals. As the movement began the shift toward the creation of a nationalist front aimed at what would be Lizarra-Garazi, the movement had made a change not just in the way it approached negotiation, but in the way it approached the work it undertook as a social movement. The *IA*, JEEGELBS holds, “has its own way of working, and throughout its own structure in tr[ied] to set in motion the establishment of the Euskal Herria it aspired to”: the *IA* she argued began to work toward alliances with those organizations that could help to institutionalize their vision of Euskadi. Much in the same way arguably, as the State had shaped the new autonomous community through the institutionalization of the Statute of Autonomy. JEEGELBS notes that rather than hoping to bring about the collapse of the new framework so that it might be re-negotiated, the *IA* sought to foster and entrench its own vision of Euskal Herria.

Upon the failure of Lizarra-Garazi, Batasuna began to look not only to other political parties within the State for potential allies, but to recruiting involvement from the international community (see also Engagements and Learning Processes). While ETA had sought help and engagement from abroad as early as the Algeria Talks in the late 1980s, the notion was rejected outright by the Spanish state which saw the conflict as an internal Spanish matter not to be interfered in (Clark, 1990). In the years following, while only limited attempts to engage international players were made as part of the Lizarra-Garazi process, subsequently the MLNV would involve international players with experience in the resolution of conflict: notably Father Alec Reid who helped facilitate the Hume-Adams talks, as well as, in 2003, the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Center), and South African lawyer

Brian Currin, (this last at the recommendation of Sinn Fein) (Whitfield, 2015, p. 7). While the talks in the early 2000s also amounted to little, Otegi continued contact with these actors (Whitfield, 2015, p. 9). While the role played by such actors was limited, Whitfield (2015) nonetheless holds it to have been important. In addition to providing neutral spaces, expertise and facilitation for the ultimately failed processes of 2005-2007, she notes “ [t]o secure the unilateral process it embarked on in 2009, the nationalist left made adroit use of its international contacts to boost its leverage with ETA and to develop a channel of communication with an initially skeptical socialist government” (p. 14).

Yet, as the failure of Lizarra-Garazi would demonstrate, ETA’s role would impact the viability of this capacity for alliances and work. As SE notes “it is certain that there were other social groups in Basque society with whom we could have achieved much but so long as the armed struggle existed, they would not bring themselves to form political alliances”. Taking advantage of the potential opportunities that might be afforded should ETA fade or even leave the scene completely, building this capacity, these alliances, would, the MLNV theorized, allow it to build sufficient strength to enact its strategy of *unilateralidad* – to have the capacity not only to pursue their goals on their own, independent of the State, but also to develop the strength necessary so that when it finally came time to negotiate with the State, they would be in a position of strength. This is in part reinforced by a new way of promoting the ideas behind the movement’s goals. The state, the respondents argue, is not truly interested in a debate. The State, SKB argues “politically, is in the end very weak, in the end it has the strength, it has the state machinery but I mean, politically, I’m referring to a debate on ideas, it is not very strong. It is not very strong and in fact, the side of independence is gaining more and more strength here no?” This weakness, is seen as reinforced when faced with a growing and important social base supportive of the ideas the MLNV.

By building a capacity to work, and the social and political base to institutionalize *IA* ideas and issues, the MLNV hopes to draw even greater support both for its causes, and to lend pressure and volume to its calls for discussion of the Basque Country's future with the State. While the reduction in military allies (particularly the safe haven of France) would have served to hamper ETA's military viability, the expansion of its allies to a nationalist front and then beyond, helped improve the MLNV's optimism for negotiations, for all that these allies appear to have played more of a facilitative, than pressuring role in the pursuit of engagement with the State, and ultimately, *unilateralidad*.

e. Resources Discussion

Support for the Basque nationalist project remains significant. ETA, though diminished, remained an organization capable of violent attacks. Given the length and intensity of the conflict to date, the support within Basque society for the methods employed – most notably the tactic of armed struggle – had ebbed. This was amplified by the perceived failure of the tactic in recent decades to extract meaningful concessions from the State, and the sense that the State itself was largely unperturbed by the violence, and did in fact, use the existence of ETA's violence to its own advantage. Yet, this reduction of support for methods, was not on its own seen as sufficient a dent in the support for the movement to warrant a change in strategy. Rather, the reduced support for the method of armed struggle was combined with the assessment by the MLNV that new opportunities had arisen to increase the support for the movement goals domestically and internationally, by building alliances, improving the perceived legitimacy of the movement, and broadening the movement base of support, contributing to the decision to re-imagine the movement's overall strategy as one of *unilateralidad*.

The movement assessment of the viability of its political project - the ways in which the old strategy impeded its moving forward along with the opportunities for pursuing their goals that the new strategy might facilitate – was, an important factor in determining the direction the movement moved in the latter half of the first decade of the 21st century. This sense of support and a significant mandate encouraged the MLNV belief that it's project was legitimate, and its consistent electoral returns suggested much the same. This functioned to improve MLNV optimism for a negotiated settlement. The utility of armed struggle, particularly in pursuit of its long term goal of forcing a re-negotiation of the constitutional status of Euskadi, was increasingly questioned. Though the MLNV has long purported the legitimacy of the armed struggle, and has arguably at various points over the course of the conflict achieved meaningful successes and made an important impact, it is nonetheless clear that increasingly, and particularly following the collapse of three significant attempts at negotiation with the state, that the military strategy on its own to be insufficient in the current context, resulting in a stalemate with the State. JAETA notes, that “in the end a high percentage of the movement believes that with weapons, we aren't advancing.” JEEGELBS explains the movement's self-assessment of the military strategy as, following the collapse of Lizarra-Garazi “which is a very controversial rupture ... from there, I believe, this perspective appears in the *izquierda abertzale* no? [That] perhaps the armed struggle, more than doing us good, is hurting us.” The organization also found itself under a great deal of police and military pressure, and impeded in its legal pursuit of its political projects.

In all, adjustments to the MLNV strategy were influenced both by the reality of disappearing alliances and the perceived potential for new allies. The military campaign was increasingly seen – in light of its interactional dynamics with the viability of the political branch, alliances and support – as not only insufficient to advance the Basque national project but, at times, actively impeding it. The potential for

new allies thus added motivation toward adopting a more political path. The assessment of ETA's military viability was such that, though hobbled by State tactics, resources, and international pressure, it remained a capable force. Nevertheless, ETA was unviable operationally, as well as in the theoretical application of its overall military strategy, as the primary mover for the Basque national project in the current context.

Part Two: State Responses

Assessment of movement strategies and decision making necessarily involves their interpretations of how the State's actions and behaviour patterns their own. Largely, the MLNV views the State's responses – not unexpectedly – to be counter to the movement aspirations: typified by SKB suggesting that left to its own, the State would never accede to any of the movement's goals. Within that however, it is suggested that the State's preference for unity has led the State to limit legitimate or legal avenues for the pursuit of movement goals for fear of the consequences, while trying to maintain an impasse in the conflict as political.

a. Institutions

While some authors applaud the extensive degree of autonomy the Spanish federalist structure awards the region, many Basque nationalists decry it as limiting self-governance. As Lecours (2007) explains, the Statute of Autonomy “not only allowed for the expression of Basque nationalism, but also stimulated its development by providing an institutional setting that generated political dynamics and patterns of relationships conducive to nationalist politics” (p. 83). Others, such as Mansvelt-Beck (2005) take a more normatively state centric approach and suggest the conflict is ongoing, in part for this very reason as the “weakness of its autonomous political institutions in the democratic period has created a context in

which the MLNV is allowed to survive” implying the illegitimacy of Basque nationalist aspirations (p. 203). Nonetheless, as a number of both authors and respondents suggest, the post-*Transición* Statute of Autonomy and Constitution have enabled the Basque nation building project to “creat[e its] own institutions and organizations that in many other countries are part of the state apparatus” (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 174). Concerning the State institutions, the MLNV analysis tends to focus on its dissatisfaction with the structuring environment of the post-Franco Constitution, Statute of Autonomy and the role of Madrid, largely perceiving them as roadblocks to movement goals through state institutions as they currently exist. Mention is further made of the ways in which holdovers and vestigial influences of Francoism both informed the creation of the institutions in question, and also continue to pattern the way in which they function.

Half-hearted Centralism, Franco and the Myth of Spain, Glorious and Unified

As Lecours (2007) notes, the Spanish nation and state building project’s piecemeal and incomplete approach to nation building left in place institutions, such as the *fueros* in the Basque Country, which not only failed to promote a sense of a unitary Spain, but became touchstones for regional, rather than state wide, identities. During the Carlist Wars of the 19th century, the Basque region largely sided with the Carlists in defence of the *fueros* (Lecours, 2007, p. 50). As ETA1 and SE note, the *fueros* exempted the Basques from mandatory military service and gave them greater control over their own tax base – two state institutions crucial for building congruency between nation and State. The revocation of the *fueros* at the end of the final Carlist War not only contributed to nationalist mobilization, but it is an oft referenced reminder to Basque nationalists of the untrustworthiness of the Spanish state: even if institutionalized, rights seen as fundamental can be, and are, revoked at the State’s prerogative. As ETA1 describes: “What did this signify when they took the *fueros* away from the Basques? So, the social

contract that existed, the socio-political contract that existed with the State, was broken". The State had broken its word, in their mind, in the name of Spanish unity.

By the beginning of the 20th century this narrative of Spanish unity was under threat. Having lost all overseas territories, lived a French occupation, and the Carlist Wars on its own peninsula, the cost of waging and losing wars, and the loss of revenue those territories provided, Spain's glory was fast fading (see Target Framing). As Lecours (2007) notes "this loss of power and prestige was linked to the perceived ills of the Spanish state, most notably a general lack of efficiency and the incapability to generate the necessary revenues to sustain great power politics" (p.42). Correspondingly, when the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, a central concern of Franco's nationalists was the unity of Spain. This emphasis on Spanish unity even above the anti-leftist sentiment, is well captured by one of the Spanish Right's top leaders, José Calvo Sotelo, who is quoted as saying "I prefer a red Spain to a divided Spain" (Zabalo et al. 2013, p. 519). More virulently Basque specific, the Francoist leader José Maria Areliza, in his speech following the fall of Bilbao, said "Spain, One, Great and Free, has triumphed...that horrible sinister nightmare called Euskadi has fallen, defeated forever" (Areliza, 1937 as cited in Casanova, 2007, p. 18-19). As Lecours (2007) summarizes "authoritarianism discredited state centralization. [...] the consequences of authoritarianism, political repression, and attempts at cultural assimilation acquired a particular meaning: The Spanish state, as opposed to only the Franco dictatorship, was seen as an oppressive force bent on destroying the Basques as a culturally distinct community" (p. 72). For Franco leftist politics and regional nationalism represented "twin evils" (Lecours, 2007, p. 70) and as Basque nationalism over the 1920s and 30s had moved to the left (SE), it would be the focus of a particularly strong virulence.

Transición and Unity

So deeply engrained is this notion of unity in the Spanish nationalist narrative, especially after decades under Franco's dictatorship (see Target Framing), that even as Spain underwent the dramatic *Transición*, it continued to impact the structuring of new institutions. For the MLNV, this continuity in institutions as creating obstacles to the pursuit of Basque nationalist goals is notable in three aspects: the Constitution, the Statute of Autonomy, and the embedded nature of Franquistas and corresponding prevalence of the Spanish nationalist narrative.

As BS noted, the *Transición* appeared, for many, to be a moment of great opportunity, but in the end, the Constitution in particular, was seen as insufficient for the defense and promotion of Basque nationalist aspirations, given its focus on the indivisibility of Spain. Whitfield (2015) recounts that the negotiations around the Constitution were impacted by two unofficial arrangements: "[t]he first, the *pacto de olvido* (pact of forgetting), ensured that no formal accounting of the violence inflicted by Franco's forces....was ever pursued. The second was unnamed but left many core institutions of the state – including the army, police, and judiciary in the control of Franco's officials, with cadres of tortures, abusive secret police, and complicit judges still in place" (p. 3). While an attempt to ensure a stable transition and avoid a military revolt (which nonetheless occurred, and failed, in 1981), the unwritten pact, along with "a general amnesty law (Act 48/1977, Oct 15) was declared for such crimes, and actors of the former regime enjoyed the possibility to access and be fully active in the new democracy" (Landa, 2013, p.11). It was not a question that would remain forgotten, as ETAPNV and SKB make clear. Nearly 30 years after *Transición* demands for investigation into deaths and disappearances under the old regime came to a head (Landa, 2013). In 2008, the United Nations Human Rights Committee would go so far as to request that Spain abolish its amnesty laws (Bengoetxea, 2013).

While the Constitution recognises the existence of historic nationalities within Spain, Article 2 then reaffirms the indivisibility of Spain and the existence of one nation (Jaúregui, 2006, p. 241). Ruiz (2013) holds that the notion of Spain as Nation and State enshrined in the constitution is reflected in the general Spanish population. As he details

[e]xisting political discourses and consistent electoral results show that most of Spanish society accepts that the various ACs [Autonomous Communities] have different projects and identities, but only as long as there is strict equality between them all and they are embedded within a common Spanish project. Society is not prepared to accept particular or special positions or situations that are permanently viewed as privileges and therefore the cause of resentment.... this neo-Jacobin view, ... is also widespread among the electorates of the PSOE, PP, IU [*Izquierda Unida* –United Left] and other regionally based groups” (Ruiz, 2013, p. 87-88).

ETA1 reaffirms the importance of this perspective and these constitutional articles in the Basque nationalist perspective: “There are two important articles: The 2nd and the 8th no? The 2nd says that Spain is united and the 8th authorizes the military to enforce this”. As ETA1 pointed out, Article 8 charges the armed forces with the responsibility to “guarantee sovereignty, the independence of Spain, to defend its territorial integrity and constitutional order” (as cited in Casanova, 2007, p. 227-228). Further, Conversi (1997) notes that Article 145 complicates structural amendments such as the amalgamation of the Basque provinces of Hegoalde as it states that “no federation between Autonomous Communities will be permitted under any circumstances” (p.197). SE explains the overall movement perception of the problem of the *Transición* process:

what had to be planted within these processes of reform for the part of the Spanish legislation was the existence of the Basque nation and its right to self-determination. And ETA considers that [...] so long as the Basque Country is not recognized as a nation and there is no legal and juridical recognition, nor the power to exercise its rights, we will consider it the de facto continuation of repression and so long as repression continues we will maintain armed activity.’

To further complicate the usefulness of the Constitution to the *IA*, ETA1 details the mechanism through which any amendments might be made to the document. To be a viable institution for Basque

nationalist concerns, questions of constitutional amendments must be tenable, but the “Spanish position is a position of rigidity; to be changed three fifths agreement is needed. Claro, this means that practically the whole State has to be in agreement [...] and so the Spanish Constitution cannot be changed”. It is a condition that sits ill with Basque nationalists: “they want all Spaniards to vote. What do you mean all Spaniards!?! How is it we are going to vote in my house, in this house, all of Spain? No. In my house, its what I want. In the stairwell is another thing no? In the elevator, in the parts outside – all that. But this? Here it is what I say” (ETAPNV). During the Constitution’s state-wide referendum, support in the Basque Country was markedly absent. While the majority of those who voted in the referendum in the Basque Country voted in favour of the new Constitution, it was in the context of remarkably high abstention rates (Lecours, 2007, p. 89; Casanova, 2007, p. 250) with rates of: Bizkaia 56%, Gipuzkoa 57%, Araba 41% (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 155) meaning support was less than 35 percent overall, and in no one province did it exceed 50 percent.

During this period of *Transición*, JEEGELBS remarks that given the Spanish nationalist preoccupation with unity, between the new Constitution and the Statute of Autonomy “the State apparatuses did a very good job at putting limits on the political renovations”. Though it contains many federalist structures, post-*Transición* Spain is not formally federal as the righter wing conservative elements of Spanish society (the army and the *Alianza Popular*, later to become the PP) saw federalism as a threat to the State’s integrity. This was particularly so of the Statutes of Autonomy, which they saw as a “slippery slope to secession...[that] would undo Spain rather than keep it together, or, at least, it would make it weak and uncoordinated” (Lecours, 2007, p. 69). These sub-state nationalisms were seen to have a destabilizing effect at a time of already great instability; risking, as it turns out, events like the 1981 failed coup – in part a response to a sense of the threat to Spanish unity. Correspondingly few attempts were made to address the actions of State officials under Franco, and many of these former officials were able

to continue in positions of authority with impunity following *Transición* (Whitfield, 2015). In keeping with the *pacto de olvido* (Whitfield, 2015), ETAPNV and others remarked the sense that the PP remains largely a party of the children and grandchildren of those who were in power or turned a profit under the Franco regime. This is amplified, Whitfield (2015) argues by Spain's

reluctance to engage more actively on the issue of human rights, including with the international community, to minimize the nationalist left's sense of victimization. This reluctance was perhaps evidence most clearly by the government's failure to investigate allegations of torture or to adopt measures to prevent it recommended by international bodies... this failure helped degrade the human rights protections that Spain is committed to uphold and was a missed opportunity to demonstrate Spain's democratic credentials (p. 13).

Given the continued prevalence of this unity focused version of the Spanish nationalist narrative, and those who espoused it, in the halls of the Spanish state at the time of *Transición*, the creation and ratification of so decentralized a structure as the Statute of Autonomy is in many respects remarkable. Yet Zirakzadeh (2002) outlines that "the new constitution also failed to limit Spain's police powers within the region and did not clarify the status of the economic powers of the new regional government vis-a-vis the Spanish state...Autonomy seemed shallow at best" (p. 70). Those in the MLNV more openly critical of the new institutions, particularly the constitution, held that "the details of the new political game – including the way electoral districts were drawn and the apparent minuscule number of enumerated powers granted to local and regional governments – prevented the achievement in Euskadi of real liberty and justice" (Zirakzadeh, 2010, p. 75).

Despite numerous advantages, for many within the *IA* however, the Statute of Autonomy trapped Basque nationalism in a sort of holding pattern. While Conversi (1997) notes that the Statute as it was written was a useful response in the eyes of the State as it helped put a damper on ETA's support (granting the State greater legitimacy as JEEGELBS explains), "its provisions fell well short of the

requirements of most Basque nationalists. In particular, the Statute could hardly remedy the political hiatus which, at the time separated the Basques from Madrid” (Conversi, 1997, p. 249). Basque nationalists, particularly those aligned with the EA and PNV, accepted the Statute as a means of reclaiming a degree of self-governance.

However, much of the positive benefits of the new institutional framework were undermined by further state repression (Conversi, 1997, p. 256). Woodworth (2007) further notes that the State’s involvement in the organization and funding of GAL dramatically undermined faith in the newly democratic Spanish state: “obstruction of the rule of law and disregarding the separation of powers discredited Spain, undermined loyalty to the state and ideologically fuelled anti-system forces in Hegoalde” (in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p.65). Despite the new democratic context, much of the new legislation that followed the *Transición* belayed this transformation:

terrorism was defined quite broadly. The term now denoted participation not only in the planning and execution of political violence but also on the composition of sayings and writings that could be construed as defense (or ‘apologies’) for violence. Security laws continued to allow police to detain terrorist suspects without formal charges [...and judges] could order the detention, without trial, of terrorist suspects for up to two and a half years (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 8)

The justice system is further contested by the MLNV as a mere extension of the Spanish state because judges are appointed by the State in a highly centralized system (Lecours, 2007, p. 227-228). Between 1981 and 1991, of the 247 cases brought before the Constitutional Court, over half were between the central government and either Catalunya or the Basque Country (Agranoff and Ramos Galleria, 1997, p. 16-18 as cited in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 69). Having the agreed upon competencies devolved was, and is a slow and contentious process. While Mansvelt-Beck (2005) suggests the readiness of the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country and Catalunya to take matters to the Constitutional

Court implies a legitimization of the institution, it may also be viewed as evidence of the contentious nature of the relationship between the central and regional governments, particularly given the context of the court battles over incompletely devolved competencies. Thus there is little confidence in the MLNV in the receptivity of the judicial system to nationalist causes, nor leniency for nationalist activists.

Yet, as JEEGELBS explains, as these institutions took root, they normalized and reinforced Euskadi's constitutional status within the State; refocusing nationalists on building these institutions up within the context of the State and stifling activism geared toward an Euskadi beyond the Statute. As parties and groups sought to claim their piece of the new institutions, they lost track of the fact that those 'pieces' were just fragments of their full aspirations, she argues. These changes, JEEGELBS argues, were greater than the MLNV anticipated: "the institutions, the political parties that handled these institutions, and the State itself settle in, manage to legitimize themselves at the international level". By the early 1990s, after the failure of the talks in Algeria, JEEGELBS notes that this new framework had had nearly a decade to dig in, leading to an impasse between the movement and State strategies, while Basque society adapted to the new situation, and, she notes, thrived.

Yet, as the Basque government continued to have to bargain for the control of its Statute mandated powers, (Casanova, 2007) and the conflict remained unresolved, the sense that the advantages offered by the Statute had been exhausted grew. By the end of the 1990s the post-*Transición* institutions had lost much of their luster for even those nationalists that had once accepted them. As President González made clear in a 1990 headline, transfers of competencies were to be "measured by the millimetre" and would refer the matters to the Constitutional court at any occasion (*El Mundo*, 7 January, 1990 as cited in Casanova, 2007, p. 358). Jaúregui (2006) notes that nationalists now held that these institutions had

“not satisfied their ambitions and that the political praxis throughout these years has diminished and drained away Basque autonomy” (p.253). In unmistakably direct language on September 25 1997 ELA announced that “the Statute is dead” (Casanova, 2007, p. 448). The Statute was now a dead end for self-governance aspirations as SE and BS note, as they held that “successive Spanish governments were being purposefully obstructive” (Lecours, 2007, p. 94).

Throughout the 1980s the State’s discomfort with the autonomy awarded to various nationalities – and the symbolic recognition of difference it implied – had grown more pronounced. In what would be come to be known, rather disparagingly, as “*Café para todos*” (Coffee all around/for all) the State sought to level out competencies to other regions to diminish the exceptional nature of the autonomy granted to nationalist autonomous regions (Lecours, 2007, p. 146), thereby diminishing the symbolic recognition of difference implied by the autonomous community arrangements. The motivation behind this, Moreno (2008) explains “is a desire to water down differences into a symmetric system and reaffirm that all the ACs jointly belong to Spain” (in Ruiz, 2013, p.88), thus reasserting the narrative of Spanish unity.

Even non-nationalist parties differed on their assessments of the malleability of institutional arrangements; for Zapatero’s PSOE they represented a point of departure whereas for the PP (wherein notions of Spanish nationalist unity run deeper), they were, and are, immutable (Muro, 2009, p. 465). That is not to suggest that the PSOE was particularly enthusiastic toward regional nationalist aspirations. As Ruiz (2013) notes, there is a deep seated antipathy towards regionalist aspirations that has been repeatedly institutionally reinforced by the decision by the Spanish Supreme Court whose “position strengthens the vision of the Constitution in Spanish society as a frozen myth deriving from a quasi-ideal and general consensus in 1978 when the Constitution was adopted, that cannot be betrayed” (p. 90).

Nevertheless, parties such as the PNV were able to take immediate advantage of the new institutions after decades in exile. Mansvelt-Beck (2005) points out that for much of the 1980s and 1990s, minority governments of the State were reliant on nationalist parties such as the PNV and the Catalan *Convergència i Unió*, (CiU) to remain in power. However, Lecours (2007) notes that such influence led to “virtually no political consequence[s]” in territorial autonomy arrangements until the 1993 and 1996 governments were in clear minority positions (p. 99). Yet, while Lecours (2007), Mansvelt-Beck (2005) and Esser and Bridges (2011) note, the nationalist parties were able to exert some degree of influence on the central government, such influence was not without its limits – for instance the parties continued to have to bargain and negotiate to have the competencies that were awarded to the autonomous community with the Statute, devolved in practice (Casanova, 2007; Concessions). As SE summarizes, what seemed the best deal they were going to get in the 70s, in the context of continued democracy, no longer seemed such a winning deal: ELA, the PNV, and EA came to reassess the institutional framework, saying “the Statute is not a valid instrument to resolve our problems and we have to go beyond it; either to a new statute or a new scenario”(SE).

In 2001 the Basque *Lehendakari* Ibarretxe of the PNV announced the proposal of a plan to transform the Statute of Autonomy, made public in 2003. As SE notes, even the PNV had come to feel that the Statute, such as it existed, was no longer a viable framework for Basque nationalist aspirations. The Ibarretxe Plan aimed for a gradual increase in autonomy and the possibility for a referendum on becoming a “free state associated with Spain” (Muro, 2009, p. 456). In 2004 the Constitutional Court ruled that while it could not prevent the proposal from being discussed in the Basque Parliament, it would nonetheless have to be put through the test of Constitutionality, in which its fate would be decided not by the Basque Country, but by the legislators of all of Spain (Jáuregui, 2006, p. 252). Muro (2009) notes that the Plan, which passed in the Basque parliament in December 2004 only to be shot

down by joint PP and PSOE efforts in the Congress of Deputies in February 2005 proposed “symmetric federalism or *café para todos* (coffee all around) should be abandoned in favour of a more flexible confederal model that recognised the sovereignty of the Basque Country [...] Only defence, customs and foreign policy would remain exclusive competencies of the central government” (Muro, 2009, p. 456-7).

The Plan, Jaúregui (2006) notes, would offer a higher degree of autonomy than typical of federal systems. Thus the new opportunities afforded to the MLNV by the *Transición* and the resultant institutions were seized upon by a large proportion of Basque nationalism at their inception, they eventually came to be seen as at best, a stepping stone for independence, and at worst, a stop gap for self-governance. Jaúregui (2006) provides a concise overview of the treatment of sub-state nations within this new constitutional framework:

neither the Constitution nor the implementation of autonomy provisions over the years have favoured the effective consolidation of [Spain's] plurinationality. Article 2 rhetorically recognises the existence of nationalities but in practice this recognition is diluted by blurring the distinction between nationalities and regions in the neutral technical term ‘autonomous community’. The Autonomous Community of the Basque Country still has a level of autonomy inferior to that which could be permitted under the Constitution (p.243).

Accordingly, for the MLNV these new institutions were insufficient, nor were they implemented to the degree promised that might make them more viable.

Seeking Agreement with Madrid

The lack of confidence in the Spanish state to safeguard the best interests of the Basque Country from the respondents was palpable. Underlying this distrust in the State's willingness to engage, - to make and follow through on concessions, its reliance on policing strategies, and ultimately linked to the Spanish nationalist narrative - is the perception among the respondents that Madrid and the Basque Country are politically, economically and socially incongruent. For the MLNV this incompatibility was

manifest in the Spanish conception of the State, its social and economic stances, and the legacy of Franco.

Given, the Spanish nationalist narrative as one that stresses the unity of the State (Keating, 2001), there is a strong sense that the State will not willingly accept any reorganization of its constituent parts. As MLNVJA noted, he doubts the State would so much as accept the unification within Spain of the four Basque provinces of Hegoalde. The legacy of Franco, ETAPNV argues, remains too strong for any changes in the State's constitutional structure to be forthcoming. After Franco's death, ETA1 holds, the State was forced to a degree, to acknowledge its constituent nations: "it does not want to recognize that it is plurinational. It barely, barely accepts that there are nationalities, and it was forced to". For MLNVJA and SE, this is the fruit of centuries of failed Spanish attempts at centralization.

Since the State does not openly recognise the presence of constituent nations, it follows, according the participants, that even within the existing political and economic state institutions, Euskadi and Madrid are frequently at odds with one another. A notion raised by S1 and JEEGELBS, it was addressed in greatest detail by SE who notes that there is consistently "not only a nationalist [clash], but a social clash between the majority of the Basque Country and the policies that are imposed from Madrid. For example, the Partido Popular that governs with an absolute majority, in the Basque Country it has 10 percent of the vote. [...] There are a heap of decisions being taken in Madrid that are rejected by 85 percent of the Basque parliament." As noted in Political Viability, those two parties that have consistently dominated Spain's national government, have considerably less support in the Basque Country (EA-GV, 2016). While in the context of minority governments nationalist parties appear to hold

a level of influence disproportionate to their numbers, Basque nationalist parties are nonetheless significantly out voiced in the national context – particularly in majority government contexts.

This clash is one made all the more notable in social and labour issues, S1 and JEEGELBS note, by the global financial crisis. S1 notes that as criminalization of activism, particularly *abertzale* activism, has progressed, the possibility for contestation within the existing political channels of the state is being reduced: “that is to say the means that we have to be able to protest all that is happening, and not just the nationalism issue” is being chipped away at. It is a concern shared by JAETA. The existing state institutions do not allow for this clash to be addressed, they argue, directing activism, both radical and not, outside of these institutions.

The State, the respondents argue, is worried that if one region goes, that others might follow. This is a particular concern, SE, SKB, BS and JEEGELBS, note given the GDP and GNP production of Euskadi and Catalunya in light of the crisis. Though this has not always been the case and has seen periods of economic slowdown in the 1980s and high unemployment up until the mid-1990s, the Basque Country has long been one of the more economically productive regions of Spain. As Zirakzadeh (2010) points out in the 1950s and 1960s, the Spanish Basque territories were “wealthier and more industrialized than most other areas of Spain” (p. 89). While hit with an economic crisis in the late 70s and 80s, in 1975 Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa were ranked first and third respectively in per capita income of the Spanish provinces (Conversi, 1997). In 2012 for instance, the Basque Country was ranked first in Spanish Autonomous Communities in terms of gross regional product at purchasing power parity (with Navarra and Catalunya in third and fourth respectively (INE, 2016). In terms of per capita income, since 2006 the

Basque Country has been the second ranked autonomous community (with Navarra and Catalunya in third and fourth respectively), up from fourth in 2000, in addition to having one of the consistently lowest unemployment rates over the past fifteen years (INE 2016).

The *IA* is often, as SE, S1 and JEEGELBS suggest, at odds with the State on how this revenue should be spent. As S1 explains “we are paying for all that and it’s outside of our competencies. We don’t have any option to decide on this nor about leaving these structures and spending more on social policies. [The State] is a black hole”. While support for de-centralization had been growing, the financial crisis of 2008 saw a significant reversal of this support in the general Spanish population (Gau ,2011, in Ruiz, 2013, p. 88). As JEEGELBS explains

the Spanish state and the French state in a moment of structural economic crisis, accelerate no? or reinforce the centralizing strategies – as much the identity ones and the economic ones. This reinforces the conflict in its structural dimension bai? And so we can see in the last few, five years, [...] The State reacts by centralizing, no? and reinforcing its mechanisms of imposition, as much in the economic as in the political and ideological sphere, no?

Particularly in times of economic hardship, the State, many respondents note, reacts by attempting to reassert the narrative of unity and redistributing resources accordingly. However, as S1 and SKB in particular have noted, even when it is possible to work within the existing political institutions of the State, the MLNV fears that committing fully comes with two distinct disadvantages. First of all, the State – particularly after nearly a decade of HB’s and Batasuna’s being illegal – has a great deal more access to financial and media resources to better navigate the political institutions (see Tactics and Political Viability). News media in Spain has been, as Clark (1990) notes “connected to a specific party (or even a faction within a party) or ideology, and will try to advance their group’s perception of an event” (pp. 495). Even though the Basque Country has a regional television station “it too is government owned and operated” (Clark, 1990, p. 495). Secondly, the State, they feel, would not hesitate to re-illegalize

organizations of the MLNV if it felt the movement was making too much headway, or it was simply politically expedient (S1, SKB, and SE; Political Viability). Accordingly, given the disparity in resources and the precarious assurances that these paths will remain open to them in the long term, the MLNV has long been wary of committing too fully to an entirely institutionalized approach. As such SE argues that the State's willingness to revert to military and policing tactics demonstrates the weakness of its commitment to democracy. For ETAPNV, the proof of this Spanish insecurity and the insecurity of its democratic institutions is in its fear of the nationalist debate: "I have to decide, not any Spanish politicians. We have a parliament, we will decide. And what is more, it is not because the Basque parliament says so but because we will decide – we vote." Yet those on the side, particularly of the PP, he argues, must be convinced that this vote would not be the end of the world, but simply democracy: "this is democracy deciding and making and unmaking [...] The people will decide. It's the people, in the end, that *have* to decide."

Further, the processes of criminalization that began with the new institutions, and intensified under Prime Minister Aznar served to delegitimize the State institutions as viable channels for the pursuit of movement goals (see Tactics). While Mansvelt-Beck (2005) appears to excuse this tactic by suggesting that "the reactive measures taken by the state did not change the incompatibility of the basic issues of contention" (p. 199), as he notes, neither did it help to create conditions for conflict resolution. For ETA or a similar group to be willing to discuss the end of itself as an organization, it must feel that it is not a surrender but that it will be able to continue pursuit of its goals through other, more peaceful means. However, the processes of criminalization as SKB and S1 note, undermine the movement's faith that it will have access to these institutionalized channels. As Mansvelt-Beck acknowledges (2005) "[b]anning Batasuna, Segi, Gestoras pro-Amnestia and imposing strict controls on organizations like AEK may have revitalized old accusations of the 'repressive' and 'undemocratic' Spanish state" (p.199).

In keeping with this there is a sense in much of the MLNV that the institutions of the State are not simply problematic in how they relate to Basque nationalism, but rather also in how they exist within a democratic context. Franco's legacy is seen to have done much to damage the credibility of the post - *Transición* institutions (see Target Framing). As JEEGELBS outlines, the Spanish state is institutionally weak it "has been dismembered, has been split. A heap of political families were born. The idea that the State needed for the political reforms has been dismembered. For you to be in a [process] of territorial reform, osea, bai? You needed a strength of state [...] And at this level the state is very weak." This perceived weakness of the State institutions was seen to cut in various negotiation attempts between the State governing party and the MLNV. The lack of coordination in this sense, the state institutions would thus harm the MLNV's perception of the State as a viable negotiating partner. Speaking to her perception of the democratic quality of the political culture of the Spanish state, JEEGLEBS summarizes the State institution's democratic credentials: "this culture does not exist, nor the paradigm, nor the instruments no? to deal with – in a democratic manner – this type of process, and there does not exist the strength of state to be able to force oneself to deal with this type of process, no?"

The response of the State to Basque nationalist aspirations as well as MLNV tactics informed these assessments of the movement's strategies and options. While the state institutions following the *Transición* were seen as a significant move forward in comparison to the Francoist dictatorship, they were nonetheless largely deemed insufficient by the MLNV. However, as JEEGELBS notes, there was a clear indication that Basque society was interested in the normalization of conflict and the degree of self-governance they might provide, and overtime these insitutions took root. TheMLNV's attempts to de-stabilize these institutions and force their renegotiation, largely left them outside of these new institutions. These institutions thus provided little hope for the pursuit of movement goals through such channels, thus creating more motivation for forcing a negotiated agreement.

b. Engagements

There have sporadically been behind the scenes contacts between representatives of ETA and of the State over much of the period of the conflict (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.27). Given the numerous attempts to negotiate a ceasefire (20 between 1975 and 1989 in Clark's (1990) estimation), Clark (1990, holds that a lack of available communication channels cannot account for the failure to reach a negotiated settlement. SKB, SE and JEEGELBS highlight the fact that there have been three distinct negotiation processes: State-ETA talks in Algeria in 1988-89; nationalist bloc negotiations with the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty of 1998; and finally talks between the State and Batasuna following the 2004 Anoeta Proposal leading to the 2005-2007 Loiola Process. Negotiations with the State had long been a movement goal: first between ETA, then through the nationalist bloc, and finally through political parties. Three themes emerge in the MLNV assessment of the State responses to these processes and informed the move toward *unilateralidad*: The State does not want to talk; when it does talk, the State does not keep its promises; leading, to a lack of faith in negotiated engagements with the State.

The State Does Not Want to Talk

As Clark (1990) notes, there is "clear evidence that both ETA and the Spanish government want to end the violence" (p. 490). However, what that end means is seen very differently by each side. Despite the occurrence of talks on multiple occasions, there is a sense within the MLNV of the State's unwillingness to talk in any meaningful fashion. In part this is linked to a fundamental difference of the framing of the legitimacy of the conflict. As Whitfield (2015) notes, without exception, Spanish governments "have rejected the idea that [ETA's] terrorist violence bears any relation to a formal armed conflict" (p.3). As such, policing is deemed a more appropriate means of addressing the problems the violence poses (Whitfield, 2015, p. 5). For the MLNV, the conflict is an unequivocally political one.

Although the Spanish state repeatedly denied the possibility of talks, the reality was demonstrably different. However, for the MLNV, there is a difference in the willingness to sit at a table, and the willingness to engage in dialogue. ETA2 and ETA3 express this perception in unambiguous fashion: “the Spanish State, has closed itself off from dialogue completely”. This attitude is seen as increasingly prevalent following the collapse of talks in Algeria and the subsequent election of the PP’s José Maria Aznar as Prime Minister in 1996. Accordingly, for much of the MLNV, the lack viability of engaging in negotiated discussions with the State is demonstrated by the State’s reticence to make or keep concessions, and rooted in the nature of the Spanish state itself: the myth of a unified Spain and fear of its dissolution; and finally the lasting effects of Francoism.

Kriesberg (1998) notes the conditions that help improve the likelihood of successful de-escalation of conflict are: a gradual increase in cooperation and that neither adversary should fear for its existence (in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 209). The first condition, Mansvelt Beck (2005) argues – particularly between 1979 and 1997 – has not been met (p. 209). Evidenced, he holds, by the lack of reciprocal moves the MLNV has made in the face of State concessions. The MLNV, for its part would argue it is the State which failed to respond to movement gestures (see Concessions). The second condition Mansvelt-Beck (2005) argues was in effect for this period, given the legal status of HB. For the MLNV, such a condition is not as clear cut as, for all that HB was a legal political party during this time, it nonetheless experienced pressure against its existence. Most notably in the form of the 1988 Pact of Arujia-Enea which sought to enforce a political isolation on the party (Casanova, 2007, p. 335).

While, as some observers have suggested, ETA has not always fully committed to ending armed struggle, it would seem that neither is the State, at least by way of negotiation (ETA1; MLNVJA; Casanova, 2007, p.321). During the Algeria talks, as well as in the years leading up to them, ETA was receiving heavy operational and organizational blows from the State. As ETA2, ETA3 and JEEGELBS point out, the State was comfortable and did not feel the need to negotiate, nor hold to its promises. In Lecours' (2007) analysis, the State, "bolstered by successful strikes at ETA and increased support by French authorities, might not have sensed the urgency to carry out whatever agreement was negotiated. It might also have feared the political consequences of implementing new policies and frameworks resulting from direct talks with ETA" (p.98). Moreover, the State was less interested in negotiating the causes and consequences of the conflict and more concerned with negotiating a dissolution of ETAm in the style of ETApM, for which it needed a weakened ETA (Casanova, 2007, p.338, See Fragmentation/Cohesion). After stuttering meetings and little progress, in January of 1988 ETA relayed to the State the offer of a six-month ceasefire, and when the State failed to respond, it increased its pressure on the State (see Military Viability). While the State had hoped a weakened ETA could be brought to dissolution, this show of force seemed to necessitate a reconsideration. The first formal meeting between the two sides would take place on Jan 25 1989. (Casanova, 2007, p. 339-45). For ETA, a discussion of its dissolution was not sufficient to be considered a negotiated resolution to the conflict, as such the State was not seen to be seriously committed to resolving the conflict and its underlying causes.

Trust has also been lacking when the two sides have met. Clark (1990) noted that Spanish representatives often placed reputed torturers as delegates in front of former victims (in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 206). In 1978 ETA killed the intermediary José María Portell, accusing him of being a government agent. In 1984 a second intermediary, Santiago Brouard, was killed by mercenaries linked to GAL (Clark, 1990, p. 495). After several years of tentative contacts between ETA and the González

government, in 1986 the ETA top negotiator was arrested and exiled to Algeria (Casanova, 2007). After the collapse of talks in Algeria, as JEEGELBES notes, the government did not feel the need to talk - with González announcing publicly that there would be no talks with ETA (Casanova, 2007). Again in 1998 while ETA, Batasuna, PSE and the State were feeling out the potential for talks, one of ETA's two lead negotiators, was arrested (Casanova, 2007, p. 446). At the same time Aznar's government leaked the name of a mediator. As such, Mees (2001) suggests not simply that the State was uninterested in negotiations, but that Aznar's government "actively scuttled" the potential peace process (in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.64). Unsurprising perhaps, as the PP's Minister of the Interior's response to the truces was "it's a trap" (in Pereira, 2001, p. 287). Again in 2006 a key negotiator for ETA was arrested in the middle of the Loiola talks (Casanova, 2007, p. 497). Even without the fear of death, potential intermediaries are at risk of charges under Spanish anti-terrorism laws, with one occasion of an "intermediary in a hostage case... arrested and charged with complicity in the kidnapping" (Clark, 1990, p. 495). For SKB, ETA has been the primary source of steps to "stabilize" the situation. As SE notes, the State was often arresting the very people promoting a peaceful resolution process. The MLNV has taken such actions as evidence of the State's unwillingness advance negotiations. Such policies and occurrences have fueled MLNV belief that the State is at best interested in talking about ETA's dissolution, but in no way interested in a dialogue on the causes and consequences of the conflict.

There are those, such as Alonso (2013), who see the MLNV's attempt at dialogue as a ploy to ease State pressure so as to be able to return to military tactics with greater force. While undoubtedly true that ceasefires are frequently used as an opportunity for a military force to regroup and resupply, to suggest categorically that dialogue is thus *necessarily* untenable is not only deeply flawed but profoundly unhelpful. For one, ceasefires are invariably used by *both* sides to regroup and resupply. To expect any party to a conflict not to undertake so vital a step for its own survival should talks fail, is to ignore the

critical role of a group's self-preservation in their decision making. Secondly, to suggest that dialogue was a mistake because all was not resolved in that instance denies the complex give and take nature of negotiations, given that, as theorists and practitioners such as Zartman and Rubin (2000) and Lederach (1997) suggest, processes of conflict resolution are not linear. The failure of a particular round of talks – may in fact prove valuable for later stages as each side gains a better understating of the priorities and constraints of the other. That is not to say that all talks are equally productive, only that they ought not perhaps be so categorically dismissed.

Yet, the State, ETA¹ argues, fears the possibility of unanticipated consequences that recognitions of sub-state nationalism might entail – such as paving the way for the departure of its constituent regions. Decades under Franco with his emphasis on a unitary and Castilian Spain have embedded these interpretations into the political system. For much of the MLNV, this sentiment did not die with Franco (Whitfield, 2015; Institutions). One of the most important hold overs is to be found in the political party system. As ETAPNV laments the reason the State will not engage meaningfully with Basque nationalist aspirations is “Francoism. Nothing more. If you look at the last names, in the PP for example, they are all children and grandchildren of Franquistas. Eh? They are people that, with Franco, made money [...] They will have to disappear” for a real discussion to take place. Jaúregui (2006) notes that the PP is particularly adamant in its resistance to changes to the existing institutional framework, not only rejecting out of hand the Ibarretxe Proposal's attempts to modify the existing Statute of Autonomy but also rejecting the notion that the *Lehedakari* had any legitimate right to put forward the proposal.

Though Lizarra-Garazi was a pact between nationalists, it was meant to set the stage for negotiations with the State. As such the MLNV made no attempt to hide their intentions; starting in 1995, at ETA's

request a former Nobel Peace Prize winner carried messages back and forth between ETA and the State (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 64). The State was thus not without warning that the stage was being set for negotiations, but, Barros and Gil-Alana (2006) note, Aznar's government was unwilling to discuss anything beyond moving a handful of prisoners closer to Euskadi, and ETA's disarmament (p. 95). Of the potential of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty and ceasefire, Lecours (2007) notes "[t]he ceasefire was artificial insofar as it was the result of a political deal between Basque nationalist parties that offered nothing to Spanish parties and the Spanish government." Nonetheless, he suggests there may have existed genuine opportunity. Yet, rather than seize it State officials "met only once with ETA (in Zurich) and then proceeded to jail the organizations member-negotiators" (Lecours, 2007, p. 105). ETA and the MLNV saw little commitment on the part of the State to engage in productive negotiations. During the truce, for all that some 135 Basque prisoners were moved to, or at least closer to, the Basque country, a further 350 activists and collaborators were arrested. Many of those arrested were men and women in the upper echelons of ETA and the MLNV who were responsible for pushing the political strategic emphasis (Pereira 2001, p. 287; see Tactics). This only reinforced the sense that the State sought to avoid political negotiations. ETA considered that the conditions for negotiations no longer existed, and ended the ceasefire, (JEEGELBS), announcing on November 28th that *etarras* would be free to continue operations as of December 3rd (*BBC News*, 28 Nov, 1999).

For MLNVJA and ETAPNV, the PP represents a primary obstacle for the prospect of a negotiated resolution in Euskadi. Whitfield (2015) notes that by the end of what would be Aznar's final term as Prime Minister, "Aznar's offensive against ETA and the MLNV, deep antagonism with the PNV, and growing intolerance of other regional demands had widened the gulf with Madrid and among the democratic forces of the Basque Country" (p. 6). As MLNVJA explains, even when there are moves toward a negotiated settlement, the PP's inherent reticence can work to derail the process. With

Zapatero, the MLNV was hopeful: “he agreed to things that, for us, were important. [...] I truly believe the PP was playing certain cards that the PSOE [couldn’t match]. I don’t believe they will ever accept the reunification of Hegoalde [...] nor the right to self-determination, nor anything like it.” Notably, while ETA initially pushed Batasuna to take a hard line on the inclusion of Navarra (a position not necessarily endorsed by the majority of Navarrese), Woodworth (2007) notes Otegi later demonstrated a willingness to be more flexible on the issue. When Zapatero decided to proceed with talks, the PP, Woodworth (2007) recounts, were vehement in their objections, seeing Zapatero’s involvement as “an opportunity to accuse the PSOE of being soft on ETA and undermining the sacred unity of the Spanish nation. The PP leader, Mariano Rajoy, denounced the prime minister’s offer [of talks] in the most intemperate language as a surrender to terrorism and a ‘betrayal of the dead’” (p. 67). A particular focus of frustration on the PP is shared by ETAPNV: “this moves forward only if they want to sit down, [...] That’s it. [...] he Socialist party sits, the PP doesn’t see it as good for anything.” So long as those who supported Franco persist in leadership positions, ETAPNV and MLNVJA argue it will be difficult for any discussions on sub-state nationalism to take place.

The PSOE for its part has been less categorically resistant to nationalist aspirations. In addition to taking part in the Loiola Process, the PSOE was somewhat more open to the Ibarretxe Proposal. While it did reject the Proposal on grounds of both content and procedure, unlike the PP, it recognized the Lehendakari’s right to put forward the proposal (Jaúregui, 2006, p. 252). However, while, as Jaúregui (2006) notes, Zapatero’s PSOE government was “in favour of a general revision of the Spanish autonomous system and consider[ed] it necessary to reform and deepen the extent of the Basque Statute of Autonomy” it nonetheless held that any changes to Euskadi’s constitutional arrangements must be decided not just by the Basque society, but by all Spanish citizens (p. 252-3). This condition of what is seen to amount to a Spanish veto, is staunchly rejected by Basque nationalists; as ETAPNV

argues: “In my house, it’s what I want.” Thus, for all that the PSOE is viewed as more of a potential negotiating party, they, like the PP are seen to be resistant to significant and meaningful engagement on Basque nationalist aspirations.

Unsurprisingly, it was with the PSE and then the PSOE that the MLNV first began the Loiola Process. Esser and Bridges (2011) note that one of Zapatero’s first actions once elected was to open a line of communication with the Basque *Lehedakari* which built to a three-year process of ‘pre-agreement’ meetings with the PSOE, PNV and Batasuna. The two track process that would take shape was based on Otegi’s Anoeta Proposal of November of 2004, with the first track “on pacification between ETA and the Spanish and French states – including the technical issues of demilitarization, prisoners, refugees, and victims – and the other between Basque social and political forces on future political arrangements for Euskal Herria” (*Batasuna* 14 November 2004, in Whitfield, 2015, p. 7). The division of talks into two streams was suggested as early as 1981 by former ETAp leader Mario Onaindia during the talks that saw the dissolution of ETAp (Clark, 1990, p. 497). There was also an attempt in Algeria in 1989 at the suggestion of ETA negotiator Eugenio Etxebeste ‘Antxon’ to have HB negotiate on political matters with the State once it was clear the State would not do so with him (Clark, 1990, p. 498).

The Loiola Process was, as MLNVJA recalled, seen as promising: “including intentionally ambiguous wording regarding key issues such as granting the Basques the “right to decide” their future and consideration of a “Euro region” which might include all their traditional Basque regions in both Spain and France” (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.64-64). During pre-agreement talks in November 2005 it was agreed that ETA would call a permanent ceasefire after which the State would have six months to solidify and gain support for the agreement (Casanova, 2007, p. 487). The ceasefire, when called, was

viewed by some observers as a “dramatic unilateral conciliatory gesture” (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.68), whereas others, suggest its impact was blunted by the increase in street violence directed against ‘Spanish’ interests (Mansvelt-Beck, 2008, p. 188). At this point, as MLNVJA noted, the PP attempted to prevent the process from continuing; launching a media campaign denouncing concessions, seeking to mobilize victim organisations, and attempting to push through the illegalization of EHAK (Casanova, 2007, p. 487-8). Nonetheless, ETA declared a ceasefire in March of 2006. Despite the potential Basque nationalists saw in these talks, as MLNVJA argued, the ruling party was unable to follow through: “Zapatero did not have sufficient political capital or political will to make conciliatory gestures or to reciprocate concessions quickly enough to keep the process intact” (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 73). Woodworth (2007) notes that the PP did not easily accept their 2004 electoral loss and sought to use PSOE engagement with the MLNV as a political tool. As tensions mounted over the hunger striking *etarra* De Juana, the PP “sensed an issue which could unseat Zapatero, and organized mass demonstrations in March 2006, that mobilized hundreds of thousands of supporters” (p. 69).

Despite its potential then, the process was one that faced many obstacles from the beginning. Alonso (2013) notes that the PSOE initially denied it was in talks with ETA, leading to the PP making accusation of lying and “each accusing the other one of betraying the victims of terrorism and refusing to work toward defeating the terrorists” (p. 114). In 2000 the PP and PSOE had signed the Pact for Freedom and Against Terrorism which aimed to remove counter-terrorism policies from the realm of partisan contestation. It was a Pact viewed as evidence of the State’s unwillingness to negotiate by Basque nationalists. Then PNV Lehedakari Ibarretxe called the pact “a big step backward politically” and that “it is a barbarity, authentic political nonsense” (in *Irish Times*, Dec 13 2000). Thus, when in 2005 Zapatero authorized talks without ETA’s fulfilment of the State requirements implied by the pact (demonstrating “a clear willingness to end violence”, usually seen by the State to mean complete unilateral

disarmament) the PP called the government actions “a betrayal of the victims of terrorism” (*El Pais*, May 12, 2005 as cited In Alonso, 2013, p. 124). Basta Ya! a non-partisan (though state-centric) civic movement argued that “recognition of Batasuna as a necessary participant inevitably implies the legitimization of violence as a valid political instrument”, that Batasuna represented “nothing more than the interest of a terrorist organization” and that “accepting political negotiations with ETA may lead to losing an historic opportunity to defeat the terrorist group for good” (Alonso, 2013, p. 125). Given the vehemence of this narrative and its implied melding of all nationalist aspirations with terrorism (Casanova, 2007), the MLNV see this and similar organizations as fronts and pawns of the PP and the Spanish nationalist narrative. It is thus seen as further evidence of the unviability of negotiations with the State, particularly with the PP.

Following the Anoeta Proposal, a first round of talks eventually took place in May and June of 2005, with a second round in November before largely stalling out. As Whitfield (2015) recounts

the parties became study in mutual recrimination that revealed fundamental differences in their understanding of the agreed guarantees and political underlining of the process. Difficulties were exacerbated by opposition from the PP, a related increase in activity against ETA and Batasuna by Spanish judges, and – behind the scene – divisions within ETA, whose top commanders supporting the negotiations had been arrested just as the peace process was beginning. Violations of the cease fire multiplied (p. 7).

In March 2006 ETA made public its ceasefire. On April 27 Batasuna leader and chief negotiator Arnaldo Otegi was sentence to fifteen months in prison for ‘*apología de terrorismo*’ (Casanova, 2007, p. 491). The enthusiasm of the State for negotiations seemed spotty at best. In June Zapatero failed to make the agreed upon speech, making small but notable changes (Casanova, 2007, p. 492). In the midst of apparently lagging talks, the late summer of 2006 saw a resurgence of *kale borroka*, indicating, Esser

and Bridges (2011) suggest, a “hardening of ETA’s stance in the absence of any reciprocal concessions by the Spanish government” (p. 68-69).

Nor had pressure on ETA and the MLNV by the State eased. As early as June ETA representatives sought to meet with the State to express their feeling that the talks were in jeopardy. In September it was made known that an imprisoned *etarra* was to be sentenced for a further 96 years for two articles he wrote while in prison (Casanova, 2007, p.403). While the sentence was ultimately not carried out, for many in the MLNV, such moves were seen as at worst attempts to pressure ETA, less toward the negotiating table, and more toward a return to violence, and at best evidence of unwillingness to dialogue in a meaningful fashion. The fact that State apologies for violence under Franco have not been forthcoming and the contested nature of who, in the eyes of the State qualifies as a victim (Bengoetxea 2013, Whifield, 2015), only exacerbates this feeling. “Here” ETAPNV states “there are different classes of victim. Here, if you die [*etarra* or an *abertzale* with no military involvement] you are one kind of victim, but if one from the PP dies, that’s another kind of victim”. In September of 2006 Spain introduced the ‘Parot Doctrine’ which sought to extend the sentences of already convicted *etarras* well after their convictions. The doctrine sought to retroactively extended the sentences of 60 prisoners, in one example seeing a prisoner – having served 24 years of a maximum of 30 after having six removed for good behaviour - having an arrest warrant issued for him shortly after his release for the same crime for which he had already served his sentence (*The Guardian*, 23 Oct, 2013). That the State is unwilling to move on questions such as prisoners and victims, which have no direct bearing on issues of constitutionality, is taken as a poor sign for hopes of meaningful negotiations. Above all they were seen as evidence of the State’s lack of commitment to a negotiated end to the conflict.

Movement frustration continued to mount, eventually leading to ETA's planting a bomb in Madrid's Barajas Airport T-4 Terminal in 2006. Though an attempt to pressure the State into committing more fully to the ongoing process, the return to violence led instead to the effective (though not immediate) scuttling of the talks. In May talks continued in which "representatives of the government and ETA discussed technical issues as well as Batasuna and PSE political issues. That ETA now insisted the Socialist Party publicly commit to a common institutional entity and a single statute, and campaign for this outcome was unacceptable to the government" (Whitfield, 2015, p. 8), in June 2007 ETA declared all fronts open once more (Casanova, 2007, p. 499). After the bombing the State "drew on a broad consensus that ETA could never again be trusted to abide by a cease-fire and that no further negotiations would be pursued. Zapatero's critics argued that the peace process had legitimized ETA as a political actor, provided scope for it to rearm, and encouraged it to raise its demands" (Alonso (2009) in Whitfield 2015,p. 8) For many in the MLNV, the Loiola Process was now, as ETA2 and ETA3 note, just another example of the State raising and dashing hopes. The failure of a process that in many respects had seemed so promising, was seen, as MLNVJA noted, as evidence that the State on its own would never agree to Basque nationalist aspirations: even when the State could be made to tentatively agree to consider nationalist concerns, it could not bring itself to follow through.

Beyond the State's unwillingness to negotiate, a number of respondents point to this stance being influenced by a sense that it neither had to negotiate nor did it have to tools to do so effectively if forced to. JEEGELBS notes that as the democratic structures of the State took root post-*Transición*, that the State gained legitimacy both internationally and at home; the "rebelliousness" of the Basque Country appeared to be settling into an acceptance of the new democratic structures. As JEEGELBS summarizes "this new framework settles in. [...T]he Spanish state, especially after the process in Algeria, bueno, now felt secure no? and so it didn't feel the need to negotiate with the organization no?" By the

time the talks in Algeria had ended, these new institutions had had nearly a decade to take root and work to reshape Basque society and its perception of the State. By 2004, one poll found that 43 percent of respondents held that the Autonomous Community was functioning ‘normally’ with a further 30.4 percent saying it functioned ‘well’ and 2.6 percent ‘very well’ (Llera, Retortillo, Alkorta, De la Peña, Juaristi, Leonisio, Sanz, 2004, p. 42).

As to the second point, for all that the Spanish state had made great strides in improving its democratic credentials and its corresponding legitimacy, the State nonetheless favours a policing solution to the conflict (Tactics). As a policing solution implies a criminal rather than a political nature to the conflict, the State is better able to promote its own credibility as a legitimate democratic State dealing with a criminal element, while simultaneously avoiding a political debate. As ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, SE, S1 and SKB note, the State prefers to brand the MLNV terrorists than risk a political debate. The Spanish state SKB, SE, S1, JAETA, MLNVJA and JEEGELBS note, prefers a police route to a negotiated route to settlement because the State does not have strong and credible arguments to defend itself in a democratic debate on the subject (see Political Viability). As such the State prefers to keep the arena of conflict a physical one where the State’s resources provide it with the upper hand. The continued contacts with ETA following the collapse of the talks in Algeria “encouraged expectations that political negotiations were a realistic goal when they never were” (Fonesca, 2006 in Whifield, 2015, p. 5). Many respondents cite a number of incidents that they view as deliberate attempts to provoke ETA to return to violence thus giving the State, ETA1 argues, an excuse to shut down any possibility of talks (see Tactics). As SE holds “because if the State does not want us to go that way, it is because it is effectively by going that way that we are getting closer”. Accordingly, though talks have been undertaken on numerous occasions – whether between the military or political branch of the MLNV, and the State – with the exception of the dissolution of ETApM, they have done little to assuage the concerns of either party. For the MLNV, chief

among the reasons for this is that the State, though willing to ‘talk’, is interested only in ending violence, rather than engaging in a meaningful dialogue about both the causes and consequences of the conflict.

The State Does Not Keep Its Promises

Feeding the MLNV view that the State is uninterested in making a negotiated settlement work is the sense that when the State can be made to sit and negotiate, it cannot be trusted to follow through on its promises (see Concessions). This lack of follow through is seen largely as evidence of the State’s unwillingness to risk a political debate it might lose, as well as a political tactic for the promotion of its own self-interest. Perhaps most notably, the talks in Algeria were, as S1 phrases it, an important moment in which the conflict could have been resolved. Though the content had been previously agreed upon, after public statements released by ETA and the State contained discrepancies, the talks, and subsequently the ceasefire, collapsed (Idoyaga, 2002 in Muro, 2009, p. 28). In ETA’s view the discrepancies represented by the State’s unilateral changes to the agreed upon text, and was evidence of its lack of commitment to the talks (Casanova, 2007) as well as further proof that, as ETA2 and ETA3 hold, the State does not keep its promises. Moreover, for some, it was ultimately an example of the State’s unwillingness to make meaningful concessions. The arrest and continued incarceration of mediators and political leaders like Arnaldo Otegi, is seen as further evidence of this attitude. When combined with the continued dispersion of Basque prisoners, the way in which the handing over of self-governance competencies was handled, and the State view of the MLNV as bearing sole responsibility for the conflict, this contributes to a strong sense of distrust in the State’s commitment. For ETA2 and ETA3, the implications are clear: “there have been conversations with the state, in 89, Lizarra-Garazi and later, but the Spanish state, always, well, it never completes its part of the agreement: it has not wanted to complete them”.

This is further complicated by the divided nature of Spanish political parties on the question of sub-state nationalism. As Esser and Bridges (2011) point out, there was a lack of bipartisan support and thus of a central coalition on the side of the Spanish state during attempted negotiations. The PP would go so far as to seek legal action against the PSOE for talking to Batasuna, despited doing so with parliamentary approval (Woodworth, 2007, p. 69). This division, as JEEGELBS holds, is indicative of the weakness of the Spanish state. Such division served to decrease the perception of the State as a viable partner in meaningful engagement. As a result, the parties were constrained by the electoral consequences of involvement in talks with ETA or the MLNV. As the PP has frequently demonstrated, such talks can be powerful propaganda ammunition. Yet this attitude serves to further erode MLNV confidence that any agreement can be reached and kept by the State.

What is more, the MLNV does not see the State as having responded to any of the movement's goodwill gestures. SE highlights ETA's ceasefire as one such example: "This last process has been absolutely unilateral. That is to say there was no type of reciprocation or action in response from the State whatsoever". SKB argues that this failure to follow through starts even before the negotiations. As ETA2 and ETA3 have mentioned, the State has long held that ETA was the reason it would not engage the MLNV but now, in ETA's absence, there is a glaringly corresponding absence of talks. SKB gives clear voice to this frustration: the State has held that "without violence all can be negotiated, everything can be discussed no? And this is a lie which has been seen whenever there is a truce, anytime there was a possibility that violence might cease, all of a sudden they add "buts"; "ah but not all ceasefires are legitimate so we can't talk about everything". This has always been a [blocking tactic]."

Clark (1990) notes that from the beginning it has been Madrid's position that no talks will take place without the absence of violence. For ETA since its outlining, the *Alternativa KAS* and its five demands were the requirement of any truce (Clark 1990). In 1995, as SE and JEEGELBS explain, the *Alternativa KAS* was replaced with the *Alternativa Democrática*, as the minimum requirements. The new demands emphasized the recognition of the right to self-determination and territorial unity of Euskal Herria, demilitarization, citizen participation and a general amnesty (Casanova, 2007). That being said, ETA had shown itself to be flexible on the question of a ceasefire in the past. In January of 1988 ETA offered a truce that would begin once talks did, instead of the *Alternativa KAS*. When Madrid refused to budge on a truce prior to talks, talks broke off until 1989 when ETA offered a truce if a promise for talks to be undertaken was made, yet "the 1989 talks collapsed at least partly because Madrid was unwilling to accept this condition" (Clark, 1990, p. 496-497). As Woodworth (2007) noted, the MLNV had also demonstrated a flexibility on the issue of Navarra over the course of the engagements in the early 2000s, that was not present in earlier rounds of talks. In 2005 the PSOE government passed a resolution saying talks with ETA could take place if ETA sufficiently demonstrated that it would renounce violence. While the resolution appeared promising, Lecours (2007) holds that the stance of the State amounted to "an invitation to surrender since these negotiations would focus on ETA's disbanding and the status of their prisoners rather than on the political statues of the Basque Country" (p. 110). Accordingly, such offers contribute to this sense of frustration within the MLNV stemming from the State's reticence to address the issues underlying the conflict. As SKB argued, the State continues to add caveats to its negotiations: as he sarcastically notes, not all ceasefires are created equal and so there can be no talks.

The sense that these "buts" keep finding their way into State promises beyond the context of negotiations is prevalent. Respondents further cited that though ETA has declared a permanent ceasefire, though Sortu and EH Bildu have publicly denounced any further attempts to use violence in

pursuit of movement goals, the State is no closer they argue, to demonstrating a willingness to talk. Instead, the requirements for talks were raised to a complete and verifiable disarmament. An internationally verified hand over of a portion of ETA's arsenal in February of 2014 was met not as a gesture of goodwill but as a failure to comply with the new pre-conditions for talks (*BBC News* 21 Feb, 2014). Such calls for an organizations complete disarmament prior to talks is problematic. First of all, it sets the bar for talks challengingly high as the group is being asked not only to hand over its strongest bargaining chip prior to negotiations, but also its means of self-preservation – without any guarantee of reciprocation. Secondly, it is often thus seen as an indication of the unwillingness of the other party to engage in any meaningful fashion as they have set a condition that they know that other side can very likely not meet. This is particularly the case when, in the situation where one of the parties is a sovereign state, the sub-state party cannot make any comparable demand of the State's disarmament.

For all that the Spanish state has heralded the ceasefire as proof of its "victory" over ETA, Whitfield (2015) notes that in so doing the State has failed to capitalize on an opportunity to put the conflict to rest. As she explains: "Spanish intransigence meant that four years that might have been used to work toward the definitive end of ETA and much-needed reconciliation in the Basque Country have been lost. Spain's actions and inaction have instead helped ensure that Basque society will remain deeply polarized and significantly hostile toward it" (p. 14). The MLNV, in large part, had lost faith in the potential for negotiating a resolution to the conflict. It is argued that the State is interested only in discussing ETA's dissolution. Further, it is felt that given the association of sub-state nationalism with terrorism and the Spanish narrative focus on unity, the State is uninterested in addressing the underlying causes and consequences of the conflict or acknowledging Basque nationalist aspirations. Finally, the MLNV has little faith in the State's willingness and ability to follow through on any agreement reached. Accordingly, the history of engagement with the State has largely served to reduce optimism in the

viability of a negotiated agreement. In 2011, the IA laid out the Aiete declaration with which it hoped to engage the state for further negotiations, however, with the election of the PP to State government in November of that year, little shifted (Whitfield, 2015, p. 10). Thus, the MLNV has sought to move forward with a unilateral strategy, in light of the perceived lack of viability of negotiating with the State.

c. Concessions

The MLNV perception of the State as uncompromising is exemplified in a quote from the Minister of the Interior under Zapatero “by police means, pursue them fully, and politically, give them nothing” (in Whitfield, 2013, p. 8). Despite the suspicion and often times anger expressed by the respondents toward the Spanish state, no credible argument can be made that there have been no changes in Euskadi since Franco’s era: since the *Transición* the State has made a number of concessions to the MLNV’s demands, most notably, the Statute of Autonomy (see Institutions). Broadly speaking, those MLNV issues surrounding State concessions, center around three themes: changes undertaken during *Transición*; a reduction in overt State repression; and the State’s failure to make and follow through on meaningful concessions – particular in response to MLNV gestures.

Moving Beyond Franco –Transición

Perhaps one of the most important changes was the State’s move from dictatorship to democracy and the corresponding new institutions the transition entailed, a transformation for which the Spanish state is rightfully proud. However, for the MLNV, the *Transición* is also marked by a palpable sense of missed opportunity. Only ETAPNV celebrated the *Transición* as a major concession in State structures. JEEGELBS and the rest of the respondents instead pointed to the limited support it received upon referendum (see Political Viability; Institutions).

Concessions highlighted by various authors are not always viewed as favourably from within the MLNV. Though the legalization of HB was undoubtedly a significant step forward from the dictatorship for the MLNV - and was one of the primary concerns of the early *Alternativa KAS* (Casanova, 2007), it is questionable how great a concession it is from the state once it had committed to the transition to democracy. Nor, as the MLNV holds, was this legalization something that could be assumed for any political party considering the eventual ban of Batasuna, and attempts to ban EHAK. When, left without the MLNV party, in 2007, during the ban of Batasuna, *Acción Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Action, ANV) took part in the elections as the party to which Batasuna sent its voters. Yet for those who favour the policing approach, such as Alonso (2013), this governmental “indulgence allowed ETA to circumvent the outlawing of its political party and to obtain, once again, very significant economic and political resources” (p. 128-129). Given the associations between nationalism, criminality and terrorism, in some respects, the State has made it more difficult for itself to make conciliatory gestures. As can be seen, all that is /A is seen as ETA, as ETA1, S1 and JEEGELBS note, and thus any concession is politically costly for the governing political party. Concessions, such as amnesty for *etarras*, could potentially harm the ruling party’s chances in later elections (Manvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 207) Even those seemingly more willing to engage may be influenced by this political cost (see Engagements), as for all that Aznar had relocated a number of prisoners in response to efforts around the Lizarra-Garazi process, “[h]aving incurred the PP’s wrath by offering talks in the first place [Zapatero] appeared determined to show that his government was even tougher than the PP had been” (Woodworth, 2007, p. 69).

The Statute nonetheless represented an enormous leap forward in self-governance terms for Basque nationalism from Franco’s era. Yet issues of implementation also bring the sincerity of these concessions

into question as “Spanish governments have been generally unenthusiastic about transferring the full extent of powers specified in the Basque Statute of Autonomy. Even in some areas where the Basque government is formally autonomous, this autonomy is often challenged in practice by central policies” (Lecours, 2007, p. 144-145). For instance, though the Statute was ratified in 1979 Casanova (2007) notes that in 2007 there remained competencies conceded to the Basque Country in the Statute that nearly 30 years later had not in practice been handed over (p. 268). The continual use of the handing over of competencies to which the State long ago agreed as a bargaining tactic, SE notes, further fosters a sense of distrust in the State’s willingness to make and keep agreements.

While acknowledging the frustration expressed by the often stuttering pace at which the agreed upon competencies have been handed over, Mansvelt-Beck (2005) suggests that the continued pressuring of the autonomous communities for these competencies reflects a contradiction: pushing for greater autonomy within the State runs counter to calls for independence. Yet, within the constitutional framework as it stands, there are only severely limited legal moves with which sub-state nationalists may push for independence. Simply because these regions have sought to maximize those self-governing competencies they can extract from the State, does not necessarily suggest a lack of interest in independence. Rather it can be seen to suggest a pragmatic desire for self-governance to be pursued by those means available to the region. The Ibarretxe Proposal, and Loiola Process demonstrate this continued desire for independence and self-governance. Though the talks would eventually fail before an agreement was produced, Whitfield (2015) notes that in September and October of 2006 PSE, Batasuna and the PNV arrived at a proposal that decisions “freely and democratically adopted by Basque citizens should be respected by the institutions of Spain”, including independence, and to promote the creation of a “common institutional entity” that would include both Euskadi and Navarra once agreed to by referendums in the two communities” (p.7) While ETA pushed for more and the State for less, the

talks failed without an agreement. Thus, these aspirations remain, and, as S1 and JEEGELBS argue, the /A aims to build, de facto, the Euskal Herria to which it aspires (see Learning Processes): accepting greater decentralization in the short term does not by preclude interest in independence in the long term. Thus, while the MLNV was granted significant concessions by the State in the form of the Statute of Autonomy, its subsequent perceived watering down (see Institutions) and delays in implementation, have diminished the importance of a concession that, for the MLNV, was always too little.

Reduction in Overt Repression

Even those respondents who expressed the most overt hostility to the State and its representative institutions conceded that in the past few years there had been a reduction in the most obvious forms of State repression in Euskadi: “I see it...calmer, in the streets” (JAETA). However, this reduction in overt repression was frequently hedged by the sense that the legal framework that supported it (see Institutions) remains firmly in place and thus, for much of the MLNV, there remains a sense that these concessions were superficial and not necessarily permanent.

Speaking most specifically of the years since 2012, most respondents suggested that the repressive hand of the State, while still present, was lighter. S1 notes that only a few years earlier, though she has herself never been involved in the illegal side of the movement, she and her colleagues were hyper conscious as to the State’s surveillance – avoiding discussions over the phone, always encrypting files etc. She even noted that before this change, she herself would not have agreed to meet with the researcher, and most certainly not in public. “Now,” she says, “well, it is calmer”. Beyond the question of State surveillance, SKB and SE also note changes in the frequency of detentions of *abertzales*. While SE notes that arrests and detentions are less frequent than they had been only a few years ago, SKB is somewhat more

damning in his assessments. 2013 saw the European Court of Human Rights strike down the Parot Doctrine that retroactively extended the sentences of convicted *etarras* and those convicted of related crimes (*El País*, 21 Oct, 2013). While acknowledging the reduction, SKB suggests that all it means is that arrests are now “more normal...more those of a democratic country”.

A further concession noted by the respondents relates to the legalization of Sortu, a key coalition member of EH Bildu, and successor party to Batasuna. The party’s legalization in 2012, was a near thing, with the vote by the Supreme Court ruling in Sortu’s favour at six to five (*El País* 20 Jun, 2012). However, while BS, SE, S1 and JEEGELBS all discuss the party’s legalization, only JEEGELBS does so in a way that suggests the action is a notable concession by the State rather than simply the end of an unjustifiable tactic of repression. Nevertheless, even here JEEGELBS views the concession as the consequence of ETA’s declaration of a permanent ceasefire as forcing the State into some reciprocal gesture, rather than goodwill demonstrated by the State. This suggestion that the reduction of overt State repression is less a concession from the State and more a case of the State having its hand forced by ETA’s declaration of a permanent ceasefire is one that was recurrent, raised by ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, SKB, and JEEGELBS.

While the respondents seem to view these changes as important and significant, as SE illustrates there is a sense that little of substance has changed: “[the State] continues detaining people, fewer than before, but detaining people for their political commitment. We have had, this year, the arrest of a group of people who were doing intermediary work between the prisoner collective and society”. As discussed in Institutions, the political and legal framework of criminalization, largely remains in place. SKB seconds this notion that no substantive change has been undertaken by the State: there has been instead a qualitative change in the nature of the repression, he argues. Like most respondents, speaking in 2014,

SKB credits ETA with any reduction in the intensity of the conflict: “it is not the same situation as it was two years ago, for all that, let’s say, that more or less the same parameters are being maintained.... Repression is holding out. It’s a little different, easier, gentle, you could say [...] the State has changed, but without changing””. SKB credits the superficiality of this change on two factors: first that the State has not changed a great deal in relative terms given that its longstanding justification for repression (ETA) is no longer a factor; and second, the State does not accept any responsibility for the conflict.

As ETA2 and ETA3 argued, the State has long pointed to ETA’s presence as the reason talks could not take place and various movement demands could not be met. For instance, for much of the period of 2004-2007 when talks between the MLNV and the State were ultimately held and postponed, Zapatero’s government was vocal in its public assertion that no progress could be made while ETA was still an active force. As ETA2 and ETA3 note “ETA is not here anymore” and the yet this same unwillingness remains. For SKB, this removal of ETA as the State’s primary excuse for repression should have produced a correspondingly significant reduction in State repression to reflect a more ‘normalized’ state. As he notes, in this relative sense the State is more repressive than before: “ETA has sought to normalize the situation. [...while] they [the State] maintain the same posture. The repression is different but there continues to be repression and they are not disposed to move even a millimetre from their position.”

For the MLNV, this immovability is tied to Spanish nationalism’s viewing of sub-state nationalism as a direct affront to the Spanish nation. Basque nationalism, given its association with violent secessionism has fed into this narrative to such an extent that the whole of the ‘Basque question’ has come to be a question of criminality rather than a political one. As the question is one of criminality rather than politics, it does not require consideration of a change in the stance by the State (see Engagements and

Tactics). As SKB notes, the State holds “that we are the only ones responsible for what has happened and so they don’t need to change anything. [...] They do not understand that the State needs to vary its position even a millimeter with this reading”. Combined with the reticence of the State to view any expression of sub-state nationalism as a legitimate political concern rather than a project of a criminal element, S1 notes that “if we really do our jobs well [the repression] can all come back”.

Failure of the State to Reciprocate

The most commonly raised theme concerning concessions by the respondents was their absence from the State’s playbook. Not only do most participants discuss the reduction in overt State repression over the past few years less as a concession and more as a simple minimal requirement of a democratic State, but they repeatedly reference a sense in the movement that the State has continuously largely failed to reciprocate any concessions made by ETA or the MLNV. In this vein, the MLNV identifies three primary sources of frustration: the ongoing contested and highly politicized treatment of Basque political prisoners, including, but not limited to, *etarras*; State reticence to resolve the conflict in a political fashion by the repeated addition of conditions; and, the tension within the movement over fears that it cedes too much while the State remains unmoved.

The assessment that the State is loath to make concessions in their dealings with the MLNV (Whitfield 2015), especially concerning ETA, is shared beyond the respondents. Discussing the mid-2000s talks, Crawford (2006) notes that the State’s position was one of refusing concessions “of any kind” arguing this was “a reflection of Spanish public opinion, which favoured negotiations as a means to end the conflict, but opposed concessions to ETA” (in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 70). This is further illustrative of the tendency the respondents describe of the Spanish state, and its citizens, to conflate ETA with the

whole of the *IA*. That is not to suggest that the two are not intimately related, ETA long held the leadership role within the MLNV (Llera et. al. 1993). However, many of the movement goals need not have been framed as concessions to ETA, but might rather have been framed as dealing with the consequences of the conflict. As such the State would have had more manoeuvrability to make concessions without being so easily accused of giving into ETA. Given the process of criminalization of the MLNV organizations and identity, and its intensification in the mid-1990s (see Political Viability; Tactics), this frame would have been difficult to change. The State had, after all, by that point spent more than a decade pushing a narrative that Basque nationalism – not just ETA- was synonymous with terrorism and crime.

For many of the respondents, addressing the inconsistencies and inequalities in *abertzale* prisoner rights is the least the State can do: it is a question, they argue, not of politics but of human rights. As such it could be dealt with without addressing the underlying issues of Basque independence, yet, SE argues, the State remains immobile on the question of prisoners. For example, the ongoing incarceration of Sortu and former Batasuna leader Arnaldo Otegi, who, ETAPNV argues, was thrown in jail simply for defending Basque rights. Otegi was arrested in 2009 on charges of attempting to rebuild Batasuna, and in 2011 was sentenced to 10 years in prison. In 2012 his sentence was reduced to 6.5 years when the Supreme Court admitted he was not in fact, part of ETA (RTVE, 9 May, 2012). Otegi was instrumental in forming Bildu and EH Bildu - currently legal political entities. Even Sortu, the party for which he was convicted, has been legal since 2012, yet there has no move by the State to reassess his sentence. This contributes to the MLNV's sense that the State has, and continues to try to avoid a political discussion of the Basque nationalist question and its related concerns, such as prisoners, by delaying its own delivery on concessions.

The result is a strong sense of the one sided nature of the use of concessions in the Basque Country. There is, SE argues, “sense of malaise, or unease in important sectors of the *IA* because the State is not reciprocating”. S1 for example sites Sortu’s charter and its implied legitimization of the State and rejection of political violence as one such point. Sortu’s charter specifically calls for the rejection of political violence – including that of ETA’s (*El Pais* 20 Jun, 2012). While she herself recognises the political expedience of such a move - they do not, S1 says, want to provide the State with an excuse to ban the party again – there are many who see it as too great a concession to the State and one that has gone unreciprocated. Mansvelt-Beck (2005) has argued that ETA has itself failed to match State concessions. 900 *etarras* or collaborators were granted amnesty between 1975 and 1979 (Reinares; van Leeuwen ed, 2003 in Alonso, 2004, p. 695). Casanova (2007) argues that not only was the amnesty granted the result of intense public pressure, but its desired impact was impeded by its implementation. The decree declared full amnesty for political acts committed before December of 1976 and partial from that point on. Given that the root of the conflict was ongoing, it was only a matter of time before the jails were full again. Thus he argues that the decree was more “a general pardon rather than political amnesty” (Casanova, 2007, p. 223). Mansvelt- Beck (2005) references Aznar’s concession to relocate prisoners closer to Euskadi. In 1998-9, during the ceasefire, Mansvelt-Beck (2007) notes that 135 prisoners were brought closer to (though not to) the Basque Country – a move he argues not reciprocated by ETA (p. 207). On Dec 18th 1997 the government brought a number of imprisoned *etarras* destined for exile and prisons in Africa and the Spanish islands back to the continent (though not to the Basque Country), this act, meant as a concession, and seen as such by some, was followed less than a week later by the partial pardons for those involved with GAL, significantly diminishing the impact of what was already seen as a virtual non-concession (Casanova, 2007, p.439).

Barros and Gil-Alana (2006) note that ETA's ending of the ceasefire in December of 1999 had as much to do with the State's failure to discuss meaningful concessions as it did the perception of the PNV's lack of commitment. Aznar was, as they note, only willing to discuss ETA's disarmament and the transfer of a few prisoners and as such "hardly any negotiations took place" (Barros and Gil-Alana, 2006, p.95). It would thus seem that the only suitable reciprocal concession from ETA some would acknowledge would be ETA's complete dismantlement. Beyond idealistic, such a representation is profoundly unhelpful as it minimizes the complex, multi-dimensional, and above all political nature of the conflict while simultaneously reducing *IA* goals to the reduction of dispersal and reinforcing the statist assumptions of the inherently criminal nature of the conflict. The unease to which SE refers not only builds the sense of distrust in the *IA* in the State's willingness to take part in meaningful negotiations, but it potentially undermines the credibility of any State concessions that may take place down the line. That is not to say that the State's only word in those attempts at engagement that have taken place has been "no". As MLNVJA holds, there was hope from Zapatero's albeit ambiguous and noncommittal wording in pre-agreement meetings during the Loiola process, with wording that included a right for the Basques to decide their future (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 64-650). However promising, they never made it past pre-agreements.

Accordingly, as expressed so bluntly by S1, there is a sense within the MLNV that they are trapped walking a fine line: don't press hard enough and fail to advance the movement goals; press too hard and risk the State's shutting down debate and returning to the default of the criminality of the movement. The watering down of the Statute of Autonomy through '*café para todos*' policies (see Institutions), the maintenance of the juridico-political framework that considers sub-state nationalists and terrorists as all but one and the same, and even the very blunt admission by State officials of a refusal to consider

shifting positions on the MLNV's goals and grievances, provides the MLNV with little optimism about the States' willingness to grant, or maintain, any concessions that might be negotiated.

d. Tactics

Largely the MLNV perception of the State's tactics is of attempting to discourage political participation and political debate, attempting to distract the movement from a focus on the primary movement goals, and attempting to provoke a reaction, mainly from ETA, in order to maintain the military and policing focus of the conflict. These strategies are manifest for the MLNV, through a combination of tactics which sought to instrumentalize the situation of, and concern for, Basque nationalist prisoners, through ongoing criminalization of the movement and its constituent organizations, and through a strong and persistent use of a rhetoric that merges sub-state nationalism with criminality and terrorism. There is significant operational and objective overlap between the three strategies and three tactics. However, by focusing on the way in which the particular tactics are employed in pursuit of the strategic aims, and the overall State goal of preventing sub-state nationalist secession (see Target Framing) as perceived by the MLNV is more clearly highlighted.

La vía policial

Following the democratization process, the Spanish state adopted a number of policies reminiscent of the Franco era in its treatment of Basque nationalism, and ETA in particular (Whifield, 2015). The policing focused approach (what would become known as *La vía policial*) to the conflict was evident soon after the formal transition process with the implementation of the Plan ZEN (*Zona Especial Norte* Special Northern Zone). This plan saw an increase in security forces presence in the region, as well as the involvement of top security officials in the organization and collaboration with the anti-ETA

paramilitary group GAL (*Grupo anti-terrorista de liberación*) which attacked suspected *etarras* and sympathizers in both Spain and France (Casanova, 2007, p. 290).

MLNVJA and ETA1 hold that heavy State reaction to Basque nationalism under the Franco regime and after *Transición* worked to condition Basque society with a fear of the police and the military institutions, damaging those social networks which may have been used to mobilize politically. As ETA1 explains: “[Franco] declared the [Basque] provinces traitor provinces, and so clearly, there is a suffering, [...] the social network is practically destroyed.” During the dictatorship, the Basque Country experienced a level of repression at a greater intensity than the rest of Spain (Conversi, 1997, p. 225). The use of torture, states of exception, unmotivated arrests and high penalties awarded “delegitimized the security forces and generated mass resentment” (Zulaika, 1988; Zulaika and Douglas, 1996, in Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 65). ETA, ETA1 recalls, “was in the first moment there to undertake a cultural work of language concessions and concessions on Basque culture no? But this got you sent to prison, it got you tortured, you were *jodido*.” Such heavy handedness did not cease with the dictatorship. As Landa (2013) explains

[o]fficially the Spanish authorities categorically deny the existence of torture either today or in the past. Nevertheless, according to impartial investigations by both official and non official human rights organizations torture in Spain was committed in a systematic way up until the 1980s, and in a more than merely sporadic way from the 1990s onwards...there are no more than 14 final convictions against civil servants involved in the torture or ill-treatment of detainees in the field of counterterrorism activities for the period of time from 1978 until [2013] (p.13).

The first democratic Suárez government introduced strict new anti-terrorism legislation that significantly curtailed expressions of secessionist nationalism and laid out harsh penalties, through broad definitions of terrorism (see Political Viability and Institutions). In 1978 new anti-terrorist measures passed that,

Irvin (1999) notes, were in many respects ineffective and “served only to remind many Basques of the worst features of Francoism” through the suspension of a number of constitutional guarantees and an increase in the police’s authority to intrude in the lives of those suspected of providing aid to ETA (p. 116). For MLNVJA, this question of the use of torture was both planned and impactful: “the use of torture in Euskal Herria as, not only a means of obtaining information, but as a means to paralyze society has been massive.” A 1974 report Amnesty International found “credible and convincing evidence that torture was systematically used against a minimum of 250 detainees (Clark, 1984 as cited in Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 81-2). Arzuga (2012) estimates the number of individuals subjected to torture at roughly 10,000 between *Transición* and 2012 (in Landa, 2013, note 14). Broad and sweeping arrests were also characteristic. In 1975 almost 5,000 Basque residents were held or arrested for “committing, aiding or abetting” terrorism. In 1985, 940 people were arrested in the region for crimes related to terrorism, and another approximately 1,000 people were held incommunicado (Clark 1990, p. 162). In 1984 *Gestoras pro-Amnistia* held that in the three years prior some 3,500 had be subjected to torture – nearly three per day (Casanova, 2007, p.306). Further, according to *Gestoras pro-Amnistia*, in 2000 there were 700 political arrests, 253 under accusations of terrorism, and 72 cases of torture, with only slightly reduced numbers the following year (in Casanova, 2007, p. 452-7). Landa (2013) notes that according to some human rights organizations, between 1960 and 2011 “there were more than 200 people killed and more than 1,000 wounded who are were waiting for investigation, reparation and justice by Spanish authorities, who had denied their existence for decades” (p.12). While no longer as prevalent an issue, MLNVJA holds “sometimes we don’t realize the magnitude of the extent of torture in Euskal Herria and it has been a factor that as extended fear into all of Basque society in an evident manner”. Such harsh consequences, has often discouraged and continues to discourage, the respondents argue, participation in movement organizations.

The focus on policing was reinforced with processes of criminalization and the association of all elements of the IA and MLNV with ETA and terrorism, in the 1990s (See Political Viability; Military Viability). Under this 'all is ETA' (Casanova, 2007) approach, one tactic employed by Prime Minister Aznar was the central position given to victims of ETA violence, and the corresponding invisibility of the victims of violence at the hands of the state – be it from torture, GAL, or police mistreatment (Whitfield, 2015). The accompanying process of criminalization, JEEGELBS and JAETA describe as “brutal”. As Whitfield (2015) details, these new policies

[a]t their core lay a determination to defeat terrorism using the police and not to countenance contacts, dialogue, or negotiation with its perpetrators... The PP returned to power with an absolute majority in 2000. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the advent of the “global war on terrorism”, Spain introduced changes in its legal framework to facilitate the prosecution of social and political organizations in the MLNV (“Everything was ETA”, the PP insisted) and increased its counterterrorism cooperation with France and the European Union. New “special measures” validated Spain’s expansive conception of terrorism and facilitated the prosecution of ETA and the nationalist left. (p.6)

These processes of criminalization were strengthened further since 2000 when “legislation was introduced with the aim of expanding the criminal definition of crimes of terrorism with reference both to adults and minors. In the period between 2000 and 2003 more amendments were added that affected not only legal definitions of crimes but also their enforcement, criminal procedure rules, sentencing and penitentiary status” (Landa, 2013, p. 17). Later, under the PSOE leadership of Prime Minister Zapatero, the Minister of the Interior would provide a clear expression to the impression long held by the MLNV when he described their policies toward ETA as “By police means pursue them fully, and politically give them nothing” (Whitfield, 2015, p. 8). Not surprisingly then, the framework in Landa’s (2013) assessment, contrary to European regional law standards, Spain’s

[p]ublic polices and legal tools have mainly concentrated...in pushing ahead counter-terrorism strategies, leaving aside –even covering up – the existence of serious violations of human rights committed by or in collusion with State representatives. ... there are double standards when it comes to acknowledging victims of human rights violations resulting from political

violence, which is reflected in the legal framework to the extent that, while victims of terrorism are adequately and fairly considered, other victims of the State or actors connected to the State are treated with lower standards or even not considered at all. (p. 10).

Discouraging Political Participation and Debate

For the MLNV, the State has long sought to avoid Basque nationalism (or any sub-state nationalism) being framed as a political issue so as to avoid setting in motion a dialogue or debate process that might pose a threat to Spanish unity. The use of policies such as “café para todos” (see Institutions) was seen as means of retroactively undermining the minimal recognition that the Statute of Autonomy had awarded the Basque region. To this end, the MLNV argues that the Spanish state has employed the above mentioned tactics concurrently. The first tactic, that of criminalization, impacts political participation and debate in three ways: by increasing the cost to individuals and organizations involved in both legal and illegal incarnations of the *IA*; by promoting and reinforcing the need for a continued policing based approach to the conflict by maintaining a low level and controlled armed conflict; and correspondingly by removing from active politics those who might effectively switch the frame from a criminal to a political one.

While the overt and systematic use of torture and activity of GAL, has, in large measure dissipated, its tactical aims remained, and was replaced in the 1990s in particular with overt attempts at the criminalization of not just ETA activity, but of the *IA* identity more broadly (Irvin 1997; Casanova 2007; Lecours, 2007, and Political Viability). As JEEGELBS notes, particularly during Aznar’s tenure, the government undertook measures to try to associate all that is *IA* with ETA and terrorism so that it could be met with increasingly harsh criminal sentences. The result, SKB and MLNVJA argue was a suppression of both the movement and popular political participation more generally.

SKB notes that this criminalization may have had an impact not so much on ETA militants but more notably, on those people committed to the movement goals but not involved in illegal activity or directly involved with ETA. ETA related violence Bengoetxea (2013) points out, for the majority of both Spanish legal and political culture, is the purview of “the application of criminal justice to ordinary crime” (p.4). Criminal justice from policy, law and administration, is the purview of the Spanish government (Bengoetxea, 2013). As such, the legal system is largely seen by the MLNV as unfavourable to Basque nationalism (see Institutions). For all that SKB holds the MLNV, particularly through the nearly ten years of the illegalization of Batasuna, had withstood well, “probably any other movement anywhere else in the world would have been affected a lot more”, he nonetheless says of that those involved in explicitly legal endeavours: “you can’t really work through the institutions because, because, bueno, they declare you illegal and you don’t have any rights[...] people are sent to prison only for the excuse of political work, [...] In the end, what it does is reduce the commitment of a lot of people out of fear no?” S1 agrees but notes that this criminalization extends beyond the *IA* to political activism in general and crackdowns on civil disobedience. As SE notes, the criminalization targets not just ETA but the whole of the *IA*, developing a “repressive illegalization [...] did not lead them just to pursue ETA as an organization that practices armed struggle, but also to pursue political organizations, the parties, youth organizations, that formed part of the *izquierda abertzale*”. There are, S1 notes “lots of people still in jail, for political reasons, [...] There is still a lot of criminalization. [...] these actions are normal [protest expressions] in other places Bueno, a bit of civil disobedience and what not, [...] the criminalization in this sense is brutal.” At the same time as the Court decided GAL was not a terrorist organization, sentences for “terrorism” related charges were harshened and participants in *kale borroka* could now be charged as terrorists rather than as citizens participating in civil disobedience, albeit violent, or criminal activity (Casonova, 2007, p. 404-412).

As SE and Casanova (2007) point out, the sense of persecution of the *IA* felt under criminalization was compounded by the apparent immunity from prosecution of State and state-sympathetic perpetrators. Even on those occasions when a conviction was achieved, sentencing was hardly comparable to that received by those accused of ETA related crimes. As Landa (2013) details “even in those cases in which there was an official conviction, punishment, however, was not severe and, breaking the guidelines of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the vast majority of perpetrators were pardoned and reintegrated into the police; in some cases, police forces were awarded honours” (note 16). While Otegi, having been cleared of accusations of being a leader of ETA, will serve the full term of his sentence, Bengoetxea (2013) notes that one of the top orchestrators of GAL, General Galindo formerly of the *Guardía Civil*, was set free in 2013 after serving two thirds of his sentence. What is more, Galindo, admitted to prison in 2000, was released to house arrest in 2004 due to poor health (Casanova, 2007).

Thus given the criminalization including the closing of *IA* newspapers, banning of political parties and the risk of arrest for too close an association or perceived sympathy with ETA for social and political activism, the pursuit of *IA* goals through existing political channels and institutions is undertaken at risk to both the individual participant as well as the that of the organization becoming illegal. As S1 notes, “if we really do our work well, it can all come back. Come right back, yeah. Without [us] picking up weapons eh?” ETA2 and ETA3 concur “the political parties are theoretically legal [...] but with any stupid little mistake[...] they are illegal”. As SE explains “slowly we moved to a situation of *clandestinidad* in which we did not have the possibility of presenting ourselves for elections, nor have the material resources, like networks or money, to be able to defend our project”.

The end result is the sense among the MLNV that the State repression is part of a strategic aim to impede political participation and protest; including but not restricted, to questions of sub-state nationalism. Rhetorically, successive Spanish governments have reiterated their belief in a unified Spain. As recently as 2015, in the light of significant Catalan mobilization in favour of independence, PP Prime Minister Rajoy stated the PP “will always defend the unity of Spain” (*El Pais*, 8 May 2015), accusing Catalunya of attempting to blackmail Spain in its desire to hold a referendum on independence (BBC News, 25 Sept, 2015). As MLNVJA summarizes: “arrests, torture, dispersion of prisoners, and the maintenance of the laws of exception, hinders political participation, [...] really restricts the participation of whatever person in society that wants to participate in particular political movement.” The high cost of political participation in the face of State repression not only discourages participation in the debate, but it also discourages the framing of the Basque nationalist question as a political question and instead works to portray it as criminal. ETA2 and ETA3 agree that political engagement remains, despite ETA’s absence, a risky activity and as such evidence of the State’s resistance to the framing of the question of Basque nationalism as political rather than criminal: “[the State] continues with the arrests of political types that haven’t done anything (ETA2)”, ‘... the politicians are still in jail [...] it’s for being politicians not for anything else. (ETA3)’. For the MLNV, as ETA2 and ETA3 note, the State “does not want to talk”. The juridical actions undertaken against the IA and any willing to engage with them, is proof-positive of this for the MLNV. Woodworth (2007) describes the situation in detail:

Charges of complicity with terrorism, carrying heavy sentences, were pursued against several levels of Batasuna leadership, including Otegi. And senior members of the PNV...including the first minister Ibarretxe, faced charges for continuing to maintain relations with the banned party... At a time when ETA had declared a “permanent” ceasefire – and indeed had not killed anyone for the preceding three years – one might have expected the judiciary to relax its stance, and for parliament to move swiftly to bring Batasuna back into legitimate politics. On the contrary, old cases were pursued with more zeal than ever, and new ones were initiated. Most absurdly, the PP even brought charges against

members of the PSOE for engaging in talks with Batasuna as part of the peace process initiated with the blessing of parliament (p. 69).

The preference of the State to address the question of sub-state secessionist nationalism through *La vía policial* instead of through political debate is held to be demonstrative of a State preference for continued low level violent conflict that justifies the police and criminalization approach. Indeed, Whitfield (2015) such a situation was tacitly considered the “least bad option” of Spanish state officials (p.11). With this approach, and increased cooperation with France, Whitfield (2015) notes, contributed to the reduction in number of victims of ETA violence. As BS explains of the States position, “while they recognise that they cannot destroy the movement [...] in political terms, I think that they considered that it was better to continue with violent conflict”. Given the State preference the respondents cite for *la vía policial* and the process of criminalization, the State’s apparent lack of enthusiasm for a negotiated settlement is in keeping with the belief that it could and will put a final end to ETA through entirely police and military efforts. The successful arrest of the ETA leadership in Bidart in 1992 had reinforced this belief (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 221, 207). So strong was this belief that when on July 10, following the March 29th arrest of the leadership in Bidart, ETA communicated to the State an offer of a six month ceasefire and a chance for talks, the State did not respond (Casanova, 2007, p.377).

This faith in the *vía policial* was reinforced by changes in both global and national contexts. As SE, JAETA and Mansvelt Beck (2005) note, the preference was affirmed in the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11, the Spanish state “felt supported by the USA and the EU in their ‘war on terrorism’ while the recent banning of Batasuna in March 2003...reinforced their extinction oriented approach” (p. 219-220). This emphasis on policing and criminalization was strengthened in 2000 when Aznar’s administration won an absolute majority. In addition to outlawing of Batasuna, and the new laws of political parties, the State shut down

the only Basque language daily, banned the *abertzale* youth organization *Haika* in 2001, and closed the newspaper *Egin* and a variety of *abertzale* businesses (a process begun in 1998) as part of the criminalization process that saw ETA membership “in a broader sense” an ‘all is ETA approach’ (Casanova, 2007, p. 455-59). Furthermore “[i]n reaction to the Ibarretxe proposal of a free association, the PP government made it illegal to hold referendums that could compromise the political and territorial integrity of Spain”, leading to the sense that the political climate between 2000 and 2004 “was the most volatile and tense it had been since the end of the dictatorship” (Lecours, 2007, p. 1-2)

The State, JEEGELBS argues, was wary of the MLNV’s ability to reframe the conflict as political, leading, under Aznar, to “a process of criminalization against the PNV, and the *izquierda abertzale* identity.” As SE explained in Military Viability, the military stalemate has been useful for the State as “it used this armed struggle as an excuse to repress the political environment of the movement” and prevent the growth of expressions of movement support. ETA2 and ETA3 suggest the State had grown comfortable with the level of violence, caring little about individual deaths and more about the usefulness of those deaths to the State’s ability to justify a policing focus. SKB concurred and the three noted that the State has long cited ETA’s presence as the reason for the lack of political engagement but that in ETA’s continued absence, the State has not moved to make good on its promises to talk (see Engagement). This, ETA1 holds, is born out of the State preference for the maintenance of the controlled military conflict because “they know perfectly well that if there is a change, and society starts to talk, it will find that there is a conflict – and the conflict is political”. A political conflict they argue, is one in which the State sees itself at a disadvantage.

In order to draw out the viability of the policing strategy and avoid the switch to a political framing of the conflict, the MLNV notes the use of arrests of key figures in the movement advocating dialogue, to try and maintain the conflict as a military one. This is a theme repeated particularly with reference to Arnaldo Otegi, but also to the arrests surrounding the Loiola process, and later as SE notes:

There have been selective arrests of people clearly favouring the change in strategy [...the State t]hey would have been aware in 2010 and 2011 that a debate was being prepared on a radical change in strategy, and including the possibility of the unilateral abandonment of armed struggle. Instead of facilitating these steps, reducing the level of repression and supporting the possibility - directly or through the use of intermediaries - [...] what [the State] did was a strategy of draining: arrests – targeted. Because these affected people who were not part of ETA’s political organization – including Arnaldo Otegi and others who were precisely those who were leading the debate no? It is curious that when [the State] sees this debate, it arrests the people significantly involved in the defence of the change in strategy no?’

Even prior to Otegi’s arrest on what Whitfield (2015) calls the “improbable charge” of attempting to rebuild *Batasuna* under orders from ETA, she notes that during the 2005-2007 negotiations process, the very leaders within ETA who were pushing for negotiations, were arrested. Nor was this the first time the State had arrested those involved in promoting dialogue. As discussed in Engagements, in 1999 the name of the mediator in discussions with the State was leaked by Aznar’s government and one of two ETA negotiators was arrested and imprisoned (Mees 2001 in Esser and Bridges, 2011). Actions such as these feed the movement perception that the State uses processes of criminalization to deter active political participation in the nationalist question and that it is seeking to maintain the conflict as a violent one necessitating policing and military solutions rather than as a political conflict requiring a political solution. Whereas Neumann (2007) argues a moment of military weakness provides an opportunity to push forward with negotiations, authors such as Alonso (2013) suggest that the Spanish state is better served by pushing for ETA’s defeat rather than by entering into discussions, using as a particular example, the early 2000s attempts at a peace process following the arrest of ETA leadership in

2004-2005. As it was, the State was caught between trying to negotiate while the opposition PP sought to derail the talks and pushed for a policing and military end – *la vía polical*.

In pursuit of the strategic aim of discouraging political debate of, and participation with, the question of Basque nationalism, there is significant overlap between the tactic of criminalization and that of the State's use of prisoner politics. While detentions and arrests are obviously linked to criminalization, the long prison sentences and continued incarceration of MLNV activists, particularly political activists, reinforces the respondent perceptions that threat of incarceration and long prison sentences are tools the State uses to dissuade people from greater involvement in the MLNV – be their actions clandestine or not. ETAPNV captures this sense of frustration aptly: “Arnaldo Otegi. He's in jail. Simply for having been a man that defended, let's say, dialogue and they said PAM! ETA!” This sense was further reinforced by the introduction of the Parot Doctrine in 2006 that retroactively extended of sentences of MLNV prisoners, some of whom had already even been released (see Engagements).

The third tactic through which it is argued the State has attempted to shut down a political incarnation of the conflict, relates the the State's framing of the config: through a longstanding rhetorical attack on sub-state nationalism, Basque nationalism in particular. As ETA2 and ETA3 have previously noted, despite the movement's perception of itself as a resistance force, the State has made use of ETA killings in the media to push the notion that the organization's actions – and correspondingly those of the MLNV – are the actions of simple murderers. The message is clear – if an individual takes part in this movement or seeks to promote its agenda, they are not political activists, but criminals. This narrative helps justify and is in turn justified by the process of criminalization and prominence of prisoner politics. It is further reinforced by the politicization of victimhood in Spanish politics. As Landa (2013), Whitfield

(2015), ETAPNV, SKB, MLNVJA and JAETA note, the State draws a clear distinction between types of victims, reifying, they argue, victims of ETA violence while at best failing to acknowledge what the *IA* argues is decades worth of victims of military and police violence, state repression, and infringement of civil liberties across Basque society.

This vilification of Basque nationalism impacts even those legal incarnations of the movement, S1 argues. She discusses her frustration with the representation in the media, and particularly the State wide media, of EH Bildu, and Sortu in particular, as a villain from which Spanish citizens must be protected: “they have also used fear. [...] ‘Bildu’s coming’. As if we were...as if the wolf is coming.” Nor is this tactic new to Bildu’s experience. The Spanish state has long promoted Basque nationalism as xenophobic and anti-Spanish, despite high levels of integration in already high levels of immigration from the rest of Spain. Zabalo et al. (2013) have outlined the ways in which anti-Basque nationalist rhetoric has been deployed in the Basque Country, largely to maintain the divide between nationalist and non-nationalist voters. Zabalo et al (2013) notes the rhetoric is used to create a narrative to imply that Basque nationalism is inherently anti-Spanish and treats Spanish citizens who move to the region as second-class citizens. The most telling example being the narrative of the PP and PSOE in the 1998 elections, periodically rekindled, dubbed the discourse of the suitcases. This discourse, as the name implies, suggested that should the Basque nationalist win, Spanish migrants would be forced to leave (Zabalo et al. 2013, p. 528). Yet, in their analysis of the experience of Spanish migrants to the Basque Country found that they were not, and did not feel, treated as second class citizens. (Zabalo et al. 2013).

As JAETA, BS, SE, ETA1 and SKB have noted, such rhetoric has grown both more prevalent and perhaps more effective since the beginning of the ‘War on Terror’ following the attacks of 9/11 (Mansvelt-Beck,

2008; Whitfield, 2015; see Military Viability; Alliances). SKB argues that the anti-terrorist rhetoric and the international and local association with ETA as a terrorist organization has been a damaging frame for the MLNV as, in the face of this anti-terror objective, “nobody questions anything”. Thus the State is given a *carte blanche* to deal with terrorism and if the IA is put within that frame its political viability and ETA’s military viability are subjected to extremely damaging pressure. Such is the prevalence of this tactic that despite ETA’s rapid denial of involvement in the 2004 Madrid train bombings, so potentially rewarding was the association of the MLNV with terrorism – particularly given the overwhelming horror with which the bombing was met – that the PP continued to plug ETA as the responsible party despite mounting evidence of Al Qaeda’s culpability. So strong was the party’s insistence that it came to be perceived by the Spanish public as an unabashed attempt to use the tragedy to promote the party’s own agenda. This instance is credited in part for the party’s subsequent defeat in the ensuing election (Lecours, 2007, p. 108). Though the tactic has occasionally backfired on the PP, the use of anti-ETA rhetoric is also appealing as a way of avoiding political debate while providing a flag around which to rally and distract the Spanish citizenry. As SE holds “part of the rhetoric against armed struggle opened up, a factor of internal cohesion in Spain and in Euskal Herria a division between nationalists and non-nationalists that impeded the formation of a large sovereigntist majority”.

So focused are some on the *vía policial* that there are those, such as Alonso (2013) who have suggested the State’s involvement in the Loiola Process was a mistake because it demonstrated the usefulness of armed action, thereby undermining those within ETA who question the usefulness of the military strategy. This is a remarkably different interpretation from that of the respondents who suggest that the failure of Lizarra-Garraz and later Loiola talks highlighted, as JEEGELBS phrases it, the contradictions in the movement and contributed to a growing sense that the armed strategy was not as useful at this point as perhaps it once was (see Military Viability). The conflation of terrorism and nationalism under

Aznar's government, particularly following its 2000 majority win, was so strong as to virtually cut off the relationship between the central and regional governments as he "simply refused to speak with his Basque counterpart" (Lecours, 2007, p.107). Not only has the policing focus and rhetorical conflation of nationalism and terrorism severely limited the State's maneuverability when dealing with ETA and the MLNV, as well as failed to extinguish the organization, but, as Lecours (2007) argues "Basques became more likely to accept the nationalist portrayal of the Spanish state as rigid, intolerant and even fascist. The tendency of the Aznar government to demonize all forms of sub-state nationalism and promote a Castilian-flavoured Spanish nation with a continual stress on unity contributed to a hardening of Basque nationalism" (p. 143). Thus, criminalization is seen as raising the cost of participation in the effort to press for a political debate for both individuals and organizations of the MLNV. Simultaneously it serves to frame the question as criminal and thus not a legitimate locus for participation or the movement as legitimate ally. The politics surrounding prisoners – the long jail sentences, politics of dispersion and the categorization of victims – reinforces the high cost of participation justifying the differences in treatment of ETA and State victims as legitimate or illegitimate victims. The three tactics overlap and feed into one another in an attempt, the MLNV argues, to maintain the conflict as a criminal one requiring a policing or military response, all the while cracking down on political participation that risks pushing the conflict inextricably into the realm of the political where it is less well equipped to deny Basque nationalist aspirations.

Divide and Conquer: Keeping the izquierda abertzale's hands busy

According to many of the respondents, the State not only seeks to block the treatment of the conflict as a political one, but simultaneously attempts to distract the *IA* so as to prevent it from being able to more fully concentrate on the primary movement goals. For the MLNV, the State makes use of processes of criminalization to create ongoing and immediate concerns for the movement; it uses the debate and

politics of prisoners and prisoner rights to keep the MLNV occupied dealing with their constituent members' concerns; and thirdly, the State employs media and rhetoric strategies to force the movement to counter State assertions rather than having a chance to promote its own discourse. As SE explains, "the State continues to try and bring about a debate in terms of violent confrontation, in emotional term, and so long as it continues to talk only of the people who were killed, of the victims of ETA's actions, they are not talking of the right of the Basque Country to decide its future."

The process of criminalization has had a significant impact on the movement's support as well as its political and military operational effectiveness (see Political and Military Viability). By 2003 there were roughly 700 prisoners held for Basque nationalism related crimes – the highest number since Franco's era (Casanova, 2007, p. 475) In 2014 that number was near 600 (*RT News* 12 Jan, 2014). ETA2 and ETA3 express frustration that given this process, the movement, even those elements of which that are legal, must be careful as a slight misstep can lead to their illegalization or the arrest of individual activists. In 2014, tens of thousands of people took part in a march in support of prisoner rights – despite a court order from Madrid banning the march (*RT News* 12 Jan, 2014). Thus, MLNV argues that the criminalization process is not only damaging to the movement's ability to affect the changes it envisions as part of its strategy, but additional effort and resources must be dedicated to ensuring that legal operations do not misstep. This is particularly so, as S1 and others note, as the State can, and has, revoked an organization's legal status and forced the organization's activists back to reliance on clandestine networks, for which, JEEGELBS notes, they are neither prepared, accustomed, or equipped. So long as criminalization is in play, the movement will be forced to address these processes – fighting existing bans, defending against allegations etc. rather than focusing on the overall movement goals.

Tied to the tactic of criminalization, the MLNV holds that the State makes concerted use of the prisoners generated by the criminalization process to keep the movement busy focusing on the fallout of this tactic rather than on the movement goals. For S1 and SKB however, this stance on prisoners is indicative of more than State intransigence: it is a conscious and deliberate strategy of deflection and rhetoric spin. Demonstrating the State's 'tough stance' on terrorism also, S1 holds, makes use of imprisoned *abertzales* to further the State's message – usually that of the ruling PP or PSOE, discourse on the terrorist nature of Basque nationalism to distract from arguably more pressing but less sensational, state wide issues. Prisoners are a useful point winning tool for State parties, S1 argues. SKB for his part, suggests that prisoners and prisoner politics are too useful a tool for the State for it to willingly make concessions over their plight. As mentioned, in 2006 the Supreme Court introduction of the Parot Doctrine was widely perceived as an attempt to pressure ETA (Casanova, 2007, p. 489 see Engagements). While the movement is obviously concerned with incoming prisoners and loss of organizations as a result of criminalization, it is equally tangled up in dealing with the existing prison population. SE notes that the State's response to ETA's ceasefire has been to maintain its existing stance: "while the State is maintaining, for example, questions like the prisoners. And not only those that are already in jail, facing stalled amnesty processes, but that they have the same conditions, the same lack of rights within the prisons as they did before". ETA4 explains the ongoing nature of these concerns to the movement: "consequences of the conflict, those that are not seen, continue today. Pues, questions of, let's see, the prisoners, the ones that are in prison in isolation, and the families [that have to travel across country] on the weekends, the expenses every weekend to see their families etc. no?" The preoccupation of the MLNV with the welfare of jailed *abertzales* is both notable and useful for the State. Those concessions to the MLNV demands that have been made, have often been in the form of prisoner focused moves rather than substantive acknowledgments of the political nature of the conflict or constitutional concessions.

While many of the respondents discussed the jailed *abertzales* as a primary concern, source of activism, and expenditure of movement resources, SKB is perhaps most explicit about linking prisoner politics to the State's strategic aims. As he explains:

“It does not want to unblock the situation in which we are now because it knows that if, for example, right now, all the prisoners were out on the street, [...we] could focus all efforts on the political question of achieving independence.... we would have our hands free to dedicated ourselves, all of our time, to Bueno, build another type of society [...] But with this they have us occupied with questions of trying to solve the issue of the prisoners

Thus like the tactic of criminalization, the respondents suggest that the State is calculated in its reticence to move forward on questions of prisoners and prisoner rights as it is a useful tool for dividing and absorbing the MLNV's time and resources away from questions of Euskadi's constitutional future.

The third tactic employed by the State to distract the MLNV from a full focus on the end goals, according to the MLNV, is an ongoing discourse on the part of the State that paints the nationalist left as socially, politically, and economically dangerous. An argument primarily raised by JEEGELBS, S1, SKB, SE, ETA2, and ETA3, it is held that the State, given its greater resources and access to the media, is able to shape the discourse surrounding the MLNV forcing the movement to spend time and effort fighting back against these allegations. As Clark (1990) noted, the primary news media outlets are owned and operated by state parties, and government, leaving the *IA* with much more limited media access. As such, the *IA* is forced to divide its efforts and is, thus less able to promote its own version of the discourse, its agenda, plans and results. SE, ETA2, ETA3, SKB and JEEGELBS expressed their frustration at the State's ability to reframe movement's actions. For the State, ETA2 and ETA3 note, when ETA kills a member of the security forces “this was convenient for them because they could tell you, you are murderers. [...] when the media gets hold of it, this gets turned around, and we see that this isn't viable.” As the respondents express, the MLNV increasingly feels that the armed campaign is useful to

the State to avoid addressing the political question it represents. As Woodworth (2007) explains “[t]he potential disappearance of Basque terrorism sends Spanish conservatives into an irrational hysteria. They seem to need an internal enemy – ‘Reds and Separatists’ in the 1930s, Basque terrorists today – in order to mobilize their supporters around old and dangerous emotive slogans about the ‘break up of Spain’” (p. 73).

S1 turned her attention to the difficulties the movement undergoes trying to counter the State efforts: “it’s brutal, and there are so many lies, a lot though, eh? [...] It’s a lie, but nothing happens, nothing happens. And so the whole while saying lies and us, we don’t appear in those papers. They don’t let us.” S1 further notes that not only does the *IA* have difficulty getting space in publications to counter allegations, but they also have difficulty spreading word about those positive initiatives they have taken. As she noted the *IA* cannot as effectively reach constituents through the media: “whoever holds government, it’s their television, completely” (S1). This also keeps the movement, particularly its affiliated political parties, busy fighting off accusations and countering allegations in a news media they see as heavily influenced by its political opponents, thereby shifting focus away from full commitment to the pursuit of overall movement goals.

The consequences of fighting a rhetorical battle with fewer resources, which in light of the tactic of criminalization has very real potential implications, while struggling in defense of those already imprisoned for their actions, has had a highly damaging impact on the movement. Together, it is held that the State aims to use these tactics to occupy the movement so that it is unable to concentrate fully on its main goals. In this way, the State is better able to prolong the criminal and military aspects of the conflict, thereby avoiding the conflict’s reframing as political in nature.

Provoking a response

Finally, the State is seen as attempting to prolong the violent low level incarnation of the conflict thereby preventing a shift to a political debate. Some respondents see this tactic as aimed at an ongoing attempt to provoke a return to armed action by ETA. While it is undoubtedly true that the Spanish state has maintained an aggressive rhetoric toward both ETA and the MLNV, this allegation is not so easily proven. Nonetheless, the sense engendered is viewed to arise from the tactics of criminalization, prisoner politics, and rhetorical attacks as primary State tactics in pursuit of this strategic aim.

To begin, there is a strong feeling, as SE explains, that “[The State’s] objective is to prolong the conflict, now that it can’t oblige ETA to return to armed action, and it has tried, it has tried, it is trying to prolong the political debate around ETA and not around political questions.” The tactic most readily employed in this pursuit, according to the respondents, is that of criminalization. Further, Woodworth (2007) along with SE note that ETA provides a unifying totem for the Spanish State. The presence of ETA and its violent armed campaign have served the Spanish State usefully as a rhetorical device to discredit the notion of nationalism: nationalist and *etarra* are equivalent. With such rhetoric the State has sought to maintain a division in Basque politics between the *IA*, more moderate nationalists, and non-nationalists.

For these reasons, ETA1 and SE argue that the State has made little effort to capitalize on ETA’s ceasefire and the new strategy, preferring instead to attempt to provoke ETA to a return to armed struggle.

Notably, in September of 1999, for instance, Belén Gonzalez, one of the MLNV representatives at the only meeting between ETA and the State was arrested (Pereira, 2001, p. 288). ETA1, ETA 2 and ETA3 hold that the reticence of the State to make good on its assertions that ETA’s armed campaign was the reason there could be no talks concerning the constitutional future of Euskadi. ETA1 goes further to

note that “make no mistake, from the moment ETA laid down arms they [the State] has been provoking them”, placing little credence in reports from international commissions verifying handovers of portions of ETA’s arsenal (see Engagements) and continuing to arrest activists, trying to provoke a splinter within ETA to reconsider the ceasefire. For Spain, he argues, is playing a high stakes game of chess with the Basque Country and Catalunya; “imagine that in this moment a group appears that takes armed action. The Spanish State has to respond. How will it respond? The debate on independence in Catalunya and the Basque Country – closed. That’s all it takes. We are aware of this.” As ETA1 and SE both point out, it is a tactic to frame the conflict as military rather than political, of which many within the MLNV are well aware. Such a tactic, in SE’s opinion is somewhat of a comfort as “if the State does not want us to go this way, that is precisely the way we go, because it is that way that brings us closer.”

The criminalization process is also seen as a means by which the State attempts to provoke ETA by cutting down on the legal means of political contestation so that frustration leads at least some members of the movement to second guess the strategy and pick up weapons once more: “For example they are detaining members and [complicating] the international commission, the verifiers, to see if they will stop their involvement and in so doing provoke a rupture in ETA [...so that] someone says, ‘bueno, we are done with this and we are picking up arms’”(ETA1). This pressure from the State, SE argues, hopes to muddy their analysis, the rhetorical attack on ETA and the *IA* – that all is ETA and *etarras* are all murders – serve to push, as S1 and SE point out, for a more emotional response from the movement. He concludes, the repression, for those “who make a more emotional analysis, leads them to reinforce the need to respond with more violence, to attack, and the people who make a more rational analysis, leads us to confirm the path correction which we are implementing” (SE). S1 holds constant work is required to keep people on board with the strategy. S1 and SKB have further noted that many within the *IA* thus do not feel comfortable relying heavily on wholly institutional means as the fear is that they can and will

be made illegal whenever the State chooses, regardless of the organization's or party's involvement in violent activity.

Further, there is a sense that the State has and continues to make use of *abertzale* prisoners as a means to provoke a visceral reaction from the movement. This has been done through manipulation of dispersion, use of isolation, changes in prisoner rights and prisoner rights' organizations, and the attempts to use sentencing to pressure the MLNV. ETA4 points to the difficulties to which prisoners and their families are subjected are difficult pills for the movement to swallow. BS holds that the nature of State repression is ongoing as the "Spanish government considers that it has the option of choosing violence". Incidents such as the threat of additional sentences for *etarras* who had already served part, or most of their sentences, (see Engagements) are seen as tactics to push the MLNV, and specifically ETA, back to violence by attacking their most vulnerable members. In essence, in all the same ways the State aims to discourage political participation through the existing institutions, it simultaneously seeks to pressure the movement into splintering: weakening the organization and, if some pick up arms, justifying the continued use of *la via policial* over political engagement and debate.

Overall, the MLNV understanding of the State's tactical responses to the conflict and to Basque nationalism more generally, are of an unresponsive, and aggressively hawkish policing approach. That the State would undertake policing efforts to attempt to curb violence committed within its borders is neither unexpected, nor inappropriate. However, for the MLNV, the Spanish response to the conflict focuses so heavily on processes of criminalization, rhetorical association of nationalism and terrorism, and intense police action that it fails to take into account the political nature of the movement's aims and grievances. As such, while the Spanish state has been operationally effective at muting ETA's

military viability, its policing emphasis – even during negotiation attempts – diminish MLNV perceptions of its viability as a negotiating partner in talks that would address not just the consequences, but the causes of the conflict in the region.

e. State Responses Discussion

The self-governance institutions laid out during the dramatic *Transición*, as JEEGELBS notes, have taken root and gained legitimacy in the eyes of Basque society. As BS holds, the Basque people made it clear during the *Transición* that they wanted to be able to express their opinions through democratic structures and institutions. Nevertheless, among the MLNV there is a strong sense that the institutions of the Spanish state are at best a mixed bag when it comes to the pursuit of the nationalist aspirations. Broadly speaking, despite the advantages the Statute has imparted on Basque nationalism, for the MLNV the Spanish state is not a structure or authority that can be trusted with the territory's best interest.

The MLNV acknowledges that the State has made some important changes in its interactions with the Basque Country. Yet, there remains a strong feeling that the State's concessions were few, far between and of precarious permanence. This is exacerbated by the usefulness of the anti-terrorist narrative to forestall discussion not only on the Basque question, but on a variety of concerns important to the Spanish public. On this point the MLNV describes the State's tactics as a combination of criminalization, manipulation of the rights and sentences of *abertzale* prisoners, and an ongoing rhetorical association of Basque nationalism with criminality and terrorism. Over the course of successive engagements, a growing lack of faith in the State's willingness and sincerity of its commitment contributed to a change in strategy. The belief prevalent among the MLNV that the State will do what it can to avoid both talks

with the MLNV as well as avoiding following through on any promises is may be cornered into making, has led to a general lack of faith in a negotiated settlement to the conflict. For ETA1 there appears to be a recognition that any change is likely to be slow in coming – and not, he argues, until the State’s willingness is taken out of the equation. While as SE notes, the movement recognises that it will eventually have to sit down with the State to hash out the details of any changes to Euskadi’s constitutional arrangement, it is held that since the State is unwilling – at this point – the *IA* must go about building social and democratic pressure so that the question of the State’s “willingness” is no longer a factor.

Thus, the MLNV analysis of State responses to the movement goals and actions provides very little hope for the successful end of the conflict through a negotiated settlement. Instead it is held that the institutional structure, despite providing a high degree of self-governance, presents more of a hindrance than a help to the movement goals. This distrust of the State institutions as they exist is amplified by a strong sense of the continued influence of Francoism and anti-sub state nationalist sentiment in them, colouring the ongoing clashes with the central state. That the MLNV feels that even though these institutions represent a concession to a degree by the State, they are less a gift from the State and more a restoration of historic rights, further diminishing the value of these institutions as a demonstration of the recognition by the State. This concession is all the more undermined by the *café para todos* approach which is seen as a denial of the region’s status as a nation and the feeling that the *IA*’s access to institutions that have been devolved, can be – and have been – rescinded by the State at its discretion. This in turn contributes to the near overwhelming sense that the State is unwilling to make meaningful concessions as would be required in a negotiated settlement. This is linked to the understanding that the State’s preference is for a policing end to the conflict that does not require a recognition of Basque nationalism or its goals. Accordingly, there has emerged a conclusion within the

MLNV that the State cannot be trusted to negotiate in a meaningful way: it has shown itself neither willing to engage, nor to keep those promises it has been forced to concede. The MLNV has lost faith in the bilateral end to the conflict: the State is not a viable partner for meaningful negotiations and as such any strategy moving forward must take that as its point of departure.

Part Three: Leadership

Leadership within the *IA* and the MLNV, is a relatively nebulous and organic concept in practice. Despite some very clear organizational structures within particular organizations, the high turnover in individuals, both leaders and followers, a tendency toward ideological heterogeneity and broad issue bases, has amplified this characterization. That being said, leadership for the movement appears to emerge less from the movement's structures and more from the movement itself. As such, over time, the *IA* and MLNV have been able to adjust not only their internal structures, but were able to learn and adapt their framings of the conflict and corresponding tactics in response to the ways in which the conflict evolved over time.

a. Target Framing

This section explores the ways in which, once mobilized, the MLNV framed its targets and goals, and how this in turn impacted the shape of the de-escalation of violent conflict in the Basque Country. The MLNV and the Spanish state have long been at odds over the nature of the conflict with high among ETA's concerns that Madrid "recognize that violence in the Basque Country is not a police question but a political one" (Clark, 1990, p. 500). To this end this section is organised into two themes: defining the movement goals and its understanding of the Spanish state.

Defining Movement Goals

The MLNV goals, in maximalist form, are easily described: socialism and independence. At its emergence under Franco, ETA understood its fight as one of ridding the Basque Country of capitalism and an occupying force (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p. 188). ETA would formally adopt an anti-capitalist stance in 1964 during its third assembly (Lecours, 2007, p. 77). Over time independence moved to the fore in the considerations of those groups that would come to dominate within the MLNV. While S1, MLNVJA, SKB and ETA1 provided direct and concise responses to defining movement goals (independence and socialism), BS suggests that it is necessary to differentiate between strategic and tactical goals. Tactically the movement sees the acceptance of the right to decide of as a step toward this aim. For ETA2 and ETA3 the objective “is independence. But the trajectory is through the right to self-determination. This does not mean that we will be independent. It’s saying that the people can decide for themselves” (ETA2), “Freely” (ETA3). ETAPNV has made clear that what matters is “that they let us vote!”

AS SE and JAETA note, in the early years it was thought that victory could be achieved by way of an insurrection (De La Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013). At this time ETA, highly ideologically heterogeneous, set aside questions concerning the nature of the future Basque State until the overthrow was achieved (see Fragmentation/Cohesion). As the conflict progressed and the context changed, the MLNV adjusted not only its strategy but how it envisioned success. As late as the talks in Algeria the movement as ETA2 and ETA3 point out, ETA believed a negotiated settlement could be reached with the government. Inspired by the liberations struggles of Latin America, as S1 explained, victory was seen like a *coup d’état* where on day one independence is achieved and day two, socialism. By the early 1990s this view of victory was replaced by a longer term one, less dramatic but arguably one more feasible, that emphasized the ongoing and simultaneous pursuit of both goals (see Learning Processes). As SKB notes “the objectives are the same: independence and socialism. What has changed

is the strategy [...] we want to move closer, bit by bit, and for this there was a change in strategy”.

Accordingly, to a degree the characterization of movement goals – the shape that ‘success’ will take – has shifted over time, particularly in most recent years, though the end goals remain the same.

Understanding the Spanish State

The conflict as it exists, is one Basque nationalists are wont to refer to as – as BS describes – not a ‘Basque Problem’ but a ‘Spanish Problem’ in contrast to Mansvelt-Beck (2005) who describes the conflict as one between competing interests in the Basque Country rather than between the Basque Country and the central State. Correspondingly, the participants’ discussions of the role of the Spanish state are, without exception, at best frustrated and at worst openly hostile. As Ruiz (2013) sums up “there is resistance by Spanish society to recognize or accommodate asymmetry at the constitutional level” (p. 79) let alone permit a meaningful discussion on self-determination. Thus, the resultant framing of the State as the ‘problem’ centers on three interrelated themes: the perceived nature of the Spanish state; the role of Spanish nationalism, and the relationship between the central and regional economies.

For many Basque nationalists, the repressiveness of the Spanish state continued following *Transición*. Clark (1991) notes that during this period the passage of a series of anti-terrorism legislations were passed – a number of which were later deemed unconstitutional (in Conversi, 1997, p. 247, see Institutions and Tactics). The new constitution was criticized for its failure to recognise the right of self-determination, and the responsibility to preserve Spanish unity it awarded to the State military (Idoyagu, 2002 in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 62). The sense that Spain is not a fully democratic state was alluded to by various respondents. JEEGELBS is unambiguous: “The Spanish state is anti-democratic bai? And so it doesn’t have the political capacity, a culture and a trajectory of democratic politics to be able to resolves its internal conflicts no?” The strongest characterization of the Spanish state was as one with

few democratic characteristics and even fewer democratic traditions: as overly centralizing, uninterested in political debate, and one whose transition to democracy has been incomplete.

As Lecours (2007) explains: the state's efforts at crafting a Spanish nation were half-hearted and ineffective as a result of institutional weakness, the existence of conflicting national projects and the lack of political willingness on the part of the political elite" of the 19th century (p. 40). Various and ineffective attempts at centralization, he argues, only reinforced attachments to sub-state institutions such as the *fueros*, representing a critical juncture in the fostering of Basque nationalism (Lecours, 2007, p. 36-40). The Spanish state, JEEGELBS suggests "is a state like the French: Jacobin and centralizing in the extreme no?" but she argues, France "has no real sense of the historical nationalities and has been an annihilator of languages, of identity *but* it has a democratic culture...But the Spanish state does not". ETA1 concurs, maintaining this relates in part to the Jacobin nature of the State. He thus argues Spanish nationalism clung fervently to the notion of its greatness through a unitary state

Spain as a republic itself accepts this kind of state identity, in which it does not want to permit those, inside its borders, that dispute the hegemony of the State. Whereas in England⁷ [...] always had very clear were certain questions of negotiated identities. [...] they had something to fall back on. As, such they created a policy, a way of doing things that has led to the fact that today, Scotland is able to exercise its self-determination.

This has ramifications for the interactions with its constituent parts, both past and present. SE, MLNVJA and ETA1 all argue that unlike the United Kingdom, the Spain never relinquished a territory without first losing a war, and has been unable to maintain a functioning relationship with those territories it lost.

⁷ England here being used as the 'core' of British nationalism

Correspondingly, as suggested by JEEGELBS, there is a sense that the Spanish state lacks the necessary democratic culture and institutions for a debate on national identities, thus amplifying the closed off nature of the Spanish state and its reticence to become involved in political debates that might challenge the status quo. Keating (2001) notes that the Spanish state has been more reluctant than others to “contemplate secession or admit that they could not stop it if it occurred in a democratic way. They have been at pains to insist that sovereignty lies with the unitary people and that devolution is a gift of the State” (p.114) As SE notes “In all countries, let’s say, no one accepts one gram of independence. [...] but the Spanish state is especially, especially harsh eh?” This position is reinforced by Ruiz (2013) who notes that the “legal framework, as read by its highest interpreter, the Constitutional court, does indeed close all doors to any attempts to propose and achieve the desired right to decide. What impedes the right to decide is the juridical interpretation of the legislative framework, rather than its actual wording” (p.94). Thus, for the MLNV, the difficulties presented by the institutional framework, are compounded by the political culture, and national narrative of a state of whose population it represents barely 5 percent.

This perception is compounded by the extent to which Francoist loyalists and supporters are felt to have transitioned into the new institutions. The lack of accounting for participation in the Franco regime characterized by the unwritten *pacto de olvido*, while it aided in the relatively smooth transition to democracy following Franco’s death, has meant that there has been both little reckoning for crimes committed by the regime, and a great deal of continuity in leadership and administration (Bengoetxea, 2013). Thus, since their inception, these institutions were infused with both personnel and ideology held over from Franco’s era. Centralism, Keating (2001) notes, is particularly strong within the PP. The PP itself is born of the *Allianza Popular* which was formed during *Transición* by former Franco officials. As ETAPNV said with a wave of his hand, the resistance to Basque nationalist aspirations in the Spanish

government is “Francoism. Nothing more.” As JEEGELBS explains this dynamic, infused by the Spanish nationalist narrative - particularly under Franco - weakened the ability of the State to foster a democratic culture during and after the *Transición*. The strength of the conservative elements of the Spanish state was sufficiently notable that there was a very real concern during the *Transición* period that too great a transformation would dangerously provoke them – as was the case with the 1981 attempted military coup, (Lecours, 2007, p. 93). Combined with the sense that successive government have been “purposely obstructive” to sub-state nationalist claims, and devolution of competencies, there is a strong perception of the State as “rigid and fundamentally antagonist toward the Basques” (Lecours, 2007, p. 93). While JEEGELBS notes that *Transición* saw improvements, she laments that it was not a change that was internalised in the institutions or political culture. ETA2 and ETA3 argue that while the *IA* has learned from its interactions with the State, the State itself has not taken to heart the importance of these engagements: “I don’t believe it has internalised it” (ETA3), “It should have as well but....” (shrugs ETA2). Much of this JEEGELBS argues, relates specifically to the impact of Francoism, not just on the democratic culture as both she and SE allege, but has impacted the state structures, weakening them and reinforcing this same lack: “of democratic history and democratic instruments.” Which in turn impeded “the [building] of density of its own economic evolution, its own territorial and political evolution no?” (JEEGELBS).

Further, as JEEGELBS noted, there is a strong sense that the State is uninterested in engaging in a political debate with the *IA* and the MLNV (see Engagements). As Whitfield (2015) has suggested, there is a tacit understanding that manageably low level of violence on the part of ETA is “the least bad option available” (p11). This has arguably grown from a degree of comfort with their policing and military approach, and according to the MLNV a lack of rhetoric and analytic tools and supporting arguments to win such debates, and a framework, not created in such a way as to foster or even permit, such

discussions. As Keating (2001) has suggested, successive Spanish governments have long been reticent to enter into any discussion that might seriously engage the prospect of a region's secession.

This preference for policing, the MLNV holds, grew after the failure of the talks in Algeria and the subsequent arrest of the ETA leadership in 1992. Despite ETA attempts to restart failed talks, González was firm that there were not, nor would there be, talks with ETA (Casanova, 2007). As JEEGELBS, BS, SE, SKB, ETA2, ETA3, and ETA4 note, with these events the State grew increasingly comfortable with, and confident in, the policing approach to the conflict. This was particularly so following the *Caída de Bidart* and the resulting belief that ETA's defeat was just around the corner (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005). As JEEGELS, SE, BS and S1 have previously discussed, with the implementation of much of the Statute of Autonomy, by the time of the *Caída de Bidart* the State could take additional comfort from the increased legitimacy it was afforded by these new institutions, both in the Basque Country and internationally. As ETA2 explains of the State's lack of serious engagement "they don't want to. They are very comfortable. They are comfortable with their strategy". "The State" ETA2 holds, "we have seen, is not disposed" to talks with the MLNV. In addition to the State's comfort with the *vía policial*, (see Tactics), the State, SE argues, "is scared of democratic debate". SKB elaborates on the State's tactical preferences: "it has been demonstrated that the State has no will. In the end, the State goes until you surrender" and so long as the MLNV provided the slightest excuse for a military response, he argues, the State would take it. This is in large part because of what SKB, S1, SE and JEEGELBS consider to be the weakness of the State's arguments in a democratic debate over movement goals.

As S1 explains, unlike the *IA*, the State has failed to learn from past experiences and engagements: "it seems to me they have not because they are stuck in olds scenarios [...Theirs] is a strategy anchored in

the past". The result is a State, as SE suggests, that actively avoids political debates as it is not equipped to handle them. This is particularly true, they argue with respect to the right to self-determination and the *IA* goals. "Politically", SKB argues "the State is very weak, as in the end it does not have the ability to imagine the state, osea, politically. I am referring to a debate of ideas. It's not very strong, and in fact the side of independence is gaining more and more strength here. But, Bueno, [the State] does not have the mechanism of a state for this, nor are they strong in such a debate". As Ruiz (2013) explains, "[o]nce it is understood that the possible legal entitlements available under the current framework are extremely limited, the only means of defending the right to decide that might serve as a basis for a new political statutes of the Basque Country is to turn to the political argument of the democratic principle" (p. 95). Accordingly, in light of the not inconsiderable support for *IA* ideas and goals, the lack of arguments and instruments to win a democratic political debate with the MLNV, the MLNV holds, the State does what it can to maintain the conflict in a state that justifies the preclusion of just such a debate (see Support and Tactics). As SE explains, the State uses the armed struggle to ensure "that the political process will not evolve in any sense more dangerous than this, which is the formation of a sovereigntist majority in the Basque Country". And thus he argues, "we are conscious that this impasse that the State has put in the resolution process is because of this political weakness – this weakness in democratic terms".

This is exacerbated, the MLNV argues, by the way in which unity is framed in the Spanish nationalist narrative as it patterns social, political, and economic interactions between the central government and its constituent regions. The Spanish nationalist narrative, as authors such as Keating (2001), and Lecours (2007), along with the respondents, note, is built on the 'glory' of the Spanish empire at its height. Spanish nationalist historiography, Keating (2001) notes, places Castile as "the heart of Spain and union its natural destiny" (p.41). As early as the turn of the 19th century, this empire was in decline. As Lecours

(2007) notes, it was no longer a major power, given the losses of colonies overseas and the French occupation of the Napoleonic war, its power and prestige were further diminished (p. 42; Institutions). This narrative emphasises Spain's greatness through unity, as S1 quipped "Spain. Great. And United. And never Red". Basque nationalism directly challenges this unity – and the *IA* further pushes back against the conservative elements reinforced under Franco (see Learning Processes and Political Viability). As Perez-Agote (1984) notes, that the Basque Country specifically was subjected to twelve states of exception under Franco "delegitimated the social reality of a united Spanish nation and in turn, legitimated the social construct of a distinct Basque nation" (in Llera et al., 1993, p. 107).

This identity issue at the heart of Spanish opposition to Basque nationalism is, BS notes "the key issue, no? is one of identity". It is an issue born of the decline of a once powerful empire "the core of the issue [...] this issue of identity in Spanish policy, that any change [...] always creates the same crisis in Spanish identity. Like it was for example at the end of the 19th century. 1898, it's called the great crisis of Spanish identity when they lost Cuba and the Philippines. [...] so you can imagine what happens with the Catalan and Basque cases." Compounded by the weakness of Spanish democratic culture and the nature of economic development "that creates an enormous inability of the State to accept the issue, which becomes, and that is the big difficulty, the big issue, because it is not a practical issue, an issue of identity – it's an issue of the [very] existence of the state" (BS). As MLNVJA explains: "They had an empire, as they said 'where the sun never sets' from the Philippines to Peru passing through Naples and the Netherlands. I believe that part of this feeling, this imperialist tradition, has stayed with them." The importance to the Spanish nationalist narrative of greatness through unity implies a fear of dissolution and the perception that contesting this unity is a slight against Spain itself.

Given this focus on unity as central to the Spanish nationalist narrative, it is unsurprising that, as Whitfield (2015) notes, the Spanish state has been highly resistant to any attempts to involve international players in the conflict, seeing it as an entirely internal matter. This preoccupation, MLNVJA notes, has changed little over time. The decline of the Spanish empire caused, as BS suggested, a corresponding crisis in Spanish identity. Beyond the crisis, the insistence on unity in the face of such centrifugal forces inhibited the growth of a democratic culture that might have been better equipped to address the questions of sub-state nationalism. As MLNVJA notes “every time they are declining, that leads them to dig in, to dig in, to maintain the, let’s say illusion, that they are what’s left [...] They were the greatest empire in the world in the era. And from there it slipped away [...] This creates a sense of anguish in the Spanish nationalist project “. This sense of anguish in the wake of this crisis of Spanish identity was amplified and engrained all the more deeply under Franco. As SE argues, the fear of the dissolution of Spain’s greatness, reinforced by economic and development concerns, provided strong fodder for the brand of Spanish nationalism that found a home in the aptly names nationalist forces of the Spanish Civil War (see Institutions).

As S1 notes, particularly after so many years of the Franco dictatorship, this emphasis on a united Spain “isn’t so much rational as sentimental and something very deep”. SE concurs, noting the pervasiveness of the melding of conservative and centralist politics of the Franco era: “this ultranationalism of Francoism is still very much internalized in broad levels of Spanish society”. The potential risk to Spanish unity posed by sub-state nationalism is all the much greater and potentially painful, as BS suggested, if it should lose a territorially incorporated portion of itself. As MLNVJA explains: “if they lose an island or something that is 3,000 kilometers away, that is more bearable. But something they consider the *‘piel de todos’* (the skin of all), as they call the peninsula, I believe that would destroy them and when feelings intervene in fights, all reason goes out the window”. For Spain “letting Euskal Herria be independent

would be, for them, the breaking of their country” (JAETA). This sentiment is demonstrated in the general Spanish population and in the Basque Country as to the nature of the State. Consider the following two polls. In one poll in the Basque Country, while 31.3 percent identified as much with Spain as with the Basque Country, 54.7 percent identified primarily with the Basque Country – 32.7 percent of those exclusively identified with the Basque Country (*Observatorio Político Autonómica*, 2008 in Ruiz, 2011, p. 83). This contrasts sharply with 63 percent of the Spanish society as a whole which sees Spain as the nation, with a mere 18 percent regarding Spain as a multinational state (Llera, 2009, p. 312, in Ruiz, 2013, p. 84). As the respondents bluntly state, it is not just the Spanish government that is resistant to regional secession, but broad swaths of the Spanish public. Between identity and economic concerns, the idea of regional secession, as they note, raises fears of setting a dangerous precedent. As Woodworth (2007) summarizes, in addition to the consideration of the region as “an integral part of Spain’s ancient heartland...[e]ven Spanish citizens who do not share the PP’s strident nationalism fear that, if ETA’s claim to self-determination were conceded, fissiporous tendencies could Balkanize Spain” (p. 66). So strong is this focus the respondents argue, that it produces a visceral negative response to expression of difference as they are seen as slights against the Spanish identity. For MLNVJA continued lack of respect for, and recognition of, minority nationalisms appears to be out of fear of dissolution of the Spanish State as it exists: “The Spanish have a fear that what they consider to be their nation might dissolve because they are aware that there exist nations within their state [and] we do not feel, and we do not identify ourselves with them”.

Aside from the loss of a constituent territory, the State, the respondents argue, is also concerned that the loss of one region would trigger the loss of others, the Balkanization of Spain, as Woodworth (2007), phrases it. As ETA4 notes “It has its logic [...] The State is aware that if it gives one a technical way out, it is left with a problem.” As such, he argues, Euskal Herria’s independence presupposes “a disaster” for

the Spanish state as it exists. It is for this reason, ETA1 argues, that the State is so eager to shut down debate in Euskadi and Catalunya and return ETA to the playing field. As ETAPNV argues “If it loses Catalunya and it loses Euskadi, what does Spain do? If Léon goes?” [Laughs]. The fear that allowing once region to secede might set a dangerous precedent is strong in a state with a strong narrative of national unity (Ruiz, 2013). On this point, MLNVJA is direct: “they are scared that if they open a process of self-determination in one of the nationalities of the nations that are in the state, that this would be a chain reaction that would lead the other nations down the same path and their state would disintegrate”. Willingness must, they argue, be removed from the equation: “and so it’s complicated, that the Spanish state accept it out of goodwill. I believe that it will only accept a process of self-determination when it understands that it has no other possibility left” (SE).

Relatedly is a sense of the near feudal nature of Spain’s economic policies which springs, the MLNV argues, from the fact that the Basque Country and Catalunya have been the drivers of Spanish economic development. The Basque Country is, as Woodworth (2007) describes it “one of Spain’s most powerful economic dynamos” (p. 66). The question of the economic importance of the Basque Region was raised by all but ETA2 and ETA3 as a significant factor underpinning the resistance of the Spanish state to sub-state nationalism. However, it is a very clearly given secondary importance to that of Spain’s identity issues by all respondents; as JAETA joked, perhaps if the Basque Country were not as economically valuable, Spain would be more amenable to their Basqueness – or as he joked again – perhaps not. Nonetheless, the economic importance of the Basque Country – and Catalunya – was an oft cited explanation of the vehemence with which the State defends against sub-state nationalism. As a number of authors have noted, while Great Britain could be said to have a declining economic interest in Northern Ireland in the years leading up to the Belfast Agreement, the same could not be said of Spanish interest in the Basque Country (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p.67). Historically, the Basque Country was one

of the seats of Spanish industry and development. That is not to say that Euskadi did not experience its own economic hardships. Indeed, during the 1980s, it experienced a significant economic slowdown with high rates of unemployment. Before peaking in 1994, nearly 45 percent of persons under 25 were unable to find permanent full time employment (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p.69). Yet, the Basque Country, would recuperate in the 21st century to consistently perform as one of the most economically productive regions of the state (see Institutions). As Gau (2011) notes, the deep financial crisis of 2008 saw a reversal in what had been steadily growing support for de-centralization amongst Spanish citizens since the signing of the Constitution (in Ruiz, 2013, p. 88). As JEEGELBS explained, particularly in moments of crisis, the State responds by attempting to reassert centralization.

For BS, S1, SE, ETA1, JAETA and JEEGELBS, the roots of Spain's economic reliance on peripheral regions lies in the history of Spanish economic development. As JAETA explains, that economics and identity combine in a focus on Spanish unity inherently resistant to Basque independence is relatively straight forward: "Euskal Herria and Catalunya are, for them, the economic motors [...] to let Euskal Herria be independent, would be to break what is for them their country. And secondly, taking away a very important economic resource". Mixed in with what she sees as the less rational identity component of Spanish resistance to sub-state nationalism, is a factor S1 sees as far more reasoned: that of economic interest: "in the northern part, as much Catalunya as Euskal Herria, the economy is fairly rich no? And so neither would it be agreeable [for the state] if these zones or even these territories were to leave this union no?" For SE, the question of economics for Madrid is quite stark, with cultural and economic development stronger in the peripheries. At "this time the Spanish state only has three developed areas no? Which are Madrid, Catalunya, and the Basque Country. And Madrid is so, fundamentally because it is the capital, it's a sort of black hole". BS agrees, adding that these identity and economic concerns amplify one another and "creates an enormous weakness of the State to accept the issue" as "Spain is a

state that passed, except in the Basque Country and the Catalan [region] from a feudal state to a modern state without a real industrial revolution”.

Economic prosperity clearly interacts with questions of state identity and are expressed through the nationalist narrative. The loss of Catalunya and Euskadi, the respondent argue, would be not simply a source of economic hardship for the State, but a blow to its prestige; particularly, as SE notes, because it would find itself a much weaker position – an essentially developing country in the midst of the European Union. Accordingly, the reinforcing interplay between the State’s lack of democratic culture, its unity focused nationalist narrative and the high economic performance of the peripheral secessionist regions in comparison to that of the rest of the state, interact to harden, in the MLNV’s eyes, the position of the State to Basque nationalist aspirations. For SKB “Man, in the end you realize that the State, what it wants to is continue being what is right now, no? Osea, it wishes to conserves itself [...] maintains a situation of impasse basically because [...] our objectives is to end the state, to take ourselves out”.

The ways in which the MLNV has framed its targets and goals has, not surprisingly given the length of the conflict, changed over time – for all that the end goals remain largely the same. Concurrently, as discussed in Learning Processes, the MLNV has also refined, to a degree, its understanding of the motivations of the Spanish state in addressing MLNV aims and grievances. There can be little doubt that Spain does not wish to see its constituent regions separate from the unified state. This is neither unusual, nor unexpected. However, the MLNV sees this desire as so deeply engrained within the Spanish political psyche as to significantly diminish the possibility that the State would commit to meaningfully

engage on Basque nationalist aspirations. Accordingly, the MLNV has refined what ‘success’ looks like, and has taken its faith out of the possibility of reaching a negotiated agreement with the State.

b. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the MLNV – its political parties, labour unions, youth organizations, cultural groups and paramilitary organizations– is a highly complex association of coalitions and shared goals. As JEEGELBS jokes after running through the more than half a dozen organizations in which she is or has been active under the MLNV umbrella: “here, you don’t sign up”, suggesting more of a social movement mentality. Despite claims to a collegial nature, functionality necessitates a certain degree of organizational structure. This structure, as Llera et al. (1993) describe, is complex:

The dynamic interplay between police and activist has forced repeated alterations of tactics, and consequently of the organizational structure to support them. Since the objectives of Basque nationalism, public support, it has been necessary to promote recruiting and social mobilization, and reorganization has been necessary to accommodate these requirements. Success, however, has proven organizationally disruptive as the induction of new members has injected heterogeneous opinions and goals that have led to internal structural modifications (p.113).

Under Franco repression necessitated a flatter organization structure for ETA and the MLNV, and the easing of much of this pressure allowed for a more hierarchical rearrangement under the later democratic regime (Heger et. al., 2012, p. 757-758). In the earliest stages ETA had barely a dozen members, many of whom were soon in exile in France, and neither had, nor necessitated complex hierarchical structures (Llera et al., 1993, p. 114). The lack of a centralized command structure in the early days of ETA allowed for the development of multiple ideological factions within the organization and contributed to the internal division and repeated fragmentation (Heger et al., 2012, p. 758; Fragmentation/Cohesion). Not until 1962 was an Executive Committee implemented for recruitment and organisation, organized along four fronts: political, economic, military and cultural affairs (Llera et

al., 1993, p. 114). Shortly thereafter the fronts were replaced by five branches “publications and communications, local organization and study groups, mass propaganda, mass organization and military actions”, and during the Second Assembly in 1963 geographical regions were assigned (*herrialdeak*s) each with their designated leader (*buruzagi*) (Llera et al., 1993, p. 114).

Yet as early as 1964 ETA was forced to rethink its organizational structure as it was handily dismantled by the Spanish police (Llera et al., 1993, p. 115). Casanova (2007) provides a detailed account of the organizational restructuring of ETA in the 1960s and 1970s as it sought to balance ideological and tactical disagreements, all the while reeling from frequent losses of key members. As Heger, et al. (2012) detail, “until ETA(m) emerged as the sole ETA... ETA lacked hierarchal structure...in terms of agenda setting there were always a least two agenda setters throughout the authoritarian period” both over its use of violence and its ideological identity (p. 759). This divided structure led to split loyalties and unclear accountability across various factions and “the lack of hierarchical authority led to the fracturing of activists into loosely connected cells” (Clark 1984; Heiberg 1989; Zirakzadeh 1991; in Heger, et al., 2012, p. 759). Specialization also became somewhat more defined under ETAm once hierarchical structure were more clearly defined (Heger, et al., 2012, p. 760). As Comas et.al. (2015) note “[t]his non-hierarchical structure makes ETA akin to a distributed and atomized network, which is more difficult for authorities to identify, infiltrate, and disrupt and destroy than a more conventional organization. Often operational decisions are made by single members” (p. 52). This, along with planning of projects taking place from a wide variety of geographical locations, is suggestive Heger et.al. (2012) note, of decentralized processes of decision making guided by common aims: as SKB notes the activists “had the same ideas in their heads”.

Yet notably ETAm, even prior to the dissolution of ETApM, demonstrated a greater degree of internal cohesion (Casanova, 2007, p. 194) and was more hierarchically structured (Heger, et al., 2012, p. 760). As such, with the return of many militants to ETAm and the retirement of those ETApM militants who would likely have been dissenting voices, ETAm was left with a more homogeneous core. Zirakzadeh (1991) hold that even within the already fractured ETA landscape of the 1970s and 80s that cells and factions within the organization often functioned with little oversight of central command structures. As it impacts the movements strategies, three sub-themes are of note: the embeddedness of the MLNV in Basque society; a focus on leadership as guidance, more than the role of individual leaders; and generational changes centered on the 1992 *Caída de Bidart*.

Izquierda abertzale embeddedness in Basque society

Grounding the second two themes is the sense in the MLNV is a movement embedded in and grown out of Basque society: “ETA is as much a concept (with symbolic properties) as a structure... In a conceptual sense, ETA permeates the Basque scene and is even capable of transcending it” (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990, p. 248). The respondents in particular argue this is demonstrated in the extensive use of debates and discussion surrounding key movement decisions, in to the ways in which these debates, opinions, and decisions travel back and forth between movement leaders, movement participants and the supporters of Basque nationalism. Debates and open discussions have long played an important role in the decision making processes of the MLNV (see Fragmentation/Cohesion). This has perhaps been particularly true since the 1990s JEEGELBS argues, with the failure of the post-*Transición* strategy of de-stabilization. ETA in particular, ETA4 notes, had to face the reality that for all the compartmentalization aimed to protect the structure of the movement, it also led to a disconnection between society outside of their own cellular structure and the militant. While, he argues, an understandable reaction to the intense State pressure on the organization in the 1980s: “this person did not have clear [view of] the

reality of armed struggle, [...] they don't know who is beside them". This is consistent with Comas et. al's (2015) assertion that in many respects, ETA became less embedded in Basque society over time. Thus, JEEGELBS argues, greater emphasis began to be placed on movement responsiveness to society. BS concurs, asserting that when the MLNV in the 1990s began to focus more concerted on generating the necessary conditions for dialogue and building the Euskal Herria to which they aspired, it necessarily had to become more responsive to the desires and opinions of Basque society.

The dual organizational structure of the MLNV meant "the role of HB in substantiating ETA's activities was key for ETA's pursuit of its policy in the democratic era. That ETA was able to simultaneously coordinate both electoral and violent strategies for its political ends speaks to the hierarchical form that group took after Franco – one that had defined agenda-setters that created accountability mechanisms for its members and could funnel people into specialized roles depending on their strengths" (Heger, et al., 2012, p. 760). Thus ETA provided a hierarchical backbone for much of the MLNV around with other organisations operated. Given its need to manoeuvre and participate in the institutionalized political processes of the Spanish state, the political affiliates such as HB and Batasuna, have necessarily more formal organizational structures (Comas, et.al., 2015, p. 52).

At the same time debate served to integrate the diverse opinions and priorities of both the movement organizations and Basque society, as well as to connect the movement to its base. The organization's penchant for debate would also lead to serious fragmentation over the course of its history, as well as prove a source of cohesion (Casanova, 2007; Fragmentation/Cohesion). As S1 and SKB mention, much of the movement's work, particularly that of the political parties, involves direct interaction with the public (see Political Viability). ETA2 and ETA3 were explicit in their belief that the ongoing and open debates amongst and between the organizations of the MLNV and the public led to a cohesive collective decision on the current strategy. JAETA emphasizes the importance of change in the movement

perception of strategic effectiveness rather than those of the leadership: a “very high percentage of the movement believed that with weapons, we were not moving forward anymore”. ETA1 argues this is because the changes to the structures of the MLNV went in step with society, to such a degree that ETA as it exists at the time of the ceasefire is not the same as the one he knew before his arrest – as, he argues, it should be. Being in step with society is, to ETA2 and ETA3 crucial as “our objective is made in the street, with the people in the street, Bueno, with the opinion of the people and making politics with the opinions of the people for the people”. As discussed in Resources, though the aim of the whole of the MLNV, ETA did not always manage to maintain this lock step with its base. Nonetheless, SE concurs with the broad nature of support for the movement change in strategy born from a long process of debate: “in the end it is a shared decision”.

Leadership structures

Within the MLNV, ETA long held the leadership role overall, and at important moments “intervened in the affairs of the various political and social subgroups that fall within the MLNV” (Llera et al. 1993, p. 111). Despite ETA’s dominance in the MLNV, Douglass and Zulaika (1990) note that the organizations of the MLNV do not always appear to act in concert with one another, nor appear to be under each others’ control: “[i]n short, Herri Batasuna is more than simply ETAm’s political arm” (p. 249). Leadership, for the MLNV was important to cohesion and the change of strategy, yet given its multi-organizational structure, the respondents argue that there were no important changes in leadership in the past 20-25 years, for all that the leadership is not made up of the same individuals. SKB clearly expresses the collegial nature of the movement leadership as part of his explanation, unlike other revolutionary movements “there was no charismatic leader. There was no one leader that was followed, no? It has been an organization, a leadership, more...collegial.” This reinforces the significance of the organizational structure on movement strategies.

The frequency of arrests of high levels of MLNV leadership and the effectiveness of the Spanish and French police operations required a degree of adaptability from the movement, particularly following the disastrous 1992 *Caída de Bidart*. Not only did the police actions remove three qualified *etarras* but, Casanova (2007) notes, it was a psychological blow compounded by the seizure of movement documents outlining operations, and the arrest several months later of another six member of a backup leadership group (p.368-9). Nonetheless, by 1993 the organization had undergone a restructuring and was once again prepared for armed intervention (Casanova, 2007, p. 375). As MLNVJA explains the occurrence of change within the leadership was common: the State “held a hierarchical conception of the movement, when really, the MLNV had the opposite conception[...] They always tried to get the leadership, and another leadership emerged [...] They didn’t understand that really, what the top level, or the leadership believed, was what the base believed.” SE, ETA2 and ETA3 explicitly agree, referencing a group of people who were driving the debate for change in strategy. ETA2 is very succinct on this point: “It is true that there was a group leading the way down this path but I believe it was more the process itself, that it was not individuals but the *izquierda abertzale* itself was there, all of us”. The only individual named by the respondents at any point in this context was Arnaldo Otegi who, while they argue was part of this leadership group, has spent much of the past decade in prison (Casanova, 2007, p. 420). In this sense, the collegial nature of the leadership has allowed for a greater degree of fluidity within the directorship of the movement.

This last is important as the leadership of ETA, as well as of Herri Batasuna and its successor organizations, was arrested, killed, or deported on several occasions throughout their organizational history, including since the beginning of the shift in strategy in the 1990s (see Military Viability and

Engagements). For both ETA and HB, SKB notes, “the same thing happened more or less, because there were also police operations directed exclusively at putting the whole of the leadership in jail, which automatically calls for the regeneration of the leadership”. JEEGELBS also referenced the 2004-5 arrest of ETA leaders, yet by the late 1990s, she argues, their vision of the strategy had already taken root meaning that the individuals in charge were of lesser import. Heger, et al. (2012) credit much of HB, ETA’s, and the MLNV’s persistence to its organizational structure: “[a]lthough its leadership, which has strong ties to ETA, has been in flux because of arrests by Spanish authorities, by and large the survival of HB as a political force is remarkable both for its effects on ETA’s political goals and its demonstration of ETA’s coordinative capacity. The harnessing of common agenda setting that could be advanced in multiple fora, combined with specialization by violent and non-violent wings of ETA, led to its persistence as a force in domestic politics” (p. 761). The lack of clear leadership structures meant that for all the the Anoeta Proposal outlined a two track approach, as Woodworth (2007) notes, ETA increasingly pushed Batasuna toward a harder line and was “curiously uninterested” in pushing forward with its own track of “technical” issues (p. 68). Despite the adoption of the twin-track approach, the respondents make clear a fear of having prisoners’ issues – the ‘consequences’ of the conflict – used to distract from substantial concessions concerning the ‘causes’ of the conflict. Further, as Woodworth (2007) notes, despite some earlier hardline stances on issues such as the inclusion of Navarra, Otegi demonstrated a willingness to be more flexible. However, at this point it was too late and the talks collapsed all the same.

This change in those holding the leadership roles was not, however, seen as having an impact in terms of drastically changing the movement strategy. Though there exists a backbone of relatively hierarchical organisation, Neumann (2007) notes that within ETA “authority is often decentralised and the leadership acts as little more than a coordinating body” (p.130). This is in keeping with the MLNV

understanding of the leadership as embedded within the movement, while there exists a degree of hierarchical structure (Heger et. al. 2012) it's organizational fluidity allows it to both recover from damaging blows by in the form of loss of leadership, as well as maintain a sense of the predisposition of the membership. For SE, leadership was important to champion debates and ideas, but new faces in this period did not equal a new strategy: "It's not new people that have new ideas. It is the same people analysing the reality and seeing that the reality is conforming to a new reality [...] It is not a new generation or it is not an internal power struggle between those who want one thing and those who want another." There was thus no drastic change in strategy in 1998 or 2004 as those who moved into the vacancies following State actions, SKB holds "had the same ideas in their heads". Woodworth (2007) suggest that the delayed response to Zapatero's offer of talks could have been the result of the internal debates of the MLNV. For the respondents, this was clearly the case. With little set organizational structure, debate takes a more centralized role – and adds significant time to already slow processes. Leadership change, SKB argues has not led to important strategic shifts as the "movement has assimilated bit by bit, the need for the change in strategy. It is not that with the change of leadership, with the arrival of new people, the course changed. It was nothing so drastic, no? So automatic. It was a...natural process." The notion that the change of strategy had less to do with specific leaders and more to do with an ongoing process of debate within the MLNV and Basque society was echoed by other respondents. Discussions about the change in strategy, S1 argues, started in the 1990s, starting small: "Bit by bit. It's a process. The importance of the process is that it tries to establish a collective position no? Pues, and so it is a long process. It's not something that can just be said".

The long debated process was seen as natural, but also, as SKB and SE noted, taken as a given considering the periodic arrest of the leadership of the MLNV organizations. For S1, the changes in leadership are, if not natural as such, then at least to be anticipated, and they contribute to the

connection between the movement and base as, as SKB mentioned, replacements for lost leaders tend to come from within the movement itself. As such, the regeneration of ideas is gradual and the debates on strategy simmer within the movement but the fluid nature of the leadership allows for different currents of this debate to surface, leading to a more robust and representative debate. The changes in leadership, S1 charges were “natural” given the joint military/political strategy and “because neither are they unexpected, no? There were so many, no? Between the illegalizations and the jailings [...] I don’t believe it was that some left and some won”. JAETA agrees, noting that the movement has learned to “measure well the State’s repression” and as such sees its leadership come and go. Twenty years as a public face does not guarantee a continued presence as they “come out saying something and... Prisoner! Another one comes out and... Prisoner!”. These changes in leadership bring new perceptions and analysis to the fore they argue. The initially high degree of ideological heterogeneity within the MLNV, and ETA in particular, created a great deal of tension and the tendency of the organizations to fragment, preventing meaningful engagement on divisive issues (see Fragmentation/Cohesion). As Zirakzadeh (2002) notes organizational setbacks, arrests and disillusionment over tactics led to a split in ETA as early as 1971, when they were unable to find sufficient common ground (p. 87). The fact that ETA caused no fatalities in 1999 around the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty demonstrates the leadership’s ability to control its members (Mata 2004 in Heger, et al., 2012, p. 761) or, as the respondents argue, was indicative of support for the strategy. While strategy shifts in ETA have frequently been slow, over the last few decades, the organization has been able to maintain its internal cohesion – facilitated by its loose hierarchical structure.

Accordingly, the respondents’ argument that, as BS phrased it “the shift in strategy was because there was a constant leadership that understood that this was the moment for change” refers to leadership as an action rather than as a specific individual. Thus rather than emphasize the role of the leader or

leaders, the focus is placed on the analysis made by the movement and the leadership's responsiveness and ability to harness and direct this analysis. This is a process further aided, the respondents argue, by the fact that very often those who once held leadership roles often continue in the movement in one form or another, after, as is often the case, completing their prison sentences. This is another way in which the leadership of the movement, while fluid in some respects, remains constant in others. As SKB attests those in leadership roles "in the 90s continue to be present today, [...] For all that they are not visible faces and they are not the actual leaders, they continue to have weight in the press, politics, they continue having weight in the *izquierda abertzale*". In all, the movement's tendency toward fluidity of personnel in leadership roles but consistency in broad strategic mindsets brought about by a gradual and ongoing change in the leadership cadre punctuated by the not infrequent arrests of large portions of the leadership, and the resultant lack of movement reliance on specific individuals, facilitated an emphasis on the movement's analysis rather than that of individuals.

Generational Changes

With such a long running conflict, multiple generations of Basques have taken part in the conflict in one way or another. The question of the impact of generational changes in the MLNV's membership arises primarily in two ways. The first concerns the way in which the institutional framework of the State shaped activists, militants and their involvement, largely comparing the pre- and post-Franco eras, with a particular focus on the impact of the establishment of the Statute of Autonomy. The second way in which generational differences may impact strategic decisions was by contributing different perspectives to the movement's long running strategic debates.

As ETA2 and ETA3 recalled of their youth under Franco's dictatorship "we lived hard times". The context in which activists and militants became politicized, ETA1 argues, impacts the type of analysis they bring to the table. As society changes, so too do the movement perspectives: "I believe that the changes [to the movement] move a bit in consonance with society no? [...] truthfully it is not the same, it is not the same organization [ETA] as it was when we were there ourselves". High turnover of ETA leadership was due largely to the effectiveness of the security forces at neutralizing high ranking members of the organization. These dynamics were particularly strong up until the early 1990s. Conversi (1997) argues that what was already a pattern in the 1960s began to occur with greater frequency in the 1970s as "the more experience and mature leaders of ETA were killed or forced into exile, younger and more radical ones quickly replaced them" (p. 250). In terms of its recruits, Reinares (2004) notes that ETA's age profile changed dramatically from the early 1970s, when barely 10 percent of *etarras* were aged under 20 years, to nearly 60 percent by the mid1990s. Reinares (2004) credits this shift to ETA's decreased options in finding and selecting sufficient recruits to maintain its cell structure. ETA had a wealth of recruits, but the isolated nature of the cellular structure would put pressures on the militants that are easier for unattached younger *etarras* to shoulder, than for those who might be older and more settled into a work and family life. This further corresponded to a shift from recruits from working class backgrounds, to those of the new middle class (see Support).

This increasingly compounded the problem of replacement and radicalisation, though celebrated by security forces, concerned moderate nationalist. This was particularly so after high level leadership arrest in 1986 and 1987 were followed by strong military responses from ETA (Conversi, 1997, p. 251). This is in keeping with the analysis of many of the respondents as well as several authors, who have suggested the failure of the talks in Algeria was at least in part due to the inability of the negotiating team to sell concessions to movement hardliners (see Engagements). Mansvelt-Beck (2005) builds on

the work of Rabuska and Shepst (1972) that suggests that competition by ethnic elites for control of the ethnic community contributed the prevalence of hardliners in the movement. Ivrin (1999) suggests that access to operational resources and the repressiveness of the regime will impact the presence of such hardliners with the movement. While ETA has certainly found itself in competition for the leadership role in the MLVN – particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s see Fragmentation/Cohesion – following the dissolution of ETAp, there has been little competition in the realm of paramilitary organizations. On the legal side of the political spectrum, HB has maintained a relatively consistent vote share, and Batasuna and EH Bildu even saw their share of the vote expand when it assumed a more – not less – conciliatory approach. The respondents for their part make much more reference of access to resources and state tactics as impacting leadership in the movement. However, as the respondents note, these dynamics were much more prevalent in earlier decades, and as the 1990s progressed, less emphasis was placed on leaders as individuals and more on the emergence of consensus and ideas through debate in the movement.

What is more, for JAETA, ETAPNV and JEEGELBS, following *Transición*, as the new institutions took root, they gained a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of Basque society, putting greater pressure on the MLNV to work through them as opposed to working wholly outside of them. New generations put increasing stock in the political processes and less in the military strategy. As such, JEEGELBS holds Bidart as a watershed moment for the increased focus on a joint political nationalist block in tandem with armed struggles strategy that over the 1990s shifted increasingly to a focus on the political rather than the military. As she explains, around 1992, 1993 “I believe it was a change, as much generational as political [...] This new direction of the *izquierda abertzale* a leadership that structures the constitutional strategy, that put the *Alternativa Democrática* on the table, along with changing the way of practicing armed

struggle". This early 1990 change over appears to be a common reference point after which the respondents focused on the consistency of the leadership and directing of the movement.

Generational changes at this point impacted the tactics employed in the military strategy. Zirakzadeh (2002) notes that particularly those militants that joined ETA after 1975 were less concerned with labour movement and were more inclined to use violence as a pressure tactic (p.75). As BS, JEEGELBS, SKB and MLNVJA note, the emphasis was on the military tactics: the opening of multiple fronts and the growing use of *kale borroka*. ETA4 notes that the change in military tactics was also reflective of a growing discrepancy in clandestine expertise between the previous and current generation of ETA militants. As he notes, thanks in part to the growing insecurity of Iparralde as a safe haven, and the high rate of arrests in the 1980s, those joining the organization in and around the *Caída* had less training prior to starting military operations and were more active with less time laying low making them more vulnerable to arrest or death, and thus less able to build experience. According to Zirakzadeh (2002) the focus of younger generations of *etarras* on *kale borroka* was undertaken in contradiction to much of the advice of older generations (p. 84). This experience, the respondents argue, is important when it can be fed back into the movement even after an individual loses their formal role. As BS describes "a man like Arnaldo Otegi is Arnaldo Otegi because he has passed through the process of the 80s, 90s, and 2000s and he has had to analyze that properly". The leadership collectively, the respondents argue, needs to be capable of longitudinal analysis: "you need a proper leadership that sees where we came from and where we are going" (BS).

As ETA1 explains of *etarras*, there is a wealth of experience in the *etarras* who are no longer active and the choice that many make to impart those experiences is an important one and by not sharing them

“you leave an intellectual gap, a gap in the analysis that the young people may not see”. Accordingly, as ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, ETA4, and SKB imply, there is a sense that members have a responsibility to contribute their insights to the movement even after their time as active militants is over. However, beyond their joint call for new blood, ETAPNV also notes the destabilizing effect some older, and he argues, more radicalized, *etarras* can have on any attempt at engagement with the State. The *IA* on the whole, attempts to maintain activists across generational divides, with arguable varying degrees of success. The attempt to incorporate the perspectives of both newer members and the lived experiences of older activists is seen as an attempt to deepen the political analysis of the movement.

Organizationally, the MLNV is broad and fluid. Within its constituent organizations, various attempts have been made to structure and restructure in response to changes in existing conditions. While ETA long held a primary role amongst the MLNV, it was a role it relinquished with the announcement of its permanent ceasefire in 2011. That ETA and HB and its successors have frequently experienced turnover in its top leadership over the course of their organizational history appears to have decreased the movement’s dependency on any individual, or small groups of leaders. This has allowed for both the political and military resilience of the MLNV, for all that a lack of strict hierarchical structures may have lessened ETA’s effectiveness as a military organization. This relative fluidity appears to have slowed down the implementation of broad shifts in strategy away from using ETA to force a negotiation with the State by hindering the ability of the movement to make, disseminate, and implement sharp course adjustments, while simultaneously helping to ensure that when such course adjustments are made, they are more likely to be reflective of the broader movement.

c. Fragmentation/Cohesion

Given the history of ETA and the MLNV, it is not surprising that virtually all respondents alluded to the question of organizational fragmentation, at least to some degree. These processes most explicitly impact the movement's attempts to maintain cohesion in the face of perceived State attempts to cause the movement to splinter and return to a military based strategy. Broadly speaking questions of movement and organizational fragmentation centered on early ideological and tactical disagreements. Discussions of movement and organizational cohesion thus focus on the importance of debate, gradual changes, and ongoing work with members of the movement to maintain group integrity.

Early Heterogeneity and Fragmentation

ETA as an organization as well as the MLNV as a movement, underwent periods, particularly in the 1970s, of significant fragmentation. As Casanova (2007), Irvin (1997), Zirakzadeh (1991; 2002) and others have chronicled, ETA has splintered into ETA-V, ETA-VI, ETApM, ETAm, ETA *berria*, the *Bereziaks*, *octavos* etc, some of which petered out, while others joined or rejoined other paramilitary or political organizations of the MLNV. Casanova (2007) notes that in 1983 there existed six armed Basque nationalist organizations across Iparralde and Hegoalde. A major split occurred in ETA as early as 1966 when members of the political office were expelled for what was seen as the risk of '*espanolización*' to which they exposed the movement by prioritizing Spanish labour allies over Basque nationalists. The Fifth Assembly would eventually result in the creation of ETA-V, ETA-VI and ETAb*erria* (Casanova, 2007, p.76-81). The *Comandos Autonomos Anticapitalistas* (CCAA or CAA), for example, broke from ETApM in 1978 and were active until the mid-1980s (Zirakzadeh, 2010, p. 76). The legal and political organizations of the movement have undergone similar permutations (see Political Viability). Such splintering was triggered by a failure to resolve tensions internal to the movement on issues of ideology and tactics.

In his 2010 comparison of the dynamics of fragmentation in ETA and *Sendero Luminoso*, Zirakzadeh concluded that ETA's early decades of fragmentation were incited by its ideological heterogeneity, the frequency of the replacement of ETA's leadership and resulting lack of experience and further introduction of new ideas and tactics, and finally the durability of the new Spanish institutions post-*Transición* providing alternative paths of activism (p.88-89). These themes were very much in evidence in the respondents' discussion of the first decades of the MLNV's existence. However, beginning particularly in the early 1990s, these same factors became less problematic for internal cohesion.

Ideological heterogeneity has long been a characteristic of ETA and the MLNV. While culture and language have long been important elements of Basque nationalism, "the failure to define one core value steadily and consistently resulted in the impossibility of developing a popular form of cultural nationalism [...Which] led to the prevalence of other kinds of political activism" (Conversi, 1997, p. 243). As ETAPNV, JAETA and BS discuss, early ETA, particularly in the 1960s, drew a great deal of inspiration and guidance from third-world liberation struggles as well as Marxist-Leninist texts. For ETAPNV, who emphasized the reclamation of Basque culture and anti-Francoist activities as ETA's original *raison d'être*, the inclusion of leftist revolutionary thought was an early sign of discord the MLNV: they were "not nationalist. They [looked] more to Russia than to here". While the other respondents would contest this, (see Target Framing), labour rights and worker issues were explicitly mentioned by a number of respondents as guiding principles for the movement (Conversi, 1997; Casanova, 2007). As ETA1 recalls, at the time he joined the movement, ETA provided a means of addressing worker's issues that did not exist elsewhere in the State. As SE explains of the way in which priorities of culture, social revolution, labour rights and anti-Francoism impacted ETA's unity, in the early years there "are different ideological currents. And the fractures are [born] of this, pues, these ideological differences, but once a definition is reached, there is an ideological maturity in ETA". Part of this ideological fragmentation came from the

fact that, though early *etarras* agreed that some degree of social change was needed, they sought to delay the debate until after national liberation was achieved (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p. 73). This came to be a significant source of organisational tension. As the respondents suggested in Target Framing, this ideological plurality, for all that it contributed to organizational fragmentation, is viewed by many of the respondents as one of the movement's strengths once what SE refers to as 'ideological maturity' took hold, after which point the MLNV came to see the two goals as necessarily entwined as part of an ongoing process and thus ceased to be a source of contention.

This ideological heterogeneity came to be embraced as an advantage and strategy, particularly in the 1990s. ETA1 for his part credits ETA with creating an ideological opening during the Franco years that allowed for different –though related- parties, organizations, and lines of thought to flourish. ETA2 and ETA3 note that although it complicates many aspects of the movement, such ideological heterogeneity is valuable: “There are, Bueno, different types [of people]” (ETA3) “In armed struggle” (ETA2) “Lots of different opinions and that’s good. We think that that is good. In a people, there has to be some of everything” (ETA3). As ETAPNV mentioned, with the *Transición* there had been a near explosion of new political organizations. The *IA* was already a diverse consortium – many organizations were coalitions of parties and unions signed on to support joint principles such as the *Alternativa KAS* but organizationally distinct. As discussed in Support, Alliances, and Political Viability, the *IA* efforts at issue expansion saw ETA and the MLNV increasingly champion a wider variety of social issues from the environment to women’s rights. As JEEGELBS argues, particularly in the face of the State’s unwillingness to discuss secession, the *IA* must go about generating the conditions, not just that will allow for self-governance, but also to start building now the type of Euskal Herria to which they aspire; for this an encompassing view of society and social considerations is needed rather than one exclusively focused on nationalism. Thus ETA, and the MLNV have taken to attempting to expand their support base even further across

ideological lines (see Political Viability; Alliances). Thus, SE acknowledges the ideologically driven fragmentation within the organization, but suggests that, for the most part, once that decision was reached, ideology ceased to be a source of fragmentation and was, overtime, recognised as a feature of the IA and attempts were made to harness that plurality in favour of now expanded movement goals.

The second source of considerable fragmentation was over concerns of tactics, particularly though not exclusively, over the use of violence. Tactics as a source of organizational fragmentation has manifested within ETA and the MLNV on numerous occasions. It is a tension that strongly corresponds to ideological tensions (Zirakzadeh, 1991). As SE points out, the decision to prioritize cultural or labour concerns will orient whether the movement seeks alliances with labour movement across Spain or focusses on exclusively Basque allies. The most oft cited example of the fragmentary potential of tensions over tactics, however, arose from debates over the use of violence. As ETA1 recounts, armed struggle “is an instrument, that will be used to create the necessary political conditions”. Nonetheless, decisions over the use of violence – its adoption, particular targets, tactics and its abandonment – have cropped up repeatedly over the course of ETA’s history.

Even within the fragmented versions of ETA, tensions over tactics were high. Within ETA-V for instance there was a growing disagreement over which aspects – ethnic liberation and armed struggle vs. stress on labour organizing – of the dual strategy to emphasize (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 187-188). By the close of the 1970s, those who did not support the use of the armed struggle had created and/or moved into other organizations that sought to pursue the movement goals through institutionalized channels, and actively avoided the label of ETA (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.181). ETA-VI, largely dissolved in 1973 after fusing with a Trotskyist organization. At the subsequent ETA-V assembly, held following the death of

charismatic leader “Txikia”, tensions over a further split in the organization which was now the sole version of ‘ETA’ were high (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.187). Even an action as significant to the course of Spanish history as the assassination of Carrero Blanco fostered divisions within ETA. Several leaders of the labour front were expelled by the executive council and military front for ‘factionalizing’ ETA after openly decrying the act as the greatest error in the history of ETA (ERE 1980 in Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 189).

Perhaps the most notable example of this fragmentation arose with the 1976 split of ETA into *ETApolitico-militar* and *ETAmilitar*. Tensions persisted within ETA-V over the tactics employed in the military strategy. The explosion of an ordinance in 1974 in a Madrid café resulted in high casualties of persons of largely unknown political affiliation. While ETA-V denied responsibility, suspicions were high and the organization split with *ETApm* adopting Marxism and seeking “alliances with other Spanish Marxist counterparts...*ETAm* pursued a nationalist front strategy and sought an alliance of all ‘patriotic left’ groups... but opposed alliances with ‘Spanish left’ organizations” (Zirakzadeh ,1991, p.191). Thus both ideology and tactics contributed to one of the most significant splits in MLNV history. Given the importance the respondents place on inter-organizational debate in the later years, it is not surprising that, as Zirakzadeh (1991) notes, many observers hold that the *ETAm-ETApm* split prior to *Transición* had significant consequences for the MLNV’s future strategy as the lack of intra-organizational communication ensured a less robust debate on the future role of armed struggle (p.192). Even within those groups that had struck out on their own, cohesion was not achieved (Casanova, 2007, p. 193).

Transición exacerbated these tensions a great deal. As BS, SE, JEEGELBS and ETA1 explain, the question at the core was whether the new Spanish state provided sufficient opportunity and avenues for the pursuit of movement goals in the absence of armed struggles: had the State truly changed. As BS noted

in Political Viability, with this question “the nationalist movement divided itself in two”. Even the political branch of the MLNV had difficulties reconciling questions of ideology and tactics: “after 1979 Herri Batasuna became organizationally anemic as constituent groups such as LAIA and ESB resigned. The reasons for the resignations related partially to dissatisfaction over the continuing boycott of government institutions” (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.198). Further, HB itself gave rise to the offshoot political party Aralar in 2000 with its decision to renounce all political violence, including ETA’s. Nor did the PNV escape the dynamics of fragmentation completely unscathed: in 1986 EA split from the PNV taking an explicitly “radical and independence oriented” position (Jaúregui, 2006, p. 240). There were even those within the MLNV who held that the military strategy only served as an excuse for continued State repression and as such the EIA met with ETApM and ETAm at the beginning of the 1980s to ask that the armed struggle be abandoned (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.194). While in the 1980s ETApM dissolved in part in the face of this analysis, ETAm persisted until over two decades later when, according to the respondents, this analysis was a factor in the movement decision making once more. Thus to an extent, this analysis persisted within the movement, but was not on its own, viewed as sufficient cause for a change in strategy once ETApM had dissolved.

As more and more ETApM *etarras* sought to abandon armed struggle and reintegrate, some ETA loyalists sought to use the threat of reprisals to cause them to reconsider (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p.200). Nonetheless, as discussed in Military Viability, large numbers of ETApM members laid down arms, leading to its dissolution in 1984. Those members who did not support the dissolution largely rejoined other organizations still active in armed struggle, primarily ETAm, simply ETA once more. State crackdowns and repression had a twofold impact on *etarra* membership. As discussed in Military Viability, it deepened much already existing resentment and anger ensuring new recruits, but it also sparked the retirement of hundreds of *etarras* from active involvement (Zirkzadeh, 2002, p. 76).

The dynamics of fragmentation over tactics and ideology have at times been intensely damaging to the movement. However, the movement has also been able to make use of that same ideological plurality to widen its support base, and made tactical division in its constituent organizations in order to both compartmentalize against illegalization processes, and improve operational capacity. As discussed below, these processes would eventually give way to a more cohesive movement, impacting the movement's ability to facilitate changes in strategy.

Cohesion

Along with the discussion of the forces of fragmentation must come a consideration for the dynamics holding the movement together. A specific emphasis is placed by the MLNV on the importance of plurality of opinion, debate, guidance rather than leadership, work, time, and a perceived State preference for movement and organizational fragmentation contributing to movement cohesion. These dynamics of cohesion are what have led, - despite varying degrees of support for the strategy of *unilateralidad*, high levels of distrust of the State, and other tensions – to the MLNV's assessment of the risk of fragmentation in ETA or the MLNV over the current strategy as negligible.

Fragmentation, SE notes, is not a process unique to ETA and the MLNV, though one, he argues, that the MLNV eventually learned to control. As he explains divisions are present "in whatever movement that practices armed struggle." Yet, the move toward ETA's declaring of a permanent ceasefire and the strategy of *unilateralidad*, though representing a significant change in strategy, was nonetheless accomplished without setting in motion a splintering process. As JAETA expressed, to see the State making so few reciprocal concessions when ETA has made so large a concession as the renouncing of armed struggle, costs him dearly "it infuriates me". SE details the decision where the IRA experienced

splintering over its decision to lay down arms, “here there was a collective decision that arose from everyone. As much from the sphere of the armed organization as that of the political sphere. That is not to say that there were not, pues, eh ‘different levels of enthusiasm’ to put it nicely no? [...] sectors that were not in agreement, but who accepted the results of the internal debate and understood that a majority had decided, no?” A culture of unity has developed overtime in the face of State repression:

There are many possibilities for the generation of internal contradictions, as we have seen all over the world. [Like in] the movie the Life of Brian, [...] It is a parody of what *is* the norm inside the left, that the movements tend to fragment, to break up and generate small currents no? The *izquierda abertzale* is a movement with a broad support, of popular support, that has held very clearly that unity was the principle value. And so this has served us to make this transition without an internal rupture. (SE)

As JAETA explains, even those like himself who, frustrated by the lack of progress of the military strategy, have accepted the new strategy, it is done with conscious effort and reminders of the importance of full commitment, despite the nagging lack of faith in the State’s willingness to respond in kind. The concern over the splintering of the movement over the move to *unilateralidad* was present enough for all respondents to discuss it in one form or another. However, their discussion centered less around the likelihood of such a splintering and dealt more with the ways in which the movement has staved off such a fracture and the ways in which the State has sought to undermine *unilateralidad* and cause ETA, or at least part of it, to return to armed struggle.

Heterogeneity of ideology and opinion, as mentioned, has long been a characteristic of the MLNV – a movement more characterized by coalitions and associations than any other organizational form. As such, debate has long played an important role in both ETA and the MLNV more broadly. While debates and assemblies have long been part of ETA’s operational structure, the first few decades of ETA’s existence nonetheless saw a great deal of organizational fragmentation, until the organization reached what SE calls an ‘ideological maturity’. It was during the mid1990s and especially during the early 2000s,

that a slow process of debate around the strategy of *unilateralidad* burgeoned, and that effort and consideration had to be given to maintaining not just the unity of ETA as an organization, but keeping ETA and the MLNV in step with one another.

In their discussions of this slow change in strategy the respondents do not reference a 'debate' such as the periodic assemblies, but rather of debates – plural. JEEGELBS for instance, specifically refers to a *process* of debates: "There is, bueno, a process of debates when it comes to shaping the movement as much as the strategy itself no?" As SE suggested, given the variety of ideological backgrounds and in light of the conscious attempt of the MLNV at issue expansion in the 1980s, it is to be expected that the movement reflect a wide spectrum of opinions. Yet this is seen as a strength of the movement and part of this debate *process*. As ETA2 and ETA3 explain on the current risk of a rupture within the movement: "No. There were debates. [...]" (ETA2), "Man, there were debates! [...] this is good, to put it on the table" (ETA3). It is a process they argue, that is reflective of the community: "In fact in the streets the debate continues, but Bueno, I believe there is no risk of a rupture." (ETA2), "No" (ETA3). This is related to the sense of support and embeddedness in the community felt by the constituent organizations (see Support, see Organizational Structure). The presence of debates both within the political and military wings as well as between them is noted by Whitfield (2015). While the political branch took the lead in the change in strategy, ETA's demands in exchange for its commitment to the new strategy nonetheless reinforce the nebulous and embedded nature of the organizations. As Whitfield (2015) notes, ETA demanded "consultation within the radical nationalist base, political alliances to create mass support, and international involvement" (p. 9) which were in many ways already demonstrably part of the broader movement strategy.

Within these debates a number of respondents allude to ETA's role not as the lead decision maker, which arguably has long been the case, but rather as having been drawn into and made part of a broader debate, within the IA. Whitfield (2015) for her part argues that the decision "was intimately related to the leadership of representatives of Batasuna and top ETA commanders and their ability to maintain internal cohesion" (p.13). Again, leadership is portrayed less as the responsibility of an individual or group of individuals making decisions and more of a guiding capacity. Notably, the only figure of note mentioned by any of the respondents – and mentioned by nearly all – is Arnaldo Otegi, a man who has been active in the HB through its various incarnations, and known not to be an active member of the military organization. Furthermore, as noted, he has spent much of the time period in question in jail.

With the rupture of the process of Lizarra-Garazi and subsequently the failure of Loiola, the contradictions caused by the dual strategy of military and political approaches was increasingly highlighted and raised the profile of debates over the usefulness of armed struggle: "From there, I believe, there started to appear within the *izquierda abertzale*, this perspective no? That maybe the armed struggle, more than doing good, was hurting us?" (JEEGELBS). The process of debate this perspective sparked, she argues, led to the perhaps unusual situation, given ETA's historically dominant position in the MLNV, where in 2010 "the *izquierda abertzale* made an interjection to the armed organization for it to stop its armed action" and allow for an exclusively democratic pursuit of movement goals (*The Guardian*, 21 Feb, 2010). This notion that ETA was responding to the movement rather than pushing its own strategy was echoed by ETA2 and ETA3: "ETA has united with the strategy of the *izquierda abertzale*. Now it has dropped its armed struggle, and so, this is because it is in agreement [with] the rest of the movement".

That is not to say, however, as SE phrased it, that there was not “different levels of enthusiasm” for the change in strategy. As S1 describes, it can take a long while to change the course of so large a boat. Given the work put into the process, like the other respondents, S1 sees little risk of a fracture in the movement: “there have been moments of much more, more important internal tensions than right now.” AS SE concludes: “In the end it is a shared decision and above all it has to be recognized, to underline a very important thing that happened here, that did not happen in Ireland, and that is that this decision did not provoke any internal fracture in the movement”. As such, many respondents argue that getting the whole of the movement on board with the change in strategy in such a way as to mitigate the risk of fragmentation was and is, a long, laborious and ongoing endeavour. S1 joins with other respondents in the feeling of the need to continue working to maintain group cohesion in the face of not only existing internal tensions, but in the face of a perceived concerted effort by the State to cause a fracture in the movement and a return to armed struggle. S1 argues that “you have to continue this engagement so that no one reaches the point where they say “I’m done with all of this, I’m going and I’m picking up arms”. This is a risk that Whitfield (2015) argues the State has not taken seriously: “the continuing arrests and lack of a response to ETA’s offers to hand over its weapons kept open the possibility of splinter groups in the future” (p.384). Furthermore, this rhetorical strategy feeds the frustration already existent within the movement as to the State’s unwillingness to engage with the new strategy, as detailed in State Responses by JAETA and SKB in particular. Tactics of criminalization, manipulation of prisoners, and anti-Basque nationalist narratives are used, SE explains to put destabilizing pressure on the IA creating “unease in important sectors of the *izquierda abertzale* because they see that we are doing things, we are making concessions and the State does not reciprocate. But this has not led to a rupture”.

Thus while initially plagued by, as SE describes, a monty-pythonesque level of fragmentation due to ideological and tactical heterogeneity, since the mid1980s the MLNV has experienced a fair degree of cohesion. This is in part due to the nebulous nature of the MLNV as a social movement and its long history of coalitions. Even Aralar which split from Batasuna as a political party, nonetheless remained part of the broader MLNV eventually joining the EH Bildu coalition. Notably, that this cohesion has been maintained across significant adjustments in movement strategies, is illustrative of the MLNV's growing responsiveness to its base, and its ability to carry its constituent organizations with it across such tactical adjustments, which increased optimism in its ability to undertake major strategic changes.

d. Learning Processes

The evolution of strategy of the MLNV is dynamic and reflective of a degree of adaptability, particularly from the 1990s onward. As JEEGELBS describes "we are talking about, in fifteen years there are three completely different negotiation processes: Lizarra-Garazi, Anoeta and now the unilateral process. Osea, in what national liberation movement, in fifteen years, has had this chameleonic capacity to open negotiation processes?" Arguably, the movement has undergone various learning processes: a notion echoed among the respondents. S1 is concise: "you have to learn no? [...] you always have to be reflecting. I believe there needs to be more reflection and more discussion and all that, but I believe that yes, we learnt a lot as a collective". As ETA2 and ETA3 express "the *izquierda abertzale* is still learning no? Everyday [...] we have always been like this". Both prompted and unprompted the respondents detailed shifts in the MLNV understandings of the conflict, their adversary and themselves, which ultimately led to the shift in strategy. Between the respondents and the literature three themes in particular emerge: lessons from other conflicts, an evolution in the movement's understanding of the nature of the conflict, along with its understanding of the State's positions and responses in engagements.

Looking to other conflicts

Whitfield (2015) notes that the MLNV has looked to other conflicts for insights into its own. As BS explains as the nationalist movement gained momentum in the 1950s and 60s “you will find quite a lot of elements that are not linked to the European politics of the time, [...] revolutionarily nationalism is one of the key elements of this development[...] That has impacted, quite a lot, on the thinking”. SE concurs, noting that for all that the differences in context and levels of development were acknowledged, “[we] looked a lot to all those countries, above all to those where there was a process of national liberation together with social liberation.” These conflicts have served as both ideological inspirations and as strategic allies. For all that, as the respondents point out, the realities of these decolonization and leftist inspired struggles of national liberation did not match those of Euskal Herria, the struggles in Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, and to an extent China, were seen as offering lessons and inspiration (Casanova, 2007, p.68).

What is more, as the conception and understanding of the conflict have evolved, so have the examples to which the MLNV turns for inspiration. ETA1 argues that the MLNV drew inspiration and insight from nations fighting struggles of decolonization, and increasingly influenced by conceptualizations of self-determination, for all that he notes, the situation in Euskal Herria was not one of colonialism. Nor are their examples restricted to Europe. ETA1, ETA2, ETA3, and BS mention conflicts in Africa, Asia, and even mention the nationalist movement in Quebec as evidence that the state need not react in the way of the Spanish state. The insights gained from these studies fell into three branches: tactics and strategies for the armed struggle; the preparation and implementation of negotiation processes, and thirdly, the pursuit of movement goals within the confines of institutionalized politics.

Some of the insights gained from allies in conflict on the carrying out of military tactics and strategies are relatively straight forward. The training exchanges with FARC, Hamas, the IRA and Algerian nationalist forces are numerous (Alliances). Yet respondents pointed less to learning particular skills or techniques, and instead focused on the bigger picture insights they provided, by learning both from the failures and success of these compatriots. As Watson (2001) noted, Irish republicanism of the early 20th century provided their Basque nationalist counterparts with a “symbolic example” while “more recently, ETA and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have maintained a sympathetic relationship – viewing themselves as freedom fighters and sharing military tactics and bomb-making techniques” (in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 67). While noting the differences in the underlying context, ETA1, ETA4, JAETA and SKB all suggest that the social reality as it existed in Northern Ireland was much more tense and divided than in Euskal Herria. With this in mind, ETA1 suggests that as ETA gained strength as a military organization, it took warning from the divisive sectarian nature of Northern Irish politics and sought to adjust their behaviour accordingly. The conflict in Northern Ireland, ETA1 notes “was more radical [...] much separation between communities, no? From the beginning we knew we couldn’t permit this. And so what is it we had to do? [...] Control the armed struggle [...] You can’t just kill anyone, because it is in this way that social rupture is created.” Sánchez-Cuenca (2007), like ETA1, holds that ETA largely kept its violence focused on the State and avoided sectarian attacks, and thus “the conflict has not involved a clash of communities between nationalist and non-nationalists” in the way Northern Ireland experienced (p. 293). However, as ETA1, BS, and S1 note, ETA’s action on a number of occasions crossed over this line (see Support). While much of ETA’s campaign against the Lemoniz nuclear reactor had a great deal of support (S1, Casanova, 2007) the 1978 bombing of the reactor that killed two and injured 14 saw mass demonstrations against ETA rather than the state, calling into question the effectiveness of the action-repression-action cycle (Zirakzadeh, 2002, p.78). By the closing of the century Zirakzadeh (2002) notes that the tactic of assassinations had lost support even amongst original *etarras* and a letter

from a jailed former ETA tactical theorist suggested the organization's violence had created a boomerang effect, calling instead for a de-escalation of violence (p. 84).

What is more, BS argues that the MLNV's ability to analyse and reframe the conflict in light of changing context, is influenced by some tactical lessons learnt from the Republican Movement. One thing the MLNV was able to learn from looking abroad BS notes, was the framing of the conflict so as not to create or exacerbate identity tensions within the community. This was done BS, ETA1 and SE note, by expanding the definition of Basque from one based on ethnicity to one focused on an individual's involvement in Basque society, particularly the workforce. As ETA1 says: "Basque is someone who lives and works in the Basque Country and choses to identify as Basque". As Conversi (1997) notes, the term *abertzale* or 'patriot', expanded: "*abertzale* is a status not defined by birth but by performance: an *abertzale* is one who participates in the political struggle [...] You are not born *abertzale*. You make yourself one" (Clancy, 1988 in Conversi, 1997, p.252). As ETAPNV, ETA1, and JEEGELBS note, action was what demonstrated involvement. *Ekintzas*, or 'actions' Conversi (1997) notes, were claims to, and expressions of Basque nationalism (p. 203-204). This change was in many ways impacted by waves of Spanish migration and the heterogeneity of the ideology of Basque nationalism (ETA1, BS, SE, Irvin, 1999). As ETA1, BS, and SE in particular note, there was an effort relatively early in the MLNV to promote this more inclusive understanding of belonging. Zabalo et al. (2013) argue that these efforts met with success in the 60s and 70s when "resistance to, and activism against, Franco's regime became a sort of identifying mark in certain environments, irrespective of whether they were Basque nationalist or not. For the first time in its history, thousands of immigrants joined Basque nationalism" (p.518). That is not to say that culture and language did not remain an important component. Zabalo (2008) notes that following *Transición* language became more of a touchstone for Basque nationalism. Language, culture and identity were discussed in one form or another by all respondents. However, as Zabalo et. al

(2013) and the respondents point out, it did not become exclusivist or hegemonic. Rather, the MLNV increasingly sought to expand their support base.

A second way in which the MLNV has learned from other conflicts around the globe relates to how these conflicts were brought to a close. The notion of fighting and winning independence through armed conflict gradually lost favour in the MLNV, which increasingly focused on achieving a negotiated settlement. As the 1990s advanced the MLNV placed greater emphasis on the strategy of *acumulación de fuerzas* and at the same time witnessed the negotiated settlements of two conflict to which it had felt a great deal of affinity, notes ETA1. “In the international context” says BS “in the South African process as much as the Irish process, neither of the cases achieved victory and began looking for a transition process, of negotiation, of conflict transformation. This had a significant affect”. Not only were these conflicts demonstrating that another way forward was possible, they also provided insights into how to bring about these processes. Northern Ireland and South Africa in particular were seen as providing the MLNV with potentially transferrable lessons (Whitfield, 2015). The demonstration effect provided by the Northern Irish agreement was particularly strong given the links – both ideologically and organizationally – between the MLNV and Republicanism as “both ETA and Herri Batasuna could see that, in the case of Northern Ireland, a ceasefire did not mean a defeat of the Republican side, especially considering the political weight that Sinn Féin managed to acquire” (Lecours, 2007, p.103-104). This *acumulación de fuerzas*, involved attempts to build a nationalist block in much the same way as Irish nationalists of the SDLP and republicans of Sinn Féin during the Hume-Adams talks. That is not to say that the MLNV aimed to cut and paste the Irish solution onto the Basque case; as JAETA notes, they had their own, in many ways significantly different, context. While the IA closely studied and even attempted to replicate aspects of the peace process in Northern Ireland, it was not accepted as replicable without critical analysis. Dated June 2001, an internal ETA document expressed that “the whole Irish nation has

been denied the right to self-determination and on the other hand the government of the 26 counties has to change its constitution and renounce the six counties until its citizens decide otherwise” (*Zutabe* 91 June 2001 in Alonso, 2004, p. 699). Despite reservations, the Northern Irish process was seen as a useful model and resource. The Treaty of Lizarra-Garazi was for the MLNV, an evolutionary paradigm shift: “the *izquierda abertzale* realizes that the proposals it has for Basque society cannot be made alone, they have to be done in step with other *abertzale* parties no? Lizarra-Garazi, osea, the proposal of Lizarra-Garazi, is a shared interpretation, taking as an example the Irish process no?” (JEEGELBS). As SE explains, after the failure of Lizarra-Garazi “we studied the Irish process; we studied the process in South Africa. [...] there is a whole methodology to conflict resolution. [...] a series of protocols, internationally accepted for dialogue processes, a mediation processes. We studied them and tried to apply them.”

Batasuna’s 2004 Anoeta Proposal reflected a deliberate attempt to learn from the Northern Irish process: it laid out multiple tracks of negotiation with ETA to discuss questions of disarmament, prisoners, and exiles with the State, while all political parties of the Basque Country would engage with the State on political issues. Each track would proceed at its own pace (Danis and Sanjuro, 2006 in Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 65). In so doing, the MLNV sought to provide the State with an ‘out’ from negotiating with terrorists (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 71) but decades spent associating HB and Batasuna with terrorism limited the effectiveness of this proposition (see Tactics). Though the MLNV sought to apply lessons learnt from the Northern Irish case rather than directly replicate the process, Mansvelt-Beck (2005) points out that the lack of allied state to play a role comparable to that of the Irish Republic for Northern Irish nationalists (external ethno-guarantor), and the lack of supporting involvement from a powerful and engaged international mediator, such as the United States in the Northern Irish case, created a geopolitical context vastly different from that of Northern Ireland (p. 211).

Nor was this a point lost on the MLNV. Casanova (2007) notes there a great deal of debate over the applicability of certain actions to their own case, and the suitability of certain comparisons (p. 387-388).

In the end, attempts to apply principles of conflict resolution learned from studying other conflicts became a consistent part of MLNV actions. Woodworth (2007) points out that throughout the 1990s not only did ETA seek to emulate the IRA military tactics, but also its approach to the building of a peace process. Most notably, the December bombing of Madrid's Barajas airport during the Loiola process "was almost certainly modeled on the IRA's February 1996 Canary Wharf attack in London, where, with a massive explosion, Irish Republicans dramatically ended an 18 month 'cessation of hostilities' with the British after peace talks in Northern Ireland faltered" (Woodworth, 2007, p. 65). SE further notes how the principles of conflict resolution were applied in the 2005-2007 process in the form of the involvement of international mediators. As Whitfield (2015) details the MLNV reached out to a number of international actors, from Northern Ireland's Father Alec Reid (who had facilitated talks between the SDLP and SF), to the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva (see Alliances), The MLNV further invited an international verification committee to oversee the handing over of a portion of ETA's arsenal in February of 2014, in what was meant as a confidence building measure by the organization, but was largely either ignored or decried as insufficient by the State (*BBC News* 21 Feb, 2014).

A third way in which the MLNV has learnt from observing other conflicts relates to the tactics and strategies for pursuing movement goals within the existing institutional framework of the State. These goals relate both to those of independence as well as those pertaining to social issues: "how these processes work in other parts of the world, they leave you with certain lessons no? Certain examples. Each country is each country and each has its own circumstances, but, eh, all of this is learnt" explains

SKB. S1 and SE discuss how addressing the social concerns of the movement require engagement from across Basque society. SE notes how, while the MLNV used to look to Latin America for its revolutionary struggles, it now seeks to learn from the ways various Latin American based movements have made progress on what he refers to as leftist issues. These movements have had success, he argues “through the construction of large fronts, broad fronts, fronts of the left which, let’s say, achieve popular majorities, defeat the governments and from there, enter the social movements and the government undergoes a process of reform”. S1 highlights Venezuela, Bolivia, and El Salvador as particular examples.

As for the pursuit of self-governance and secessionist goals, the respondents note the moves made in recent years by the nationalist movements in Quebec, Puerto Rico, Scotland and Catalunya. Scotland and Catalunya were given particular focus. Scotland was useful for exploring the possibilities for self-determination in the context of a more permissive state, while Catalunya offers insights in dealing with their own state. As SE details: “In Scotland, they have the advantage of receptivity on the part of the British government and in Catalunya, no. But this has an advantage because it looks more like our reality.” One way in which Catalunya has been informative S1, SE and JEEGELBS argue is in “the construction of a scenario of democratic sovereignty for the country.” Where, like Catalunya “so long as [the State] does not change that law [to recognize self-determination], we will not do any of this, demanding a bilateral process no? we will advance along our own path and force the State at a given moment, to recognise the process in which, de facto, we are” (S1). JEEGELBS argues that the MLNV began to make this realisation after Lizarra-Garazi. The failure of the process reinforced the role of the PNV could have in this new approach that had been brewing: “they are capable of developing a process similar to that which is being [done] now in Catalunya, bai? What Ibarretxe tried in his moment, no?” As proof positive of the potential of such a route, if not as the full realization of the process than at least a

step in the right direction, JEEGELBS cites the severity of the illegalization that took place and the vehemence with which the Ibarretxe proposal was shut down.

One of the reasons for which Catalunya is viewed as such a potential for insight relates to the ways in which it has attempted to build broad social coalitions, in much the same way the movement has seen progress on leftist agendas in some Latin American cases. Thus the IA has sought to replicate a similar process. SE relates Catalunya is offering ““to those that are not nationalist in the classical sense, [...] but who want instruments for self-governance where they live, to make policies that respond to their needs, there, no? This is also what we are trying to do here. [...] to demonstrate to them that independence would be an instrument”. This emphasis on policies ‘made here’ is driven home by the sense that beyond the differences in nationalist narratives between the central and regional governments, there is also a fundamental and recurrent clash on social and economic issues (see Institutions).

Thus, since its inception, the MLNV has drawn on the experiences of those involved in conflicts with similarities to their own strategic, tactical, as well as technical lessons. While often skeptical of the transferability of these lessons to their for own case, as the MLNV increasingly placed emphasis on the political strategy – in particular beginning in the 1990s – organizations within the movement, as well as members themselves, increasingly sought to implement the tactics that appeared to have borne fruit for their allies. However, by the mid2000s (see Engagements) the MLNV was increasingly aware that while certain tactics might help increase the viability of their political strategy, the State would not respond in a similar manner.

Evolving Conceptions of the conflict

As the MLNV accumulated new experiences and interactions, much of the earlier conceptions of the movement about the nature of the conflict in which they were and are engaged, as well as the articulation of their goals, evolved. How the eventual victory is envisioned, according to the respondents has changed as the understanding of the nature of the conflict evolved over time. As ETA4 explains, over 50 years the context of the conflict has changed and with it the nature of the conflict and the tactics employed in its pursuit. The interplay of context, engagement, tactics, and goals of the movement is explained in detail by ETA4 noting that, initially it was held that armed struggle would

bring about a process of insurrection [...] Next, once it could be seen that the dictatorship was ending and a process of reform was coming – not of a rupture though – we adapted ourselves to the circumstances [...] bringing us to the *Alternativa KAS*, [...] We build a political party etc. and Bueno, we set about putting in place what we need to do politically and militarily to create the conditions to bring about the moment to sit down with the State and lay out our proposal. This leads to Algeria, [...] we adapt the *Alternativa KAS* to the *Alternativa Democrática*. Now 10 years have passed, and in those 10 years the context has changed again. We adapt ourselves once more and we arrive at Lizarra-Garazi [...] with a nationalist front to put a proposal to the State, and that too fails and Bueno, we arrive at the process of Anoeta, [...] the military strategy has come to an end. Other tools have to be used...then comes Sortu and Euskal Herria Bildu, and the Declaration of Gernika etc. etc. [...] the armed struggle has finished – It's over. Political and democratic instruments are where we are today. *Unilateralidad*.

ETA4's description lays out not just the movement's changes in tactics or, as JEEGELBS refers to it, the movement's chameleonic adaptability, but it also demonstrates the way in which the conflict itself is envisioned.

As early vision of the insurrection suggests a violent, military based overthrow (in a sense unilateral action). The spiral theory of violence (action-repression-action) failed to play out as theorized (Zirakzadeh, 1991, p. 196). Throughout the 1980s as Ipparalde was progressively lost as a safe haven, ETA turned to the use of car bombs in an attempt to maintain a sense of instability in the State

(Casanova, 2007, p. 331). As JEEGELBS describes in *Institutions*, the MLNV sought to maintain instability in the State so as to prevent the post-*Transición* institutions from taking root and then force a renegotiation with the State. In March of 1987 an internal ETA bulletin announced the synthesis of this fostering of instability with an increase in attempts at expanding its strength of allies, describing the social, political and military aspects of the struggles as “on the one side, deepening the crisis of the Reform in Euskadi, and on the other, in parallel, accumulating strength of workers and popular forces around the *Alternativa KAS* and the political negotiation as the only guarantees of the process of Democratic Normalization and National Reconstruction” (*Zutabe* 45 March 1987 in Casanova, 2007, p. 330). As the State changed the conflict came to be seen as both political and military, implying necessarily the need for both political and military tactics. Finally, with the growing sense of the demonstrated nature of the unwillingness of the State to engage, and the frustration of the military campaign, the conflict was increasingly viewed as both broader in scope and more unilateral in strategy. As JAETA aptly summarizes, the conflict came to be seen less as a revolution, and more as a transformation.

Along with this shift in understanding of the nature of the conflict, came a shift in how achievement of the movement goals was imagined, S1 notes this was now seen as “a process of construction, not a coup [d'état] and there you are[It's not] Independence. Done. And tomorrow its done so now we're socialists”. As conceptions moved away from early notions of revolution and insurrection to focus more squarely on negotiation and later building social density, victory, as BS explained came to be pictured less as bells ringing from the clock tower and people on the steps of city hall. As JEEGELBS, SE and S1 characterize it, victory became to be imagined less as a “*día de*” – a day of one particular moment of victory, of grand celebration the way it was envisioned in the days of insurrection and revolution. With *Transición*, ETA and the MLNV moved away from trying to induce a revolutionary movement in the

Basque Country, realizing that if it had not happened under Franco, it would certainly not happen now (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2007). As S1 explains: “the objectives are the same: independence and socialism. [...] little by little as the movement itself changed ... we saw that these have been processes... We realized that it’s all linked [...] we have to go at it working.” As ETA4 argued, and the other respondents concurred, the tactics and conceptions of the movement have evolved with the changes in context. As the context of the conflict shifted, a number of key moments impacted the corresponding conception: the *Transición*, the Algeria Talks, the *Caída de Bidart*, and the processes of Lizarra-Garazi and Loiola.

BS, SE, and JEEGELBS in particular note how the implementation of new institutions following *Transición* took root in Basque society. For all that the MLNV viewed them as insufficient, they nonetheless garnered a degree of legitimacy amongst Basque citizens and in the eyes of international observers (see Political Viability and Institutions). Since the end of the dictatorship had, as ETA4 outlines, caused the movement to rethink the goal of insurrection, when the talks in Algeria failed, and the movement took a blow with the *Caída de Bidart*, the MLNV had to rethink its strategy as the State seemed uninterested in negotiation, fixated on a policing and military solution, and the post-*Transición* institutions were well established. The instability they had hoped to use to pressure the State to renegotiate had not sufficiently been realized.

Much like the *Transición* had caused a shift away from viewing the conflict as an insurrection, the talks in Algeria and the *Caída de Bidart* forced a similar reassessment leading to the *Alternativa Democrática*. The *Caída de Bidart* represented a turning point of significance for the MLNV. As JEEGELBS and Casanova (2007) note, from the *Transición* until the *Caída* the MLNV’s strategy writ large sought confrontation with the State leading to a negotiation between ETA and the State, and the implementation of the

Alternativa KAS. Following arrests in 1992, ETA was forced through a generational and political renovation that culminated in the *Alternativa Democrática* (Casanova, 2007, p. 375). As JEEGELBS explains, the *Alternativa Democrática* “and in this debate process the *izquierda abertzale* looks to Euskal Herria and says, we cannot wait for the “*día de*”. We cannot be waiting for the “*día de*”. We have to build Euskal Herria from here because the framework is taking root”. The notion that there will not be a ‘day’ of victory is linked to the notion that the MLNV increasingly internalized, that, as JEEGELBS notes, it had to move forward with building the Euskal Herria to which it aspired, rather than, as S1 suggests the revolutionary conception requires, waiting until independence was achieved in order to begin. This necessarily involved a greater emphasis on politics and greater cooperation with both *abertzale* allies and allies on social issues - a decision that had proved divisive in the 1970s. As S1 and SE explain, looking to other leftist movements around the world emphasised the construction of fronts, expansion of allies, and the building of public support. S1 argues that part of the importance of this ongoing work is that building a more socially just society necessarily moves the region closer to self-determination because more emphasis is placed on the rights and decisions of the citizens: “we have more independence no? or we are closer to socialism, because we built it. And so, it’s more construction, a process of construction.”

As previously outlined, the MLNV sought to learn from the actions of other negotiated settlements. Lizarra-Garazi as JEEGELBS, BS and SE note, was influenced by the Northern Irish Process. So too was Loiola. Loiola, for instance, SE notes, brought international mediators into play an important role for the first time. The MLNV, JEEGELBS argues, made concerted efforts to go into the Loiola process with a broader conception of negotiations. As the emphasis on construction grew stronger, JAETA and S1 both cite a sense that ETA increasingly handed over responsibility for the movement goals to the political organizations, frustrating as that was for many members. Though the 2006 ceasefire would not,

ultimately, be permanent, its presentation signalled a larger role for politics through institutionalised channels: with it ETA announced its objective as “the launching in the Basque Country of a democratic process for a building of a framework where our rights as a people can be recognised and where all political options can be explored” (in Lecours, 2007, p.109). The way forward, JAETA argues “will be more the politicians, with the people behind them, but more politicians”.

As the emphasis on construction, and the lack of confidence in a negotiated settlement with the State grew, BS argues, the MLNV increasingly began to prioritize its base. As JAETA and others noted the world and its views on armed struggle had changed (see Support). While the emphasis on construction of the Euskal Herria to which the movement aspires grew in scope, the movement’s reliance on its base became more explicitly. As ETA1 explains, as the State repeatedly proved itself unreliable as a negotiating partner “so what do we have as a guarantee when we sit down that it will fulfill its obligations? This, we realised with the passage of time. Our guarantee, what is it? Its society.” Thus as JAETA aptly put it, the conflict came to be seen less as a revolution and more as transformation. This in turn necessarily implies a re-evaluation of corresponding strategies.

Evolving understandings of the State’s limits

Consideration of the learning processes the movement underwent in its understandings of the State, build off the framings described in Target Framing – that is to say its understandings of the depth of Spain’s democratic nature, the embeddedness and influence of the Spanish nationalist narrative are the primary reasons the MLNV outlines for the State’s resistance to meaningful engagement.

There is a strong sense that over the course of successive attempts at engagements with the State, the MLNV came to realize that it was not simply the ways in which it approached negotiation that were ineffective at producing the desired results, but rather that the State's reticence had as much to do with the acceptance of the need for negotiations as it did the procedures followed. By mid 2009 such was the case that Otegi would publicly state that the state (along with Spanish public opinion –see Target Framing) was “fundamentally against the idea of negotiation” (in Whitfield, 2015). In the mid 1980s the MLNV was fully engaged in alternating military pressure and offers of negotiation but was adamant that negotiation would not equate with dissolution, as the State has sought to use negotiations not to reach a resolution of the conflict but rather to replicate with ETAm the dissolution process that was taking place in ETApn (see Engagements). To this end ETAm was resolute that “If the organization is offering this possibility it is because we are perfectly aware that peace is possible here and now. But not just any peace, not the peace of the cemeteries, nor the Pax Hispania but a peace with neither conquerors nor conquered” (*Zutabe* 42, October 1985 in Casanova, 2007, p. 317).

The respondents were unanimous in their assertions that the MLNV had undergone learning processes over the course of their engagements with the State. As SKB asserts “in the end all negotiation processes, here, they impart lessons, [...] about your enemies and how they function [...] so you go to the next process with other positions no? A more flexible position or more flexible on specific aspects, pues, no?” Aside from the examples of the MLNV learning from other conflicts as discussed previously, ETA2, ETA3, MLNVJA, JEEGELBS and BS all provide specific examples of how the tactics employed by the MLNV (in all cases outlined, by ETA specifically), represented miscalculations by the organization with respect to the positions, limits and postures of the State. ETA2 and ETA3 note that for all the hopes that were raised by the talks in Algeria, ETA did not grant the necessary weight of import to the fact that the State had taken a seat – however unwillingly – at the negotiating table. It has been suggested that part

of the reason for the failure of the talks can be attributed to the negotiating team agreeing to terms unpalatable to the movement hardliners (Dominguez Iribarren 2007 in Muro, 2009, p. 64). Whether it was the State or ETA (or both) that balked come time for their official statements and made changes to the agreed upon text, a number of respondents suggest neither side was sufficiently committed to the gravity and difficulty of the process at this time. That is not to say that they suggest the State had no role in the failure of the talks, far from it. However, along with MLNVJA, they point out that the MLNV was not blameless in the failure, referring to the discrepancies in the statements that precipitated the breakdown, and the how the subsequent dealings were handled. MLNVJA does not believe “the State genuinely had any intention of recognising what it had signed [...] neither the MLNV nor the State was mature enough to recognize that something had to be done. With the whole process, the sides needed to do something new, and I believe neither of the two sides were disposed to do too much”.

From this experience, along with the eventual failure of Lizarra-Garazi, the MLNV drew a number of lessons. As the MLNV increasingly recognized the unwillingness of the Spanish state to negotiate directly with ETA, despite its dominant position within the MLNV, HB and its successors increasingly took center stage. Though, as noted, Antxon had suggested a twin-track approach to talks in Algeria to no avail, later attempts would take this further to heart. As discussed in Engagements, the end of Aznar’s tenure as Prime Minister and the arrival of Zapatero offered some hope of a different pattern to negotiations. Yet, there remained the legal framework that discouraged talks directly with ETA. Correspondingly, Otegi’s presentation of the Anoeta Proposal in 2004 explicitly drew a division of labour between ETA and Batasuna (Woodworth, 2007, p. 67) in an attempt to provide the government an easier means of moving forward with negotiations.

A second lesson the MLNV drew from Algeria, as discussed in Engagements, was a sense that the State would not hold up its end of any deal, even if it could be made to sit down. As many respondents made clear, the MLNV walked away from Algeria with a sense that the State could not be trusted. As ETA2 and ETA3 summarize: it “doesn’t keep its agreements. It doesn’t want to”. What is more, Casanova (2007) notes “the experience of Algeria had demonstrated that the implementation of political changes required the presence in resolution dialogue of other sociopolitical agents beyond ETA and the State” (p. 392). However, it had demonstrated to the MLNV as ETA2, ETA3, JEEGELBS, SKB, JAETA, and MLNVJA point out, that the armed struggle could be used to force action from the State. After all, if nothing else, the failed talks for ETA implied degree of recognition (Casanova, 2007, p. 351), of its ability to influence the State, if not of its legitimacy as a representative organization in the eyes of the State.

Accordingly, throughout the 1990s, the MLNV went about trying to create a unified front with which to pressure the State to the table. Leading, especially after the *Caída* to a focus on the *acumulación de fuerzas* (Casanova, 2007, p. 393). The process of Lizarra-Garazi was in many respects a nonstarter (see Engagements), the continued pressure the MLNV sought to maintain on the State through *kale borroka* was seen by the PP and PSOE as circumventing the ceasefire (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 68). The MLNV’s attempts to use violence to pressure the State into talks thus ran into difficulty – a problem that would only be replicated in the years to follow. The ceasefire making possible the discussions around Lizarra-Garazi was broken when the PNV showed itself reluctant to carry out “some of the more ambitious plans” (De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca, 2013, p. 98). Whitfield (2015) notes that in the little contact that occurred between the State and representatives, the State deemed ETA no more willing to compromise on its maximalist agenda than it had been in Algeria. However, given the tendency in negotiations not to begin with one’s minimal aspirations, it seems likely that – as discussed in Engagement, the State was no more willing to engage in any bargaining process than it had ever been.

Nonetheless, JEEGELBS argues that the breaking of the ceasefire was premature and reflected an incomplete understandings of the pressures on their allies in the process – particularly the pressure on the PNV and its need to interact with other statist political parties given its past and present commitments. She suggests the PNV should have been given more time to demonstrate its commitment. It is, nonetheless, she argues, a process from which the MLNV learned, going into the next engagements with a broader, more flexible understanding of negotiations, as SKB and SE agreed, and demonstrated by the terms of the ceasefire wherein the acceptance of the *Alternativa Democrática* was not used as the minimum starting point.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001, much of the world's view on terrorism and sub-state nationalist violence hardened. Support for violent tactics, already diminishing, was impacted (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p.2) The reaction to the Al Qaeda train bombing of 2004 provided the MLNV with a stark example of this declining support for violent methods (Esser and Bridges, 2011, p. 64). It was a lesson that had been growing within the MLNV, BS, S1 and JEEGELBS argues, since Lizarra-Garazi but not truly driven home until the deaths of two workers in the 2006 T-4 bombing in Madrid. As the MLNV entered the Loiola process following the Anoeta proposal, many respondents saw hope once more for a negotiated settlement. By the end of the process several respondents suggest the movement was made to learn another series of lessons about the central government's flexibility, tactics and reactions. While some observers, such as Alonso (2013) see the attack as evidence the State should never have sat down with the MLNV, others, such as De La Calle and Sánchez Cuenca (2013) view it as a type of vestigial violence rather than indicative of some new campaign or the unviability of talks. BS for his part, referred to it as a mistake that damaged the possibility of further negotiations. It was, to his mind, a negotiated process and should have been left as such. Together with JEEGELBS, BS argues that the use of violence in this way was increasingly damaging to the advancement of movement goals. Along with ETA's increased

operational difficulties, successive attempts at engagement with the State were arguably made more difficult because of ETA's presence (Lecours, 2007, p.152; see Engagements). It became clear that while a certain degree of military pressure might be used to convey the movement's frustration, there was a point after which the actions simply facilitated the State's justification of the pursuit of a policing end to the conflict: such attacks had lost their usefulness as a way to force concessions from the State.

The realization that, as JAETA suggested, the armed struggle was not getting them anywhere with the State came hand in hand with the growing realization during the Lizarra-Garazi and Loiola talks that the State cannot be treated as a singular actor. As discussed in State Responses, the MLNV was increasingly aware of the role of party politics between the PP and PSOE, as well as the PNV, and the impact the military strategy had on strengthening the 'anti-ETA' hand of those opposed to a negotiated settlement. As the respondents discussed in State Responses, the willingness of the State media to blame the 2004 Train bombings on ETA and the rhetoric the PP employed against the PSOE for agreeing to talk to ETA highlight the fact that the willingness of the governing party was not enough. As MLNVJA explained, despite the hopes raised by the talks with the PSOE that a meaningful agreement might be reached, the PP was playing its own game. Talks with ETA and the MLNV provide such powerful ammunition that even when one of the State wide parties does sit down to talk, the other will not necessarily be on board, with negotiation derailing consequences.

As JEEGELBS discussed in Institutions, there is with this a sense of the weakness of the Spanish state that impedes the possibility of productive negotiations. As MLNVJA suggested above, even if the PSOE agrees to a concession there is no guarantee the PP, for instance, will allow the PSOE to enact it. Despite a growth in the legitimacy of the State since *Transición*, the State has not managed to gain the people's

complete confidence. The behaviour of the PP government from 1996-2004 in particular impeded this development: “symbolic actions glorifying Francoist collective memory, bad management of the Prestige oil catastrophe that caused a great deal of damage to the Basque coasts and shameless media control have contributed to a weak and contested legitimacy of the state” (Mansvelt-Beck, 2005, p.229). For the MLNV, as the respondents expressed, even the democratic state with its institutions in place could not be seen as a trustee of the best interest of the Basque Country (see Institutions; Engagements). This feeling, Mansvelt-Beck (2005) notes, has been particularly strong around Bilbao and Gipuzkoa where repression under Franco was harshest (p.29). Thus over time the role of the State as a unitary or fragmented actor has increasingly impacted movement strategy. This analysis, JEEGEBLS holds, was further added by looking at resolution attempts abroad. The Spanish state, she argues “is lacking...democratic culture, democratic [...] economically, politically and so if you start a negotiation process with a weak state... [shrugs and shakes her head] . And this we have seen in Ireland as well. This needs a strong state. And so the *izquierda abertzale* is learning along the way”.

In and of itself, that a movement has undergone multiple significant changes in strategy is indicative of the presence of learning – though not by definition, of improved effectiveness. As the MLNV’s understanding of its targets – both its goals and of its adversary – along with that of the nature of the conflict, evolved over the course of multiple engagements with the State, so to have the approaches it employs in pursuit of its goals. The adoption of *unilateralidad* from a strategy of armed conflict is indicative of a significant transformation, and decreased optimism in, and motivation for, negotiations.

e. Leadership Discussion

The target framing expressed by the MLNV is done in succinct fashion: independence and socialism. Of the two goals, independence is clearly awarded greater weight, and, importantly, the MLNV increasingly saw socialism and independence as intertwined goals. This change went hand in hand with a changing understanding of the nature of the conflict. While the specific goals have not changed over time, as BS suggested, there have been shifts in the goals considered as way markers on the path to achieving independence and socialism. For the most part, the MLNV framing of the State focuses on the pervasiveness of Francoism into Spanish political culture and institutions, and the failure of the *Transición* to purge these institutions of these anti-democratic tendencies and perspectives. This in turn inhibited the State's ability to consolidate politically, economically and socially, creating a weak State easily swayed by populist and partisan politics and thus seen as unreliable as a negotiating partner for the MLNV. Further, despite their own periods of economic hardships, Euskadi and Catalunya have long represented some of, if not at times the most, economically productive regions of the State. Not only would the loss of one or more of these regions be damaging economically, but given the centrality of unity to the heart of Spanish identity, sub-state nationalisms represent an existential threat to the very identity of the Spanish state. That Euskadi or Galicia or Catalunya are part of the very 'skin' as MLNVJA points out, of the State would only add to the identity trauma of such a loss. Thus the MLNV sees the State's resistance to sub-state nationalist aspirations as a result of the State's democratic, economic and identity insecurities. Accordingly, it seeks to clamp down on any political debate that might foster such aspirations. The fear guiding this tactic is twofold: given its insecurities it is unwilling to cede an inch lest it trigger a chain reaction and secondly, it lacks the necessary political arguments and tools to contest these aspirations in a democratic arena. This deep seated resistance to the notion of independence and the perceived lack of democratic cultures and institutions, are seen to make the state less viable as a partner in a negotiation toward resolution to the conflict.

The organizational structure of the MLNV is rather nebulous, characterized by associations, coalitions and commitment to shared principles. As political and paramilitary organizations *HB* (and its successors) and ETA have had more distinct internal structures, though these too have undergone periodic re-organizations. Leadership of the organizational structure of the MLNV and HB/ETA specifically, emphasised collegiality, embeddedness, slow change, and leadership as an action rather than as the work of specific individuals. The sense that the MLNV was and is embedded in Basque society, is critical for the movement's ability to make strategic course corrections that are reflective of the movement and its base, and thus help to avoid the risk of fragmentation within the constituent organizations. This embeddedness allows for the debates taking place within the movement to travel up and down between the support base and the leadership levels, as well as the base's ability to punish the movement for missteps. This embeddedness, it is suggested, has allowed for consistency in the leadership of the movement that relates not to a particular individual but rather to a consistent yet flexible and changing leaderships that emerges from, and feeds back into the movement. In this way, the movement was able to maintain the aims and strategies of the movement in the face of successive arrests because the intense and ongoing debate processes ensured that the movement, society and leadership were moving forward on roughly the same page. Thus leadership in this sense emphasizes a consistency in leadership (if not in leaders) born from the ongoing debates throughout the movement and the reflectivity of movement analysis rather than that of individual leaders.

In light of this lack of clear leadership structures, the dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion have at various points in the history of the MLNV played important roles. The tendency toward fragmentation was particularly strong in the early decades given the ideological heterogeneity of the movement. With the dissolution of ETApam and the MLNV's deliberate moves to expand the issue base, the MLNV seemed to grow to better mitigate these splintering tensions. Given the slow yet comprehensive process for

building consensus around the strategy of *unilateralidad*, the respondents did not feel that fragmentation of either ETA or the movement was likely in the foreseeable future.

Movement activists as well as its constituent organizations saw their understandings of the nature of the conflict, their role in the conflict, and their understandings of their adversary evolve with the changing context and layered experiences from successive interactions. The MLNV learned from both its own interactions with the State as well as by observing the moves toward resolution of other conflicts, that the pursuit of their goals was less of a fight for a day of victory and more an ongoing process of transformation. Looking in particular to Latin America, the MLNV sought to pursue socialist and nationalist goals simultaneously – to build the Euskal Herria to which they aspired. This dual pronged strategy was further justified by the analysis that a more socially just society would in and of itself bring the movement closer to independence as the greater emphasis on citizen preferences would facilitate the realization of secessionism. At the same time the movement sought to adjust its negotiating tactics based on the study of conflict resolution theories as well as based on observations of the implementation of resolution processes in other conflicts – particularly Northern Ireland.

After successive failed engagements with the state, the MLNV took to heart four crucial lessons. First, the State is deeply ideologically opposed to secession based on the Spanish nationalist narrative that holds Spanish unity as paramount. Secession is thus not something to which the State can be made to agree in negotiation – the willingness of the State must be removed from the equation if independence is to be a realistic result. As such, secondly, the emphasis must be placed on a process of societal and institutional transformation. The movement thus no longer sees the achievement of its goals in terms of the arrival of a “*día de*”. Thirdly, the armed struggle was increasingly seen as doing little to advance the

movement goals while simultaneously providing justification for the State's pursuit of a policing and military end to the conflict. Finally, the MLNV increasingly recognised that 'The state' was not a entirely unitary actor. Thus, while one party might agree to negotiations, that may provide little guarantee that it will have the necessary manoeuvring room or political capital to make or deliver on an agreement. This in turn reinforces the sense, that the State is not a viable partner for a negotiated settlement, and the MLNV must work on its own to create the conditions necessary for the transformation of the conflict to which it aspires, decreasing optimism in a bilateral resolution, and providing motivation instead for the exploration of a unilateral path.

Part Four: Chapter Two Overview

The de-escalation of violent conflict in the Basque Country has been a slow process, in which neither side would characterize the result as demonstrative of their own defeat. For the MLNV and IA the de-escalation represents a change in strategy. This strategy is one that had been percolating in the movement, to varying degrees, for nearly a decade before ETA's declaration of a permanent ceasefire, for all that it has roots in the early 1990s. For the MLNV, its path to its unilateral de-escalation of conflict rather than through a bilateral agreement, is the outcome of a path begun in the 1980s. This path was then reaffirmed by permissive and productive conditions surrounding the critical junctures of the Algeria talks, *Caída de Bidart*, Lizarra-Garazi Treaty, and the Loiola Process.

The talks in Algeria were made possible because of the political viability of the Basque nationalist project, the ability of ETA to pressure the State, and the State's desire for an ETAp style dissolution of ETAm. Once engaged in the talks, the productive conditions of the State's unwillingness to meaningfully engage on the topic of *abertzale* aspirations – born of both the inability of ETA to militarily defeat the

State, and its own institutional and ideological focus on unity – contributed to the MLNV's impression learnt from the engagement, that the State was not predisposed to talk with ETA, and it was unlikely to hold to any agreements reached.

Scant few years later, the *Caída de Bidart* served as another key moment in the move toward the strategy of *unilateralidad*. In terms of permissive conditions, while the MLNV was still politically viable and possessed of support for the movement projects, it found that the institutions of the *Transición* had taken root and militarily ETA had failed to create the instability it considered necessary to force the state to renegotiate the existing institutional framework. These concerns were then cemented by the State's focus on *la vía policial* and the State's belief that through this strategy – and with the later intensification of processes of criminalization – that the defeat of ETA was at hand. This reinforced for the MLNV, the unwillingness of the State to participate meaningfully in a negotiated settlement, undermining its viability as a negotiating partner, and sending the MLNV in search of other partners.

This lack of faith in the willingness of the State to negotiate, and the failure of the military strategy to sufficiently damage the State into a more pliant position, saw the MLNV adjust its strategy toward the *acumulación de fuerzas* as it sought to use military, political, and social pressure to force the actors of Basque society to taking firmer stances on the Basque nationalist question. The continued viability of the Basque nationalist project, measured by the electoral success of HB, was reinforced by the shift in stance of other political forces of the Basque Country (PNV, EA, ELA etc) away from constitutionalist positions to more sovereigntist oriented positions, leading to the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty. Despite the increased optimism in the strength of position for an negotiated settlement, the State's focus on criminalization and *la vía policial* made for little progress, and the talks largely failed before they began.

The failure of the Lizarra-Garazi talks despite having demonstrated the breadth of support for the *abertzale* projects, also demonstrated the waning support for the military strategy with the electoral punishment to which HB was subjected following the end of the ceasefire. Further, while ETA demonstrated itself capable of damage, it was clear it lacked the necessary viability (both operationally and in terms of support) to defeat the State. Building on experiences gleaned from previous interactions with the State, as well as resolution processes from abroad, the Loiola Process sought to implement these lessons to bring about a further attempt at negotiations. The continued State preference for *la vía policial*, and the lack of unity in the State as an actor, reaffirmed the inviability of the State as a negotiating partner. For the MLNV the State cannot be trusted to keep its agreements, they must move forward on their own:

The Spanish state, Bueno, has not kept its agreements, it has not wanted to fulfil them. Faced with this situation, we have decided, [...] looking to our own people [...] we will go our own way, we will make our own way” (ETA3) “until now we usually took steps and waited for the State to take the other step to follow. And we have seen that the State is not ready. We don’t care. (ETA2) “[...] We will make our way, we will not wait for the State. We cannot wait” (ETA3)

This combined with the decreased support for armed struggle, and the ever increasing sense that armed struggle was proving a hindrance rather than an aid in the pursuit of movement goals, served to cement the strategic change from a dual military-political strategy in pursuit of a bilateral resolution to the conflict, to a socio-political one in pursuit of a unilateral resolution.

Over the course of these strategic adjustments, the relatively nebulous nature of the organizational structure of the MLNV would serve to increase the resiliency of ETA as a military organization in the wake of the effectiveness of Spanish and French policing efforts, while simultaneously reducing the organizations ability to increase its impact in terms of lethality. The division in labour between political and military branches largely aided in the promotion of the Basque nationalist project across significant

swaths of Basque society, as well as broadening the support base. The collegial and fluid nature of leadership structures within the constituent organizations (a result of policing efforts as much as by design) created a situation in which leadership took the form of guiding debate rather than directing actions: thus strategic changes were both slow to take root, as well as secured once they had.

Thus, *unilateralidad* is the culmination of these movement learning processes and assessments, described by the respondents as “our own path”. SE provides a useful overview of the strategy:

society will see that while one part is turning things around, the other is stuck in immobility. Therefore, we will take steps unilaterally, what we expect is that the State will not move immediately [...] Eventually Basque society and the international community will realize that there is a serious commitment on our part to construct a peace process and a democratic scenario. Thus, in this scenario, the Spanish state will be left, since it doesn't want to move itself, in a very weak political position and will thus lose its capacity to accumulate sectors, to accumulate forces, in democratic terms.

Thus, *unilateralidad* is about making their own path toward movement goals and not waiting for the State. As ETA4 explains “we will not wait until the State proposes something, we will propose something, independently of what the State carries out, we will go about carrying out what needs to be done, no?” The process is one inspired by lessons from other sub-state nationalist movements, such as republicans in Northern Ireland and the Catalans in Spain.

Much of this is the construction as S1 and JEEGELBS lay out, of a de facto state of independence wherein the MLNV seeks to construct the Euskal Herria to which it aspires in preparation for independence, rather than waiting for independence to build this new country. As SE elaborates: “this process has not asked permission from Madrid. This is not an agreed upon process, as differentiated from Scotland where they could agree, *unilateralidad* is not voluntary.” In comparison to those earlier framings of the

conflict that saw victory as achieved in a day, after which all would change, the achievement of movement goals under *unilateralidad* is seen more as a long term process of construction. As S1 explains: the difference between formal and informal independence. “Formal independence, we will get there, but really, if we move forward with this process we will make ourselves independent bit by bit”.

Chapter Three: The Republican Movement and Northern Ireland⁸

Part One: Introduction

Often mistakenly described as a religious conflict, for Ruane and Todd (1996) the conflict in Northern Ireland as it emerged in the late 1960s is more complex, given that

[c]olonization was never separable from religious differences ...[t]he result was a multi-level conflict, where power relations (expressed in military forces, economic resources, class position, legal status, and political representation) were partially organized by formal and informal religious institutions and networks, and where symbolic boundaries were multiple, with religious beliefs, moral political norms and civilizational values, as well as historical narratives of plantation and ethno-national identities overlapping if never quite connecting (in Todd 2009, p. 338)

Religion, rather than being a cause of conflict, served as a group marker to the conflict (MacEvoy, 2008).

1918 marked the UK parliamentary elections with universal adult suffrage, and, in Ireland, saw pro-Irish independence parties with some three quarters of the vote (McGarry and O’Leary, 1995, p.27). While a closer examination reveals territorial concentrations and a number of victories of uncontested seats, “70 per cent of votes cast in all contested seats were for nationalists who sought an autonomous and united Ireland. Thus the 1918 election outcome supports the claim that an autonomous if not fully sovereign Ireland was supported by a majority on the island as a whole” (McGarry and O’Leary, 1995, p.36-37). Shortly thereafter the Irish War of Independence waged from 1919-1921 before the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 laid out a provisional boundary between the new Irish Free State and what would become Northern Ireland (McGarry and O’Leary, 1995). The resultant statelet, in the Republican Movement’s (RM) consideration, was set up to the advantage of the boundaries redrawn to preserve a protestant majority. McGarry and O’Leary (1995) for their part suggest that Britain’s role in Northern Ireland “is better understood as that of indirect responsibility through semi-deliberate neglect [...] The

⁸ Respondents – ISF, SFIR, SF1, SF2, SF3, SF4, SFI2, SFI3, I1, see Appendix 2 for details

control actually established by the Ulster Unionist Party [UUP] between 1920 and 1972 was not planned, but rather was sanctioned by the neglect of successive British governments” (p. 45).

Colloquially known as the ‘Troubles’, the conflict that came to a head in the 1960s and ran the latter half of the 20th Century before the achievement of a negotiated agreement in 1998 and the transition to primarily institutionalized politics. Over the course of the conflict 3,623 persons were killed, roughly 55 percent of them at the hands of Republican paramilitaries, of which the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) was by far the most active (MacKeown, 2009). In all the Provisional IRA was responsible for more than 2,600 attacks, and more than 1,800 fatalities. IRA activity and lethality was at its height in the 1970s, with lethality experiencing a relative decline until spiking again in the late 1980s before declining once more. IRA attacks have shown a less consistent trend with a low point in the mid1980s with significant spikes on either side, before falling off dramatically in the mid1990s with the declaration of the ceasefires and the talks surrounding the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) (Appendix 9).

Though the peace process surrounding the GFA can be said to have begun much earlier, the final document – the Belfast Agreement (BA) – was signed on April 10th of 1998, and ratified during a referendum the following month (English, 2003, p.299). Voter turnout for the referendum in Northern Ireland was high (81 percent) and was endorsed by 71 percent of the voters, and 94 percent of voters in the Republic of Ireland (English, 2003, p. 301). Notably, support among voters identifying as Catholic was significantly higher than amongst those identifying as Protestant (MacEvoy, 2008). Though it would take nearly another decade to finalize IRA decommissioning, and bring anti-GFA unionist parties on board, the GFA was nonetheless extremely significant in transforming the conflict from a violent one, to one in which competing interests pursue their goals through institutionalized political channels.

Part Two: Resources

The RM and its primary constituent organizations, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Provisional Sinn Féin (SF), have done much to impact the course of Northern Irish history throughout the 20th century. While both organizations were born of earlier incarnations, the Provisional IRA would come to dominate the republican landscape in the early years of the conflict, with SF stepping more fully onto the field in the 1980s. The material and immaterial resources available to these organizations, would shift over time in such a way as to encourage the pursuit of a negotiated settlement. SF in particular, despite early set backs in the mid 1980s, would see its share of resources grow.

a. Political Viability

Beginning in the early 1980s, the republican strategy switched to one that pushed both political and military methods for achieving their goals. At Sinn Féin's annual meeting, the Ard Fheis, in 1981, organizer Danny Morrison was quoted as saying "Who here really believes we can win the war through the ballot box? But will anyone here object if, with a ballot paper in this hand and an Armalite in the other, we take power in Ireland?" (in English 2003, p. 224-225). Historically, republicans considered the existing state institutions as unviable as means through which to address their grievances and move toward their goals. However, in the years leading up to and during the GFA, this began to change. There is a sense within the RM that the possibility of a new political framework that has emerged with and since the GFA has demonstrated the ongoing viability of their political project.

Viability of the political project through the pre-agreement political channels

The political arrangements of Northern Ireland for much of the time since partition distinctly favoured unionist and British interests over those of Irish nationalists and republicans. In a 1968 survey asking

whether the respondents in Northern Ireland believed Catholics in the region were treated unfairly, 74 percent of Catholics responded yes (in McGarry and O'Leary, 1995, 108). Catholic citizens were frequently at a disadvantage in terms of housing, the labour market, and politically through the use of gerrymandering in Northern Irish politics (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995). As SF4 describes the nationalist community "had no access to political power, their culture and identity was not recognised, and on many occasions attacked, and insulted. We didn't have the same social and economic rights as the protestant majority of the northern state. We didn't have the same voting rights as many members of the protestant state." The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s which sought to address these discrepancies, as early as 1968 had their protests end in clashes with the police (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p.49). Increasingly, despite their early peaceful nature these protests, were "put down violently by the unionist dominated police and other unionist groups, who viewed them as subversive of unionist dominance" (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1521). As MacEvoy (2008) explains, in the late 1960s "[w]ith an expanded Catholic Middle class Catholic political mobilisation called for an end to discrimination and an increased role in the state...the Civil Rights Movement became increasingly about the nature of the state and changed its focus from state reform to criticism of state brutality. The unionist community ultimately felt threatened by these developments and pointed to the anti-partitionist rhetoric of civil rights campaigners" (p. 72). For SF2, the 1960s, 70s and 80s were "bleak times" during which discrimination was institutionalized.

By the time British troops arrived in Northern Ireland in August of 1969, many factories and hundreds of homes had been burned, and thousands of Catholics had been forced to flee their homes (Thornton, 2007, p. 75). As Thornton (2007) explains, "despite the history between the Catholic population of Ireland and British forces, local Catholic communities actually greeted the Army effusively; 'much like the troops who arrived to liberate Paris in 1944'." (Dillon, 1991, p. 26 as cited in Thornton 2007). They

were seen as neutral and divorced from the Stormont government⁹ and its perceived lackey, the Protestant-dominated police force.” (p.76). The Official IRA, were loath to become involved militarily leading both to an initial Catholic reliance on the military (Thorton, 2007), as well as leading eventually to the formation of the Provisional IRA in response to OIRA inaction. Indeed, as the IRA had for years been seen as the source of protection for their communities against a loyalist attacks and a biased police force, the British Army and chief IRA figures were in contact in the early stages and to an extent allied in their attempts to protect communities and restore calm (Thornton, 2007). However, by 1970, a number of tactical errors on the part of British Army (from the use of predominantly Protestant forces, to the use of gases that disproportionately impacted Catholic areas), increasingly withered Catholic support for the British presence. For the respondents, this led to a situation in which there “was nothing else left but military action” (ISF).

This institutionalised discrimination and lack of access to political and economic power undermined the legitimacy of the State political institutions, sowing distrust and fostering a sense that the RM had to be self-reliant. This need for self-reliance, I1 argued blurred the lines between the politics of governing the community in order to meet its basic needs, and involvement in the conflict as in the republican communities

there was always a major drive for community, for local community infrastructure, to work on behalf of the people, to work in betterment for the people. And you deliver resources to make possible to do that because the state ghettoized our communities, very much under resourced [...] But it was also very much politicized because the people that were involved were also very much the people involved in the war.

By default then, SF2 holds, the republican community came to focus their attention on helping the community address its own needs as these constituents have generally traditionally found the State

⁹ Stormont – Northern Irish Parliament

agencies and government bodies unresponsive to their needs (see Institutions). The pursuit of movement goals and addressing of grievances through the existing political channels was not considered a viable option. The British state, Todd (2009) notes “rather than constituting an arena of democracy, continued to be seen as a power resource for the communities of Northern Ireland” (p. 343). With the division of the RM into the Official IRA and Provisional IRA, in 1971 the Provisional IRA published a document outlining the Provisionals’ political and social aims: “while *Eire Nua* demonstrated a side to the Provisionals that was not apparent in the headlines produce by the group’s violence....by publishing such a document, the Provisionals were demonstrating that they remained an organisation that would continue to maintain the means through which their goals could be negotiated” (Craig, 2012, p. 99). Thus this new incarnation of the RM announced early on its political bent.

Toward the end of 1973 and finalized in early 1974, Northern Ireland saw the signing of the first major attempt at negotiating an end to the conflict: the Sunningdale Agreement (SA). This agreement included elements of an Irish dimension and a new executive assembly but would ultimately collapse in the face of unionist disenchantment with the agreement (see Engagements). While SF had not been a signatory to the agreement (Appendix 7), the SA for a brief moment fanned interest in institutionalized politics, while its quick demise served to fan a lack of faith in the potential of such paths.

By the 1980s however, there was a sense that the military strategy alone was not going to be enough to force the change in British and unionist positions the RM required. In terms of the military strategy SF4 notes “I think there was a certain acceptance that it wasn't making political progress” (see Military Viability). As implied by Morrison’s ‘armalite and ballot box’ speech, for ISF and SF2, the sense that the strategy had stalled out was gradual and would wax and wane but, as SF2 says “more people were

having to come to terms with the fact that this was going to be a stalemate for, who knows how long, and that's not good enough." SF13 explains in greater detail:

the attitudes of the British you know, when you look at the 1970s and you look at the tactics and strategies, and when you get to the period of the hunger strikes and beyond, and their relationships with the political prisoners in the jails, you begin to see, I think, a slight change in atmosphere and energy and there is always a sounding out there of a sort of, you know, a recognition if I can use that word or a realization that they're not going to defeat the movement. So things begin to change and then there is a surge to find a compromise. Stalemate is a word that is often used, you know, a draw if you want to call it that

These stirrings, SF2 and ISF argue, drew further impetus from the mobilization surrounding the no-wash protests and hunger strikes surrounding the attempted criminalization of the republican prisoners of the late 1970s, early 1980s, "broadening the battlefield" as it were (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995, p. 247).

For ISF the fact that the British state allowed prisoner after prisoner to die on hunger strike while no political party or state body intervened, highlighted the movement's need to take matters into their own hands. As SF2 and ISF note, the significant support that hunger striker Bobby Sands received when he stood for election demonstrated the desire and interest of the republican base to make use of electoral and political institutions in the absence of any significant military advancements. Thus, in 1982 SF began running political candidates, meeting great success in 1983 with the election of Adams to the British parliament and receiving 45 percent of the nationalist vote (Moloney 2002; Taylor 1997; in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1521). SF's success, even with an abstentionist policy of not occupying the seats won, caught much of British opinion by surprise, "undermin[ing] the British government's public stereotyping of Sinn Féin and the IRA supporters as a "tiny, evil, extremist minority" (Irvin, 1999, p. 129). For ISF, Sands election was demonstrative: "[p]rior to that probably you know, Sinn Féin going for election would have been you

know, maybe a piss in the wind or whatever a nice way to say that is but the groundswell that rose in the support of Bobby Sands you know really did sort of say right you know, this is possible.”

Rather than growing directly out of support for SF as a party, the early support for Sands was as much fed by anger and frustration at the treatment of Republican prisoners and the immobility of both the Irish and British parliaments to intervene. For SF2

when all those families were repeatedly urging the Irish government, the political parties in Ireland to do something about it and none of them did anything, none of them lifted a finger, none of them, even those who might have been interested were unable to change any of the [...] for me personally that was a major, major lesson that unless we roll our sleeves up and get into that political world we're not going to, [change anything]. If we face a situation as grave as it was throughout the hunger strike period which was a rather short period but super intense, for me we were not able to shift those other political parties in Ireland, then we have to be in that arena to shift them, to become part of that. [...] So we then moved into 1980s and the party started to get elected, and I think in part of the 80s people were thinking this could be very opportunistic for us here to build because we are getting popular support, again, it's by difficult circumstances.

In light of this support, the growing awareness of a stalemate and the sense that more direct political action was required, SF and the RM began to adjust their political strategy. The move from military to a joint political-military strategy would not prove to be a seamless transition: a drop to 35 percent of the vote in 1987 was blamed on IRA violence, leading Adams' camp to push the IRA “to redefine, dilute, and ameliorate its campaign... to sell the idea of a political alternative “ (Moloney, 2002, p.241 as cited in Pruitt, 2007, p.1521). The potential for growth in institutionalized political strength began to increase in appeal and importance.

Accordingly, in 1986 Sinn Féin gave up the policy of abstentionism (White and Fraser, 2000, p. 338). The changing SF policy on electoralism and abstentionism was strongly referenced by SF2, ISF and SF13. For

ISF, the party's changing stance on running for office and taking their seats in Stormont is a question of changing the tools to best deal with the task at hand. SF2 notes that in light of the hunger strikes and seeming immobility of the State, caused the movement to rethink its overall strategy both in terms of the practical issues of mobilization and for long term change. He notes that in conjunction to the armed struggle SF was actively campaigning and involved with a number of organisations that were

articulating you know, repression and the strategies that were causing it and so on but beyond that you had nobody really with a plan or a strategy to break through that cycle. And so we would have been having this, as a party and a movement, having these internal debates about how to broaden the base of the struggle because an armed struggle in its own right is never going to achieve [...] victory or otherwise, so that was never really one of the real areas, but for me the hunger strike period really, in a sense brought those debates to the practical level.

Thus, the decision to involve itself more fully in electoral politics was seen as a means of working to implement changes SF had long since espoused. The change, SFI3 notes, was not immediate, but rather reflected a growing debate within the RM in reaction to the current political and social context and the possibility of improving the viability of SF as a political force: "if you look at the period around the 1981 hunger strikes you have a sense of electoralism [...] is taking shape within the internal discussions of the movement and how you can use political strength, because it is ultimately about the political strength." Nor was it accepted by all Republicans; the 1986 move toward the end of abstentionism saw the fracturing of Provisional Sinn Féin and the creation of Republican Sinn Féin under the leadership of long time republican leader Ruairí Ó Brádaigh (White and Fraser 2000). To this end, throughout the 1980s, SF and the RM sought to create a united nationalist front, expand its base, and drum up support internationally for the republican cause (see Support and Alliances). Yet, as SFI3 noted, the impact was not immediate. SF2 notes that "we had these policies and strategies about trying to build the peace process and we couldn't get them operationalized I mean or looked at so, I don't think anybody changed their policy or their view of the conflict." However, the focus was noticeably shifting to pushing for a more institutionalized political approach to obtaining movement goals.

Viability of the republican political project

The steps further into institutionalized politics, the signing of the GFA and subsequent agreements have led to a situation where not only is there a new “rhythm” to politics in Northern Ireland, but republicans have the means to pursue their goals through solely democratic means. For the pro-GFA Republicans, the goals of republicanism remain unchanged and the republican nationalist project remains viable. Accordingly, the RM points to SF’s electoral successes, as particular evidence of the projects viability. The respondents also point to changes in attitude toward the republican project as providing further opportunities, while pointing out that unionist resistance remains the primary obstacle for their success.

For the RM, the republican strategy of building its support and expanding its mandate (see Support and Alliances) has been demonstrably effective, paving the way for a stronger mandate with which to pursue their goals. As SF2 explains “I am satisfied that our strategy thus far has been successful because even on the hard nosed end of it I think we have given ourselves a political, peaceful, democratic way forward [...] And I think the people are standing by us in increasingly larger numbers with the electorate north and south of this country so people have some confidence that we are going in the right direction.” In terms of the potential for political success, for its part, SF has since experienced an almost steady rise in its vote share since the 1986 decision to put aside abstentionism. For SFI2, this growth was a process that “really came about after the cease fire once politics really became the way forward then we, while we had been involved in politics from the 80s we became a serious political force after, you know, as we gained in each election and each time we get stronger as a political party and then now we are in government in the North and opposition in the South.”

After the collapse of the SA, it would be several years before elements of the RM would refocus on electoral politics. As early as June of 1979 Adams had begun to publicly argue for the need for a greater involvement in the political process (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 109). While the RM would make the move to electoral politics with the election of Bobby Sands in 1981, it was not done so as Sinn Féin. Rather, Sands election to the Westminster seat of Fermanagh and South Tyrone was as an 'Anti-H-Block¹⁰/Armagh¹¹ Political Prisoner' (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 111). His election fanned the flame of debate on participation in electoral politics in the RM and in September of 1981 the IRA announced that it would endorse the running of Sinn Féin candidates (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 112). The wariness of pursuing the electoral path was likely, Guelke and Smyth (1992) argue, born of a fear that such participation would result in the disappearance of the armed campaign as had been the case with the Official Republican Movement. At the level of Westminster elections, SF earned 13.4% in the 1983 elections, in 1987 with 1 seat and 11.4% of the vote, the party lost ground in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the loss of Adam's West Belfast seat in 1992 with a vote share of 10%. Despite the initial early success, Guelke and Smyth (1992) note that the first decade of Sinn Féin's participation was one of significant fluctuations across the electoral landscape, with much of the SDLP gains at the expense of SF. The media ban against SF in the early 1980s (part of an attempt to encourage the growth of the SDLP at SF's expense) "damaged the British government internationally by questioning the integrity of the electoral process in Northern Ireland, though the government [...] attempted to meet this point by exempting election campaigns from the ban", concluding that "steps to isolate Sinn Féin politically by making it more difficult for the party to compete for votes could rebound on the government" (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 117-122). The halt to SF's growth would ultimately prove temporary.

¹⁰ Refers to the Maze Prison in Belfast

¹¹ Armagh Prison in Armagh, a largely women's prison

For all that SF saw its numbers slip, its success, and the success of the SDLP demonstrated the existence of support for the Republican project. As Justice (2005) notes, while SF is less centrist in their socio-economic platforms, and decidedly less constitutionalist than the SDLP, it nonetheless demonstrated significant support within the nationalist/republican community. SDLP and SF vote shares represent the near entirety of the vote within the Catholic identifying community, which in turn represents close to half of the population. Thus, within their constituent community, nationalist parties were a hegemonic majority, demonstrating the viability of the political project.

With the ongoing GFA process in the mid 1990s, this was reinforced when SF experienced an electoral boost to a 16.1% in 1997, 21.7% in 2005 before becoming the second largest party in Northern Ireland in 2005 with 24.3%. In 2010 SF had the largest vote share of northern Irish parties with 25.5% of the vote, before dropping back into a close second in 2015 with 24% to the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) 25.7%. Though there are fewer elections to create the pattern, and they are interrupted by periods of direct rule from Westminster, SF has seen a similar upward trend at the level of the Northern Irish in Stormont. SF first contested the elections in 1982 where they earned 10.1 % of the vote making them the fourth largest party in Northern Ireland. During the 1996 election to the Northern Ireland Forum as part of the talks for the GFA, SF would see its share rise to 15.47% before rising again to 17.63% during the 1998 elections. In 2003 SF became the second largest party in the Northern Irish Assembly with 23.5% of the vote. Following a series of short suspensions, in 2002 Northern Irish politics ground to a standstill over questions of decommissioning and policing and Direct Rule from Westminster was once more imposed until 2007 (BBC news, 14, March, 2008). In 2011 SF nonetheless managed to make some gains in its vote share earning 26.9% of the vote. SF has seen its entrance into the political realm rewarded by the nationalist community. (ARK 2015).

These electoral results for the RM, are evidence that the nationalist project has a chance at success. For SF2 republicanism has grown in strength. It is, he argues a “much stronger political force than it has been since the war of independence in Ireland and I think that is a big achievement. As I said it doesn't guarantee us our freedom as yet, I believe it can help us to get that but that means that we keep applying ourselves strategically and putting our time and effort and commitment into that and I see no evidence that that will not be the case.” SFI3 is in agreement, noting that much of SF's support is across the whole of the island “we have political representation in 31 of 32 counties in Ireland. We have in excess of 400,000 people the length and breadth of this country who share the political analysis, the Sinn Féin analysis.” The challenge for the RM, the respondents argue, is now to expand their base of support and their mandate. For SF1, SFI2 and SFI3, the RM has the advantage in this because, as they believe, for an island and population the size of that of Ireland, governing together is the most practical solution. For SF1, beyond the ideological, joint operations with the Republic of Ireland are the more practical solution for an island of this scale “and in this small island it makes more sense to have one education system, one health service, one economy, you know, rather than this small island having two split economies you know. And I think more and more people are seeing that you know.” As SFI2 holds “somewhere out there we feel that that is something we will achieve, it's something that is a common sense practical solution so part of me believes the penny has to drop for everyone at some point, that it will be realized that this is the most sensible way that a small island should take itself forward”.

Viability of the new political framework

As the 1980s progressed, a number of contextual changes helped the development of a new political and institutional framework that would culminate in the GFA (see also Institutions and Engagements). The RM holds that this new political framework developed in Northern Ireland better allowed for the pursuit of republican goals and aspirations through the institutionalized political framework. For the RM,

for all that there remains a conflict and unionism is still seen largely as an obstacle, this new framework has helped created a new, more peaceful, social and political context; provided concrete mechanisms for the pursuit of movement goals; and allows for a focus on expanding the movement's base and building a broader mandate.

Undoubtedly, within the new political framework, the violence of the conflict has de-escalated.

However, the respondents are equally adamant that the conflict, what SF2 refers to as "interference" in Northern Irish affairs, is ongoing. As SF13 explains "as a result of the cease fires of 1994 and 1996 and the peace process as we know it to date. [...] while the physical sort of manifestations of conflict have [...] certainly been reduced, I think the political end of the conflict still very much remains." There remains a number of issues of implementation and development of the GFA and corresponding agreements and institutions (see Institutions), however, for much of the RM, the biggest hindrance of the current political framework, is the question of unionist and loyalist intransigence. Patterson, (2012) has characterized unionist response to the GFA as "reactionary, inconsistent and divided", and notes that, the DUP, now the largest unionist party in Northern Ireland, was not a signatory to the GFA and was only 'brought on board' with the 2006 St. Andrew's Agreement. While highlighted by a number of respondents, SF1 and SF12 are perhaps the most explicit. For SF12 "right up until now you've got unionism out on the steps saying absolutely never and never accepting when all they are being asked is to, you know, maybe consider this. [...] they can't handle it, so that's where unionism still is very, very immature. They've never accepted the concept of democracy, the concept of equality."

SF1 also highlights the difficulties that can and do arise working with unionist and loyalist communities and politicians. The unionist and loyalist communities, as he and ISF note, have many legitimate complaints and are not simply driven by innate intransigence.

I suppose the biggest challenge for republicans in the here and now and over the years has been the unionist community. And so we've made a huge effort to try and engage with that community to try to settle the community in terms of its fears and concerns about their future on the island and we've done all of that. We've tried to get the message out as far as Sinn Féin is concerned, we want to make compromises with them and we've had some successes (SF1)

ISF notes that as the larger unionist and loyalist political parties have typically not seen their support come from working class communities, and as such many of the lower income unionist and loyalist communities have felt left behind by the GFA, and to ISF's mind, have been let down by their representatives. Patterson (2012) notes, that unionism has largely been disaffected with the GFA, believing for a long time – particularly until agreements on policing and decommissioning were finalized nearly a decade after its signing – that concessions had been largely in the favour of the nationalist community. This is exacerbated, ISF argues by the fact that many of those in these deprived communities can look to improvements in many of the nationalist communities and begin to perceive the GFA as largely favouring nationalist interests and leaving working class unionist and loyalist communities out to dry. Accordingly, with the new framework, the republican community must take into account to a greater degree, unionist interest and positions. As SF3 summarizes in addition to the primary republican goals

I don't want to talk about a struggle by any other means, its more complex than that, but it is [...] also about building a new society, its about you know, this is not about harking back to the Ireland of old, this is about actually trying to build a new forward looking dynamic society that recognizes diversity. There are people here on this island that views themselves as British, you know, they should have a place. There are people on this island who are non-white, they have a place. [...]It is about trying to put that in place. So, the fact that we've had the whole political process here is important, and its also important

because it is about building those relationships between unionism and nationalism on the island, and that is going to take time.

For all that the new framework forces the RM to deal more directly with unionist concerns, the respondents argue that the context and atmosphere in Northern Ireland is more peaceful and conducive to democratic politics than it was under the previous framework. AS SF13 notes “there’s a different dialogue now. I think the discourse is different.” SF1 holds “its just about the peace process really. So its in, this is one of the benefits of the peace process that you have a different society, a different rhythm, a different political rhythm in society today.” ISF explains that the years of conflict have polarized the communities and through the work both at the grassroots level and through the political institutions “through a lot of the work and a lot of the progression that’s gone on through the political arena a lot of those fears have been broken down”.

The question as to whether RM goals were met by the GFA is, to a degree, controversial (see Target Framing). That being said, much of the RM argues that the new political framework provides them with the means to pursue their political projects in the absence of armed conflict, an opportunity they argue that was, as noted above, simply not present in earlier decades. Further, MacGinty (2006) notes that the agreement was also important for addressing many of the related – but less constitutional – grievances of the nationalist community and RM (see Concessions). For SF1, the change in political atmosphere has not only been remarkable but is evidence of the success of republican efforts: “for the first time in almost a thousand years republicans have created a situation where, effectively, the republican nationalist gun I suppose has been taken out of Irish politics. And that has definitely been possible because of the political changes that have taken place.” SF2 contends that the work in Northern Ireland demonstrates the importance of changes to the political framework in order to address ongoing conflict as the conflict in Northern Ireland has long been presented as intractable: “they’re headcases, you can’t

do anything with them. But actually you can. You know, we are living proof of it. And that doesn't change the fact that we still have our own problems here, but we've also made an awful lot of progress". The peace process in Northern Ireland, he argues, is thus a "good model".

The GFA institutions improved access to political voice for nationalists and republicans in a number of respects (see MacGinty 2006; O'Leary 2007; Concessions; Institutions). SF12 argues that having the opportunity to move forward on the republican project is the main goal. The new political framework allows for this and as such "an all-Ireland solution is the main message and the rest of it becomes negotiable because what shape that looks like is going to be dictated by all of the different players making those decisions". As SF1 explains

we don't have a united Ireland, we don't have an independent Ireland but what we do have is, due to the changes that have been made by the British and Irish governments, ourselves and the unionist parties, there's a situation that has been created where now you can work for a united Ireland peacefully and democratically. And you can change society peacefully and democratically [...] Society today, in this part of the island, compared to society twenty years ago, it's night and day in terms of the positive changes that have taken place.

As the respondents note, the main 'objective' of an independent and socialist Ireland has not been obtained. However, they portray the ongoing peace process as an important vehicle for addressing republican goals and grievances, both on the scale of everyday community concerns and questions of broader political and ideological goals.

The new political framework not only changed the context surrounding the republican political project, but provided concrete mechanisms through which the RM could pursue its goals. Equality legislation in key institutions, not just the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, but within organizations such as the police, has helped a sense of improved viability of the pursuit of republican interests. In terms of

community governance SF13 notes that when the IRA “left the stage” as he phrases it, for the first time “there was an arena for, there was a forum where we were pursuing what it is we want on a purely political basis [...That] changed everything and then attitudes to policing as well has been a pivotal moment as well in terms, you know, the police service now where republicans sit on the policing boards and the district policing partnerships. We are playing a very full role in community life, political life.” Changes such as these allowed for longstanding grievances on issues such as policing to be begin to be addressed. SF1 concurs, noting that with the disarmament of state and non-state armed organizations “and the political processes that are in place, parliamentary processes, community processes that are in place now, people are using exclusively peaceful means, by and large to try and change the society in which they live.”

The new political framework provided for a number of institutions and institutional mechanisms that allowed for the democratic pursuit of the larger republican goal of a united Ireland; the implementation of power sharing, the potential border poll and the increase in North-South institutional cooperation (see Institutions). As SF2 has argued, without these arrangements the SDLP, let alone SF, would not have signed off on the GFA leading to the IRA’s 2005 declaration of the end of the war, and General De Chastelain’s confirmation that the IRA’s arsenal had been put beyond use (*BBC New*, 27 June, 2009). As SF2 notes “so if in the longer run I want to have Irish independence, I do need to have a mechanism by way I can get that” which the potential for the border poll allows (see Concessions; Target Framing).

Within this new framework, the RM holds, it has been able to develop a strategy to make use of this new framework. Changes in the relationship between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as within the UK itself (MacEvoy, 2008) helped increase the perceived viability of the political

path toward republican goals. As the movement saw the potential for the political framework to open up, it increasingly adjusted its strategy to take advantage. In particular, the republican strategy increasingly focused on expanding its support base and growing its mandate within both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (see Alliances and Support). As SF13 explains:

[W]e see this very much as a period of building political strength to be able to, we believe we have created a framework that allows for the taking forward of the desire for the reunification of our country by purely peaceful means. [...]I believe we have created the framework and we have the strategy, and the strategy is very much about building political strength north and south of Ireland. (SF13)

For many republican supporters, though the move to an all political strategy was supported, there was a fear that without arms, the movement would be giving up its primary bargaining chip. As Frenett and Smith (2012) discuss, the decision to call a ceasefire and enter into talks resulted in further splintering within the RM (see Fragmentation/Cohesion). Yet, ISF argues, the RM has not shied away from taking “big steps” when the pay is deemed worth the risk. As SF2 notes here are many who have said

that if the IRA gives up its arms you'll never have anything to negotiate with, I didn't accept that for example[...]just because the IRA is no longer there or weren't in the armed struggle, how do you have no leverage to negotiate? You have a mandate, get a bigger mandate you know, take initiatives, change the context you know, it has to be in the will of the political party to stretch itself to be creative, to be innovative. You know what I mean, to win public opinion because your biggest weapon should be the public really.

ISF sights as a further example, Gerry Adams' decision to run for office in County Louth in the Republic of Ireland. However, she argues this is an important part of building the necessary cross border support to work toward the movement's goals: “[O]ur people need to get the border out of their minds and get the colonization out of their mind and start to think, Louth is down the road, it's our country and that Dublin is our parliament, Dublin is our capital city. And it's amazing when you start saying that to people,

the people actually do start thinking... fair enough". The new political framework, for all the advantages the respondents espouse, is not without its complications.

As previously mentioned, there remains a great deal of friction between unionist/loyalist and nationalist/republican political parties both at the political and interpersonal levels. As late as the fall of 2015 the entirety of the DUP cabinet resigned – however symbolically and temporarily – over reports that the Provisional IRA still existed, and though the Police Service of Northern Ireland denied that the IRA were on ‘war footing’, there remained allegations that former Provisional IRA members were involved in sectarian killings over the summer (BBC News, 22 August 2015; BBC News, 19 October, 2015). This perception of intransigence, the respondents hold, can cause significant roadblocks in navigating the political framework, both in terms of the pursuit of movement goals, as well as in terms of the affairs of everyday governance. As SFI2 describes “we still work with unionists who will not talk to us, [...] I sit on committees with people who can hardly bring themselves to say a word to me. [...] there is a big step that needs to happen in a lot of unionism. They need to move, and they are resisting change so much.” Some of this intransigence, SFI3 argues is less sectarianism and more a response to SF’s increase in political strength and presence: “we are very much now about trying to strengthen our political base, our political strength and I think our opponents realize that, I think that in many ways informs the ferocious way in which they’ve been targeting our political movement”.

Additionally, ISF, SF3 and SFI2 note that the very fact that SF is now embedded in the new political framework brings with it a number of challenges with which, while it operated more heavily from outside the system, it did not have to contend. O’ Clery (1995) notes that UUP leader James Molyneux privately stated in the early 1990s that he “agreed with the British government’s strategy of wrapping

Adams up in politics so that the republican movement would not go back to ‘war’” (in Dixon, 2006, p. 66). The peace process itself, ISF notes, is a slow one to begin with, and it had many detractors from the beginning. As such the RM has to continuously build on the existing framework. SF12 notes that while the primary movement goals have not changed, they are more involved in the day to day politics and this can obscure the overall political commitments to movement goals as

we have become involved in negotiations and discussions and all of that, and in politics, you know, North and South, then you're involved in day to day stuff so you also have to have messages about lots of things [...] about health, about education, about welfare benefits, about welfare reform, about all of these issues that we now have to deal with. So we have many messages now.

This means, they argue that the process is slow. SF has thus had the difficult task of balancing change and stability. As SF3 notes, oftentimes people “get very frustrated at the length of time that the political process is taking and the very slow pace of change. We are trying to impact centuries of conflict so it’s not going to change overnight. But you have to also try and force the pace of change to keep the change and keep it dynamic.”

Thus, part of the republican job is to convince not only republicans and nationalists, but unionists, that a united Ireland best serves their interests. While the enormity of this task is without question, there are those in the RM who point out to the successes of a number of institutional initiatives and projects that have grown out of the peace process as providing an opportunity to demonstrate the viability of this plan to those unconvinced. Speaking at the end of 2013, SF13 held that SF’s support was strong and was proof of endorsement of its analysis, in addition to being consistently one of the largest parties in the assembly, he notes “[w]e are the biggest party in Belfast City Council, [...] right across the country, people are voting for Sinn Féin in increasing numbers so I think there is a sense that the Sinn Féin analysis of what we are saying is right. I think that people are accepting it.” SF1 argues that on some

small issues, there are times when “a very hard core unionist politician, and totally opposed to anything to do with Sinn Féin or republicanism or nationalism or anything” has come out in support of certain all-Ireland operations, such as for an all-Ireland cardiac care unit. Such movements, though small, SF1 sees as evidence of the potential viability of the project moving forward: “there's a sort of chink there, you know. And it's a chink that is being replicated throughout you know, Stormont and throughout the parties working cross border and stuff like that you know so. Strategies change, positions change you know, and it continually changes.” Electorally, Sinn Féin has had significant support since its decision to contest elections. The potential for electoral success appears to have enticed the movement toward greater emphasis on institutionalized politics, but was not indicative of sufficient viability within the Northern Irish institutional framework, as it existed, to encourage its pursuit as a singular strategy.

b. Military Viability

That the IRA caused significant damage, loss of life, and of property throughout its operational lifetime is not in question. Of those killed during the Troubles, republican paramilitaries were responsible for 59 percent of the deaths (Fay, Morrissey and Smythe, 2001). Prior to the attacks of September 11th in New York, the IRA's 1992 bombing of London was the most expensive terrorist attack; resulting in the government paying out more than 800 million pounds with an estimated cost of damages and loss of business of over 1 billion pounds (BBC News, 14, May 2004). However, there is debate over its effectiveness as a paramilitary force and the role it played in bringing about the eventual de-escalation in conflict in Northern Ireland. For the RM, perhaps unsurprisingly, there is little debate on these questions. The discussion of the military viability of the IRA, as discussed below, centers around three themes: the aim of reaching movement goals through armed struggles; assessments of the effectiveness

of the IRA's military campaign; and finally the impact of changes in national and international context on the viability of continuing the armed struggle.

Choosing Armed Struggle

While some authors, such as English (2003) suggest that the military campaign was unnecessary, with regard to the choice of the use of armed struggle and its aim of eventual negotiations with the British state, the RM holds the field of options from which this strategy was chosen was painfully limited. SFIR argues that the stage for military conflict was set with the Anglo-Irish war after which the island was partitioned and the British "armed the unionist section of our people." and Northern Ireland was set up to the advantage of the unionist population. As SF2 and SF3 argue, as the nationalist and republican community increasingly took issue with this divide, the response from unionism, loyalism and the British state to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s made clear to the republican community that armed struggle was the only option. The British troops, initially greeted hopefully as protectors, were soon seen by the Catholics as aggressors, and supporters of unionist hegemony and loyalist violence (see Political Viability). As SF3 notes, the response to the movement was violence leaving nationalists to fend for themselves. SF2 elaborates:

the Civil Rights Movement was beaten, it was shot off the streets and people resorted to armed struggle. [...] We had pogroms here in 1968 and 1969 where whole communities were being displaced [...] one of the things that was seared in to the people here's mind was that [Irish] government turning its' back on the North. I mean we were left to defend our own homes, left to defend ourselves for fifty, sixty years after partition [...] I had to defend my home and I make no apologies for that. I'd rather you [the British state] had've been there, I'd rather we didn't have to go out and defend our homes. And that moved from a defensive history right on to the point where the IRA regrouped and practically reformed and went on an offensive.

For much of the republican community, the violence associated with British, unionist, and loyalist responses, combined with the lack of support from the Republic of Ireland led the community to believe

that “we are never going to have rights within the Northern State, it is a sectarian state. The only way we can do it is by wresting. You know we can never ask for our freedom, we have to take it, we have to demand it” (SF3). Accordingly, armed struggle, ISF notes was “seen to be necessary and you know, there was a time when there was no other choice. There was nothing else left but military actions.”

While ISF admits that the “the negotiating table might not have always been the goal” the idea that a political solution to the conflict was to be required became part of the republican strategy with time. As MacStíofáin (1975) notes, the initial goal of the IRA was to make Northern Ireland “ungovernable” and bring about the retreat of the British from Ireland (in Drake, 1991, p. 45). As ISF and SF2 note, the notion that the armed struggle would have to give way to an extent to the political struggle gained ground in the 1980s around the period of the no-wash protests and hunger strikes. There began to emerge within SF a sense that a military solution alone was insufficient (Pruitt, 2007). As SF2 discussed in Political Viability, the failure of the British state to make any moves with regard to criminalization during the hunger strikes drove home the importance of the political aspect of the republican strategy. For all that, ISF notes, the State attempted to use the death of successive hunger strikers to “break” the RM, it had a rather different effect. She holds that, it was at this time that “the whole political input started as well. You know, Bobby Sands stood for election, the other hunger strikers stood for election and that's where the whole political war if you like, started on that level.” As Irvin (1999) expresses, SF’s quick electoral success demonstrated that support for the RM extended beyond the ‘fanatics’, as the state had claimed.

Increasingly, within the RM talks were seen as the natural progression to an inherently political conflict. As SF12 explains “mean I think most republicans accepted that you know, the point of the armed conflict

is to get us to a place where we can negotiate a settlement or negotiate whatever, the peace process”.

SF2 notes that while there are those that would suggest that without a united Ireland the RM has failed

I don't feel that way at all because you know the armed struggle was part of a set of circumstances, nobody, certainly not in my generation had planned to have an armed struggle, I mean I didn't. [...] I was born into it. It wasn't my fault. I inherited it but what I am determined to do is make sure we don't transfer it on to another generation. Which is why I think this generation of republican leadership is fundamentally different from what has happened in the past.”

As such, as ISF put it simply “for me the only way this war could have ended was the way it did”.

The IRA's military effectiveness

That is not to say, however, that the eventual peace process is viewed by the RM as either a failure, or the result of the military debilitation of the IRA. Frenett and Smith (2012) note that the very fact that the RM refers to the IRA as an ‘undefeated people’s army’ has helped energize anti-GFA republicans who seek to continue the Provisional IRA’s military campaign. Though mention is made of IRA failures, the respondents held that the armed campaign was what had made the talks possible; that overall, the IRA had been and remained a viable military force; and that the IRA had the will and means to continue had the talks proven less successful.

Failure for the IRA, SFIR and SF2 note, is primarily manifested in the fizzling out of previous military campaigns in the decades between partition and the Civil Rights movement. The IRA’s campaign has ebbed in previous incarnations of the conflict: the campaign “in the 1950s had been called off due to lack of public support and the IRA admitted as much in its statement ordering Volunteers to dump arms” (BBC News 6 June 2005; Frenett and Smith, 2012, p.386). As SFIR describes “there were IRA campaigns to break the connection with Britain but they did not succeed in any way, in moving the Brits toward any

sort of negotiated settlement.” As SF2 notes, successive generations “raised the flag” and did their best but ultimately served as a lesson for subsequent generations of republicans:

because it didn't move Britain to change from partition [...] you can say that was a failure every decade since partition but I don't like using that terminology because it insults the kind of people who 'thought I did my best and we went out and we did our best in the 1950s or 1960s' and it fizzled out or it came to an end in an honourable way. This generation of republicans since the end of 1960s early 1970s we made a determination in our own minds that this is not going to be allowed to continue,

However, the Civil Rights movement and the perception of the abandonment of Northern Ireland by the Republic saw a drastic re-organization, both organizationally and ideologically (see Fragmentation/ Cohesion), of SF and the IRA in the North. As Drake (1991) recounts

[t]he military and political reorganisation was also a recognition that the British were not going to be forced to leave Northern Ireland soon, and that therefore the PIRA had to prepare for a long war. Up until March 1976 according to Bishop and Mallie, or March 1977 according to Kelley, the PIRA had publicly declared each year that the next year would be the 'Year of Victory' and that 'one more heave' would force the British to quit. Thus long-term security and the need to build up a durable political base were not thought to be important. However, in a long war, it would be necessary to guard against deep penetration by informers and the security forces, and to build up a solid base of support among the northern Catholics” (p. 47).

From this point, the RM paints a far more effective picture of the IRA and its military campaign.

ISF notes that much of the effectiveness of the IRA as a military force came from the commitment and embeddedness of its volunteers in the community from which it grew. As she notes, that the volunteers came from ordinary citizens to contest the British state was testament to their effectiveness:

you're talking about men and women, you know, from ordinary working class backgrounds who took on the might of the British Empire. And that's what happened. I mean the British State had all sorts of weaponry they had very, very clever people, they had the power and they weren't able to break the IRA. And the IRA was made up of very clever people, very strong people too but it was like working Joe Blogs and Mary Jane you know?

The most notable success the respondents highlight, is their sense that without the IRA's armed campaign, there would have been no talks, and very little real change in Northern Ireland. As SF13 notes, the relationship between the armed struggle and the political one was not always completely straightforward. For instance, the armed struggle sent volunteer after volunteer to prison. With the British attempt to institute policies of criminalization, which denied the political nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland, there was a strong backlash in the republican community leading to the hunger strikes (MacEvoy, 2008). As SF13 explains the hunger strikes "changed I think the shape of everything" as "for the first time we enter electoral politics with Bobby as the elected MP [...] we've seen many opportunities than that we were able to go forward and demonstrated the validity of struggle. Unfortunately, war made politics possible."

In Kennedy-Pipe's (2006) assessment:

IRA violence had arguably played a part in persuading the British to dismantle the Stormont regime; it had kept the issue of Irish unity on the political agenda, souring Anglo-Irish relations for two decades; and it had arguably strengthened the SDLP. But the violence had also proved counter-productive. It had led to an increase in violence by loyalists against working class Catholics; it had alienated moderate nationalist opinion; and had done very little to dent British resolve at the governmental level (p.51).

Additionally, the Bank of Ireland estimated in 1990 that at the time, the conflict was costing Britain 358 billion pounds per year (*The Independent*, 22 May, 1990, in Drake, 1991, p. 55). From a Republican perspective, as ISF, SF2, SF3 and I1 outline, the impact of the armed struggle on the eventual negotiations could not be clearer. As SF2 says of the link between the IRA's campaign and the negotiations "I think it's self-evident. I don't think you would have had a discussion with anyone without having the armed struggle. [...] I don't believe there would have been any negotiations of any sort if it wasn't for armed struggle." I1 is equally explicit, the IRA "brought the British government to the

negotiating table through armed struggle". Such was the cost, perceived and actual, of the conflict that Patterson (1989) suggested that "provided the PIRA can survive militarily and maintain a bedrock of support in the Catholic community, they will wear down the will of the British government to remain in Northern Ireland" (Drake, 1991, p. 55).

The armed struggle was scaled up and down in order to exert the necessary pressure on the British government, or as one Provisional IRA commander phrased it "bring the situation to a crisis" (Coogan, 1987, p. 607, in Drake, 1991, p. 54). Thus the armed struggle SF3 explains, was about "bringing everybody else, in a sense, on to the same script" in order to move into the political arena. Cease fires, ISF argues, were used to push the negotiations to the forefront. She holds that "the cease fire got people to the table that maybe wouldn't, they may have been talking before the cease fire, but behind closed doors or very secretive you know, and that got people more open like". The IRA's control of its military campaign, I1 contends enabled them to better move the British government "onto a particular ground" to facilitate negotiations. Armed struggle, as all respondents made note of at one point, is not the end goal but "To create a whole new thinking pattern, to create a whole new scenario, that you know, we got so far through armed struggle, armed struggle gets you to that stage and now this will get us to the next stage."

The successful application of this pressure was made possible, in the RM's eyes, by the military viability of the IRA and its armed campaign. Not only was the IRA, in I1's estimation, an organization that "fought the British government to a standstill" but, as SF13 notes, it was one about which members of the British military establishment were forced to concede had developed from a position of weakness in the late 1960s, to a viable military organization. In 1984 the IRA nearly managed the successful assassination of

Prime Minister Thatcher and most of the cabinet (Drake, 1991, p. 52). Between 1985 and 1987 the IRA received 300 tons of weapons and explosives from Libya which were meant to be used in an escalation reminiscent of the Vietnamese “Tet Offensive” which had spurred American withdrawal from Vietnam (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1528). The material was enough to support the IRA campaign for, according to McKittrick for the whole of the following decade (in Drake, 1991, p. 51).

However, the British were able to intercept the bulk of the arms. The offensive was begun in 1988 and though British casualties did rise, the increase was not dramatic as authorities had been “tipped off” prior to several attacks. Through 1990 and 1991 the IRA began to abandon the tactic (Pruitt 2007, p. 1528). Examining rates of arrests and recruits, Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) argues that by 1990 the IRA could no longer sustain the war of attrition strategy (p. 297). Nonetheless, in 1991 the entire British cabinet was nearly taken out by an IRA mortar attack on 10 Downing Street (Neumann, 2007, p. 128). English (2003) offers a succinct overview of the state of the IRA’s military campaign in the early 1990s: in 1992

The day after the general elections...the IRA bombed London’s Baltic Exchange, killing three people and leading to a massive insurance pay out. To attack the City of London in this way was to attack a key part of the UK economy, and attracted more attention – internationally as well as in London itself – than did the killing of people in the north of Ireland – as the IRA well knew... members of the security forces were proving more difficult to kill as they became more adept at their anti-IRA role, and this too reinforced the logic of English bombs; during the 1970s 583 soldiers and police officers had been killed in the troubles; during the 1980s, 341” (figures derived from McKittrick, 2002, p.1494 in English 2003, p. 278).

Drake (1991) notes that one of the operational advantages of the IRA was that it did not require high levels of recruits, as by the mid-1970s, its “aim now is merely to maintain a level of violence which is too great to be ignored, and, in the words of a PIRA commander, to’...always retain the ability to bring the situation to a crisis” (Coogan, 1987, p. 604, in Drake, 1991, p. 54). Further, Hayes and McAllister (2005) note that high numbers of republican attacks took the form of punishment beatings that often do not

involve deaths or guns. Thus these attacks, like *kale borroka* in the Basque Country, may mark a military capacity not accounted for in accounts of IRA activity that focus on deaths or bombings. Hayes and McAllister (2005) note that this type of violence was significant, accounting for 46 per cent of paramilitary violence (both loyalist and republican) between 1981 and 2002. Nor was this the first time the IRA had seen its position assessed as one of stalemate with the British Army, having suggested as much during an offer to begin negotiations as far back as 1972 (Craig, 2012). Nonetheless, the capacity to create such a “crisis” remained. Despite Sánchez Cuenca’s (2007) assessment of the war of attrition strategy, the IRA was not without capability to damage British interests. While Sánchez Cuenca suggests the strategy had ceased to be viable in 1990, that same year a report in *The Independent* held the UK government estimate of IRA income at 5.3 million pounds (in Drake, 1991, p. 55).

In light of the IRA’s continued presence and ongoing operations, there were increasing moves by British officials to admit the difficulty of combatting an armed campaign by the Republicans. In a 1988 BBC interview, British General Glover is quoted as saying “In no way can, or will, the Provisional IRA ever be defeated militarily... The long war will last as long as the Provisional IRA have the stamina, the political motivation.... the wherewithal to sustain their campaign” (in Miller 1993, p. 76). For SFI3, General Glover’s assessment of the IRA is telling

Glover made this statement there was an acknowledgement that there's a sophisticated army here who had the backing of a community that supported it. What does that mean? It means that volunteers were coming forward. People were prepared to hold arms and explosives. There were safe houses. There was a massive network that allowed the Irish Republican Army to function. You cannot function in a guerilla warfare situation without all those resources.

While the British state, the respondents argue, had over time become more effective at controlling the IRA’s activities, having made significant inroads into the organization with the help of informants,

eventually reaching a stalemate it nonetheless, they argue, remained a sufficiently well motivated and equipped organization to force the States' hand with Canary Wharf bombing of 1996 and would have been willing and capable to continue the conflict had the talks not produced the GFA. For I1, the only opportunities in the conflict were those created by the RM in general, and more often than not, the IRA in particular (see Engagements).

The calling of the cease fire in 1994 I1 argues, was not the result of a weakened state of the IRA but rather a deliberate move on the part of the organization. Claims of the IRA's defeat or victory are controversial and often reflective of the needs of the narrative in which it is recounted. As Dixon (2012) notes, there are some authors whose work at times almost simultaneously references the IRA's defeat, victory, and draw. Claim's of the IRA's defeat have been made in the past, such as by elements of the British security services in the early 1970s (Dixon, 2012) which ultimately proved painfully erroneous. Further, as Dixon (2012) notes, claims that the IRA moved toward the peace process because of its impending defeat fail to take into account that though operations such as the Tet Offensive were indicative of military setbacks for the IRA, that was in the late 1980s, early 1990s, when steps had been underway in forging the peace process in the RM for years prior. Lastly, continued assaults, such as the attack on 10 Downing Street, Bishopgate and Canary Wharf, are all suggestive of a continued capacity to inflict massive damage (Dixon, 2012).

When the IRA declared its ceasefire, it did so in a statement "[r]ecognising the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the peace process" (AP/RN 1Sept, 1994, in English, 2003, p. 285). SFIR notes that commitment to a strategy of war has to be complete, and accordingly, the IRA was active in the field against British interests right up until the cease fires were called, it was not a question of a

weakened capacity. As I1 explains: “Cease fires came about because the IRA decided to have a cease fire. [...] it was generating success, so the IRA came from a position of strength when they announced a cease fire. And may I add to the annoyance of its volunteers because there were successes occurring but that’s the best time to negotiate, from a period of strength.” For the RM, the IRA’s ceasefire was not a surrender. As McKittrick explains “this is not an IRA surrender. The organisation has the guns, the expertise, the recruits to go on killing: it has not been militarily defeated. Rather, it has allowed itself to be persuaded that in the circumstances of today it stands a better chance of furthering its aims through politics than through violence” (*Independent* 1 Sept, 1994, in English, 2003, p. 286). As Dixon (2012) explains:

[w]hile the security forces had their success against the IRA they did not defeat them in the sense that the IRA was ‘overcome’ ... The governments and parties to the peace process did not believe the IRA had been defeated and therefore accepted that the IRA’s ceasefire was not permanent and that they might go back to ‘war’, which they did in the 1996-97 ... If the IRA had been defeated, the peace process would have been about managing their surrender and few if any painful concessions, such as on decommissioning and reform of the police, would have needed to be made to SinnFéin/IRA (p. 311).

These successes were born in part, I1 argues, by a strong understanding on the part of the IRA leadership, on how to most effectively impact the British after decades of operational and tactical learning (see Organizational Structures and Learning Processes):

The structure of the army had changed to a point where the, to fight an effective war, techniques, weaponry had changed. That happened. There was a clear understanding of the difficulties faced by the British State to economic warfare and so the bombings of England, Manchester, the bombing campaign that was put in place economically in the North. There started to be an understanding of what really hurt the British state

This understanding I1, SF12 and ISF argue, was fully demonstrated by the breaking of the ceasefire in 1996. Immediately following the cease fire, the respondents argue the State began to put up barriers to negotiation and sought to use the ceasefire as an opportunity to inflict structural damage on the IRA

(see Engagements and Tactics). The bombing of Canary Wharf was as ISF argues “a deliberate act to make the maximum impact. Again it was a move forward”. As SFI2 elaborates it was a definite move on the part of the IRA with which “it wasn't that we were trying to gain concessions. [...] We had shown our commitment and it was thrown back in our faces. A year and a half we had been trying to get into talks and it was thrown back so we needed something to move it forward, and that definitely moved it forward.” The bombing of Canary Wharf and the subsequent resumption of talks, Woodworth (2007) suggests “raises troubling issues for democrats” as the above participant responses suggests, the bombing was a deliberate attempt by the IRA to push forward talks the RM saw as floundering. As Woodworth (2007) describes “[t]he IRA’s renewed campaign in 1996, which focused on causing maximum damage to British business interests, arguably accelerated progress towards prisoner releases and the historic Belfast peace agreement. That, at least, is the opinion of such well placed observers as the former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, a key figure in the Irish peace process” (p. 65).

While not unexpected given their allegiances, the respondents offered as further evidence of the military viability of the IRA the sense that IRA volunteers were both willing and equipped to continue the conflict had the need arisen. While respondents acknowledged the strength of the British military and policing apparatus, they were nonetheless unanimous that had there been no other options. As I1 puts it, the stalemate with the British could have been maintained, “absolutely all day long. Did we have the equipment? Of course we did. Did we have the ability? Of course we did. Did we have the personnel? Of course we did. Did we have the intellect? Of course we did”. As Martin Mansergh (2006), one of the architects of the peace process, notes

[t]he physical and material ability to carry on the long war almost indefinitely was not in doubt. Whether there was the moral capacity to do so – with no realistic prospect of a military or political breakthrough, all led to the gradual realisation that political aims cannot be advanced in this way and may even go

backwards, and to a sense of responsibility towards those involved – was, however, something that had to be assessed. Paramilitary violence on both sides represented a form of political veto. While it was capable of prolonging the stalemate and frustrating political initiatives, it could advance little. As Gerry Adams has acknowledged, republicans could not achieve their aims on their own (p. 30).

The war as SF13 puts it, could have been sustained, the IRA left the stage, he notes, not prior or during the negotiations, but in 2005 once they could be assured of the process to a degree.

Criminalization and Ulsterization (see Tactics) were accompanied by an assessment by then Home Secretary Reginald Maudling of the goal of an “acceptable level” of violence in Northern Ireland (Kennedy Pipe, 2006, p. 48), is suggestive of the futility of the hope that an IRA campaign could push the British off the island. Though an action undertaken by a splinter group, the Real IRA bombing of Omagh in 1998 killing 28 “demonstrated the continued potency of the armed tradition” (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p. 53). Yet, as SF13 and ISF note, it was not about sustaining. As ISF recounts “You could continue on doing what you're doing for another ten years or twenty years leaving another few thousand people dead but what use is that?” As SF2 explains:

our assessment of our community and the republican ability to carry on the struggle would have been it could have carried on for another thirty years. There was sufficient support for that. There would not have been support to escalate it in any substantial way, [...though] a low intensity struggle for a period of time which in our view could have been maintained for quite some time. In fact that would have been probably one of the scary things for me [...] you could have continued that on indefinitely. So there wouldn't have been like ‘oh we need to get negotiations here because we're tired and we're frightened of the future.’ I stress that I don't say that in any bravado sense.

This ability to continue the conflict indefinitely in a low level intractable context, was amplified by the sense of the continued commitment of volunteers themselves to the armed struggle. In this regard SFIR is perhaps the most straightforward: “I served 21 years in prison as a result of my involvement in the IRA and I was released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In all probability, if the

conflict was still continuing today I would probably still be active in the IRA". While perhaps unknowable, it is nonetheless indicative of a belief in the willingness of the movement to continue armed struggle. The respondents were adamant that fear and fatigue among the volunteers was not a factor in the movement's strategic choices, with I1 saying simply "no". SFI3 and SFI2 elaborate somewhat further, suggesting that while not a determining factor, once the military strategy appeared to plateau fatigue becomes more of a factor as there is no change on the horizon. For SFI3 "it has been a long war. But I think the war could have been sustained. [...] if you're sustaining something simply for the sake of sustaining it, then you know, I would question what value is that, as a tactic. [...] Fear, I don't think, comes into it. Fatigue, you know, we've disproven that, it was a long war, you know, we stuck at it."

Sticking at it, it was increasingly seen, would bring about little more than a continued stalemate. As Kennedy-Pipe (2006) recounts "there is simply little doubt that by the end of the 1980s the IRA had begun to doubt its ability to push the British out of Ireland" (p.51). SFI2 agrees that fatigue set in during the stalemate but that "most republicans accepted that you know, the point of the armed conflict is to get us to a place where we can negotiate a settlement or negotiate whatever, the peace process". Further, SFI2 notes that there were many within the ranks of the volunteers that at the time of the cease fire's announcement, were not convinced the timing was right, a sentiment with which I1 concurred. The idea that armed struggle could be maintained but only if there were no other options was seconded by I1: "it came very clearly to the point of saying if the core issues still remain, then we all return back to prison, but we also damn another generation to imprisonment" (I1). For SF4 the obligation was clear, and demonstrated by repeated returns to the negotiating table: "the whole move to negotiations, no matter how troublesome and tricky and things like that there that it was, was a willingness by republicans to create a framework and structure that could attain their ultimate goals by

not using armed struggle.” As such he, like Mansergh (2006) notes “morally the obligation is that if there is an alternative to armed struggle that could potentially deliver the objective or advance your objectives than you need to look at that alternative”.

Of further note, renouncing the armed campaign and its inherent contradictions was not simply a question of its effectiveness against the British. As Kennedy-Pipe (2006) argues “the perceived need to continue to defend the Catholic community against loyalist attacks made it difficult for the IRA to relinquish its struggle, let alone its arms. Indeed, as Mark Urban (1996) has noted, from 1993 onwards, the conflict in the province had changed in character: The British Army was not killing republicans anymore; but loyalist were killing Catholics in greater numbers” (p. 274 in Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p. 52). Hayes and McAllister (2005) note that beginning in the late 1980s it had been Loyalist forces who were responsible for the greater number of both murders and paramilitary style assaults. Military force remained a means for the IRA to pressure the British state, if not out, at least to the negotiating table. In addition to the costly bombings of London in the early 1990s, the devastating explosion at Canary Wharf in 1996 was seen as being meant to pressure the British Government to press ahead with stalled talks (Pruitt, 2007). Thus, while there was a growing acceptance that the military campaign alone was insufficient to push the British from Ireland, there remained a sense of the IRA’s capacity, and at times, obligation, to continue to use military pressure to defend and gain concessions for its community.

Changing context and changing strategies

Despite the stated continued commitment to continuation of the armed campaign should it have proven necessary, a series of contextual changes made the military strategy appear less viable. In particular, the respondents note that it was long held that talks, not a military victory, was the inevitable end of the

conflict and this spread with British attempts at engagement (see Engagement; see Concessions); that the British and republican forces had reached a stalemate; and that with that stalemate a gradual change was noted in the British attitude toward the military conflict.

As SF2 holds, it was not enough to be capable of continuing: “determination remained to continue the armed struggle but for me and many others that would not have ever have been enough, continuing the struggle.” As the respondents noted above, armed campaigning was selected as it was seen as the only viable option. Increasingly however, it came to be seen as part of, not the whole of, the republican arsenal. Accordingly, ISF argues “you don’t carry on shooting or bombing, you know, for the sake of it. If it’s not moving you forward than you have to find something that will.” As such ISF continues that “[n]ow there is a choice. When that choice came through the political arena, it had to be taken to save lives. [...] so if lives can be saved and still fight your fight through the political arena, that’s the way to go.” As SFI2 explains

you can’t keep on fighting a war forever and a day, and not actually getting closer to where you want to be, because the point of the armed struggle was to get to a point where you could negotiate solutions. And there are, there has to come a point where you ask yourself are we being effective? Or are we being contained at all? At the end of the day people are being killed, people are going to jail and you have to ask yourself are we being effective, are we winning really?

Based on this, when the opportunity was noted to move the conflict from the military to the political arena, the RM made the change. ISF contends that “We had gone as far as we could possibly go in that method and now the conflict in that sense, the military sense has ceased, but the political conflict is still just as strong and important.” For all that the IRA would maintain a damaging military capacity for years after, as early as 1983, voices within SF began to express doubts about an entirely military solution (Hennessey 2002 in Pruitt, 2007, p.1527). The conflict in Northern Ireland, the respondents contend, is inherently political and as such a negotiated end to the conflict had for much – though not all of the

conflict – been envisaged as the way out (see Political Viability and Target Framing). Accordingly, as the opportunity arose to move to the political arena, combined with the growing awareness of a stalemate with the British state, as SFIR explains “if the IRA did not have the wherewithal to drive the British Army into the sea, and I don't believe that they did, it means then that the only way that the war could end is around an negotiating table.” As SF12 and ISF noted, armed struggle was seen as a means to take their seat at the table “armed struggle gets you to that stage and now this will get us to the next stage” (ISF).

The sense that the British and republican forces had reached a stalemate was widely cited both outside of, and within, the RM. During this period, the republican strategy of the “armalite and the ballot box” came into greater play. Taylor (1997) reports that by 1986 Adams had written “There is a realization...in republican circles that armed struggle on its own is inadequate” (p. 336). This was followed a year later in an by an interview in which he said “there's no military solution, none whatsoever...There can only be a political solution... an alternative, unarmed struggle, to attain Irish independence” (Taylor, 1997, p. 353). Even those who most adamantly insisted on the IRA's ability to continue the conflict indefinitely, did not suggest that the IRA might ever be able to achieve an outright 'victory' over British forces. SFIR likens the stalemate in Northern Ireland to American involvement in Vietnam, explaining that: “There was definitely a stalemate that had been reached. The IRA knew that they could not drive the British into the sea but the British had historically refused to accept that they could not defeat the IRA. Once they did accept that they could not defeat the IRA, then that then opens up other channels of alright, what do we do here, how do we bring this conflict to an end?” The respondents were unanimous in their assessment that by the late 1980s, a stalemate had been reached between the IRA and British forces, having fought, as I1 phrases it “to a standstill”. SF1 is direct in characterizing the military campaign as one of war. As SF4 notes “there was a certain acceptance that it wasn't making political progress. As I say, it wasn't as though we had suddenly discovered pacifism.” For all that, as Pruitt

(2007) notes, the UK was able to crack down significantly on IRA operations, essentially dismantling the Tet Offensive before it began, it was unable to do away with the IRA either. This much was acknowledged by British officials in the late 1980s (Miller, 1993; Guelke, 2001) and Republicans alike. As SF2 notes “they had control of the apparatus, I mean, they had the military, they had the police, they had the judicial system, they had the governance, they had the pounds, shillings and pence to run government they had all of that so they were always much stronger.” As SF13 and ISF note, despite this discrepancy in available resources the IRA had “an enemy, an opponent, who are throwing all their resources at us, I mean they've tried and tried to defeat republicans, to portray us as I say, as criminals” (SF13) attempting to demoralize both the volunteers and their supporters through policies of policing and criminalization.

Yet, as ISF notes, despite their efforts in the 1980s, the State was unable to “break” the prisoners or criminalize them in the eyes of their supporters and “instead of breaking it, the mobilization outside on the street actually added to the whole impetus and whole movement.” This thus meant that not only could the British not defeat the IRA, but, she argues, neither could they defeat republicanism: “[t]he British couldn't break the republican movement. You can't break the will of the people to be free. And likewise the IRA, with all their might and all their successes, and all their operations you know, couldn't break the British you know. So it is a stalemate.” SF3 for her part puts the stalemate into a more historical context arguing that the conflict need be seen as part of one that goes back centuries, noting that ultimately a political solution was necessary:

it would have been very, very clear that while the IRA were never going to be beaten, the IRA were never going to beat the British either. It's this idea of just, I suppose in a sense two sides fought each other to a standstill. And it was never going to go anywhere else. And the other point is, because the conflict had a political basis, its only right that it has to be politics that takes primacy at a certain stage in all of this.

For many, as SF2 summarizes, a “military victory” was never a likely outcome. In 1988 Adams himself acknowledged that “there is not military solution” and that he would “consider an alternative unarmed form of struggle” (Taylor, 1997, p. 353).

Much of this sense was owed to a number of contextual changes in the 1980s and 1990s. The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) in 1985 saw increased policing cooperation between the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Britain, curbing IRA access to what was once a safe haven (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1522, see Engagements). The British state itself, while certainly not anticipating an IRA victory, came to see the military and policing defeat of the IRA, following decades of just such an approach, as unlikely. In 1989 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Brooke stated as much: “it is difficult to envisage a military defeat of the IRA” (in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1526). While arguably such a statement was, at least in part, a conciliatory gesture toward the IRA and RM, it is nonetheless reflective of two decades of unsuccessful military and policing led efforts to end the conflict. Thus, the IRA maintained a degree of military viability sufficient to pose a continued problem of the British state.

With this growing sense of a stalemate amongst republicans were perceived changes in the British understanding of the conflict. The end of the Cold War, and the moves towards resolutions in conflicts such as that of South Africa, not only demonstrated the possibility for the transformation of once seemingly intractable conflicts, but also impacted the interest and potential allies of both Britain and republicans (see Alliances and Learning Processes). As SFI3 explains, the British attitude to the conflict evolved and developed throughout the conflict:

the attitudes of the British you know, when you look at the 1970s and you look at the tactics and strategies, and when you get to the period of the hunger strikes and beyond, and their relationships with the political prisoners in the

jails, you begin to see, I think, a slight change in atmosphere and energy and there is always a sounding out there of a sort of you know, a recognition [...] that they're not going to defeat the movement. So things begin to change and then there is a surge to find a compromise. Stalemate is a word that is often used, you know, a draw if you want to call it that. But the fact is that the British, with all their resources, could not defeat the Irish Republican Army

Like ISF, SFI3 argues this realization applied not just to the military front but to republican goals and the movement itself: "I think that somewhere along the line they realized that they couldn't defeat republicanism and that was reflected in the Good Friday Agreement I think, so maybe there was an awareness at that level." The military stalemate contributed to the change in British attitude toward engagement that opened up greater possibilities for political engagement (Political Viability).

This attitude shift was reinforced following the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. Not only did this impact the potential international support for republicanism and the IRA (see Alliances), but it also impacted how the British state dealt with Northern Ireland. On the one hand, tolerance for terrorist actions was greatly reduced in public opinion. However, as I1 notes, as Britain began to engage in the U.S led 'war on terror' it was also motivated to put to bed in a more permanent fashion the conflict in its own backyard, so as not to be fighting on multiple fronts. This also helped reinforce the de-escalation process, as this new global context I1 argues, helped diffuse any enthusiasm that might have existed for a return to the armed campaign. As SFI2 notes, the de-escalation process was at this point, ongoing and so rather than impacting a move to negotiations, would have helped reinforce the existing peace process. Though the GFA certainly marks one of the largest milestones in the process, it is but one peace. As she explains, the commitment of the IRA to the new military strategy was tested until "2005 basically, the IRA left the scene. Completely. So, I suppose over a period of eleven years".

The concrete steps toward de-escalation and the GFA, rather than being taken in the context of the IRA's military defeat, were taken during a slowly growing realization that the military campaign was not enough. This realization was an incremental one, taking root in the early 1980s, and reinforced by increased British-Irish cooperation, the failure of large scale operations (such as the Tet Offensive), and a growing sense of stalemate. Notably, the sense was that of a stalemate rather than defeat, or fear of extinction. Thus the IRA and the RM had a degree of optimism concerning the strength of their position in the event of negotiations. Further, this lack of fear of extinction, as Kriesberg (1998) and Pruitt (2007) note, increases the viability of the RM as a negotiating partner for the state. Thus, the balance between a sense of stalemate, but a position of relative military viability, helped increase the RM's optimism in negotiations, while the stalemate made negotiations appear a more inviting option.

c. Support

The RM very clearly sees itself as a movement operating with the support of its constituent community: with the IRA as an 'undefeated people's army'. Thematically, this section explores the strength of support of the movement with respect to members of the nationalist and republican communities as born of the movement's involvement in the community; the continued support for both the RM's projects and support; and, as impacted by fear and fatigue but not irreparably so.

Sources of republican support

Given its self-portrayal of the IRA as a 'peoples' army', the RM is adamant in their statement of the importance of maintaining the support of their base. It is a support they hold, that was earned by the movement and which was built up through their active engagement in the community.

The notion that the RM had the support of its community behind it for the duration of the conflict is one oft repeated by the respondents. As SFI3 argues, part of the reason the British came to accept that a stalemate with the IRA was the only likely outcome on the current path relates to the depth of their support within their community: the British, “with all their resources, could not defeat the Irish Republican Army [...] you have a movement mission where we have political representation in 31 of 32 counties in Ireland. We have in excess of 400,000 people the length and breadth of this country who share the political analysis” of SF. As a sign of British acknowledgment of this support, SFI3 notes the strong community reaction that took place in the face of State efforts of criminalization of the conflict in the 1980s. As he explains: “You will not criminalize this war. You will not criminalize the movement. You will not criminalize the hunger strikes, the hunger strikers. [...] like they are trying now to say, retrospectively, that we were a mass criminal conspiracy. But I think that is more borne on their fear of where we are and our potential political strength and our potential growth.” For former deputy governor of the Maze Prison, Duncan McLoughlin, has said “I think that criminalisation was a significant error of judgement by government,” (*BBC News*, 4 May 2001). As he explains, the criminalization was

a denial of its [the IRA's] history, of its ideology and it was a challenge that had to be answered... My feeling is that at the time, the Provisional IRA did not want to be sidetracked by prisoner issues.... However, once the criminalisation policy was implemented, the prison became a battlefield rather than a scene of the occasional skirmish in the confrontation between the British Government and the republican paramilitary movement.

Ultimately, he suggests, the protests “provided a vehicle for international support for the movement that put the government on the back foot.” (*BBC News*, 4 May, 2001). An estimated 100,000 people attended the funeral of hunger striker Bobby Sands (CAIN). Further demonstrating this support is the fact that Sands won his seat not as a SF representative but as a representative of the political prisoners.

As SF12 elaborates, for both those active and not within the movement, it was important that the base and movement alike have faith in the movement goals and strategy. While she argues much of the support of the movement came from faith in the leadership (see Organizational Structure), this would not have been sufficient as people “have their views of it as well, people believe in it so its not just we are being told this is where we are going, people actually have to believe it too or we wouldn't do it”. There are many who held that without the IRA, the RM ran the risk of losing the leverage it held against the British state. Instead, SF2 argues that the breadth and depth of support for the RM and its goals can and will provide the necessary pressure: “get a bigger mandate you know, take initiatives, change the context you know, it has to be in the will of the political party to stretch itself to be creative, to be innovative. You know what I mean, to win public opinion because your biggest weapon should be the public really.”

While they argue support for the RM and its goals remain strong, the respondents also suggest that the base, overall, was supportive of the shift in strategy away from the military campaign. For SF1 “Society opened up in the course of the peace process and new circumstances then began to emerge. People's lives began to change significantly and the political culture then, which was dominated by armed conflict, changed, and became dominated by the consequences of the peace process.” These lived changes he argues, helped build support for the ongoing process of de-escalation and transformation of the conflict:

People knew, when the IRA called a ceasefire that something quite fundamental and world changing in their world was happening. [...] the release of prisoners, demilitarization of society by the British government, the new police service, the disbandment of the armed militias that were killing people and repressing people, all of those different things, people were living the change, the young people particularly you know, were taking advantage of the new society that was emerging and the backdrop of peace.

This is particularly imports I1 argues, given that the RM draws its support from the community in which it is based, the base needs to see that a difference is being made in their lives. He notes that “you have to ensure to keep the things moving, that people can see change, people can relate to the type of politics that's being delivered because if there is a detachment from the people on the ground and whatever they are realizing in the political world, there will be a complete and utter breakdown of the de-escalation of military operations or so called peace settlements. “The depth of this support, demonstrated in the relatively steady electoral growth SF experience at both the Westminster and National Assembly levels (see Political Viability) is born, in the eyes of the RM, of two reasons.

First of all, the RM sees itself as a movement born from, and representative of, its support base. As ISF notes, this engagement is possible because the members of the RM are fundamentally part of the community “we all live in our own communities and we all represent our own communities which just adds to it you know?” Not only, she argues, do they represent their communities, but the membership of the RM is drawn from those same communities; it is not an elitist organization. Rather, “you're talking about ordinary people, you're talking about men and women you know from ordinary working class backgrounds who took on the might of the British Empire”. This has led, to a movement that is not only highly grassroots in nature, but as Drake (1991) explains, was able to make use of its ties to the community to gather intelligence, as well as by encouraging IRA recruits to take up positions in local administrative bodies to gather further intelligence.

Given the structure of the RM's constituent organisations, particularly SF, decisions on policy are ultimately taken by the membership itself (see Organisational Structure). The decision making structure for a party born of the community, they argue, is almost necessarily grassroots. For SF2 “the fundamentals of the party would be very much grassroots.” As SFI2 explains:

republicanism again as a movement would have what you call family meetings [...] say in the local hall and bring together all the republicans and anybody who wants to come along and so the republican leadership would have given their analysis. So that would have happened at times, you know, whatever ceasefire times, decommissioning, policing, big big times whenever we were facing challenges, facing challenging decisions and it would have been part of keeping the community informed and that was important.

It is this grassroots involvement that SF2 credits for the success of SF. He suggests that even SF's opponents acknowledge it as one that works "very much at a grassroots level," and while those same opponents suggest that

we are only doing well electorally because we are exploiting disadvantaged communities but we would say we are part of those communities and we are working for them and we're mobilizing people. So that's not exploitation that's actually working with people, and people were then paying us back maybe like by electing us. Then obviously that was very legitimate on behalf of those people who do that but we don't see it as payback we see it as the stronger our mandate is the more we can do and we do it with people

This is reflective of the second reason highlighted for the support for the RM – engagement with the community itself.

As I1 explains, given the divided nature of politics in Northern Ireland and the history of disadvantage and disenfranchisement typical in many the nationalist and Catholic communities, an important part of the republican project has been to step into the infrastructural and development gap in government projects. Even something as simple as the creation of the now famous 'Black Taxi' service in West Belfast was created in response to the inaccessibility of public transport in Catholic areas due to blockades and militarization throughout the Troubles. Within the RM, I1 argues, there has always been a "major drive for community, for local community infrastructure, to work on behalf of the people. [...] the state ghettoized our communities, very much under resourced, [...Thus] republicans were always involved in building the community. If you want, giving ownership to its people". As SF1 and SF2 explain, in addition to the overall movement goal, the RM has focused on this commitment to building within their

communities the very type of community they feel the State has deprived them of; to build the possibility for and sense of, sovereignty. Following the SF's move to electoral participation, in 1982 it began to set up advice centers in Catholic communities across Northern Ireland. As Bishop and Mallie (1988) explain "By 1984 Sinn Féin was established in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry as the most efficient means of redress against the agencies of the State, with more advice bureaus than the rest of Northern Ireland's political parties put together" (p. 412, in Drake, 1991, p. 46). As SF2 expands the RM ideology "is about empowering people as well, again, rooted in the sovereignty of the people in our basic ideology. [...] providing support to people at the local level but also mobilizing local people to fight their battles, [...] So, it's really a campaigning party." This means addressing everyday concerns on the way to a 32 county state: "is the quality of the education up to the standard to give young people a future? So there's a whole set of different criteria to judge yourself by and people judge you by in these circumstances because it's really now about the quality of people's lives, about equality, about cultural justice" (SF1).

One of the rallying points of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s ISF recalls, was protesting gerrymandering and demanding the right for votes in Catholic areas to be as equally valued as those in Protestant areas. Accordingly, ISF argues:

The vote to me is something that people died for, something people fought for. [...] so the vote to me has to be earned and it has to be used. And that's the way I see it, why Sinn Féin are so powerful and why they are getting such a strong mandate. Because they are on the streets. They don't please everybody, they don't do everything for everybody by any means, but people do see them actually active in their communities.

As Rudolph (2008) suggests, the ability of a movement to address the socio-economic, and social justice grievances of their constituencies, can greatly attribute to a group's ability to transition from a primarily military focused movement, to one more institutionally and politically focused. In this sense, as discussed further in Concessions, SF, and to an extent the IRA itself (through its protection of Catholic

areas – both perceived and actual), have done much to build support and goodwill for the movement within large segments of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.

Support for republican projects

In broad strokes, assessing the support for the overall republican projects can be made on the basis of two indicators: the electoral support awarded SF, and desire for the movements' long term goal, particularly that of a 32 county united Ireland. For SFI3 "political strength, that's probably for me, the clearest barometer of the strength of the movement, and the fact that we have grown in strength, I think gives you an indication of how far we've come. I mean, I think, we were in a strong position". This is, for SFI3, of critical importance "because it is ultimately about the political strength".

As BBC reporter Conor Macauley writes, the Hunger Strikes marked a moment of politicization for many republicans (*BBC News*, 5 May 2011). SF's electoral growth, as discussed in *Political Viability*, took off during the Hunger Strikes of the 1980s. As ISF summarizes:

Prior to that probably you know, Sinn Féin going for election would have been you know, maybe a piss in the wind or whatever a nice way to say that is but the groundswell that rose in the support of Bobby Sands you know really did sort of say right, you know, this is possible. And it's shown now. I mean the massive vote that comes out for Sinn Féin is amazing, you know. And given that relatively short period of time too. And an awful lot of that is down to the hard work of Sinn Féin activists.

For SF2, the Hunger Strikes brought home the importance of expanding their base (see *Political Viability*, *Alliances and Learning Processes*). While the RM, he notes, was already debating internally the merits of expanding its support base, the lack of political movement in defense of the Hunger Strikers at the institutionalized political level brought home not only the importance of electoral politics but that of broadening their institutionalized support base.

While, as SF1 argues, like many others, SF often looks to the electoral results as evidence of their support, “there are other tests, other measures to judge us by. So for example, what's the level of unemployment, what's the detail quality of people's lives in terms of you know, their social circumstances, their economic circumstances?” Not only has the electoral landscape changed drastically since the 1960s, ISF notes, in terms of elected representatives, but what those representatives signify which is “they represent thousands and thousands of people who support the republican strategy and who support the republican struggle.” For SFI3 this means that “[t]he political analysis, and the republican analysis is one I think people are increasingly listening to, and I think they're listening and saying 'there is validity in this'.” As, he discussed in *Political Viability*, there are, on some issues, even Unionist politicians who have accepted some amount of the republican analysis (see also *Concessions*).

For all the respondents' enthusiasm in outlining SF's electoral success as evidence of the support for the movement goals, it should be noted, that while support for the notion of a 32 county Ireland has not dropped significantly, neither has it appeared to surge forward. In a 1990 *Guardian* poll, 59 per cent of opted in favour of a British troop withdrawal (14 Nov, in Drake, 1991, p. 55). In 1999 amongst those Northern Irish Catholics surveyed 7.4% held a lot of sympathy for the use of paramilitary violence, with 34.6 % holding a little sympathy and 58% holding no sympathy (Hayes & McAllister, 2005, p. 607). As noted in Keating (2001) in 1996, one survey showed “15% of Catholics in favour of remaining with the United Kingdom, while 34 per cent wanted to join the Republic (Evans and O'Leary, 1997, p. 70). A Life and Times Survey in 2011 showed 73% of respondents preferred to stay in the Union over uniting with the Republic of Ireland, including 52% of Catholics living in Northern Ireland surveyed (Guardian 2011b). In 2006 56% of Catholics favoured unification, and 1998 49% preferred unification with the rest of

Ireland, and only 19% favoured remaining part of the UK (NILT 2012). In one October 2015 poll excluding those who offered no opinion found 40.2 percent of respondents opted for Irish unity either immediately, or within the next twenty years. When the results are broken down into only those who identified as Catholic 9.8 percent opted for immediate independence and 39.5 percent within the next 20 years, giving a total of 48.3 percent of the community in favour of the long term goal of a 32 county state. Interestingly, even within those who identified as Catholic, a substantial percentage (30.1) offered no opinion, leaving the no vote at 20.6 percent. Interestingly, 11.4 percent of the self-identified Protestants opted for Irish unity, either long term, or immediately (1.8 percent) (*Belfast Telegraph*, 29 October, 2015). That being said, there was notable support across both communities for the notion of conducting, in accordance with the GFA, a border poll. 52.6 percent of respondents opted to hold a border poll. Of those who voted yes, interestingly, only 52.8 percent identified as Catholic, with 22.4 percent identifying as Protestant, and 24.8 percent as no religion or other (*Belfast Telegraph*, 29 October, 2015). Accordingly support for republican projects remains significant, having neither grown nor plummeted, but particularly in a region of divided communities, the support is not sufficiently hegemonic that Republican goals are (or were) immediately within reach.

Support of the strategy

As noted, the RM and its supporters refer to the IRA as 'the undefeated people's army'. The IRA, it argues, earned its support through its involvement in the community as the "the very organization that has brought the British government to the negotiating table through armed struggle". As Hayes and McAllister (2005) note "[p]erhaps more than anything else, the Northern Ireland conflict has been sustained by popular ambiguity that exists toward the use of political violence" (p. 605). For many within the RM, the armed struggle and the IRA were necessary and important parts of their struggle. As SF1 explains "You know, when the war was at its height, what people were primarily concerned about was

staying alive, not to be caught up in it, not to die. Some people, republicans, would've had children in jail. You know. Catholics were being killed. You know. There was just a totally different set of reference points for people." That being said, even at the onset "the Catholic community it claimed to represent was not supportive of an unlimited guerrilla campaign and there was almost immediate disenchantment when either the Official or Provisional IRA overstepped the mark" (Craig, 2012, p. 98).

For many who became involved in the RM, and for the republican community more generally, the armed struggle was a direct response to the harrowing conditions on the ground within their communities (see Political and Military Viability). As late as 1999, one survey in Northern Ireland suggested 42 percent had some support for paramilitary violence (Hayes and McAllister, 2005, p. 607). The authors note that despite the transition to a wholly institutionalized political process, there remains within the Catholic community a significant bloc of support for the historical use of paramilitary violence (Hayes and McAllister, 2005). As ISF explains "I was actually thirteen when a man asked me to carry a gun for him, from one area to another and I didn't hesitate because I saw the IRA as the protectors of our areas which is what they were. You know. People felt safe when the IRA were on patrol or were on the streets". For I1 this was a crucial element of support for the IRA and the armed campaign:

the IRA was representative of the people, they lived within the neighbourhoods, they came from the neighbourhoods, they were supported by the neighbourhoods. Our weapons were kept by the neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhoods fed us, clothed us, housed us and became our intelligence network. So we owe so much to our people. We are a people's army and as such any decision that we make, the people need to be informed. And if we make a decision then we need to ensure that the people understand why we made such a decision

Hayes and McAllister (2005) note that a significant minority of respondents in a 1999 survey expressed sympathy not only for republican paramilitaries, but for loyalist ones as well. This is reflective, they suggest, of the characterization of the conflict as a war and the legitimizing role that this

characterization has on the use of violence (Hayes and McAllister, 2005, p. 607). Given these levels of support, Hayes and McAllister (2005) argue “significant numbers of the population continue to remain sympathetic to not only the aims of the republican movement but also their use of violence to achieve them. The larger numbers of individuals who have been exposed to and directly influenced by political violence suggest that in Northern Ireland the demise of the physical force tradition will take much longer” (p. 614). That is not to say the respondents suggest, that support for the armed struggle as a method was universal within the community. The republican community, ISF notes, was “more than willing to support peaceful means”. SF1 and SF2 concur, noting that a great deal of the support that SF and the IRA received, was given a significant boost following the implementation of the policy of criminalization. ISF holds “the British made the big mistake of trying to make martyrs and to try and force criminalization on the prisoners, and their mistake then allowed an even bigger upsurge of support for the republican struggle on the back of hunger strikers in particular.” In the wake of the OIRA’s failure to protect Catholic communities, and the subsequent feeling that the British Army too failed in their duty to protect, the PIRA came to see itself, and was seen, as a protector of the Catholic community (Rooney, 2007). ISF adds to this her surprise when, in her role as a SF activist, she was brought into contact with former loyalist paramilitaries. As, coming from the Republican community “the IRA were always seen as the protectors, the IRA were accepted, not 100 percent obviously [...] for ex-prisoners there's always a respect regardless of fault, there's always like, respect, and through my work with loyalists there, I was actually shocked at how much they are not respected in their areas.”

This respect, ISF and I1 contend, helped facilitate the transition surrounding the GFA into a gradual strategy of de-escalation and the eventual disarmament of the IRA. As ISF summarizes:

there was always a very hard core support for the military struggle, but there was also a lot of people who couldn't support that you know and that was fair

enough. The move into the cease fires and into the political scene certainly gained you know people's support you know, who could support Sinn Féin by you know, voting. Once they saw what Sinn Féin could actually do for them on the streets and stuff, they could support that whereas before they couldn't have supported maybe a shooting or a bombing

Additionally, the usefulness of the armed campaign was increasingly called into question. Support for the IRA's armed campaign took periodic hits; such as following the killing of 11 civilians at a Remembrance Day celebration in Enniskillen in 1987, promoted widespread outrage and a drop in IRA support (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p. 51). Further, as Kennedy-Pipe (2006) details

'successes' by the Provisional IRA in the 1990s, such as the bombings of the financial quarter of the City of London in 1992, were also being overtaken by IRA disasters, for example the killing of two small boys... in the spring of 1993 and the Shankill bombing in the autumn. The problem for the Provisionals was that the political path now pursued by Sinn Féin deprived the bombing campaign of any sort of rationale. Continued violence called into question the logic of bombing once Sinn Féin no longer sought to drive out the British, preferring to achieve recognition within the constitutional system (p. 52).

What is more, as discussed in Military Viability, the attacks of September 11th did much to impede and lessen support for tactics and strategies associated with terrorism; both within the RM's support base and internationally. Keohane (2002) note that the 9/11 attacks made it harder for both "state and non-state actors to endorse, or covertly support terrorist methods" (in Dixon, 2006, p. 88). Further, the attack helped to "delegitimize the use of terrorism and this has serious implications for the IRA and Sinn Féin's tactics, making less likely U.S tolerance of its terrorist activities" (Dixon, 2006, p. 88). Thus, given the IRA's ability to draw on both historical and ongoing perceptions within the Catholic community as protectors, while support for the military campaign did diminish with time, it was nonetheless present in a notable proportion of Catholic communities and does not in and of itself account for a move to a negotiated agreement.

Social fatigue

The support for both the RM's goals and strategies, the respondents contend, was evidenced by the duration over which the campaign was sustained, despite palpable war weariness within the community. As ISF notes "I think people were war-weary, you know? Naturally." One indicator of both this support and weariness, SFIR suggests, is the sheer number of Northern Irish citizens who passed through the penal system as a result of their involvement with the RM. In a study commissioned by the ex-prisoner organisation Coiste na n-Irchimi, he notes came back "with a figure of between 25 and 30,000 people went to prison as a result of being involved with the IRA," with 20,000 people charged with terrorist offences since 1972 (Hayes and McAllister, 2005, p. 601). In a population as small as Northern Ireland, the impact is significant. For a sense of proportionality, Hayes and McAllister (2005) extrapolated figures to those of Great Britain and the results suggest some 126,000 deaths, 1.8 million injured and nearly three quarters of a million persons charged with a terrorist offense "By any standards, what Ulster people euphemistically call "the Troubles" is, in fact, a war" (p. 601). In addition to those killed during the conflict, the onset of the Troubles saw more than 15,000 people displaced from their homes (Keane 1990, in Hayes and McAllister, 2005, p. 614), another estimated minimum of 40,000 injured (Fay et. al, 2001) and an estimated one in five adults in a 1998 survey having had a family member or close relative injured or killed, more than half having known someone killed or injured, and one in seven reporting having been themselves a victim of violence (Hayes and McAllister, 2001, in Hayes and McAllister, 2005, p. 614). Like SFIR, the respondents suggest that there existed a significant degree of fear and fatigue within the republican community, but that while it was a concern, it was not sufficiently so to bring about the move toward de-escalation for the militants.

The heavy toll of decades of conflict on the republican community was unanimously acknowledged by the participants. This fatigue was born, they argue, both from the duration of the conflict, as well as the development of a sense of stalemate. This particular incarnation of the conflict in Northern Ireland, by the time of talks leading up to the GFA, had been SFI2 and SFI3 note, going on for nearly 25 years. As SFI3 notes, the struggle,

for the first time, began to transcend generations, became a generational thing. Whereas in previous decades, [...], struggles maybe last three, maybe four or five maybe not even[...]. So this was a struggle, that by its very definition was different. I think that was, again, a key turning point, that, this transcending generations. So there was strength in the movement, the support was there, the resources were there but people had been fighting for an awful long time. It was a long war you know.

Yet despite this ability to maintain the conflict, ISF, SF2 and SFI2 note, there was a growing fatigue fed by the perceived lack of progress. For all, SFI2 expresses, “most republicans accepted that you know, the point of the armed conflict is to get us to a place where we can negotiate a settlement”, she notes that “there has to come a point where you ask yourself are we being effective? [...] And I think that we had reached a plateau where we were gaining in some ways but we were losing people in other ways so that war fatigue is a factor.” A stalemate, ISF argues, was not sufficient a goal to warrant an ongoing military campaign “you could continue on doing what you're doing for another ten years or twenty years leaving another few thousand people dead but what use is that? And that's when then the whole change came, the cease fires were called, no more military action and then the political arena.” The removal of the armed struggle from the movement’s arsenal, she notes, also allowed a certain percentage of Republicans, who supported the movement’s goals, but not methods, to move their votes from the SDLP to SF. Notably, since the GFA, SF has overtaken the SDLP as first choice amongst the nationalist community.

Despite this, as noted above, there nonetheless remained notable support for the IRA's campaign in the years leading up to the GFA. Unsurprisingly then, the RM rejects fear or fatigue as a determining factor in the movement's decision to move toward de-escalation. As SF13 summarises:

"it has been a long war. But I think the war could have been sustained. But, I mean I think the key point in there as well, is that if you're sustaining something simply for the sake of sustaining it, then you know, I would question what value is that, as a tactic. So I think its about strategy. Fear, I don't think, comes into it. Fatigue, you know, we've disproven that, it was a long war, you know, we stuck at it." SF2, SF3, SF4 and I1 are much more direct in their assessments of fatigue within the RM's support base as a determinant of de-escalation: "no". As SF2 expands "You wouldn't be involved in negotiations if you'd gone through that cause you're gonna get nowhere. I don't mean that in any kind of a false bravado sense so that would be a low motivator [...] there wouldn't have been like oh we need to get negotiations here because we're tired and we're frightened of the future." For I1 this is evidenced by the very notion, that while armed struggle cannot be maintained if it is not advancing the movement goals, the RM was adamant that the move toward de-escalation did not represent an abandonment of movement goals as "it came very clearly to the point of saying if the core issues still remain, then we all return back to prison".

For much of the Catholic community the RM provided needed protection and support. While Sinn Féin sought to address and represent the socio-economic and social justice grievances of the historically disadvantaged community, the IRA was in large measure viewed as a protector from within the community itself: a 'peoples' army'. Support for republican goals and aims remains significant within its constituency, though support for independence and a united Ireland since the GFA has to an extent waned. As noted above, the IRA was able to function, and Sinn Féin able to advance electorally, because of their support within their constituency. Such support, while not without its limitations, was an

important variable in creating motivation for negotiation, but arguably sufficiently flexible to allow the room to manoeuvre away from demanding maximalist positions once negotiations had begun. Support for the movement organizations and goals was sufficient to allow the movement a degree of leeway on the strategies selected in pursuit of those objectives.

d. Alliances

The RM in Northern Ireland provides a near text book case of soliciting allies from abroad in support of their political goals at home. As the conflict in Northern Ireland moved toward the GFA and the de-escalation, there was a very notable and well documented presence of allies working both in front of, and behind the scenes to move the process forward. As these alliances relate to the RM's strategy and move toward de-escalation, three particular themes are of interest: a changing local and global context; an expanding pool of allies; and the importance of timing and convergence.

New partners for a new context

In their discussions of the impacts of changing contexts on the RM's strategy as it relates to allies, the respondent discussions were thematically consistent with those of the literature: changes in global context pressuring for de-escalation and against armed conflict; movement reassessment of strategy brought on by a military stalemate; and the possibility of new allies with an IRA ceasefire.

In an analysis that echoes Guelke's (2001) suggestion that learning from and the involvement of allied actors who had recently, or were currently going through a peace process was an important part of a changing context, SF4 provides an overview of the global context facing the RM at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s:

I think the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and the collapse of many states that had been hitherto very supportive of the Irish Republican struggle, I think all them factors combined - the negotiations between the ANC¹² and Afrikaners, the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the negotiated settlement to the conflict in El Salvador [...] the collapse of the Soviet Union, all them factors combined together to, if you want to dictate that a new way, a new strategy had to be formulated.

This was combined, he suggests, with a growing concern that the Republic of Ireland was itself in need of changing if the goal of a socialist, independent 32 county state was to be met: “That it was simply not good enough to have thought a republican struggle [...we] believed in social justice that we needed to be as concerned and as interested with the children of west Dublin as we were with the children of West Belfast. “

The winding down, or beginnings of transformations in the conflicts that SF4 mentions – many of which whose constituent combatants were important allies of the RM – created a change in global politics as it related to sub-state armed conflict for both the RM and the British state. As SFIR argues, along with the end of the Cold War, these de-escalations “changed global politics to a large extent and one of the effects of that was that it caused the British army to review their whole involvement in conflicts all across the world and their whole military operation, and preparing for the future.” The British state, the respondents argue, had seen their involvement in the conflict in Northern Ireland as largely military, despite attempts at criminalization in the 1980s. While the UK permitted the involvement of the Republic of Ireland in the Sunningdale Agreement (SA), and sought to increase its cooperation on policing matters in exchange for a greater role in Northern Irish affairs through the AIA, Owen (2007) charges that “[n]o country has demonstrated that [reticence] more clearly than the UK, which until 1994

¹² ANC African National Congress

rejected internationalizing its peace effort in relation to the long-standing Irish conflict” (p. 25), with the exception of the involvement of the ROI. SFIR notes, there was a reappraisal by the British, a

military reappraisal, of that period that came after the wall came down. Also you had the international, big picture type[...] resolution of the conflict in South Africa, the what at the time seemed to be movement toward a resolution of the Arab/Israeli, the Palestinian question there with the agreements [...] the wall coming down had really thrown up a whole new politics that anything was possible so that had played a factor, and its own way that then created a dynamic within the Irish American community to engage the US political establishment and attempt to find, or help them to find some sort of process of engagement

Just as this created a dynamic in British politics that might facilitate a move toward a non-military based solution to the conflict, the changing context, the respondents note, provided both an example and a testing ground for groups engaging with the State government after violent conflict. This demonstration effect was particularly impactful, SFI3 notes as the RM “would've been reaching out to understand different conflicts in other parts of the world, how that may have informed our own war in this country and our own strategy in this country” (see Learning Processes). For instance, a number of the respondents' recount having had representatives from South Africa come to speak with jailed republicans about what their process looked like in South Africa.

Part of this broadening of alliances was the creation of a pan-nationalist front that sought not only allies at the local, but also the international level. Dixon (2006) for his part, argues that the primary use of the pan-nationalist front was performative. As he asserts,

[[t]he pan-nationalist script claimed that the end of the Cold War transformed the international climate and allowed the U.S. Presidency to play an important, if not vital role by pushing the intransigent British government and pan-unionism toward accommodation (Dixon, 2002) ... The British government recognized the importance of this script for delivering the IRA into the peace process and, to some extent, acquiesced and played its role as villain (p.62).

This script, he argues, was designed to provide for the RM leadership “a convincing story to tell republican audiences about the unarmed route to Irish unity in order to persuade them to give up their armed struggle. The formation of a powerful ‘pan-nationalist front- comprising the... SDLP... the Irish government, and the U. S. Presidency (and perhaps pro-nationalist elements in Britain and Europe) would help give republicans the *appearance* of a powerful alliance” (Dixon, 2002; Dixon, 2006, p. 63). Dixon note that such an alliance and international involvement was not necessary to bring about the 1973/74 SA and thus its role in bringing about the GFA is likely exaggerated. While undoubtedly the republican leadership – as any leadership – spun and framed their new alliances in such a way as to encourage their ‘version’ of proceedings, Dixon’s presentation of the pan-nationalist front as a “charade” largely strips the RM of any agency in the process while implying a degree of control over the whole of the process to the British government that would be exceedingly impressive. While he provides convincing evidence that the British recognised the importance to republicans of having allies in the lead up to and during negotiations, that does not mean that such alliances were not important for building optimism within the republicans about the viability of negotiations if such alliances were seen as providing leverage. As Pruitt (2007) notes, the strength of a central coalition, and its inclusion of outliers, can play an important role in the ability of negotiating parties to both reach and maintain an agreement. The maintenance of an agreement was notably absent with the SA which was signed by relatively narrow coalitions on both nationalist/republican, and unionist/loyalist sides (Appendix 7).

Nonetheless, Dixon (2006) notes the importance of the external-ethno guarantors in creating alliances to reassure, motivate and encourage optimism about negotiations: “a senior British source” having noted “it is the job of the British government to push the Unionists to a line beyond which they will not go; it is the job of the Irish government to pull the Republicans to a line beyond which they will not come

“(in *The Observer* 5 February 1995, in Dixon, 2006, p. 67). Thus, even if the British were following a script of their own volition, such changes in behaviour were arguably important to the peace process.

At the same time as the global context appeared to favour non-military solutions to intractable sub-state conflicts, both the British state and the RM were increasingly aware of a military stalemate in Northern Ireland; this despite the early 1980s seeing the IRA gain a new military ally in Libyan Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and having received an influx of supplies (Pruitt, 2007, p.1528; Military Viability). For SF2, the notion of the stalemate did not mean that the British state had grown more accepting of the RM’s goals. He notes that “I don't think anyone would have changed their analysis but more people were having to come to terms with the fact that this was going to be a stalemate for, who knows how long, and that's not good enough.” This analysis was also growing, SFI3 notes, within the British perspective: “somewhere along the line they realized that they couldn't defeat republicanism and that was reflected in the Good Friday Agreement I think, so maybe there was an awareness at that level.”

This situation of stalemate and the decreasing viability of the military option, was one that was driven home for the RM in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11th 2001 (see Military Viability). While not a factor in the calling of the ceasefire, nonetheless worked to dampen enthusiasm for a return to armed struggle. As I1 summarizes “any intention, I mean, even if there was an intention by the IRA to return to armed struggles, 9/11 really sort of put dampeners to that.” While, as SFI12, notes, the RM was already on the path of de-escalation at the time of the attacks, the renewed global focus on terrorism reinforced this path by making a return to military action all the more difficult. 9/11, she notes “changed a tolerance, [...]. The security focus of the world changed. In terms of us wanting to reach an arms settlement, we were there anyways. We were on that road so it just made things probably more

difficult” (see Military Viability). Further, the 9/11 attacks and the Bush administrations declaration of a “War on Terror” Dixon (2006) holds created an international climate “arguably...more favourable to unionism” (p. 86) as terrorism and those associated with it, lost a degree of legitimacy internationally (Military Viability). This then helped reinforce the peace process and build support for IRA decommissioning.

In light of these developments, the IRA’s declaration of ceasefires, gradual de-escalation, and eventual disarmament, were seen by the respondents as moves that would allow not only to have a degree of military pressure removed from the movement, but also to facilitate the possibility of renewed, and new alliances at the international level. The IRA’s ceasefires, SF1 notes, were crucial “the IRA's first ceasefire opened up a whole new vista of exploration of the big issues of the day for republicans and so there was a whole panoply of issues I suppose that republicans then started to turn their minds to.” As SF12 elaborates, “The biggest opportunity that we had was in 1994 [with] the cease fire”. This ceasefire, the respondents suggest, allowed for a number of what would be key allies in the GFA – the Republic of Ireland and the United States of America – to make greater commitments to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and increase their contact and engagement with republican organizations and representatives. As Drake (1991) notes, there was a sense that were it not for “atrocities, deliberate or not, such as the Enniskillen bombing, the PIRA might have quite a sympathetic audience” (p. 56). Dixon (2006) holds that though the peace process was already underway “when U.S actors took to the stage; they did play a significant role in persuading key audiences to take the peace process forward” (p. 72). This, was important, SF2 notes, because it allowed the RM to internationalize both the conflict itself, and their perspective on the conflict. For instance, SF2 highlights as an example the awarding of a U.S travel visa to SF leader Gerry Adams “which then opened up was very important [...]to speak to republican supporters in America, again very powerfully symbolically important [...]and speak to people to convince

them that republicans could get a peaceful, democratic way forward, wanted to be able to end the armed conflict.” These were steps, he argues, that were strongly resisted by the British state. However, in the context of an IRA ceasefire, potential allies like the United States had greater leeway in interacting with the RM. He notes “all of those steps were very, very important but if Britain had’ve been allowed to control the field as it had been prior to that engagement, well, we probably wouldn’t have had the peace process that we’ve had.” In all, the attraction of new allies, though in many respects symbolic, helped build the sense of legitimacy of the republican demands as well as boosting its legitimacy as an actor on behalf of the Catholic and republican community. These allies, would play an important facilitative and motivational role in bringing parties to the table, and encouraging them to stay there (Pruitt, 2007).

Soliciting allies at the local level

While the importance of the recruitment of such powerful allies as the United States was of importance to the creation of a nationalist block, such efforts began earlier, and were highly impacted, by earlier efforts closer to home. To that end, the respondents highlight the policy document ‘Towards a Lasting Peace’ and the resultant Hume-Adams talks. As SF2 points out, as early as the beginning of the 1980s, the RM had laid out two policy documents ‘Scenario for Peace’ and ‘Towards a Lasting Peace’ for a resolution of the conflict: “we had these policies and strategies about trying to build the peace process and we couldn’t get them operationalized I mean or looked”. In keeping with this, throughout the 1980s, the RM sought to create a nationalist block with the SDLP and political forces in the Republic of Ireland to promote their resolution process.

Discussions of changes to the potential allies at the local level corresponded primarily to the SF strategy epitomized by the later document 'Towards a Lasting Peace' released in 1992, which sought the construction of a broad nationalist coalition with which to politically confront the British state. As SF3 notes:

It was only ever in the interest of republicans and nationalist Ireland to make changes. It wasn't in the interest of the British government to change. [...] Any initiative to change the context was only ever going to come from republicans and Irish nationalism. And it was only ever going to come [...] from Northern nationalism because we were the people who were affected by it.

This was amplified SF2 argues, by the fact that, in the 1980s the SDLP, SF and the ROI were all "insisting that they spoke for the north and you had a situation where [...] there was no engagement between [them....] Let's be fair, there were hostilities amongst them. You know, so Irish nationalism was badly fractured in the face of strong, in the case of the British state in the north run with an iron political fist".

In light of this situation, the creation of a united front began to gain ground. As noted in *Military Viability*, with the SDLP, Adams' began to push for a political alternative to armed struggle in the early 1980s. Part of this alternative envisaged a pan-nationalist front with which to pressure Great Britain (Coogan, 2000; English 2003; in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1527). To this end Adams requested the help of two members of the Catholic clergy, Bishop Cahal Daly and Father Alec Reid, the former of which was turned down (Hennessey, 2000; Moloney, 2002 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1527). By 1986 Father Reid facilitated the transmission of messages between Adams and then Irish Taoiseach Charles Haughey (Moloney, 2002 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1527), and by 1988 facilitated meetings between Adams and SDLP leader John Hume (English, 2003; McKittrick and McVea, 2002 in Pruitt 2007, p. 1527), who in turn acted as an intermediary between SF and the Irish government (Mallie and McKittirck, 1996; Moloney, 2002; in Pruitt, 2007, p.1527).

Historically, the SDLP and SF largely drew their supporters from different demographic pools: with SDLP supporters largely middle-class and SF's supporters largely working class (Irvin, 1999, p. 127). However, views on the appropriateness of violence notably differentiated supporters: four of five SF supporters approving the use of violence for political ends with inverse results for SDLP supporters (Irvin, 1999, p.127). As such, prior to the GFA, SF and the SDLP were not in many respects in competition for voters, making them more suitable as allies. However, as SF moved away from the joint military-political strategy – towards the SDLP's own position – they moved into more direct competition. A self-destructing move for the SDLP perhaps, but not one it could avoid taking given its commitment to a political resolution to the conflict.

Thus, the SDLP proved itself a useful ally to the RM in practice as well as theory. As SF2 argues, the debate that would eventually lead to the document "Towards a Lasting Peace" "was specifically referring to outlining a strategy of let's bring ourselves together, the representatives of Irish nationalism together and present...Britain with a more united front". Talks between Hume and Adams began in late 1987, gaining ground through 1988 and grew to involve Tom Hartley, Danny Morrison and Mitchel McLaughlin for Sinn Féin, and Seamus Mallon, Seamus Farron, and Auston Curries for the SLDP (English, 2003, p. 263). Although the talks ended without agreement in September of 1988, "Hume and Adams remained in private contact, genuine trust having been established between them" (English 2003; 263-4). These talks, SF12 notes, had been going on since the late 1980s and were well advanced by the time of the 1994 ceasefire. However, as SF2 notes, there were many, particularly in the earlier years of the exchanges, even within the SDLP, who were opposed to the notion. Nonetheless, SF2 notes that "John Hume took away something from that more than many of his colleagues" thereby beginning to pave the way for more meaningful engagements in the wake of the IRA ceasefire. This pursuit of a nationalist front and the ongoing Hume-Adams talks, SF1 recalls, "was major in terms of moving things forward".

Simultaneously, during these meetings “Hume challenged Adams’ perception that British dominance was the root of the problem and persistently argued against IRA violence” (English, 2003; Taylor, 1997; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523), and pushed for a recognition of the importance of unionist consent (Moloney, 2002; Taylor, 1997). Arguably Adams’ interactions with Hume had a moderating effect, but only after Adams himself had begun the shift to a more political based strategy. With this strategy adjustment, SF3 notes, the Irish government was asked by Northern Republicans, “to come on board” (though admittedly, with the AIA in particular, the ROI had demonstrated its engagement (see Engagements)), this “was about bringing everybody else, in a sense, on to the same script. So, that did take a long time and as that was happening, you still had the conflict going on, and as I say, still at times had the conflict escalating. But that decision had to be taken, that we had to move on to political arena.” While following the AIA the ROI was a certifiable British ally, it continued to play similar role for the RM. On the heels of the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 (see Engagements) and subsequent IRA ceasefire, the Republic of Ireland pressured Great Britain to begin negotiations (Mallie and McKittrick, 2001).

Such a united front was particularly important in the face of the apparent inability of the military campaign to push the British government into concession. As SF2 notes, “the state was always stronger because they had control of the apparatus, I mean, they had the military, they had the police, they had the judicial system, they had the governance, they had the pounds, shillings and pence to run government. They had all of that so they were always much stronger”. This was particularly so in the face of the fractured nature of republicanism on the island. Accordingly, the RM “needed to offset [...] to neutralize some of that strength so we had to reunite ourselves in Ireland on common cause but we also still needed to find a way to neutralize Britain's strength against us”. The RM for its part appears to have put great faith in the talks between Hume and Adams. In April of 1993 the two once again engaged in a series of talks, resulting in several important statements between April and September (English, 2003,p.

271). On October 3rd the IRA released a statement on Hume and Adams' initiative saying "if the political will exists or can be created, it [Hume –Adams initiative] could provide the basis for peace" (*Irish News* 10 Nov, 1990, In English, 2003, p. 271). Accordingly, SF1 holds the eventual importance this nationalist front held, noting that those achievements that have been made in pursuit of the de-escalation and the RM's goals, "those achievements don't exclusively belong to Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin made a contribution to them, a valuable contribution, an important contribution to them but there were other people and other parties who helped create the circumstances that we have right."

Convergence: allies and timing

The groundwork laid in the above attempts at expanding the pool of allies would come to pay off in the early 1990s. Attempting to offset the strength of the British state through a nationalist front, the RM looked to the Republic of Ireland and United States in particular. With work ongoing in the Republic to build a nationalist front, SF2 notes there was a refocus of efforts on lobbying the United States, where Irish nationalism, given the large Irish diaspora, garnered a great deal of sympathy. Beginning in the early 1980s, these strategies, the respondents argue, began to bear fruit. Simultaneously, they note a number of changes in the British political context, linked with – but not exclusively so – the end of the Cold War. To this end the respondents discuss a coming together of allies (the Republic of Ireland and the United States) with the arrival of Tony Blair as the British prime minister, as a type of convergence that made possible the GFA and the de-escalation process. As SF12 summarizes

what you had was a coming together of different... I suppose different facts or stars colliding at the same time. You had the Hume-Adams talks which had been going on since 1988 so they were well advanced, we had Albert Reynolds who was the Taoiseach in the South, and the most willing Taoiseach, the most genuine Taoiseach in terms of trying to resolve the situation and down to earth and he was practical and he was just willing to do what he could to try and work out a solution. And then we had an American president in Bill Clinton who was open to the idea and showed a degree of flexibility I suppose, in trying to create opportunities for things to happen

Mansergh (2006) notes the gradual increase in Irish cooperation was actively sought by both Hume and later the British government from the late 1970s onwards. The peace process itself, he argues “can be divided into three phases; the long road to the establishment of the first ceasefire, from late 1987 to 1994; the manoeuvres and negotiations leading to a political settlement, the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and finally, the present phase of implementation” (Mansergh, 2006, p. 39). Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds notes that though animosity and confrontation had previously characterised Anglo-Irish relations, he and Prime Minister John Major “had become very close, personal friends and a trusting relationship had built up” (Interview on *Endgame in Ireland* BBC2 Television, 8 July 2001; as cited in Dixon, 2006, p. 73). In this scenario, the IRA called its first ceasefire in 1994. As discussed in Engagements, the RM saw little progress and the ceasefire was broken once more. As SF12 recalls “the cease fire was called in August 1994 and [...] immediately people began to put barriers in the way, to demand pre-conditions before we moved into talks and what happened was in 1996 the cease fire broke down.”

While the mid1990s appeared at first to see the potential peace process stall out, there remained, SF2 argues a sense that “we had very, very prosperous times ahead if we could just manage...” This hopefulness was encouraged by Adams’ attempts to add the United States, and the Irish American Lobby to the pan-nationalist front. U.S involvement was important for building republican support for negotiations (itself a tremendously critical impact). However, as Dixon (2002; 2006) and Drumbell (2001) note, its influence has oft times been exaggerated. In addition to a degree of pressure the U. S was able to exert of Britain (Drumbell, 2001) the U.S. President’s key role was symbolic and “important, in giving credence to the Sinn Féin leadership’s strategy that the republican movement could more effectively advance its goals through the pan-nationalist front... and the unarmed struggle than it could through the armed struggle” (Dixon, 2002 in Dixon, 2006, p. 77-78). Although, Irish-American political initiatives in

Northern Ireland began as early as 1975, it was President Clinton who first made a commitment to the peace process (Owen, 2007). In 1994 President Clinton granted Adams' visitor visa as it was hoped "an American visit would give the republicans a glimpse of the new vistas of support which could be available to them, though only if they moved away from violence" (McKittrick and McVea, 2002, p.197 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1528). This was amplified by the growing strength of the nationalist front: "you had John Hume and Gerry Adams and Albert Reynolds on the steps of the government building in Dublin, shaking hands, appearing together was another major milestone in the development of hope" (SF2).

Certainly, there exists a sense among the Northern Irish population that the U. S's involvement was helpful in securing peace. On 1998 survey found that 55 percent of Protestants and 93 percent of Catholics held that the U.S government's involvement to be "very or quite helpful in the search for peace" (MacGinty and Darby, 2002, p. 117 as cited in Dixon, 2006, p. 85). In Owen's (2007) opinion, the recognition and legitimacy of Gerry Adam's implied by the granting of the visa was crucial "if he was later to stand a chance of delivering a ceasefire" (p. 37). With the American and Irish governments on seemingly on board with the republican project, the RM increasingly felt it had the leverage and united front it needed to effectively engage with the British state at a political level.

With the elections of Tony Blair as British prime minister and Bill Clinton as president of the United States, all responds described an opportunity for advancement: "I have always described that as the stars were aligned" (SF2). Guelke (2001) notes that an additional American contribution to the Northern Irish peace process was the participation of Senator George Mitchell as an unofficial 'peace envoy' and skilled mediator (p. 257). In addition to helping encourage optimism in the RM, Curran and Sebenius (2003) note the importance of US Senator George Mitchell in the creation of the central coalition that

would negotiate the BA. However, Pruitt (2007) argues too much credit cannot be given to Mitchell as this ignores the time and effort place on coalition building in the years' prior (note 14 p. 1539).

Nonetheless, it suggests a role for the RM's American allies in the maintenance of the coalition throughout the negotiation period. Following the Canary Wharf bombing and the resumption of the IRA ceasefire, SFI2 notes in 1997 "Tony Blair was voted in as leader, as Prime Minister and he moved right away". As SF1 describes "Tony Blair is big change". As he describes the sequence of events: "And then the IRA ceasefire collapse and Tony Blair comes into office, the IRA renew their ceasefire and then it mushrooms into change. It was in that period then that all of these preparations then, start to emerge."

The election of Tony Blair as Prime Minister is highlighted by all respondents as key shift in alliances that helped bring about the de-escalation process. As SFI3 notes it was the sense that

the British I think became aware of, I think, in an ever increasing manner, that the desire for reunification of Ireland was something that they were prepared to discuss and think about in a way that maybe they hadn't acknowledged prior to the, you know, cease fires, for example. You know, there was a transparency about British language, the Downing Street Declaration, and declarations since then, the Hillsborough, St. Andrews, all recognize that there is a massive Irish dimension, for once... So I think there was a change in the British attitude.

As SF1 and SF2 note, given the relative detachment of the British state (compared to that of unionist politicians and activists) to the conflict "the British state, in my view, was always more content, more intent on pacification as opposed to solving the long term fundamental issue which was really any British constitutional role in Irish affairs" (SF2). As such, the British state increasingly sought to "set themselves as arbiters". That is not to suggest that the RM saw the British government as an ally. Further, the RM rejected the State's attempt to portray itself as an 'honest broker' (see Target Framing). Yet, the respondents note a shift in the State's type of engagement with Northern Ireland at the beginning of the decade, and seemingly accelerated under Tony Blair, if not toward allying itself with the

RM, then at least distancing itself from its role as an unquestioning supporter of unionism. It is because, SF1 holds “they have that detached relationship... they can take initiatives independent of unionist interests. They can take initiatives independent of that, and they did [...] It took the unionists much longer to deal directly with Sinn Féin than it did the British. But when the British created the negotiation table the unionists were at it. Because the British basically told them this is the way they're going.” This position is seen to have solidified under Tony Blair’s leadership. Blair, as SF12 details:

made a big difference. He moved immediately to get Sinn Féin involved in the talks, to get things moving and that ultimately led to the Good Friday Agreement. So its very important when you do have that confluence, I suppose, that you get the right people in the right place and the right time, and those are you know, your golden moments....So you did have a willingness in [...]Blair's office. Tony Blair's advisors were people who could be worked with”

Thus the UK came to occupy a slightly more ambiguous position – not an ally, but no longer so ardent a supporter of the RM’s unionist opponents.

The role of allies in the peace process in Northern Ireland as they relate to the Republican Movement is one of significant importance. While arguably an international dimension in the role of economic aid helped with the establishment of conditions more conducive to the achievement of an agreement (Byrne, 2011), as it relates to the strategic decisions of the Republican Movement, the impact is most important symbolically and in terms of facilitation. The interactions and building up of a nationalist coalition in Northern Ireland and farther afield was a slow going and long term process. As Pruitt (2007) notes, the creation of such a block helped facilitate the moves to a negotiated agreement by increasing both the RM’s motivation for negotiation, and its optimism concerning the outcome. By approaching negotiation as part of a broader coalition, the RM has a greater sense both of the breadth of its mandate and weight of its voice in negotiations. By creating a broad coalition, it further helps balance out the voices of hawks and doves and thus assures to a greater extent that any negotiated agreement reached will not be undone by disaffected groups (Pruitt, 2007). Further, as noted, the SDLP, as well as Irish and

American governments are seen to have had a moderating effect on SF as well as acting as motivation by pushing for engagement with the state. The presence of such a united front is not necessarily sufficient for the decision to negotiate, but it helps increase the likelihood both of negotiations and of a negotiated agreement.

e. Resources Discussion

That the RM, and within it the IRA and Sinn Féin, have enjoyed considerable – though not absolute or unconditional – support of their community is clear. While support for a united Ireland appears to have declined to a degree in the years leading up to the GFA, both Sinn Féin and the IRA could claim to represent a significant portion of their community, illustrative of a degree of optimism born of their mandate and perceived legitimacy. For SF2 the mandate awarded to Sinn Féin carried with it the responsibility to make change happen. This responsibility was given through electoral channels, and thus, he suggests, implied Sinn Féin's responsibility to make use of those channels. Electorally SF saw its involvement in institutionalized politics rewarded, though not unconditionally. This was further enhanced by the creation and maintenance of productive links with other nationalist organizations, particularly the SDLP, which would have helped expand this sense of legitimacy and representativeness.

Militarily, while support for the IRA's campaign diminished over time, the organization maintained sufficient support and operational effectiveness to continue to pressure the British state for years to come. However, it was clear early on, and increasingly throughout the 1980s, that at best, the IRA's campaign would manage to maintain the Irish question on the government's radar, but nonetheless would plateau in a stalemate with the British and Northern Irish security apparatuses. In light of this, a political solution to the conflict was increasingly prioritized, with the military campaign seen as the

means through which to bring this about, demonstrative of motivation for a negotiation. As ISF summarized “We had gone as far as we could possibly go in that method and now the conflict in that sense, the military sense has ceased, but the political conflict is still just as strong and important”. Additionally, the continued viability of the IRA as a military force helped increase optimism for negotiations as it implied the RM came to the negotiations from a position of strength. That the IRA maintained the ability and the support to return to armed conflict should the talks not advance, provided the movement’s membership with an assurance that they should they enter into negotiations, they would do so from a position of strength

To this end, the RM was able to make effective use of the recruitment and fostering of alliances, both at the local level and further afield. Close to home, the Hume-Adams talks spiraled not only into the creation of a joint platform, but the increasing involvement of the Irish government as part of the pan-nationalist front, a process that for SF1 was “major in terms of moving things forward”. For SF12 the importance of this international involvement was summarized as with Irish government playing “a big role” and “you had Bill Clinton and that's how we got, ... you know, the momentum moving forward”. As Pruitt (2007) and Owen (2007) suggest, the addition of international allies helped both increase motivation for a negotiated agreement through the moderating influences and encouragement of these allies, as well as increased optimism for the negotiation by implying a weight, legitimacy, and mandate behind their negotiation position and interests. Thus, the RM was not brought to the negotiation table for lack of resources, material or otherwise. While shortages did exist, they were trumped by questions of strategic effectiveness.

Part Three: State Responses

The responses of the British state to the RM have shifted significantly in many respects since the onset of the Troubles, while maintaining certain threads of continuity. Certainly Republican assessments of the State, its institutions and motivations, have changed over time. This is also true as it concerns the British state's understanding of the conflict from a criminal to political problem, and from an insularly British conflict, to a more expansively international one.

a. Institutions

Primarily, the RM focuses its considerations on institutions on two themes: first, the way in which the institutionalized relationship between unionism and the British state both impeded and facilitated de-escalation; and secondly, the way in which institutional changes, such as those associated both with the GFA and demilitarization, reinforced the de-escalation process.

The British-Unionist Relationship

The relationship between the British state and Northern Irish unionism and loyalism is a complex one (see Target Framing). In terms of government structures, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are multi-leveled, federal type institutions that are the result of centuries of military campaigns and politically expedient union pacts (McGarry and O'Leary, 1999). For the respondents, this history has shaped the relationship between unionism and the British state. Building on the work of McGarry and O'Leary (1999), Kennedy-Pipe (2006) notes

[t]he creation of Northern Ireland in 1920 was a textbook example of a state and nation-building failure. The establishment of Northern Ireland marked the partial retreat of the British State from Ireland and was proof of the bankruptcy of the attempt to construct a British identity throughout Ireland. It was also ...evidence of a failure of Irish nationalism. Irish nationalism lacked the resources to inspire a revolution throughout the whole island (p.42).

Not only has this served to deepen the institutionalization of the conflict (see Target Framing), but it has meant that the British state, has at different moments and in different ways, alternately been impeded

from pursuing a de-escalation of conflict that recognises republican aims and grievances, and has been a means for the British state to pull a reticent unionism into the engagement process.

That much of republicanism characterises the British history on the island of Ireland as colonialism is evident in both the respondent discussions and the academic literature. The Partition of the island in the 1920s, Ruane and Todd (1991) argue, “created the conditions for lasting conflict in Northern Ireland, institutionalizing unionist majority power such that only unionists could be relied upon for loyalty to the state. In effect It created a structural bind, in which nationalist equality came to threaten unionist security” (in Todd, 2009, p. 341). For SF12, SF3, SF2, and SF1, this means that not only is Britain part of the ‘problem’ (see Target Framing), but that the history of colonialism has impacted the institutional framework of the State and the way in which identity politics are, given institutional form. SF2 argues that despite moves toward decolonization, there remains in British politics a sense of what he calls an “almost benign” imperialism, that the islands’ proximity, obscures the British understanding of colonialism on the island: “I mean, there are a lot of people in the British Labour Party, for example, who would have been arguing [...for] the decolonization of African countries and so on and so forth, but Ireland was maybe just a little too close. I’ve often said to some of them, you know, that if Ireland had been towed away a little bit across the Atlantic they might have had an easier job of being forthright and saying Ireland should have the same right to self-determination as countries all over Africa and elsewhere”. This sense that Northern Ireland is seen as a greater concern due to its close proximity is reinforced SF3 argues, the British state is concerned with the demonstration effect of Northern Ireland on its own federal style institutional structure: specifically, on the Scottish independence movement. The complexity of the political history of the British Isles means, as SF3 notes, that the British state cannot be treated as a monolithic actor but more of a “big tanker you have to manoeuvre to change [...] and that involves a lot of complex issues”.

The resultant relationship between unionism and the British state is one such issue. As SF12 explains, so adamant is the unionist focus on the sacrosanct nature of the relationship with Britain that “it’s hard to know if [imposing] that was the only reason [for reluctance in engaging] or if they just didn’t want it anyway.” For many republicans, the State-unionist relationship is so tight as to have significantly delegitimized State institutions as viable paths through which to pursue movement goals (see Political Viability and Target Framing). The Northern Irish parliament, Stormont, as SF1 notes “has always been the embodiment of Orangeism¹³ in the State”. This relationship has served, SF2 points out, to institutionalize much of the more repressive elements of the conflict (see Political Viability). Given the centrality of this relationship in Northern Irish political history, it necessarily shaped the de-escalation process. That being said, in 1973, with Northern Ireland under what was meant to be temporary Direct Rule, British Prime Minister Edward Heath published the Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposal “which proposed a devolved Assembly, executive power sharing between unionism and nationalists and a new institutional arrangement for cooperation with the Republic of Ireland” (MacEvoy, 2008, p. 74). In October of 1973 the Northern Irish Secretary of State invited the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), SDLP, and Alliance Party to inter-party talks, and in November a power-sharing executive was set up (MacEvoy, 2008, p. 75).

With the new Northern Ireland Executive set up, Jan 1 1974, as part of the SA, the February 1974 UK General Election “was pushed by the parties as a referendum on power-sharing and the Council of Ireland”, in which candidates opposing the SA won eleven of twelve seats. Subsequently, as Patterson (2006) explains “[t]he Executive had lost all legitimacy with the bulk of the Unionist electorate, and this is the key to understanding the British government’s reaction to the unprecedented industrial action by the Ulster Worker’s Council (UWC), which was the occasion, but not the fundamental cause, of the

¹³ A short hand for the influence of the Orange Order, or Protestantism

Executive's collapse" (p.242 in, MacEvoy, 2008, p. 76). Fundamentally, though Faulkner had signed the SA for the UUP, he had been unable to bring the bulk of his constituents with him to the agreement.

The depth of the emotional, identity, economic, and political ties between unionism and the state account for much of, if not most of, the perceived unionist reluctance to engage with republicanism according to the respondents (see Target Framing). This has meant, the respondents note, that unionism has frequently and to varying degrees of success, used their institutionalized relationship with the British state to impede the nationalist and republican pursuit of movement goals. Echoing Patterson' (2001) assessment, SFI2, SF2 and SF3 in particular highlight the vehemence and commitment of unionist and loyalist forces in resisting the advancement of nationalist aspirations: "political unionism and the unionist community would have been completely opposed to British withdrawal and they still would be totally [...] it becomes the be all and end all to be thought of as British" (SFI2). SF1 notes that the makeup of the parliament in Westminster occasionally gives unionist politicians an increased influence over state politics. The first ceasefire of 1994 broke down in the face of the republican belief in the unresponsiveness of the British state, but SF1 argues "that was primarily because the then British government were a minority government. They relied on unionist support, so they were, they had to tread very carefully otherwise they would lose power in London, so that is what the concern was". Yet while some, such as SF3 and SFI2 note that unionism has been a constraining factor for the British state, the remainder of the respondents see this more as a politically expedient excuse. The British state, they argue, is itself part of the 'problem' (see Target Framing). SFI2 argues that the British state was constrained in its actions by its relationship with unionism in that it was unwilling to impose a solution to which unionism would have been too strongly opposed – and unionism was strongly

opposed to most any concession. For all that the State claims to be constrained by unionist concerns, as SF1 and SF3 hold, it is far more pragmatic – driven by interests not loyalty. SF2 is blunt in his assessment:

their mantra, for decades, it would have been ‘well... you know... we can’t really do this because we will have a loyalist backlash and so on and so forth [...] well, they could have stood up to that. So I think it was largely an excuse because as we’ve seen over the years, there’s an awful lot of evidence to show that at the very least there would have been a blind eye turned to a lot of loyalist activity and certainly also a lot of evidence of collusion with it and even in some cases, direction of it. So I don’t really accept those arguments.

This belief that the British state could have “stood up” to unionism is equally clearly expressed by SF1.

The British and unionist forces, he argues, held different degrees of emotional attachment and self-interest tied up in the RM’s goals (see Target Framing) impacting their responsiveness.

As such Britain was able to not only summon a more objective frame of mind with regard to negotiations, but could use its considerable institutional weight to drag unionism toward the table. Prime Minister Blair, SF1 notes, likened negotiations to a train preparing to leave the station on which he wanted everyone – including unionists – on board. The British state, he argues “had that capacity. The things that they had control over...” The British state was able to dismantle much of the institutional structures the RM saw as perpetuating the conflict because the State saw this as institutionalizing the de-escalation process as it served British interests (see Target Framing and Concessions). In Owen’s (2007) analysis, Prime Minister John Major’s “most valuable personal contribution to the peace process was his absolute determination to carry with him the Unionist leaders... [Major] appeared never to shift from this stance; his stubbornness may have provoked the IRA to restart bombing after the first ceasefire, but by holding his nerve he held the Unionist to the peace process” (p. 35). It is a preoccupation, Owens (2007) argues, that was continued under Blair. These changes, SF1 argues, were made despite vehement unionist opposition “the unionist opposed them all but the British government said to the unionists, we need to do this for peace in Ireland, we need to do this to keep the IRA in the

process otherwise you have the IRA killing British soldiers here and planting bombs in Britain. They didn't want that. So they served their own interests". Thus while SFI2, SF3 and others (see Target Framing) acknowledged the close relationship between the State and unionism had a constraining impact on the State's willingness to meaningfully engage with the RM, there is a strong sense that it was a constraint easily overcome by the State when such a position best served its own interests.

Institutionalizing De-escalation

As discussed, both above and in Concessions, many of the concessions made by the British state took the form of institutionalizing changes. The willingness of the British state to consider talking about republican goals itself represents a significant shift (see Target Framing). These institutional changes were important both to 'lock' the IRA into the de-escalation process, as well as providing a new institutional framework through which the RM could both address its grievances and pursue its aspirations.

For SFI3 the institutional changes were heralded by a change in the British attitude, a growing transparency in its language, and recognition of the importance of an Irish dimension. The signing of the AIA in 1985 saw the Republic of Ireland concede increased police action against the IRA for "the establishment of a regular intergovernmental conference at which the Irish could put forward their views on Northern Irish affairs for serious consideration by the British" (English, 2003; Mallie and McKittrick, 1996; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1522). These growing institutional links marked a change in the landscape (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1522) and helped facilitate later efforts at engagements between the British State and the RM. The republican and loyalist communities would need convincing of this however. Immediately surrounding the Agreement, loyalists, feeling the risk of abandonment by their British

allies, increased their paramilitary activity. A few years following the AIA, Adams for his part still held that the Agreement had failed to make serious changes for the republican community, and that Northern Ireland remained beyond reform (English, 2003, p. 265).

While republicans, , loyalists, unionists and the British security forces fought one another to a stalemate, it was with the AIA that the “political stalemate was broken, a change in popular aims was confirmed and an alternative to violence” provided by the “repositioning of the British government in Northern Ireland” (Todd, 2009, p. 343). In particular, SF13 points to a series of British declarations and commitments from the 1993 Downing Street Declaration to the St. Andrew’s Agreement of 2006 and the Hillsborough Agreement of 2010. SF1 discusses a series of concessions by the State, from the removal of military installations to the creation of a new police services as “things over which they knew they had power and which they could unilaterally act on. And so they did this because they knew that in making these changes it was locking the IRA into the process of change”.

While the respondents were none of them without criticisms for the political institutions and power sharing arrangement that emerged from the GFA, they nonetheless saw these new institutions as critical to the de-escalation, eventual disarmament of the IRA, and the on-going peacebuilding process. As SF1 notes “we don’t have the same hostilities and animosities, even in local political institutions like councils”. The GFA is, as SF2 describes it, a “raft of measures” given import by its “recognition that the North is different” (see Engagements and Concessions). Though the agreement did not result in the immediate reunification of Ireland, the respondents do suggest that it was an important step forward. In particular, SF2 notes the importance of the power-sharing arrangements in guaranteeing nationalist and republican representation, saying the power-sharing is “guaranteed to be inclusive [...] there’s no

majoritarianism ever allowed here again". The new institutional framework – from the consociational parliamentary arrangements to the North-South Ministerial Council – he argues, has been critical for addressing and redressing both republican goals and grievances. As he explains: "where you have institutional discrimination, that's gone. Where you had exclusivity from politics, that's gone, because any political institution has to be based on sharing and you can call it forced sharing [but] if you want it you have to share [...] and obviously a border poll allows in the longer run an expression of sovereignty, so that's an objective of the people".

Further, while he and others suggest both the NSMC and Irish dimension have not been implemented and developed to the expected or necessary degree, SF2 suggests that the fact that the GFA is backed by both the British and Irish states as signatories lends an important legitimacy and weight of implementation to the new institutional framework. Accordingly, Northern republicans "have that work with the Irish government in an institutional format, hence the North South Ministerial Council – all that has to be underwritten by human rights protection and equality protections. So the agreement is really about removing all the various causes of conflict" (SF2).

These institutional changes are nonetheless seen by the respondents as a work in progress. For SFI, given the historic unionist dominance of Stormont, there was hesitance in the movement over whether such a degree of institutionalisation of republican politics was wise: "there was a big risk for the republican movement to move into Stormont, but it's been a risk that has paid off". This is particularly the case, as SF2 notes, as "people from here have had – traditionally – a lack of confidence in dealing with statutory agencies and government bodies because they would not have been very often very

responsive". As SF2 and SF3 hold, for all that strides have been made, the institutions are often still weighted in favour of Britain or unionism. As SF3 explains

we are still, now, in a position where fiscal powers, generally, still rest with Britain. That's not in the interests of the North and yet that's something that even at the very basic level, the Brits won't, you know, hand over. [...] this has been an ongoing issue for the past three years. There's consent, there's political consensus in the North [...] across unionist and nationalist parties[...] and yet every step of the way the British government has resisted because it is not in their interest.

These types of difficulties, SF2 argues, are compounded by the sense that, in light of unionist opposition, many of the institutions were and are, not developed to their full potential. The NSMC for example

was almost designed as minimal and then there were even, through the St. Andrew's Agreement, then, commitments to review the operation of that to see where best practice would show you we should be extending that, what we've got in terms of areas of cooperation and joint administration, they were all at minimum objectives to be delivered on in the Good Friday and to be built upon and we don't build on them. And we often get the Irish government saying none the while 'tread carefully 'cause unionism can't cope with it and you'll create problems with the unionist parties'. Every year we insist that we do more of this and the Good Friday Agreement was always about building on, not saying 'here's these agreements and we're doing nothing further than that'. That's just nonsense.

Institutions such as the NSMC allow for the building of all Ireland institutions and projects. Although well shy of independence and reunification, they speak to the development of de facto island wide governance structures.

Thus while republicanism in Northern Ireland has long viewed State institutions with suspicion, through the GFA and related institutional changes, this perception has been, at least in part, shifted. The new institutional framework is still viewed critically, but at the same time the respondents suggest it has been reconstituted in such a way as to address many historic grievances – such as representation in government – while providing channels through which the movement can work to address the remaining grievances and concerns in the short term, and seek to pursue the overarching goals of independence and reunification in the long term. After the collapse of the SA and the imposition of

direct rule, what little faith the RM had in the State institutions to address its concerns largely dissipated. The AIA marked, for the RM, the possibility that some value might yet be recouped. The shift in British willingness to address the institutionalized grievances of the Republican Movement (see Concessions), helped demonstrate to the RM the potential viability of reaching a negotiated agreement with the state.

b. Engagements

The GFA was not the first attempt to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict, nor – for all that it marks a turning point – was it the last. For the importance awarded to the GFA as part of the de-escalation and conflict resolution process, it is just that – a process. Accordingly, the RM’ assessment of the State’s engagements with republicanism focused on de-escalation three themes are raised: assessments of the impacts of the State’s interests in the process and the creation of initiatives; the importance of laying groundwork for a negotiation process; and finally, the ongoing nature of the de-escalation and conflict resolution process.

Initiatives and Interests

In assessing the roles played by the State, and unionism in creating the initiatives for de-escalation and following through, the RM argues that State and unionist interests for much of the conflict, were not fully aligned with a negotiated resolution of republican goals and grievances. Accordingly, the RM, perhaps unsurprisingly, credits republicanism – and often specifically the IRA – with taking the initiative and creating opportunities for de-escalation. Eventually, the British state, they hold, underwent an about face and began to engage more meaningfully in the process beginning in the 1980s.

That the British state and unionist forces had long had an interest in maintaining unionist control over Northern Ireland is not a question the RM feels is up for debate (see Target Framing). As Guelke and Symth (1992) explain “[m]any Protestants saw the radicalization of Catholic opinion after British intervention as a challenge to Ulster's very existence” (p.105). Unionist ideology, as SF3 puts it

is about stopping change. It's about, it's that siege mentality... it's coming from the position of a people who were in power who don't want to give up power. And again, that's perfectly understandable, but that ideology was never going to have the imagination. And it never is in unionism's interest to change. It was only ever in the interest of republicans and nationalist Ireland to make changes. It wasn't in the interest of the British government to change [...] If it's not in their interest to do it, they're not going to do it.

As Mansergh (2006) notes, the collapse of the SA was a stark example of “unionist veto” over Republican concerns (P.29). As Owen (2007) elaborates, the “fundamental problem” with the SA was that it “took the then Ulster Unionist leader, Brian Faulkner, too far away from his own political base, and the so-called Irish dimension with the South alienated too many Unionists for him to hold his party together” (p. 32). The British government’s inability to end the Unionist Workers Coalition strike that heralded the collapse of the SA (see Institutions), undermined republican faith in the UK’s commitment: even the SDLP “already angered by the failure of the British to end the process of internment, remained convinced that the strike could have been broken by a resolute action” (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p. 50). Unionism itself had to undergo a shift for negotiations to take place.

Unionist and loyalist alike, Todd (2009) argues, viewed

republican violence as criminal terrorism and wanted it defeated independently of and prior to any political settlement that included republicans (Farrington, 2006). For them there was no rationale to armed struggle, and any attempts to lessen support for the IRA by reforming the state in Northern Ireland (as nationalist in the SLDP and the Irish state advocated) was at once unprincipled appeasement and practically useless” (p. 345).

This would change, Osbourne and Shuttleworth (2004) note, overtime, particularly in the aftermath of the AIA (in Todd 2009; 345). The AIA, largely opposed by unionists, Kennedy-Pipe (2006) notes “exposed unionism as having lost some of its influence with the British Government over the previous decade” (p. 50). Thus, as discussed in *Institutions and Concessions*, it was strongly held that it was will rather than a lack of capacity that had long stayed the British hand in facilitating any of the changes favoured by republicanism.

SFI2 and I1 in particular highlight the response of the head of the UUP at the time, James Molyneaux’s reaction to the declaration of an IRA ceasefire in the 1990s as indicative of continued unionist aversion to a negotiated process. As SFI2 recalls, unionism “described the IRA ceasefire as the most destabilizing thing that had ever happened throughout the whole conflict”. The declaration of the ceasefire I1 argues worried unionism as a signal that the conflict might be moving from a primarily military to political arena. As he puts it, the ceasefire was called “a dark day for unionism” as

they had a state that was securely run, and run in their interests, and when the IRA declared its intentions it then brought a focus that they were very uncomfortable with because nationalism couldn’t give anything. The only people who could give anything was unionism and the State, so they knew at some stage [...] regardless of what small reconciliative positions they adopted, it was going to be small but they still had to give them.

Unsurprisingly, the respondents argue, unionist political, social and paramilitary forces sought to actively resist the negotiation process. As SF2 discussed, even having signed the GFA, the UUP, he argues actively resisted all attempts to pass the corresponding legislation for the implementation of the agreement (see *Concessions*). SFI2 is blunt in her assessment of ongoing unionist resistance to the conflict resolution process. Notably, following the signing of the AIA “100,000 people attended a protest rally in Belfast. Unionists saw the new involvement of the Irish government as a dangerous threat to the sovereignty of the province, and feared (correctly as it turned out) that it was only the first step towards

greater involvement of the Republic in the affairs of Northern Ireland.” (Silke, 1999, p.4) This was followed by significant backlash in the unionist and loyalist communities with a sharp increase in loyalist violence from 1985 until the early 1990s (O’Duffy, 1995, p.764). For the GFA, she argues “what you had to do was drag unionism kickin' and screamin'. And it's always been kickin' and screamin'. And even right up until now you've got unionism out on the steps saying absolutely never and never accepting when all they are being asked is to, you know, maybe consider this.” As discussed below, maintaining a unionist presence in the GFA would come to require a great deal of effort.

While somewhat less vehement in their frustration with the lack of British interest in the resolution of the conflict, – perhaps given the role the state would come to play in the de-escalation process - the respondents are nonetheless adamant that a lack of perceived British self-interest in bringing about a resolution to the conflict, delayed meaningful engagement with the RM. Much of this attitude, the respondents argue, stems from a longstanding sense that the British government long believed it could reach a military and policing based end to the conflict (see Tactics). As I1 explains, at the time of the IRA’s 1994 ceasefire declaration, the government, both in terms of the elected officials and the bureaucratic institutions that spanned successive governments, “weren’t ready for negotiations”. To that end SF2, I1 and SF12 note, the State did not act immediately to take advantage of the ceasefire but instead sought to continue the use of military and policing options in order to avoid a political approach to resolving the conflict (see Tactics). Undoubtedly, this perception reflects a very real tension within the British government – that of moving towards negotiation, but maintaining sufficient unionist support as to render any agreement meaningful.

Faced with the perception of intransigence, the RM largely held that most of the initiatives which led to the GFA and beyond, were brought about by the work of the RM, including but not limited to, Sinn Féin and the IRA. As Craig (2012) notes, as early as the 1970s, it was the IRA that reached out to the British government to discuss the possibility of negotiations. Further, it would be Gerry Adams who sought to reach out to other branches of Irish nationalism to seek a united front. As SF3 explains “It was only ever in the interest of republicans and nationalist Ireland to make changes. [...] If it’s not in their interest to do it, they’re not going to do it. Any initiative to change the context was only ever going to come from republicans and Irish nationalism.” To this end the SF2 and SF3 highlight the attempts made by SF to expand the republican base of allies to better pressure the State for talks (see Alliances). I1, SFI3, SFI2 and ISF discuss the role of the IRA in creating opportunities (see Military Viability). I1 is particularly explicit on this point, while recognizing his own bias, he is adamant that “the only opportunities for us were created by us, by republicans. No opportunities came about based on the goodwill or hand of peace and reconciliation of the British government. Absolutely none whatsoever. All initiatives were created by the IRA.” For I1, though the process was not immediate, “from a war position, the de-escalation came about with the initiative of the Irish Republican Army in 1994 with announcement of its ceasefire”. SFI2 argues this was the “biggest opportunity we had” and was a unilateral and deliberate “initiative by the republican movement to move the situation forward”. For SFI3

it was a genuine opportunity on behalf of the movement to explore other ways of taking our desire, our belief in the reunification of our country forward. Now the British around the first cease fire were, sadly, were not genuine. And consequently the ceasefire was broken. But I think there was a desire to look at another way of taking the struggle forward.

SFI2 further places importance on the eventually decommissioning of the IRA, a move which he sees as a notable sign of good faith on the part of republicanism as putting arms beyond reach is unprecedented for the IRA, and implies a faith in the process and a degree of permanence to the peace that has heretofore never existed. Attempts at criminalizing the conflict such as those undertaken in the late 70s

and early 80s, a conflict that Republicans saw as an inherently political one, was reflective, the Republican Movement held, of the unwillingness to seriously address the underlying causes and consequences of the conflict – at least as they understood them. As he explains, the ceasefire “British and Unionists felt much easier to deal with republicans in war because they just described us as terrorists, they put us in jail they didn't have to talk to you, they treat us like... once you become a major political force it's not that easy”. Thus, through the GFA, SF3 argues “I think we created that framework whereby we could achieve a united Ireland that we desired, and still desire, in a way that didn't request or need people to die, thank god, or go to jail.”

In the RM's understanding these opportunities were seized upon by the British state as it went through a gradual about face over its role and interests in the conflict. As discussed in *Military Viability*, SFIR and SF13 note that the State, like the RM, increasingly came to see the situation as stalemated, while at the same time, the early 1980s saw Britain's relationship with the Republic of Ireland thaw (O'Duffy, 1995). For SFIR, the British “had historically refused to accept that they could not defeat the IRA. Once they did accept that they could not defeat the IRA, then that then opens up other channels of alright, what do we do here, how do we bring this conflict to an end?” For Guelke (2001), a significant tactical shift was demonstrated early in Brookes' tenures as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1989-1992) when “[i]n contrast to his predecessors, Brook made no claim that the security forces could defeat the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). Instead he acknowledged the IRA's capacity to sustain its campaign, while also stressing its futility” (p. 246). SF13 notes that this was not solely a military stalemate with the IRA but was a reflection of the support for republicanism as a political and social force. As he notes “I think that somewhere along the line they realized that they couldn't defeat republicanism and that was reflected in the Good Friday Agreement.”

While the RM awards much of the credit for the peace process to itself, it nonetheless allows for some credit awarded to other parties. While the State had long been more interested in pacification rather than a resolution or transformation of the conflict (see Target Framing), many of the respondents credit the arrival of Prime Minister Tony Blair with the British state's perceived new commitment to meaningful engagement. There was a shift in British policy in the late 1980s, although

[i]t can be argued that the approach of successive British Governments has been one of pragmatism. An incremental approach has been adopted whereby successive British Government have awarded concessions or 'carrots' to the respective parties' through the peace process. This conscious effort to trade concessions with nationalism/republicanism and unionism has been particularly evident under the Blair administrations (MacEvoy, 2008, p.95).

It has often been held that it was "Major's insistence that the IRA begin the process of decommissioning its arsenal that, according to critics, destroyed first ceasefire... Tony Blair's resounding electoral triumph in May 1997 provided him with such a massive majority in the House of Commons that, unlike Major, he was not dependent on the ten Ulster Unionist MPs and could move away from the preconditions that the Major Government had imposed upon 'inclusive negotiations' (Patterson, 2001, p. 166) However, Patterson (2001) suggests there exists a great deal more continuity between the Major and Blair administrations than often suggested. Major and then Secretary of State Peter Brooke, Owen (2007) argues made the decision early upon taking their positions to move the conflict in Northern Ireland to the "front burner". That being said, Patterson (2001) notes that Major's attitude to the concept of 'inclusiveness'... was initially considerably less enthusiastic and wholehearted than that of the Irish Government and John Hume" (p. 168). Nonetheless, he notes "Major had been prepared to offer radical constitutional concessions to republicans and had begun to soften his line on decommissioning by the time he lost office. While unionism recovered some ground on constitutional issues in the Belfast Agreement, the pressure on them to accept a major fudge on decommissioning grew significantly under Blair" (Patterson, 2001, p. 180).

The first ceasefire was not met with the enthusiasm from the State that the RM had hoped, leading to the eventual breakdown of the ceasefire. It was at this point, SF2 argues that “Tony Blair comes into office, the IRA renew their ceasefire and then it mushrooms into change. It was in that period than, that all of these preparations start to emerge”. I1 concurs, noting that with the new ceasefire and Blair “that was an opportunity to move onto a ground that republicans had never experienced coming from the British government. You had a willingness to address fundamental difficulties regarding the Irish question”. For SF12 this willingness was crucial to meaningful engagement, but was further facilitated by the people with which Blair surrounded himself. As she notes

Tony Blair made a big difference. He moved immediately to get Sinn Féin involved in the talks, to get things moving and that ultimately led to the Good Friday Agreement. So its very important when you do have that confluence, I suppose, that you get the right people in the right place and the right time, and those are you know, your golden moments. Whenever, you don't know when they are going to happen but when they happen you have to seize those opportunities. So you did have a willingness in Tony Blair and in Tony Blair's office. Tony Blair's advisors were people who could be worked with, [...] who could work with people and who had a genuine approach.

While Kennedy-Pipe (2006) notes the continuity in government engagement with republicanism, she notes that “Blair, as British Prime Minister, has gone further than his Conservative predecessors in taking the unprecedented step of acknowledging and apologising for some of the more tragic aspects of the British legacy in Ireland” (p. 41). The respondents also made further note of the importance of changes in leadership and attitude in the Republic of Ireland and the United States in contributing to this ‘confluence’ of people (see Alliances). Thus, the move to productive engagement over the conflict in Northern Ireland, the RM argued, was facilitated by the British state’s eventual re-evaluation of their interests in response to republican initiatives and improved relations with the Irish Republic, despite unionist protestations resulted in increased RM optimism for both meaningful engagement and a promising outcome.

Setting the Stage

The opportunities for engagement between the State and the RM are reflective of both active attempts to create the necessary conditions, as well as the confluence, as SFI3 puts it, of events and people. Laying such groundwork required active involvement by both the British State and the RM over time, in a series of complementary, conciliative gestures (Pruitt, 2007). On the part of the State, many of the concessions mentioned in Concessions, are seen by the RM as being important for creating an atmosphere in British, unionist and nationalist communities that was more conducive to a negotiation process. On the part of the RM, these actions relate broadly to the work done in creating the nationalist front, as well as the calling of the IRA's ceasefire.

For more than 20 years prior to Brooke's October 1990 decision to reach out to Martin McGuinness of the RM, there had existed lines of back channel communication between SF and the British government (English, 2003, p. 267). Craig (2012) notes that in even in the early 1970s, talks with paramilitary groups, particularly the PIRA, were rarely undertaken on an ad hoc basis (p.98). The British government, apparently wary of that of Northern Ireland, created its own access to information on the ground in Northern Ireland "that was uniquely detached from sources supplied by or through the Northern Ireland government" (Craig, 2012, p. 101). It was in fact through these channels that the IRA first approached the British about a possibility of negotiation in 1972 (Craig, 2012, p. 103). The issue of a stalemate had already been raised with a message from the PIRA Chief of Staff Seán MacStíofáin outlining that "The British Army could not defeat the IRA; the IRA could not defeat the British Army. In the event of a Protestant backlash the Roman Catholics could not defeat the UVF. Therefore [MacStíofáin] proposed a truce between the British Army and the IRA" (Memo from Director of Intelligence, as cited in Craig, 2012, p. 105). Following the return to violence of the IRA car bomb attacks of Bloody Friday, in the summer of 1972, the British implemented Operation Motorman in Derry on July 31st which sought the

elimination of the 'no-go' areas under republican control (Craig 2012). While there continued to exist communication channels until 1974, Craig (2012) notes that Secretary of State William Whitelaw was not open to the possibility of two way communications with the IRA in the wake of Bloody Friday. Yet, he notes "the above contacts also suggest that Dáithí Ó Conaill remained firmly in control of a large and powerful wing of the Provisionals who continued to seek a negotiated way out of the conflict" (Craig, 2012, p. 108). As such, Craig (2012) concludes that channels of communication in the early stages of the Troubles "were not dependent on whoever had the upper hand (or felt they had) militarily. In fact, to take a maximalist approach, violence was as much a part of communication as the talks themselves were of the conflict. The gun battles, the bombs, the arrest and the security patrols were in many ways simply another means by which the Republican movement and the British communicated" (p.111)

Since that time, however "[i]t has not been in constant use. It had been used in an extensive way during such periods as the bi-lateral truce of 1974-5 and the Long-Kesh hunger strikes of 1980-1981" (DDD) and would run "fitfully" from October 1990 until November 1993 (Sinn Féin *Setting the Record Straight*, 1994 in English, 2003, p.267). As SF3 notes, confidence building measures such as there were important both to get the process started as well as to maintain it in the face of inevitable setbacks

in a sense it is about people showing their good faith. You know, things about, if you go back again to the release of prisoners, you know those confidence building measures obviously by the British. And you know all of that type of thing. The cease fires, the decommissioning of weapons.... confidence building measures were important and in my view are still important because it is about a sign of good faith that you are in a sense projecting to your political enemies now. So all of that is important. In fact not just important but it's vital.

These moves, SF1 argues, helped to create "a different political rhythm in society" that facilitates the de-escalation and resolution processes.

While Adams met with Hume in the 1980s (see Alliances), Britain initiated the laying of some groundwork for future interactions, beginning with a number of statements by then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Brooke, which can be characterised as conciliatory. He said it was “difficult to envisage a military defeat of the IRA”, that “if...the terrorists were to...withdraw from their activities, the... the Government would need to be imaginative” (Taylor, 1997, p. 365) and that “the British Government has no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland... but to ensure democratic debate and free democratic choice” (McKittrick and McVea, 2002, p. 178-179 as cited in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523). Shortly thereafter, British intelligence reached out to Adams’ deputy Martin McGuinness by way of a “chain of intermediaries” (English 2003; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523), and around Christmas 1990 the IRA declared its first ceasefire (lasting 3 days) in 15 years.

Dixon (2006) suggests that such conciliatory statements as those made by Brooke between 1989 and 1990 were “restatements of British policy rather than major new developments” (p. 71). However, there is something to be said for making such statements publicly and having them correspond to public actions, rather than being implicit to government policy, or privately (or quietly) stated. It may be difficult to take seriously claims of benign disinterest while under Direct Rule, in the midst of a high military presence, and within unreformed policing structures. As Guelke and Smyth (1991) note, the RM had learned to be mindful in the differences between State rhetoric, and policy on the ground. Accusations of collusion, discrimination and criminalization may make it difficult for those on the receiving end to view the British state as neutral rather than an enforcer of unionist dominance. Thus, throughout the early 1990s, the British state sought to ensure that the RM was not caught unawares by their movements. Brooke’s 1990s speech declaring Britain’s lack of “selfish strategic or economic interest” in Northern Ireland was sent to the RM in advance (English, 2003, p. 269). As English (2003) explains: throughout 1991 and 1992

the Provisionals were briefed (indirectly by the British) on British government policy and were given advance notice of key speeches. One such major British overture was placed in December 1992 in Colerain when Patrick Mayhew, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, argued that while Northern Ireland majority preference for membership of the UK would continue to be respected, “there is also the aspiration to a united Ireland, an aspiration that is no less legitimate” (p. 270).

These initiatives and gestures build on those launched by Adams in August of 1991 calling for talks aimed at a political settlement. On the 20th of that month he revealed that he had written to the Irish and British governments, and to the political and Church leaders, to say that he was prepared to participate in discussions in pursuit of a solution to the northern troubles” (English 2003; 270). Though little was finalized, in 1992 SF’s “Towards a Lasting Peace” document was produced which “for the first time, accepted the importance of unionist consent to a united Ireland and called on Britain to encourage such consent” (Hennessey, 2000; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523). Adams and Hume then published a similar document which was sent to both the Irish Taoiseach and British Prime Minister (Hennessey, 2000; Taylor, 1997; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523).

In terms of decommissioning and demilitarization, both were “promised, the latter dependent of the security situation, and the former dependent on the implementation of the agreement, with the parties committing to “use any influence they may have” to achieve decommissioning within two years “in the context of the implementation of the overall settlement “(Decommissioning 1998) These qualifications lost important unionist support.” (Todd, 2009, p. 347). Nonetheless the pushing back of the timeline for decommissioning helped encouraged republican confidence in the negotiations as an agreement rather than a discussion of surrender, and though unionist support was lost to a sufficient degree to cause later implementation difficulties, enough remained to reach agreement and undertake those processes of implementation.

Confidence measures that reflected a recognition of the political nature of the conflict, such as the release of prisoners, and the involvement of SF in all-party talks, contributed to the sense that there was a chance for republicanism to move forward in this process (SFI2). As SF1 notes “the release of prisoners, demilitarization of society by the British government, the new police service, the disbandment of the armed militias that were killing people and repressing people, all of those different things, people were living the change, the young people particularly you know, were taking advantage of the new society that was emerging and the backdrop of peace.” A point to which Owen (2002) and Neumann (2007) agree (see Concessions). That being said, I1, SFI, SFI2 and SF3 also note the use of an escalation of violence as a tool with which to reinforce the negotiation process. While seemingly contradictory, as discussed in Military Viability and Concessions, the 1996 bombing of Canary Wharf was seen as an important move that reiterated the seriousness of the situation, the viability of the IRA as a military force, and the perceived intransigence of the unionist and State actors.

In addition to confidence building measures and the calculated increase and decrease in military activity, SF3, SF2, SFI2 and ISF also highlight the use of ongoing back channel discussions and contacts between republican, Republic of Ireland, and British actors in laying the ground work for the de-escalation process. 1974-1979 had marked a cooling in British-Irish relations, until the 1980 Dublin Summit, after which cooperation between the two gradually built (Dixon 2006; 68). As SF2 and SF3 note, the involvement of the Republic of Ireland was seen as an important guarantor to the republican cause in negotiations with the British state (see Alliances). The expansion of allies and contacts made it easier for the various parties to pass on information and offers outside of the spotlight and pave the way for various announcements and encounters. As SFI2 notes, in the weeks surrounding ceasefires – whether official or not – there were often overt or covert messages passed between republican and State forces. The extended series of meetings between the SF and SDLP leaders, as well as the involvement of the

Irish and American governments contributed to these exchanges as confidence building measures (SFI2; Alliances and Political Viability). The ceasefire, ISF notes helped highlight many of these already ongoing processes “the cease fire got people to the table that maybe wouldn't, they may have been talking before the cease fire, but behind closed doors or very secretive you know, and that got people more open like”. Thus a number of conciliatory gestures, such as public admissions of a stalemate or willingness to dialogue, helped increase Republican optimism about the possibility of meaningful negotiated engagement with the State (Pruitt, 2007).

An Ongoing Process

The respondents made very clear over the course of their discussions the idea that de-escalation and conflict resolution are processes rather than an events. This is reflected in much of the literature on the GFA which marks its origins well before the talks began, and further consider questions of its implementation as well as the IRA’s ensuing decommissioning, and the eventual inclusion of the DUP. Engagements between the RM and the British State in Northern Ireland follow the pattern of a de-escalatory sequence of conciliatory gestures – a conciliatory spiral, as Pruitt and Kim (2004) describe (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1524). This spiralling pattern is further demonstrated by the reciprocal, alternative nature of concessions between the two sides “suggesting that the parties were reacting to each other at each step in the sequence” (Pruitt 2007; 1524).

The de-escalation process, despite the initiatives and opportunities of the early 1990s, was underway long before. As Dixon (2006) notes “[t]he peace process is the result of an unfolding dynamic that cannot be separated from previous developments, and the search for a single point of origin is probably misleading” (p. 69). Additionally, the British government’s signing of the AIA in 1985 marked a landmark

attempt by the British government to involve the Republic of Ireland in addressing the conflict in Northern Ireland. One example of early, ongoing developments that helped bring about the process is the Hume-Adams Talks of the 1980s (see *Alliances*). As Owen (2007) elaborates, while in signing the AIA, Prime Minister Thatcher “never contemplated fully internationalizing the issue, she made the crucial realization that reducing terrorism across national borders involves co-operation between neighbouring states. It was left to Prime Minister John Major to cross the Rubicon of internationalizing the Northern Ireland conflict by involving the United States” (p. 33). Nonetheless, the AIA marked a shift in the political landscape (Pruitt 2007; 1522). The increasingly close institutional and cooperative links it created between the two states would facilitate coordination between the two in their engagements with the RM. While not a “technical” step in the peace process, Pruitt (2007) argues this alteration in context helped set the stage for what was to come to pass (p.1522).

For SF3, the move of the conflict from military to political expression was to be expected, “anybody with any bit of wit would have known that that is just what had to happen, you know, it had to be, there had to be some way that the context changed.” However, SF3 suggests it was a process that was long in the making, much of which would have taken the form of clandestine and behind the scenes contacts between republican and State representatives or go betweens. As she notes “if you look at the history of some of this and the history of the things that are coming out now and some of the things that are coming out in the future, but these talks had been going on and these talks had been going on for a good number of years”. SFI2 notes that even in the periods leading up to ceasefires there would be messages exchanged: “sometimes, you know, overtly, sometimes not overtly. And sometimes those messages would involve if there was no violence, if the guns were silently as they put it, it would be possible to talk and to move forward”. SFI3 is more explicit in the importance of these back channels such as the work of a West Belfast Catholic Priest Alec Reid.

through either back door channels or other conduits there has been degrees of contact throughout. And there is always a sounding out about and between, you know, sort of, opponents, and enemies [...] maybe a lot more than I'm aware of, when there would have been backdoor contact about, through a third party where there may have been an opportunity to challenge positions, but it would be enough maybe for people to move in this direction

Despite seemingly positive steps, English (2003) notes that “the early 1990s witnessed not a diminution but an intensifying of intercommunal violence in Ulster” (p. 280). That being said, in early 1994 the IRA announced “we are prepared to be flexible in exploring the potential for peace” (AP/RN, 16 Mar, 1994 in English, 2003, p.283) which was followed in April by a 3-day suspension of military activities. However, in their Easter message the IRA reaffirmed the belief that the British were those who had to be responsible for the removal of obstacles to peace (English, 2003, p. 283).

The slow nature of the engagements, SF2, SF3, SF4, ISF, I1, SF13 argue, is also due to the importance of moving slow so as to better manage the emotions, expectations and fears of the members and supporters of, not just the RM, but the unionist community as well (see Fragmentation/ Cohesion). As Dixon (2012) notes, there was a particular balancing act to be played to bring with the UUP leadership a sufficient block of its membership. This was made particularly difficult after the unionist fears of abandonment flared with the signing of the AIA (Silke, 1999). These contacts, the respondents suggest, would have helped set the stage for later negotiations, moving people in different directions as SF13 notes, laying the groundwork for slow and painstaking adjustments in course, as SF3 describes it, like turning a tanker. Following the 1993 Downing Street Declaration, Prime Minister John Major announced there existed a possibility of negotiations with SF within three months should they “end violence for good” (Hennessey, 2000, p. 82 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1523). In light of this possibility, the IRA announced a ceasefire in August of 1994 (English, 2003).

Nonetheless, Senator Mitchell (2002) describes the mood across all parties in 1995 as one of pessimism. Though the IRA had declared a ceasefire, the British government insisted on the IRA's disarmament prior to SF's admittance to the talks. The IRA saw this as contrary to the agreement and ended the ceasefire with the bombing of London's Canary Wharf in 1996 (Pruitt, 2007, p.1524). As such, as SFI2 and SFI3 note, both unionist and British commitment to the negotiation process was doubted for much of the negotiation period. The State and unionism, SFI3 argued had long found it easier to portray the IRA as "mindless, moronic, uneducated, you know, barbarians, or something along those lines" rather than have to engage the movement. As noted above, initial British commitment following the first ceasefire was not perceived as genuine. As SFI3 notes "they still tried to win the war". SFI2 explains in detail

once the IRA began the cease fire there began a series of barriers and pre-conditions, you have to do this, you have to do that you know, so like one that everybody kind of remembers was 'is it permanent', is the cease fire permanent? You know, so it was all kind of delaying stalling tactics that came about and they were just messing about with it. So what it felt like certainly for me, and for many republicans, was that unionism really didn't it. It wasn't what they wanted. The British probably were taken, you know, were all taken by surprise with it and they tried to just stall it. They probably always found it easier to deal with the republican movement in a war situation, it was easier to respond [...] a cease fire was called it was like calling their bluff and so then they were looking for reasons not to treat us, to treat our political representatives as actors and players in the peace process, the negotiations

Thus the respondents argue, the State and unionism attempted to maintain the military expression of the conflict in such a way as to avoid moving the conflict to a political arena, where, as discussed, the State recognized that it was the one that would have to make concessions. Following this, talks proceeded without SF until the May 1997 election of Tony Blair. Blair announced that an IRA ceasefire could open the door to SF joining the talks. When the ceasefire was announced and SF admitted, Ian Paisley led the Democratic Unionist Party out of the talks (Pruitt, 2007, p. 124).

When the negotiations did begin in earnest however, the respondents argue that the State was able to engage with republicans on fundamental issues. As I1 noted, republicans were much less interested in addressing only the consequences of the conflict, and more interested in addressing its roots (see Concessions). For SFIR, when the negotiations took place, one of the important dynamics was the State's willingness to engage on these issues. As he explains in the talks leading up to and during the GFA, the fact that republicans were able to engage with the British state rather than unionist powers was critical:

You talk about the release of IRA prisoners, you talk about the weapons issue, you talk about the removal of the British Army from the streets, you talk the disbandment of the British Army militia [...] And you talk about the end of the RUC [...] So all those were resolved between the IRA and Republicans and the British government. Each one of those issues. If it had of been the unionist we were negotiating with instead of the British, none of those would have been resolved. You know, the unionists would not have disbanded their militia, UDR... They would have refused to get rid of the RUC. They would not have released the IRA prisoners, and they would not have accepted a compulsory power sharing government.

Dixon (2001) notes that traditionally unionist actors have looked warily upon 'external' involvement as they held the conflict to be an internal matter, a sense likely reinforced by the fact that "unionist international support has been very limited" (in Dixon, 2006, p. 78). Further, Dixon holds that while British and American actors were aware of the importance of the pan-nationalist front to republicans, they were also well aware of the potentially alienating effect it might have on unionism. Accordingly, Hazelton (2000) and MacDonald (2000) note a number of overtures were made by the U. S Presidency toward unionism and loyalism in addition to the showing support for nationalism (In Dixon, 2006, p. 81). The British state, McDonald (2000) argues, pressured the unionist parties not only to stay in negotiations, but to make concessions enough to keep the process viable (in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1531). This in turn helped boost SF optimism about negotiations (English, 2003; Pruitt, 2007, p. 1531).

While the Republican Movement frames the GFA as a victory (Dixon, 2012), SF2 and ISF are explicit not only in their assessment of the importance of the agreement to the context in Northern Ireland, but as a model for dealing with seemingly intractable sub-state conflicts more globally. This has been demonstrated by the involvement of SF representatives in conflict resolution efforts and discussions with representatives of the MLNV from the Basque Country, to Kurdish militants (*The Guardian* 10 Feb, 2011). For SF2, while the GFA called for a ceasefire and eventual decommissioning of the IRA, it was important that it did not strictly adhere to a stance that the IRA had to decommission prior to talks. The notion that the IRA was 'defeated' and thus the timing opportune for talks, is one vehemently countered by the Republican Movement (see Military Viability) and various authors. As Dixon (2012) notes, UUP leader David Trimble "is one of the heroes of the peace process *because* he acted not as if the IRA had been defeated but as if the 'armed struggle' had reached 'deadlock'. This explains the UUP leaders' courageous leadership in attempting to support the Adams/McGuinness leadership to bring a united republican movement into a peace process and reach accommodation" (p. 315). For him, the GFA was particularly important because it provided a new arena through which republicans could pursue their goals and address their grievances in the absence of the IRA. The GFA, he puts simply "is a good model". The signed agreement, ISF argues, gave the RM and its supporters something of substance, something tangible with which to move forward.

This importance of moving forward, of building on the agreement, was crucial to those positive assessments of the State's engagement with the RM. It is most explicit in parsing the movement's perception of the ongoing nature of the process: "This isn't a settlement., [...] for republicans our settlement is when we have unified this country and the British interference is gone. We see very much the Good Friday Agreement as a stepping stone to bring about the necessary dynamic to bring that change about. So, a settlement, no. An agreement, yes. Every day is a negotiation towards a

settlement.” As SF12 noted, the GFA must be seen as part of a series of agreements and understandings that serve to address various components, such as the St. Andrew’s and Hillsborough Agreements.

Negotiations, both the everyday variety, and the more formal, are important parts of building on the existing framework, as SF2 notes, towards a more comprehensive and lasting resolution to the conflict.

The importance of the GFA to give ‘substance’ to a sense of change, ISF argues, was all the more important because of the recognition that this would be a slow and long term change. The GFA thus provided not only a framework for that process but a tangible touchstone of evidence that the process was underway:

people need something concrete, they need the substance. You know I think it was important it was one signed agreement but its not the be all and end all, d'you know what I mean? It did what it did but its still you know, its still a project in process you know and its still moving forward and its still being worked on. Not everybody is in agreement. Not everybody is opposed to it [...] If its working now then its working and you build on it. You keep building.

For all that the peace process that has led to the current relatively de-escalated climate in Northern Ireland, the RM by no means suggests that the conflict is ‘settled’. While the respondents are all adamant in the importance of the GFA, they are equally adamant that there remains a conflict in Northern Ireland; only now it is a conflict to be addressed through engaging with the British and unionist communities through largely institutionalized channels. The GFA, the respondents note, was not a switch that was flipped when discussions were agreed to. This sentiment is reflective of the wider RM with Gerry Adams announcing in 2010 that he would resign his seat in West Belfast to contest elections in the Republic of Ireland as part of a promotion of republican thinking to an ‘all-Ireland’ approach (*The Guardian* 14 Nov, 2010).

Thus while the British state was long seen as party to the conflict, its role in the eyes of the respondents, has changed. While the respondents still reject the notion the British state projects of itself as an

'honest broker', they increasingly from the AIA through the GFA and beyond, see it as a viable partner for the pursuit of political goals. That is not to say that republicans view the State favourably or as an ally. Rather, it suggests that unlike in previous decades, as the 1980s wore on, the RM increasingly saw the State as one with which – although they will likely not be in agreement – it can nonetheless work to address its grievances and goals. The AIA was seen as evidence that the British government was less beholden to unionist interests. This was greatly reinforced by the British government's increasing engagement with the Republican of Ireland, as well as a series of reciprocal concessions. Together these helped build the RM's optimism that engagement with the British state has the potential to be productive and meaningful for republicanism.

c. Concessions

While the respondents were all vehement in their discussion of unionist and British tactics, they were also quick to note that the British state had made real and meaningful concessions. This is echoed by the broader RM, given the representation of the GFA as a "victory" for republicans (Dixon, 2010). Broadly, the RM see concessions made: as having been by the British state rather than unionist forces; concessions made by the RM; as well as outlining a series of caveats to their full endorsement of the State's concessions.

Concessions and the British State

For the RM, the State, rather than unionism, took center stage with regards to concessions. These moves played a role as confidence building measures, and several of these concessions were crucial for the RM's engagement for the entirety of the negotiation process. As the figures in Appendix 9 demonstrate, for all that significant tensions, sectarianism, and outright conflicts remain, there is also little doubt that there has been a quantitative and qualitative de-escalation of the conflict in Northern

Ireland. That does not suggest that the conflict is over, but rather, drastically reshaped (see Political Viability and Target Framing). “You walk up and down that road today” SF1 explains (indicating the Falls Road of West Belfast) “and you wouldn’t see, I mean, this is a normal society. But twenty years ago, you know, it would have been packed with British soldiers, RUC personnel, and paraphernalia of war quite obvious everywhere you went”. SF2 concurs, noting that street violence is but one of the indicators of de-escalation, “on the political front you’ll have a lot more people working together [...] though the problems aren’t all eradicated, but they are substantially reduced”.

The British state, the RM argues, was impacted by a recognition of a stalemate with Irish republicanism (see Military Viability). SFI3 notes “once they knew they couldn’t win this war, in that sense, things began to be different for them”. As such, the respondents argue the State made a series of concessions which served as confidence building measures to facilitate engagements and subsequently, de-escalation. Both SFIR and SFI3 highlight the 1993 Downing Street Declaration as heralding this change, along with the earlier declaration by Peter Brooke of the UK’s lack of selfish interest in Northern Ireland (English, 2003, see Engagement). SFIR notes that his reaction after his speech was “that’s it, the war is over. So, for me, I understood that that was it, we were into the endgame and it was about how, from then, to bring the conflict to an end. I know there were a lot of people killed in between then, and the IRA cease-fires you know, and the actually end of the conflict, but for me the writing was on the wall from that period.” This was, as SFI3 notes, seen as a potentially important opportunity to see the beginning of the end of the conflict (see Engagements). As Pruitt (2007) notes, this conciliatory gesture, for all that, as Dixon (2006) argues the comments were representative of no change in British policy, was an important confident building measure for the RM to have it so publicly, succinctly, and unambiguously stated.

In keeping with Dixon's (2006) assessment, it is notable that, as Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in the 1970s noted of the GFA "there is nothing that the IRA can get now that they couldn't have had any time in the last twenty years" (in McIntyre 2001, p. 206). Former SDLP leader Seamus Mallon referred to the GFA as "Sunningdale for slow learners" (in Bean, 2007, p.137). That being said, the signing of the SA was not sufficient as the agreement failed shortly after it was signed for lack of unionist support. For all that the RM could have been said to have 'gotten' what it wanted, the collapse of the agreement did not allow republicans to 'keep' it. The similarities between the SA and GFA have been well noted (Wolff, 2001). The principal of consent was largely accepted by London and Dublin since the SA (Bew and Gillespie, 1999, p. 72-75, in Wilford and Wilson, 2006) along with a border poll to test consent (dated to a constitutional referendum in 1973), which was to be conducted every decade. However, after "Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior decided against such a sectarian headcount in 1983" the notion was not raised again until pre-negotiations for the GFA in 1993 (Flakes and Elliott, 1999, p. 186 in Wilford and Wilson, 2006, p. 17). O'Leary (2001) notes that a crucial feature of the BA are the power-sharing structures of the new Elected Assembly; particularly the rules of parallel consent –requirement of concurrent majorities and weighted majorities between the two community blocks for key decisions. These cross-community consent rules applied to key and or controversial decision, such as that of the budget, and were "vital to the design of the internal consociation" (O'Leary, 2001, p. 50-51). This was combined with power-sharing at the executive level and proportionality within the Assembly committees, largely in keeping with consociational democratic structures (O'Leary, 2001). Such structures guaranteeing a voice for the nationalist community, after decades of Direct Rule, were an important 'get' for republicans. For all that power-sharing had been on the table during the SA, the agreement's quick collapse ensured that its institutionalization remained an important issue for the RM.

Notably, the Downing Street Declaration was a joint statement by the British and Irish governments, but did not necessarily speak for Northern Irish nationalists, DUP leader Ian Paisley leveled charges of betrayal and perfidy against the British government, while UUP leader James Molyneux demonstrated a reserved optimism for some of the guarantees outlined but held the declaration was rife with “Dublin-speak” (*The Guardian* 16 Dec, 1993). The RM holds that the British state was best able to make the necessary moves necessary to announce and implement concessions both as a matter of interest and of capacity. As SF1 explains

they are primarily driven by interests not loyalty and so their judgement, they have a different filter in terms of their judgements of what needs to happen than for example what the unionists would have. [...] To some extent they are detached as well from the immediacy of the conflict on the ground although their forces, they were losing people just as much as the IRA were losing people but the emotional element to it, for the British isn't there, where as it is for the unionists. And I suppose the unionists have more to lose in direct negotiations than the British have I suppose. [...] They were, what they do do, what they can do is, because they have that detached relationship is that they can take initiatives independent of unionist interests. They can take initiatives independent of that, and they did.

For I1 the most significant concessions necessarily had to come from the State. As he sees it, the ball was in their court, changes in representation, constitutional and institutional frameworks, policing etc. were all the purview of the State and unionist political forces, and as such these most important of concessions had to come from them. Given the perceived vehemence with which unionism opposed to republicanism (see Target Framing), inevitably, he argues, highlighted the State as the one who first had to make such a concession: “Nationalism couldn’t give anything, the only people who could give anything was unionism and the state so they knew at some stage they would have to make a move onto that ground [...] it was going to be small but they still had to give them”. The State’s ability to deliver on the movement goals was widely accepted by the respondents. However, as SF13 points, out, capability was not sufficient to see these concessions granted “they probably would have been capable if they had wanted to deliver on them but they didn’t want to and that’s a fact of life”. SF2 agreed: “I think they could have at any time done an awful lot more to resolve the conflict here [...] The political will being

there, they could have done an awful lot more, and still can do an awful lot more.” As discussed in Institutions and Target Framing, the RM largely held that the British state had the capacity to make the concessions to republicanism that the movement saw as critical should the State find the political will.

The above sentiment is reinforced by the sense that once the State had made the decision to make such changes, it was able to deliver on a wide array of concessions that were important to the RM as important confidence building measures critical to republican commitment to the de-escalation process. As SF2 explains, early attempts at negotiations in the 1990s excluded SF as a republican representative. To get the republican community on board with talks he argues

by the time we got included in those talks there had to be a lot of things built to obviously maintain republican commitment to it and also to build the public understanding that there will be all-party talks, what people wanted. [...] important ones would have been de-scaling or demilitarization where you had the British troops coming off the streets, taking off their hardware, you know coming off the street or patrols taking down some of their military installations. All of those things would have been very, very important to create a far better, more positive environment. (SF2)

Steps toward demilitarization of Northern Ireland, along with prisoner release plans in particular were highlighted as confidence building measures that helped guarantee republican commitment.

That being said, the RM, I1 notes, was wary of the use of prisoner releases as a concession as they were concerned that it might be used to emotionally manipulate the movement while at the same time being treated by the State as a fundamental concession to republicanism rather than, as republicans saw it, addressing a consequence rather than a cause, of the conflict. As more than one respondent noted, if the war was still on, they would still be a member of the IRA. “We weren’t there” I1 argues as a prisoner at the time, “as a core issue”. That being said, I1 also highlighted the importance of prisoners’ releases

as important for by in, by both loyalist and republican forces. SFI2 notes that the release of prisoners functioned both as a concession as part of the GFA as well as a confidence building measure. MacGinty (2006) offers an overview of some of the changes positive to republicans ushered in by the peace process, suggest that there could

be no doubt that the peace resulted in significant advances on the republican grievance agenda, particularly in relation to security issues. Combined pressure from Sinn Féin, the SDLP and the Irish government resulted in far-reaching security sector reform, including a re-organisation of the police force, the scaling down of British troop numbers, prisoner release and the establishment of the Bloody Sunday Tribunal. This reform, and particularly the reorganization of the RUC and partial withdrawal of the British Army in the context of the IRA ceasefire, had a real quality of life dividend in many nationalist communities. Alongside the republican security grievance agenda, the introduction of human rights and equality legislation and more attention to social and cultural inclusion represented a willingness on behalf of the British government to deal seriously with the republican non-constitutional agenda (p. 126).

That is not to suggest that the RM itself did not make any concessions over the years. Concessions of note range from the renunciation of socialism in 1988, the increase in permissible years for British troop withdrawal from 2.5 in 1972 to 4-5 in 1980 and finally, unspecified in 1988; and notably, ultimately moving to participate in negotiations despite the lack of British troop withdrawal (Moloney 2002 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1530-1531). Leading up to the negotiations in 1995 Owen (2002) notes that Adams had offered assurances that “every issue, including decommissioning, could be on the negotiating agenda” (p.38). Not only did British concessions help promote optimism in the RM with regard to negotiations with the State, but, as Pruitt (2007) notes, the above mentioned concessions by the RM can be assumed to have increased British optimism concerning negotiations with SF (p. 1530-1531).

Nonetheless, as discussed in Political Viability and alluded to by I1, for the RM, a significant concession had to come from the State, and ultimately did: the inclusion of the possibility of a border poll to decide

the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. That this possibility had existed (see above) prior, may be reflective of the State's ability to 'sell' the idea or the perceived credibility and sincerity of its offer. As the respondents noted, what was important about the GFA was that it provided a "mechanism" for self-determination. Part of a series of conciliatory gestures (see Engagements), the Downing Street Declaration of December 15th 1993 by the British and Irish governments was also seen as a sign of British willingness to make a significant concession. In the Declaration, it was said "the British government agrees that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right to self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, north and south, to bring about a United Ireland if that is their wish" (in English, 2003, p. 271). In the eyes of Hume, such a declaration "undermined the IRA's insistence on the use of republican violence" (on BBC Radio Ulster 29 Jan, 1994 in English, 2003, p. 272). Initially, many republican prisoners held the Declaration to be insufficient, as, for all that the importance of unionist consent was recognised, it was held that the Declaration failed to address the underlying failure of partition (English, 2003, p. 272-273) Adams and SF were "formally unimpressed" with the Declaration – with Adams stating the British government demanded an IRA surrender as a pre-condition, - but nonetheless "remained involved in the broad peace process" (English, 2003, 272). Part of the RM's strategic goal, SFIR explains, was to move the British state to a more neutral position, which, to an extent he argues, occurred with Tony Blair. While he notes the Conservative party and "the coalition rolled back somewhat on that but it's still written, you know, it's still written in the Good Friday Agreement that if 50% plus one person in the Northern state opts for independence, for a severing of the British connections, that that's it, it's over. Now that's written into legislation here".

In addition to the release of prisoners SF12 and SF2 highlight the role of recognition as a confidence building measure. For SF12, prisoner release was not simply a concession for the militants and activists

imprisoned but it was “the recognition of the political nature of our imprisonment” that made the concession so important. Owen (2007) argued that the release of prisoners under the GFA was crucial to the final signing of the GFA. As SF2 notes, one of the important changes was that these concessions and the talks around the GFA, there was a recognition that the “the North was different”. Thus recognition, both of Sinn Féin as a legitimate representative of a portion of the Northern Irish constituency, and the political nature of the conflict, were important confidence building concessions which signalled to the RM that there may be a viable opportunity for engagement with the State (see Engagements).

In addition to confidence building measures in the lead up to the negotiations, significant institutional concessions, in addition to the border poll, were made during the negotiations. As Coakley (2005) explains “[t]he existence of the Assembly was codependent on the existence of a North-South Ministerial council of ministers” (in Todd, 2009, p. 347). In addition to changes to institutional structures “there were far-reaching reform policies involving the mainstreaming of equality in all public decision making and human rights guarantees” (Osbourne and Shuttleworth, 2004; in Todd, 2009, p. 347). The commitment to a power sharing executive and a role for the Irish state in the affairs of Northern Ireland, were seen as important “wins” by republicans (see Institutions). Not only could many of these concessions be considered conciliatory gestures, but also concessions in their own right. This is because many of the moves made to set the stage for negotiation and de-escalation were not simple window dressings, but addressed fundamental republican concerns. For example, while, as I1 and SFI2 note, the release of prisoners was goodwill gestures, it was made all the more important because of its implied recognition of the political nature of the conflict. Concessions from direct talks with Sinn Féin, power-sharing, an Irish dimension, the border poll, prisoner release and demilitarization all addressed or began to address fundamental republican goals and grievances.

A final point of note with regard to the State-made concessions references the importance of the way these concessions were packaged and delivered. SF1 notes the ways in which the manner of implementation was seen as demonstrative of a certain degree of commitment to the process on the part of the British state. For SF1 that the State carried through on concessions despite vocal unionist opposition helped to cement the process:

one of the big, big changes that happened, first of all they were involved in direct negotiations with Sinn Féin. It took the unionists much longer to deal directly with Sinn Féin than it did the British. But when the British created the negotiation table the unionists were at it [...]The things that they had control over, such as the release of political prisoners within a two year period after the um, the deal was done in 1998, they dismantled the military state here in the north, so they disbanded the local armed militia, which was exclusively unionist. They dismantled that. They removed what were maybe 150 military installations across the north. They dismantled those. They set up a commission to investigate and set up a new police force which allowed nationalists and republicans to join, so, these were the things over which they had power and which they could unilaterally act on. And so they did that because they knew that in making these changes it was locking the IRA into the process of change

The question of the form many of these concessions took – that of a packaged, negotiated agreement, was seen by the respondents as being crucial to the de-escalation process. SF12 is blunt on this point: “I don’t see how you could have gotten any other settlement if it wasn’t going to be in the form of a package”. The packaging of concessions into what SF2 calls “a raft of measures” was important, the respondents argue, as the packaging served to reinforce measures, provided timelines and forced commitments for implementation and provided a framework for further development.

The GFA allowed, SF2 argues, for the linking of concessions: “I mean, there are some very important elements of the Good Friday Agreement which are fundamentally necessary as a package if you like.”

SF12 argues that advancement on issues of the Irish language, me on a piecemeal basis by fierce unionist resistance, were made possible by their inclusion in the larger package. AS SF2 explains:

probably a lot of the initiatives would have been squandered if they had've been delivered on a piece meal basis. [...] you could not have secured power sharing agreements in the North here for example if you hadn't have had the All-Ireland [dimension] including the right for a border poll, because I know that our party would never had signed on, and probably the SDLP would never have been allowed to sign on even if they'd have wanted to. So you couldn't have had, for example, let's have a power sharing agreement [...] we we're saying no you had to bridge the country, it has to bridge the border, it had to be working constitutionally and legally and the rest.

Further, SF2 and SFI2 highlight the importance of providing timeframes for implementation in order to demonstrate the State's commitment and keep republicans engaged in the process. As SFI2 notes, the question of the State's commitment was not at all times a given (see Military Viability and Engagements). As SFI2, I1, S1 and SF2 hold, concessions to republicanism were most often vehemently opposed by unionist which at times acted, they argues, as a break on – or an excuse to apply the break to – the process. Accordingly, SF2 argues “there had to be things that had to be done and so I think that delivering it all in a package with those set time frames was the only way in which, it really would have made the main difference”. SFI concurs, saying “well I think it was important it was one signed, sealed agreement because dragging things on, people need to know, people need something concrete, they need the substance.”

Yet de-escalation of the conflict is not seen by the respondents as complete; while the conflict has transformed, it remains ongoing (see Target Framing). As such, the question of concessions, just as with the new institutional framework must be continually revisited, up-dated and built upon (see Institutions and Engagements). The GFA SFI2 argues “was the main package but there have been other settlements since then, there was the St. Andrew's Agreement and the Hillsborough Agreement – all very necessary to move it forward”. In all, however, the literature and respondents alike suggest that significant and critical concessions were made by the British state to facilitate the de-escalation process.

Caveats to British Concessions

For all that the respondents made much of the concessions of the British state, it must be noted that they were not without reservations in their assessments. These reservations centered largely on the sense that many systems are still weighted in favour of unionism and correspondingly that not all concessions have been fully implemented. Both issues are seen as the result of a lack of political will, either of the British or Irish states.

Commitments, SFI2 notes, was not however, consistent. She argues that the 1996 Canary Wharf bombing in London was a response to this perceived lack of commitment: “it wasn't that we were trying to gain concessions because let's try and get something more. We had shown our commitment and it was thrown back in our faces. A year and a half we had been trying to get into talks and it was thrown back so we needed something to move it forward, and that definitely moved it forward.” Further, once the concessions had been made SF2 argues, the lack of political will impacted the implementation as well. SF2 maintains that:

if you look at the Ulster Unionist Party which was the largest unionist party and they sign on to the Good Friday Agreement and then fought against every single aspect of it in Westminster. So you know whenever the Agreement was being legislated for, [...] Trimble led the charge against virtually every element of it in the British parliament so that you had for example the policing aspect of it, which, the Patton Commission had to established, and they were given terms of reference but the terms of reference were diluted by the British government because they had enabled the legislation, the working of the Patton requirement was diluted so you had people who were trying to stymie elements of the Agreement as it moved along.

Beyond the question of dilution, SF2 argues that implementation of aspects of the agreement have been incomplete (see Institutions). As he explains “there are aspects of that that have not been implemented and you get the British government, and indeed even the Irish government, both saying yes you have to play carefully and we're saying yeah but it's an internationally binding agreement, you know.” This is reinforced by the sense, discussed by SF2, and SFI2 that, particularly as demonstrated by the flags

protest of the past few years, along with the delays in implementation and perceived dilution of legislations, that the unionist community still exercises a degree of influence over State institutions disproportionate to its constituency.

In all, as McGinty (2006) neatly summarizes, the conciliatory gestures and the significant concessions awarded to the RM were no doubt critical for the RM to sign off on the GFA. While framed as victory by the RM despite the lack of a united Ireland, the significant concessions – on both political and technical issues – helped the RM accept an enshrined right to, and mechanism for, a united Ireland rather than its immediate manifestation. Conciliatory gestures, particularly in the form of public statements, helped signal to the RM the possibility of such concessions should negotiations take place (Pruitt, 2007) building optimism for negotiations and the likelihood of a sustained positive outcome thereof.

d. Tactics

The tactics employed by the British government and its unionist allies over the course of the conflict have been well documented in a variety of sources. These include a variety of military and policing tactics the course of the conflict, as well as political manoeuvrings around the partition of the island, favouring unionist allies. However, notable for the time periods surrounding the de-escalation and the peace process, is how these tactics changed over time, particularly in the late 1980s, early 1990s. Three themes in particular emerged: the longstanding ties between unionism and the British state; the State's preference for the status quo with regard to Northern Ireland; and the prevalence of a military and policing based approach to handling the conflict until the mid to late 1980s.

Longstanding ties: the UK and unionism

The ties between the United Kingdom and the unionist political and social forces are well documented. As the respondents explain, these connections are born of the Britain's historic colonial presence on the island and the legacy of the partition of the island under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act (MacEvoy, 2008). This history obliged the British state to a degree of involvement in the conflict which, SFI3 argues, makes the British claim of being an "honest broker" in the conflict, untenable. As SF1 holds, following partition, the island became "unmanageable" and as forces and communities loyal to Britain moved to the north "The British invested all the power in the unionist community and then they set about setting up a one party state that they controlled through democratic privilege, military force, discrimination". From this point, SFIR argues "the British military operated in a totally colonial fashion." In the face of a deteriorating situation following the onset of clashes during the civil rights protests, in August 1969 Northern Irish Prime Minister Chichester-Clark called for and received an influx of British troops. However, as MacEvoy (2008) explains "the presence of British troops further alienated the minority community and did not prevent the growth of the IRA, with the army becoming targets for the republican armed campaign" (p.72). For many within the Catholic community, the British response was seen as a defense of the status quo and "antagonized and radicalized numerous Catholics and convinced a significant body of nationalists, in particular, that violent resistance to Britain's attempt to put the pieces back in the box was justified" (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 104).

The impact of this connection with unionism was, according to the respondents, twofold: to increase the depth of the conflict, and to provide the State with an excuse for its own immobility on matters concerning the conflict. The British government, SF1 explains, given its history on the island, cannot help but be party to the conflict. Thus, colonial policy, he argues "was to support the unionist community and the unionist view of the world so, they weren't in the process of making the

fundamental changes that were needed to avoid conflict in this society because they were part of the conflict. They had armed combatants in the field. And they had an array of oppressive legislation that meant that they were right at the heart of the conflict with the armed forces.” As SFIR points out, the influx of military manpower and resources to Northern Ireland following partition reinforced the sense that, as he notes of Lord Craigavon “the first prime minister of the northern state declared that it was a protestant parliament for a protestant people”.

The sense that the State was unmoved by nationalist grievances grew with heavyhandedness of the military’s attempts to contain the situation. With the introduction of internment in 1971 and the use of live bullets during what would be known as “Bloody Sunday”, in Jan 1972, Bew, Gibbon and Patterson (2002) note “by February of 1972 it was clear that far from creating the conditions for British engagement, Faulkner was creating a minor Vietnam” (p. 160) As SFI3 details:

the British are not neutral in this and never have been. I think that attempts to portray themselves as an honest broker in all of this has been really, quite honestly, torn to shreds. They were never an honest broker. They are not an honest broker. [...] the British, in essence, were an extension of the unionist family here in the North [...]the B-Specials, the RUC as it was then, the UDR and the British Army, Loyalist Death Gangs, that were all component parts of the same machine MRF that we knew was in existence and basically there has been an admission of that. These were all armed components of the British camp, of the British side in this war. So the British were never neutral.

This perceived lack of neutrality was exacerbated by accusations of collusion: collusion between British security forces and loyalist paramilitary organizations was widely referenced by the RM as characteristic of the British/unionist relationship (SF2, SFI3, I1 see Institutions, Engagements and Target Framing).

Building on the work of the Pat Finucane Center (2014), McGovern (2015) notes “[f]ormal and informal collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and locally recruited state forces, particularly the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), was rampant” (p,6). This was amplified by evidence – and certainly the belief within the Republican community – of the British Army “shoot-to-kill” policy in effect in the 1980s and

early 1990s (McGovern, 2015) As such, the British state, despite its extensive involvement, often used its connections with unionism as is reasoning for not pushing for more extensive reforms or to better address republican grievances and goals. Perhaps even more damning is the fact that in the late 1980s, what is suggested to be a low estimate, held that “For example, 85 per cent of all intelligence held by loyalists in the late 1980s, used in the planning of an escalating campaign of sectarian killing and targeted assassinations, originated from state intelligence services” (de Silva, op. cit. in Hillyard and Unwin, 2013, in McGovern, 2015, p. 6). As SF2 discussed in Institutions in response to arguments that the State could not take a stronger stance against unionist intransigence “a lot of us would argue that loyalism could only really survive with the conniving of or acquiescence of or whatever you want to call it, of the Britain turning a blind eye or even colluding with them to do things [...] So I think it was largely an excuse”. For much of the conflict, the strategies and comportment of the military and security forces were seen by the RM of the State’s support of unionism and loyalist communities. This damaged the State’s viability as negotiation partner, and gave further fuel to those within the RM inclined to pursue their own military strategy to a greater degree.

A preference for the status quo

Given the perceived allegiance to unionism, the RM held the British state had long been interested in maintaining the status quo. MacEvoy (2008) notes that both Northern Ireland Prime Minister Chichester-Clark and UUP leader Faulkner’s attempts to address the situation arising from the NICRM appeared as reforms introduced “in an effort to preserve the autonomy of the Northern Irish state and prevent further intervention by Britain” (p. 73) This goal raised the ire of the unionists who viewed it as appeasement as well as nationalists who saw little change in the state, and was ultimately unsuccessful when in April 1972, 50 years of unionist rule was ended with the prorogation of the Stormont

parliament and the introduction of Direct Rule (MacEvoy, 2008, p. 73). As Guelke and Smyth (1995) explain, for many Protestants, the “radicalization of Catholic opinion after British intervention [was] a challenge to Ulster’s very existence” (p. 105). The notion that the state had used its connection with unionism to explain its relative immobility, the respondents argue, is born of the States’ preference for to avoid a political discussion of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Unionism for its part was actively threatened by such a discussion (see Institutions; Target Framing).

Notably, though intended as a tactic to quell mounting violence, the imposition of Direct Rule was unsuccessful. As Kennedy-Pipe (2006) explains, Direct Rule was “a bid to isolate the IRA from the Catholic community and an attempt to build a moderate political center in Ireland drawn from the SDLP, APNI [Alliance Party of Northern Ireland] and moderate unionists” (p. 46). As such, both the British state and unionism actively sought to avoid a wholly political and negotiated approach to the conflict. As Guelke and Smyth (1992) explain the “nationalist side was acutely aware of the contrast between political rhetoric and initiatives and the British Army’s heavy-handed implementation of security policy on the streets, which for many negated the promise of reform” (p. 107). As SF2 discusses in Institutions, even in the GFA and corresponding negotiations and subsequent talks, the British state involvement has been characterized by a predisposition to minimum objectives and avoidance on the development of established institutions and projects. SFI3 has argued that this mindset is exacerbated and born of “their fear of where we are and our potential political strength and our potential growth.”

This sense that the State and unionism sought to avoid a political discussion, was highlighted in particular by SFI2, SFI3, and I1, who noted that both unionism and the State not only failed to seize upon the first IRA ceasefire of the 1990s, but actively sought to put up barriers and avoid talks (see Engagements). Unionism in particular, SFI2 argues felt threatened by the ceasefires and resisted any change to the State’s approach to the conflict that implied greater engagement with republicanism. As

SFI2 notes, key unionist leaders “described the IRA ceasefire as the most destabilizing thing that had ever happened throughout the whole conflict.” As such she holds negotiations

You know, so it was all kind of delaying stalling tactics that came about and they were just messing about with it so what it felt like certainly for me and for many republicans was that unionism really didn't want it. It wasn't what they wanted. [...] They probably always found it easier to deal with the republican movement in a war situation, it was easier to respond and whenever, then, a cease fire was called it was like calling their bluff and so then they were looking for reasons not to treat us, to treat our political representatives as actors and players in the peace process, the negotiations, so there was a whole lot of periods where people were demanding...so all of that was a sort of pressure in that it deflected from the real issues.

As SFI2 further elaborates, there is a sense within the Republican Movement that the “British and Unionists felt much easier to deal with republicans in war because they just described us as terrorists, they put us in jail they didn't have to talk to you...once you become a major political force it's not that easy.” Accordingly, SFI3 argues it has been the tactic of the State and unionism alike that “anything that they think they can throw at us to stick and try and make us look ugly, you know the tactics that they are prepared to, you see it in the press and the media, which is a very powerful tool to be honest.”

Nor was this, SFI3 argues, a new strategy. He notes that for all that there was an acknowledgment by the British military as early as the 1970s of the sophistication and viability of the IRA, “it was easier for them to portray us as mindless, moronic, uneducated, you know, barbarians or something along those lines.” (see Irvin, 1999). SFI2 further notes that even more than a decade after the agreement, much of the unionist political community remains intransigent “they need to move, and they are resisting change so much.” Dixon (2006) references similarities between the SA and GFA, as well as moves under Thatcher toward, the AIA, and finally her approval of back-channel communications prior to her resignation, as evidence of continuity in British policy in Northern Ireland, with only “tactical adjustments”. However, these “tactical adjustments” are arguably of great significance as the AIA

marked a turning point in British involvement from militarization and criminalization, to one that sought greater involvement from the Republic of Ireland and put forward a series of conciliatory gestures (see Engagements).

Following the first ceasefire it is perhaps unsurprising that to the respondent's eyes, the State and unionism sought to throw up barriers to talks. In 1994 it was agreed SF could participate in negotiations on the condition of an IRA ceasefire (English, 2003). However, this concession was soon deemed to be a sign of Britain's lack of commitment. Shortly after the IRA called a ceasefire, Britain announced that a ceasefire was insufficient and partial disarmament was required to allow SF into the talks (Pruitt, 2007, p. note 9, p. 1539). For I1, when the ceasefire came about in 1994 after decades of a security apparatus dedicated to a military and policing strategy the British state and its corresponding institutional apparatuses "weren't ready for the negotiations" and sought to use the opportunity to damage the IRA. As McGovern (2015) notes, allegations of collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, and the military "shoot-to-kill" policy extended into the early 1990s. Further, as Kennedy-Pipe (2006), the early 1990s saw an uptake in the of loyalist attacks on members of the Catholic community.

This was, I1 argues, an attempt to replicate a similar devastating attack on the IRA following the ceasefires in the early 1970. Following the collapse of the SA, as each side in failing negotiations is better suited by laying the blame for its failure on the other, O'Dochartaigh and Svensson (2013) note "the Provisional IRA...renewed armed action late 1975 without formally ending its ceasefire while the British effectively ceased negotiating in mid-1975 while continuing to attend meeting with IRA representatives (p. 41-42). Thus, for I1, the British state "had used that phony cease fire to infiltrate, destroy, what they believed was the very fabric of the Irish Republican Army [...] So, when the IRA declared a cease fire on

the 31st of August 1994 I think the British government approached it as a means to try and do a similar strategy.” This despite the fact, he argues that the IRA ceasefire was “a genuine attempt to create the situation where there would be meaningful dialogue and meaningful negotiations. For eighteen, sixteen to eighteen months, no sixteen months, the British government done everything to ensure that no progress was made.”

In addition to the discouraging and negative rhetoric surrounding the ceasefire described by SFI3 and I1, the State they argue, began to place a series of pre-conditions on engagement that the respondents argue were designed to dissuade the RM from committing to the talks. Notable was the raising of the minimum requirement for SF’s entry into the talks from a ceasefire to IRA disarmament (Pruitt, 2007). As SFI2 describes “as soon as the cease fire was called, immediately people began to put barriers in the way, to demand pre-conditions before we moved into talks and what happened was in 1996 the cease fire broke down.” SFI3 concurs, arguing that despite the British reaction, ceasefire was “a genuine opportunity on behalf of the movement to explore other ways of taking our desire, our belief in the reunification of our country forward.” Subsequently, as SFI3 and I1 argue, the IRA breaking of the ceasefire was a result of the State’s failure to respond and engage. The placing of these types of barriers, SFI2 argues, was common around the first ceasefire, but also have continued throughout the de-escalation process. For SFI2, as unionism and the British were not interested in a negotiation process

it was all kind of delaying stalling tactics that came about and they were just messing about with it [...]The British probably were taken, you know, were all taken by surprise with it and they tried to just stall it [...] if the guns were silently as [the State] put it, it would be possible to talk and to move forward and then once the IRA began the cease fire there began a series of barriers and pre-conditions, you have to do this, you have to do that you know, so like one that everybody kind of remembers was 'is it permanent' is the cease fire permanent? [...]So that was always something going on all the time, one thing after another. Then it became decommissioning, decommissioning demands

went on for years so ... there was a process of putting arms beyond use took place. So that would have been as a result, just to take off pressure.

As discussed in Engagements, one of the difficulties being managed by the British state at this time concerned its ability to bring the Unionist and Loyalist communities with it to the negotiating table.

While, understandably read by much of the RM as a sign of intransigence, as Dixon (2012) explains, this manoeuvring helped ensure that the UUP was at the table once negotiations got underway.

Owen (2007) argues that chief amongst American contributions to the peace process was helping with the creation of the International Body on Decommissioning to help address precisely this issue. Having recognized that decommissioning prior to or during talks was a bridge across which Sinn Féin could not carry the IRA – even were it so inclined – the Clinton administration was more flexible on decommissioning than the British were comfortable with (Owen, 2007). As O’Kane (2007) explained, while the British government under Major saw the bombing of Canary Wharf as proof positive of a lack of IRA commitment to exclusively peaceful means, the Irish government took it as a sign that the RM was being pushed too far on the matter of decommissioning (in Kerr, 2008, p. 219).

While British government times with the unionist and loyalist communities undoubtedly dampened the faith of the RM in the possibility of a negotiated outcome to the conflict, the increased willingness of the British state to try to portray itself as neutral (AIA, Brooke’s statement) helped shift this perception. However, it must be noted that in the light of the persistence of the above mentioned tactics, this was not a shift that was readily widely accepted by the RM. Arguably, confidence in a degree of British neutrality, while growing, would only truly take root once Sinn Féin was permitted into the GFA talks.

A strategy of war: militarization, criminalization and ulsterization

That the State and unionism were uninterested in talks for much of the conflict, the respondents argue, is not unexpected given the conflict was viewed through the lenses of military and policing solutions. However, they note that for the State, once it had come to view the conflict and its role in it differently (see Engagements), opened up to a wider variety of tactics, many of which were more conducive to engagement with republicanism and eventually, de-escalation.

The British and unionist emphasis on a military solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland, the respondents argue derives both from unionism's deep attachment and interest in the conflict, as well as the British state's relative detachment. Under Prime Minister Edward Heath (1970-74), the response to the conflict in Northern Ireland was largely focused on military and policing efforts. When, in the 1970s, these tactics failed stem the violence, more soldiers were brought in. This too proved insufficient, leading to the implementation of internment which saw suspected IRA members interned without trial. This approach had to be abandoned by 1975 as "the list of IRA members was grossly inaccurate and the unjust nature of internment further alienated the nationalist population, bringing new recruits to the IRA and a much increased level of IRA violence" (McKittrick and McVea, 2002; Moloney, 2002, in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1526). As noted in Target Framing, for much of the unionist community, republicanism was seen as a radical criminal element attempting to overthrow a democratic government (SFIR; Todd, 2009). In accordance with such a framing, a policy of militarization and criminalization of the conflict is not unreasonable. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the British state implemented policies for the "Ulsterization" and "Criminalization" of the Northern Ireland conflict. Having dropped the policy of internment - which had done much to embitter the Catholic population - the British government also dropped the special powers which facilitated the adoption of criminalization to be processed through regular courts (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 107). From 1975 onward the British government

first under a Labour Government and then under the Conservative Government of Mrs. Thatcher, implemented policies designed to redefine the problem of Northern Ireland as one of criminal activity, not one of political or constitutional struggle. Ulsterization, or normalization, was in many ways a logical outcome of the stated British position in Ireland. Successive British governments had refused to declare war against the IRA and, unlike in colonial struggles, in Northern Ireland there had been no open declaration of a state of emergency (Weitzer 1987). Ulsterization was designed to place the security emphasis on local forces, such as the RUC and UDR, and to allow for a reduction in the number of British troops (Kennedy-Pipe 2006; 48).

As SFIR notes “in 1970 British generals went on television and said on television that they were at war with the IRA. So. From that period, 1970 until that statement from the British General it was clear that the British military strategy here was to defeat the IRA.” This is in keeping with the attempts I1 outlines following the 1994 ceasefire, to use the lull in violence to better dismantle the IRA. To this end, the militarization of the conflict in Northern Ireland was significant and well documented Bennett (2010) describes in depth the setting up of police road blocks, searches – with more than 36,000 house searches undertaken by the military in 1972 alone – as part the significant military presence in Northern Ireland (p. 519). Between the early 1970s and 2001, the number of British troops in Northern Ireland vacillated between 30,000 and roughly 10,000 (BBC News, 15 Aug, 2005) Given Northern Ireland’s small population (roughly 1.6 million), that means one soldiers for every 53 people. As SFIR notes not only has the course of the conflict seen a high volume of British military personnel through the region, but they have not, he argues, been held responsible for their actions during that period. The figure the British government has given, he notes “from 1969 until 2007, 38-year conflict, 300,000 British soldiers served here and it didn't matter what they did, you know. I think there were three British soldiers that were sentenced to prison for killings here and so whenever they went to prison they served two to three years”. As a result of what SF4 refers to as “the full range of counterinsurgency legislation was used against us in terms of the Special Powers Act, internment and so on”, the impact on both republican and Northern Irish societies more generally has been significant. SFIR notes that his own sentences, which amount to more than twenty years of jail times for crimes that did not result in deaths or injuries, meant

that “I’ve served more time in prison than the whole of 300,000 British soldiers served in prison”. A recent study by Lundy (2012) showed that British military personnel involved in deaths in Northern Ireland had “*de facto* immunity from prosecution” (in McGovern, 2015, p. 18). I1 describes this militarization in greater detail noting that prior to the ceasefires it was:

hard to look at the six counties without looking at it as a sort of military zone because that is what it was. Yes it was a response to IRA activity, for example in Belfast there was a thing called the Ring of Steel which meant that the British army totally sealed off all routes leading into the city center and searched every single vehicle 24/7 that entered the city center. I think in from south Armagh what had previously been seen as safe passage by helicopter became a danger because there had been a number of successes in shooting down a number of helicopters [...] they responded to every successful operation with a security measure.

The extent of the militarization was exacerbated, the respondents argue, by the British policy of criminalization of republican and IRA activities prominent in the 1970s and 1980s.

Criminalization, the respondents argue, was an attempt to deny the political nature of the conflict and not only failed to curtail IRA activity, but in fact did much to galvanize the republican community into action. Ulsterization and criminalization were attempts to frame the conflict in Northern Ireland in such a way that did not necessitate a political solution. As SFI3 notes the State was “are throwing all their resources at us, I mean they’ve tried and tried to defeat republicans, to portray us as I say, as criminals” to no avail. In particular the framing of the prison protests, the no-wash protests and hunger strikes of the 1980s was met with a great deal of anger and resentment in the republican community: “attempts by people to rewrite that you know as republicans, as the leadership of the republican movement in one way, letting other republicans die is just so absurd.” (SFI3). During the hunger strikes following the removal of the Special Category status for paramilitary prisoners as part of the process of criminalization, the Thatcher government’s handling of the crisis was “widely condemned”, including by

the European Commission of Human Rights (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p. 49). ISF notes that while the RM was strong at the time of the hunger strikes and no-wash protests, the attempts to criminalize the republican prisoners served to politicize people who had otherwise remained inactive:

apart from family members, you know, people on the streets probably weren't really that much involved, you know. But the British made the big mistake of trying to make martyrs and to try and force criminalization on the prisoners, and their mistake then allowed an even bigger upsurge of support for the republican struggle on the back of hunger strikers in particular. At the beginning on the hunger strikes even, [...] it was hard to get people to go out and protest it was hard you know to stand up, but then as the British let men die after each other, you know, the difference was amazing. So the British seen it as a weapon to break us but the opposite happened. It actually consolidated.

The high number of arrests, along with allegations of mistreatment of prisoners by military and police alike, particularly in the wake of the attempts at criminalization, served to galvanize the republican community and further discredit the military and police forces, and with them, the British government.

This was further exacerbated by the accounts and accusations of collusion rampant between British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries, as well as the shoot-to-kill policy that, as I1 and SFI3 note created what I1 calls a “a clear policy to terrorize the community”. As Kennedy-Pipe (2006) recounts “the alleged ‘shoot to kill’ policy operated by the SAS [Special Air Service], the supergrass trials, and the strange affair of the Stalker inquiry and the subsequent refusal to prosecute anyone in the wake of the Sampson inquiry on the grounds of national security left serious question marks over the behaviour of segments of the army and the RUC” (p. 51). It was ultimately, the respondents argue, a strategy that proved counterproductive, and at the same time highlighted for republicans the unwillingness to treat the conflict as a political one. In May of 1992, English (2003) notes, MI5 took over as the primary in Britain’s fight against the IRA (p. 278).

As discussed in *Military Viability*, discussions around the viability of the IRA in the wake of years of British Army and security forces pressure, is one with strong proponents on either side. There are those, such as Frampton (2008) that suggest “for the most part, Britain chose to rely on its ringcraft, staying one step ahead of its opponent, slowly exhausting it, until it reached the point where it was ready to throw in the towel. This, then, was effectively what the IRA did when it opted to embrace the peace process in the early nineties; the ‘dirty war’ had achieved its chief objectives” (as cited in Dixon, 2012, p. 303). While, certainly contributing to the eventual stalemate, as discussed in *Military Viability*, such an assessment fails to take in the reality of the IRA’s military capacity, and the moves toward a negotiated settlement taken in the decade before the GFA. Thus, Dixon (2012) argues that such ‘zero sum’ politics “triumphalist claims of victory may appease one leader’s supporters but damage the ability of opposition leaders to manage theirs. This is why Sinn Féin’s attempt to present compromise as victory (the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) also attempted this with less success) had an adverse effect on the UUP’s ability to bring its supporters to support the Good Friday Agreement” (p. 311).

These same policies with a focus of tactics on criminalization, militarization and avoidance of political engagement were characteristic, in the RM’s view of a strategy of war that saw no legitimacy in republican grievances or aspirations. This war-based strategy, SF1 argues, limited the British state’s available tactics. However, as they State began to reassess its role in the conflict and the nature of the conflict, this began to change. In the mid-1980s, faced with continued IRA violence, Prime Minister Thatcher, was in a situation where “[n]ot only were they not winning the war against the IRA, but Sinn Féin was showing great strength at the polls” (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1526). Accordingly, the AIA of 1985 sought to improve policing cooperation across the island.

When this too saw little success, the British government, Pruitt (2007) holds, “began to entertain the possibility that the IRA was unbeatable” and undertook a number of conciliatory moves to help bring about a negotiated solution (p.1526; see Engagements). As SFIR explains, Britain began to “review their whole involvement in conflicts all across the world and their whole military operation and preparing for the future. And, the British general who was in charge of the North here in and around that time, he made a statement where he said that the British Army could not militarily defeat the IRA.” This then, as SF13 notes, was seen as an opportunity by the republican community. The declaration, he elaborates that Northern Ireland held to economic or strategic importance to Britain caused the RM to think “about what that meant and maybe there was an opportunity here to maybe for the first time understand that the British were thinking differently about the conflict here.” As SF1 explains:

you weren't going to get movement by them of significance while the war was waging. Because they have very little capacity for room in those circumstances any more than the IRA would have had at the time so, it was whenever things began to change and the focus, the spotlight then went onto British policy in the north and they, because they wanted the peace process to succeed, like the unionists they too had to compromise, but it was easier for them to compromise with republicans than it is for the unionists to compromise with republicans.

The British state's decision to increasingly portray itself as an arbiter rather than a party to the conflict, allowed for the State to make use of tactics beyond those associated with a military or policing based solution to the conflict. The policy of criminalization represented a deliberate tactic on the part of the State to manipulate movement concerns for republican prisoners as well as deter other activists and militants from similar activities. However, approaching the GFA, I1 notes, many prisoners were concerned that prisoner release schemes meant that prisoners were to be used as pawns to avoid addressing the causes of the conflict by instead addressing the consequences. Yet once in a frame that saw the conflict as political one that could be addressed in a political arena, the question of prisoners could be treated as a concession that went along with changing the conditions that had created the prison population in the first place. As several of the respondents noted, were the military conflict

ongoing, they would still be active members of the IRA. Accordingly, the change in frame allowed the State to make use of prisoner relations as a confidence building measure, as I1 notes, rather than having it be seen as an attempt to bribe or manipulate the RM through its most vulnerable population.

Increasing Anglo-Irish Cooperation and Back Channel Talks

While the questions of back channel communications and increased Anglo-Irish cooperation are addressed in Engagements and Institutions, one of the crucial “tactical adjustments” as Dixon (2006) phrases it, is the increased use of back-channel communications for more than crisis management initiated under Prime Minister Thatcher towards the end of her tenure. Seldon (1999) notes that Thatcher’s approval of talks with Sinn Féin in October of 1990 was “to find out what was happening in the republican movement” (Dixon, 2006, p. 70). In addition to state negotiations, the State and the RM made use of local figures to act as intermediaries:

Brendan Duddy, a Derry businessman with strong and extensive political connection, acted as an intermediary between the IRA and the British government. He was at the heart of extensive contact between the two parties in the early and mid 1970s, and acted as an intermediary again in negotiations aimed at tending the 1980 and 1981 hunger strikes... He was also the key figure in the contacts between 1990 and 1993 in the approach to the crucial IRA ceasefire of 1994 (Mallie and McKittrick, 1996; Mallie and McKittrick, 2001; O’Dochartaigh, 2009; Powell, 2008; Taylor, 1998; Taylor, 2001; Rowan, 1995, in O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 44).

Duddy was seen as both an important channel of communication as well as a source of information for the British and Republicans, with British officials having even been characterised their contacts as “primarily as a process of information exchange and information gathering” (Mallie and McKittrick, 1996; Reese, 1985 in O’Dochartaigh and Svensson, 2013, p. 45). This channel was particularly important given the formal posture of the British of non-negotiation with the IRA.

The response of the British State to the RM and the violence of the conflict in Northern Ireland have demonstrated elements of both continuity and change over time. Early responses focused heavily on militarization and later, criminalization, of the conflict. While the state maintained some channels of communication in the early years of the conflict, they would be used only intermittently, and more as an avenue for information exchange than the development of a negotiation strategy. In the mid 1980s, while questions of collusion, overzealousness, and outright misconduct persisted within the military establishment's role in Northern Ireland, the AIA marked a shift to a broader view of the conflict, and by the end of the decade greater emphasis was put on avenues promoting a diplomatic resolution to the conflict. Though the RM remained skeptical – reacting to delays in SF's inclusion in talks with the bombing of Canary Wharf – as Dixon (2006, p. 2012) and others explain, this was a necessary part of balancing Unionist and Loyalist reticence with Republican willingness to engage. The difficulties for the RM raised by the tactics of the State certainly impacted the movement, but in no increasing degree. Thus, the tactics employed by the British government did little to increase either RM optimism or motivation for negotiation for much of the conflict. That in the mid to late 1980s many of these tactics came to a more nuanced assessment of the RM, and were increasingly used in conjunction with concessions, served to mitigate some of the earlier RM assessments of the State and its role.

e. State Responses Discussion

For Senator George Mitchell, an important figure in the Northern Irish peace process, significant credit must be given to the British state for the way the peace process unfolded (Mitchell, 2002). While British institutions for much of the conflict were structured in such a way as to reinforce for the RM perception of the close ties between Unionist interests and the British state, the British state would over time demonstrate itself both willing and able to make institutional changes that addressed both Republican grievances and aspirations. For the RM this shift began to be discernable in earnest with the 1985 AIA.

This move that allowed for greater involvement of the Irish government in the affairs of Northern Ireland would be followed by a series of conciliatory statements and the opening of more dedicated channels of communication between the British State and the growing nationalist front.

As noted by both the respondents and the literature, such a turn of affairs was not without caveats, and certainly not immediate. The AIA was after all part of the Thatcher 'criminalization' approach to the conflict that sought to criminalize the actions of the RM rather than treat them as crimes of a political nature. For the RM such tactics, along with those associated with the British 'dirty war' and high military presence, were seen as the State being, at worst uninterested in the political conflict, and at best beholden to the interests of the unionist community. Shortly thereafter, the British state showed tentative moves towards a recognition of the political nature of the conflict, those same tactics by the state began to be viewed somewhat differently by the Republican leadership: Hume increasingly moved Adams away from the position that the source of the conflict was British colonial presence.

As Pruitt (2007) notes, the peace process in Northern Ireland followed a buildup of small but important reciprocal conciliatory gestures by both the British State and the RM. While the continued use of often heavy handed policing tactics, along with collusion of the RUC with Loyalist paramilitary forces meant that significant reservations about the State's sincerity to engage with the RM in meaningful fashion, these gestures, along with commitment to fully engage across the breadth of issues involved in the conflict helped cement faith that something might be achieved. That both the State and the RM demonstrated a willingness to engage on the breadth of issues, and make significant concessions in the name of compromise, allowed each side to rally its membership in support of such talks.

Although, the early State insistence on decommissioning prior to negotiations was arguably in large part an attempt to manage and retain the commitment of Unionist parties, it was taken as a sign of British lack of commitment by the RM. When talks broke down and the IRA bombed Canary Wharf, many within the British government took this as a sign that the RM was not committed. The Irish state for its part held it as proof that the State had tried to push the IRA too far on questions of decommissioning (Owen, 2007). Subsequently, decommissioning was delegated to an impartial body and the terms of a ceasefire for entry adjusted to allow Sinn Féin's admittance to the talks. As Owen (2007) notes, even had Sinn Féin been willing to push the IRA into accepting decommissioning prior to talks, it would not have been able to. Such a demand amounted to call for the IRA's surrender prior to any talks. When the requirements for entry to the talks were shifted, an opening was made to allow for talks to progress while talks of decommissioning ran parallel.

In all, the British state, most notably in the latter half of the conflict, increasingly demonstrated a willingness to meaningfully engage with the RM. However, that the tactics employed by strategies of militarization and criminalization ran in parallel to much of these same gestures, however, also served to justify significant Republican skepticism of the State's sincerity. Further, though the State had demonstrated a significant degree of willingness to engage with the movement in a meaningful fashion during the SA, its inability to get and keep the unionist community on board with the agreement soured republican faith in the State as a viable and trustworthy negotiating partner. It would take time, and a significant interplay of conciliatory gestures, particularly from the late 1980s onwards, for the State to regain a sufficient measure of viability in the State as a partner, and correspondingly optimism for negotiations, to bring a sufficient percentage of the membership of the RM to a point where it would accept an agreement that – while offering significant and important concessions to address Republican grievances – nonetheless fell short of the maximalist version of the movement's goals.

Part Four: Leadership

The conflict in Northern Ireland has centuries old roots (MacEvoy 2008) and a variety of incarnations of conflict have seen dispute framed, and the struggle led, by a variety of actors and organizations.

However, for much of the Troubles, the Provisional RM has dominated in both those respects, and within it, both SF and the IRA, have undergone notable shifts and fragmentations, but have also experienced a significant degree of continuity within those changes. Both this continuity and change have impacted the dynamics which coordinate and shape the leadership structures the movement and its shift from armed struggle, to a joint political and military strategy, and finally to negotiations and institutional politics.

a. Target Framing

Given the duration and complexity of the conflict, the RM's framing of its goals, and targets have shifted to some extent. As all the respondents remain adamant, the primary goals are the same as always. However, as their understandings of the behaviour of both Unionism and the British State evolved, strategies and targets have been correspondingly adjusted. In their discussions relating to Target Framing, the respondents highlighted four themes: discussions of movement goals; their understanding of the nature of the conflict and its changes over time; their understanding of the British State; and their understanding of Unionism.

Movement Goals

While this research does not primarily concern itself with mobilization, in order to understand the strategic decisions of the movement once in conflict, a brief overview of the movement's goals and understandings of the conflict is necessary to provide the context for these decisions. I1 was the most concise in his explanation of the RM's goals: "the ultimate objective ... was a 32 county socialist republic

with the removal of British presence". While every respondent made reference to a united, independent Ireland, and made reference to issues of social and economic equality, not all explicitly referred to a 'socialist' united Ireland. As Moloney (2002) notes, the RM dropped socialism from its list of demands in 1988 (in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1530-1531). SF4 was very straightforward, saying "as a republican my goal is to have an independent Irish Republic." SF2 for his part holds "our primary objectives which is the reunification of this island and as a republican party, for us, the people have to be sovereign." For SFIR:

When the war was in full flight, you were able to articulate in the sense of a free, independent, socialist republic based on the 32 county republic as proclaimed at Easter 1916. From time to time we talked about a socialist republic. It depended who was speaking. That would have been the most we would have spoken. [...] that is still the goal of people who are currently involved in the republican project. To bring about the end of British government interference in this part of Ireland.

For much of the RM, issues of equality – both identity and economic – were referenced as part of the reasoning for an independent united Ireland, if not explicitly in reference to socialism. As SF3 describes the movement goals "the issue, from a republican point of view about the issue of supremacy and equality and it goes to the heart of any society really, around tolerance". As Adams explained as early as 1986, the notions of socialism and the institutional structure of the state were linked: "I don't think that socialism is on the agenda at all at this stage except for the political activists of the left. What's on the agenda now is an end to Partition. You won't get near socialism until you have national independence" (in *Irish Times* 12 Oct, 1986, in Drake, 1991 p. 46). Similarly, SF13 notes "the strategy was always, and still remains the reunification of Ireland, a new Ireland, a different Ireland, but an Ireland that is inclusive and it still would be that, the goal remains the same." For SFIR and SF2, the resurgence of the conflict in the 1960s following the Civil Rights Movement was based on not just nationalist sentiment but a sense that socially and economically, the partition of Ireland had failed, and the new state could not be reformed. This would be sentiment held well into the 1980s (English, 2003). SFIR notes that "the inequalities of life within the state for the nationalist population were unacceptable and they began the

revolutionary demand for equality. Equality of citizenship within the land of your birth. So they began to demand one man, one vote. They demanded the right to a house. They demanded the right to a job”.

Thus while concerns for a ‘socialist’ republic were not explicitly discussed by all respondents, the respondents did all reference social justice and equality issues as part of both original movement goals, and their goals moving forward.

The fact that the GFA and subsequent agreements did not explicitly create an independent socialist and united Ireland, is highlighted by some in the literature as evidence either of the RM’s failure, or its lack of commitment to the movement’s stated goals. Alonso (2004) highlights an interpretation of the GFA which accuses republicans of revisionism in their acceptance of the agreement. This is evidenced, he suggests, by recalcitrant statements surrounding meetings between the British government and top provisional republicans in the 1970s, saying “the ceasefire which made the meeting possible would be broken immediately if the republican’s demands were not met” (Smith, 1997, in Alonso, 2004, p. 698). This, arguably reflects a rather one dimensional framing of actors’ goals and behaviours. While underlying goals of republicanism have remained unchanged, what that “success” looks like has changed over time with changes in contexts, players, behaviours, and the learned negotiation and political skills of those involved. This shift in framing was strongly evidenced amongst the respondent descriptions.

The respondents however, reject both assessments. Rather, they suggest that the movement’s goals have in no way altered over time, however, as the nature of the conflict has changed, the changes in strategies have allowed for the development and deployment of new strategies and mechanisms by which they may pursue movement goals in the absence of armed conflict. While certainly within his interest to frame it as such, Adams would make considerable effort to frame the GFA as a victory for the

RM (Dixon, 2012). While not all were convinced, (see Fragmentation/Cohesion) the high levels of support the referendum of the GFA elicited from the Republican community certainly implies that this framing was largely accepted by Adam's targeted audience.

Overall, SF3 explains, the "strategic objectives of the movement haven't changed in that, in the sense, I suppose that the main reason for republicans being republicans is the fact that we want to see a united Ireland. We want to see an Ireland that is free from British interference." Yet, at the same time, she notes "but it's also about building a new society, it's about you know, this is not about harking back to the Ireland of old, this is about actually trying to build a new forward looking dynamic society that recognizes diversity." Though Sinn Féin had renounced socialism as an official goal (Moloney, 2002, in Pruitt, 2007), SF2 argues the RM has not shifted its analysis of its goals but an analysis of the situation in which the RM found itself necessitated a change of strategy:

Our analysis of the conflict I think remains the same, we need an end to, [...] political interference in Irish affairs, we need to be a reunited country, partition has failed, still continues to fail. And so I don't think anyone would have changed their analysis but more people were having to come to terms with the fact that this was going to be a stalemate for, who knows how long, and that's not good enough.

Accordingly, as SF1 and ISF note, the GFA not a failure but a change in the means to move forward. As

SF12 holds, prior to the GFA process, the RM had little access to meaningful engagement with the State

so in that respect our goals would have been pretty high level, sort of like, things like United Ireland, Big Messages. [...], when we got into negotiations, then your goals become then your goals become negotiating. It becomes a negotiation [...] and in any negotiation you're always going to have to compromise, so then that means that some of what you want has to come in a different form so your message changes in a way. [...] but what our main objective is - a United Ireland Free from British Control - And that is a big message and I suppose really that message hasn't changed,

That being said, SF12 does note that as the RM has become more involved with the electoral politics and governance structures of Northern Ireland, in a sense, these ‘big picture’ goals becomes obscured by the shorter term concerns of governance. As SF is now more involved in, as she phrases, the “day to day stuff so you also have to have messages about lots of things. Lots of issues that affect people so we would have lots of things to say about health, about education, about welfare benefits, about welfare reform, about all of these issues that we now have to deal with. So we have many messages now”. As discussed in Political Viability, SF has become “wrapped up” in the tasks of governance diverting attention away from ‘Big messages’ in much the way that was feared when SF was considering joining electoral politics in the 1980s.

Understanding the Conflict

Overtime, the RM’s understanding of the nature of the conflict in which they are embroiled has changed in response to local and global contexts, and various engagements and concessions with the British State, and their own allies. The conflict in Northern Ireland has de-escalated in terms of the violence of the conflict, but the conflict itself has undergone a transition to a more political field rather than ended. As Todd (2009) explains, the

Overarching division was defined in political-indeed constitutional terms – but fuelled by religious ethos, economic conditions, and perceived injustice. More precisely, these motivations reinforced a national division that – for many – was of decreasing salience in the period after the Second World War. By the 1960s, for example, many Catholics and “nationalists” were willing to settle, in the middle term, for a reformed Northern Ireland (Whyte 1991). Many Protestants and Unionists were willing to contemplate closer relations with the Irish state and reform within Northern Ireland (Whyte 1991) (p. 244).

Yet following the violence which met the Northern Irish Civil Rights Movement, whatever the characterizations made in academic or state policy analysis, for the respondents the early nature of the conflict was clear: war. As SF3 notes, that there has been a de-escalation in the conflict is made all the more apparent because “obviously we came from a position of all out warfare in a sense. You had a

conflict between the state, between republicans and loyalists". The conflict, for many of the respondents, was initially characterized as a war brought about by a colonial history and rampant inequality in Northern Ireland, which persisted following partition. As SF1 explains:

what you have to bear in mind is the colonial nature of the problem here is that, you know when you look at the last almost thousand years of history, the British government were primarily here as a result of their armed forces. [...] the British mediated their policies through [the unionist] community in terms of controlling Ireland. All of Ireland at one stage. After 1921 when they introduced partition, when the island became unmanageable, let's put it like that, because of the IRA, the British accepted that they had to retreat, you know, and they retreated into the north.

As noted by SF2 and SFIR above, when, decades after partition, protest grew around the Civil Rights Movement, the conflict ignited once more. As SFIR describes, nationalists, and initially some unionists "went onto the streets in peaceful protest to articulate these demands and draw attention to what was happening in this part of Europe. The state reacted with violence. [...] if you attempt to repress people who are demanding their rights, people will react against that repression which will then lead to further repression which then takes us into a downward spiral of armed insurrection".

With the violent response engendered by the NICRM, SF4 notes "you had a strange coming together, you had the quite clear showing up of the Northern State as being unreformable, irreformable." Though initially the arrival of British troops was greeted by many republicans as favourable, this soon changed. As SFIR notes "for me and people like me, we obviously saw it very, very differently. The British Army occupied my town. The British military operated in a totally colonial fashion". Feeling abandoned by both the British State and the Republic of Ireland to the south, the IRA reformed and began to engage in armed conflict once more. As I1 notes with the "formation of this present generation of the Irish Republican Army, there was a view that military strategy alone could deliver the ultimate objective". As one formerly involved in the IRA, Maria McGuire (1973) notes, early on the IRA believed that if it simply

killed a certain number of British soldiers that would be sufficient to pressure the Army to withdraw. First, 36, then 80, but this proved insufficient (in Sánchez-Cuence, 2007, p. 296). Drake (1995) points out that in the early years of the armed struggle, each year was declared the year of victory, until 1975, and the doctrine of the 'long war' took root. The IRA's 'long war' did not seek the impossible task of victory over the British Army, but rather, "to render the existing state unbearable so that the army would have to withdraw" (Coogan, 2000, p. 375 as quoted in Sánchez-Cuenca, 2007, p. 296). Overtime, the focus on the all military strategy would shift to a politics based approach, but for the respondents "unfortunately, war made politics possible" (SF13) (see Military Viability).

While the respondents hold that "war made politics possible", they also discuss how over time military action alone was viewed as insufficient to bring about the RM's goals. Despite increased emphasis on electoralism and the pan-nationalist strategy, Adams still held that the AIA had changed little for nationalists and the North remained "irreformable" (English, 2003, p. 265). This was amplified both by an increasing regard for political action, and the growing realization of a stalemate (see Political and Military Viability). As I1 explains:

after a very long period, those with an understanding of strategy became aware that there needed to be in tandem a negotiated, or sorry, a political dynamic and legal, running parallel with the military strategy. I think there was also realization that the only possible position of disengagement by the British State was going to be after a period of negotiations. So the strategy of that time was to ensure that the military machine of the Irish Republican Army fought the British government and the British state to a position where they needed to negotiate our future within this country.

For the RM, this meant using the armed struggle to gain a presence at a negotiating table. Accordingly, "in a sense two sides fought each other to a standstill. And it was never going to go anywhere else. And the other point is, because the conflict had a political basis, its only right that it has to be politics that takes primacy at a certain stage in all of this" (SF3). While some might claim the RM's acceptance of the

GFA constituted a reversal on its goals, the respondents, like Neumann (2007) argues that “no one in the IRA ever abandoned their absolutist ambitions for a united Ireland, but at some point in the late 1980s, the group’s leaders realized that their military campaign no longer furthered that aim and so they began exploring alternatives” (p. 130). In the light of the military stalemate, as SFIR explains “for me the only way this war could have ended was the way it did end”.

What the movement for engagement around the GFA meant, the RM argues, was an acknowledgment of the political nature of the conflict. By acknowledging the political basis for the conflict – particularly following the processes of criminalization in the 1970s and 1980s – there was a greater sense that the conflict could move more fully to the political realm. English (2004) notes that when republicans “were convinced that Irish unity could not come in one step, but that other political opportunities were being held open, they slowly opened negotiations that would lead to not just the end of the war, but also to the end of the political stalemate” (in Todd, 2009, p. 346). As SF13 details, as an internationally binding agreement, the GFA was “was an acknowledgement that, cause [...], the British were at the table and the Irish Republican Army was at the table, the governments were at the table, so you know, Sinn Féin was at the table. Sinn Féin was speaking on behalf of the republican movement”. In this sense, the ceasefires around the negotiation were particularly important: they permitted the presence of SF in the talks, and the potential for SF’s admittance to the talks created the potential for ceasefires. As SF1 details, this was particularly important as “you weren’t going to get movement by [the State] of significance while the war was waging. Because they have very little capacity for room in those circumstances any more than the IRA would have had at the time”. There was no abrupt reversal of beliefs, or dramatic changes in attitude, SF4 outlines, but rather “it’s just that there was a realization that there had to be another way”.

Yet the respondents by no means suggest that the GFA brought about an 'end' to the conflict with any finality. Rather, they see a de-escalation in violence, and the cementing of the conflict in the realm of political contestation. As SF2 explains, the conflict has in many ways been greatly reduced: "obviously people think in terms of, if you like, street conflict or violence and that has very, very substantially reduced. [...] we don't have the same hostilities and animosities in even in local political institutions like councils for example even. Though the problems aren't all eradicated but they are substantially reduced." SFI3 concurs, noting the "conflict remains but in the political sense. I think the physical elements of the conflict have de-escalated without a doubt". However, he notes that at the same time "while the physical sort of manifestations of conflict have... or there has been a de-escalation, they have certainly been reduced, I think the political end of the conflict still very much remains."

As SF3 explains, the conflict in Northern Ireland "certainly has de-escalated [...] obviously we are now in a different place in terms of the peace process and politics has taken primacy. Has the conflict ended? In my view no it hasn't it's just being played out in a different way. It is obviously less intense because it's playing out at that political level". That this conflict remains, at a political level, is seen by the respondents, as a result both of the political nature of the conflict, as well as of compromises made over the course of the GFA. As SF3 notes, that the conflict would result in a stalemate between the RM and the British state was never in doubt: "It's this idea of just, I suppose in a sense two sides fought each other to a standstill. And it was never going to go anywhere else. And the other point is, because the conflict had a political basis, its only right that it has to be politics that takes primacy at a certain stage in all of this". Many of the issues raised over the course of the conflict, he argues, remain unresolved as "there were difficult issues that had to be parked in different ways in the Good Friday Agreement. So there is conflict going on and it has a propensity at the minute to be ramped up or ramped down. Is it to

the same intensity that it was 20 years ago, 30 years ago? No its not. Its being dealt with at a political level and I think that is a big difference.”

It is this ‘big difference’ that characterizes the move to a wholly political approach to the RM’s goals, and the eventual disarmament of the IRA. For McIntyre (2001) the GFA represents “unmitigated disaster” and defeat, but unlike authors such as Holland (1999), “locate[s] that defeat in the strategic/political/ideological sphere rather than... in the military/organizational or structural realm” (p. 202). At one time even key movers of the peace process on the RM side were adamant of the importance of armed struggle; with Adams stating “if at any time Sinn Féin decide to disown the armed struggle it won’t have me as a member” (*Andersontown News* 1986; in McIntyre, 2001, p. 204). As the respondents explain, while the GFA and subsequent agreements did not result in the immediate achievement of all movement goals, what it did create was a series of mechanisms and an overall framework through which the movement could pursue these goals in the absence of armed violence. As SF1 and SF2 explain, rather than a failure to achieve the RM goals, the GFA and de-escalation process has created a transformative framework in which to move forward. There are many people, SF2 explains, who have accused the RM of conceding too much, who

would see it as a sellout, was you know, conceding defeat almost because a lot of people would have been saying well you should only be going in to negotiations with the British to manage how they'll leave. Because of the political environment, the stalemate and all the rest [...], that wasn't going to happen. So that maybe would be a nice idea, that you'd just go in and negotiate with them when they would leave and what time they'd be on the boats, but that wasn't going to work out

Instead, the respondents argue, SF1 argues, something remarkable has been achieved as “for the first time in almost a thousand years republicans have created a situation where, effectively, the republican nationalist gun I suppose has been taken out of Irish politics”. As SF1 noted in political viability, while

true that, although they have not yet a united and independent Ireland, “there’s a situation that has been created where now you can work for a united Ireland peacefully and democratically”.

As I1 noted in Engagements, the GFA does not represent an end point, but rather “our settlement is when we have unified this country and the British interference is gone. We see very much the Good Friday Agreement as a stepping stone to bring about the necessary dynamic to bring that change about [...]. Every day is a negotiation towards a settlement”. SFI3 is in agreement, noting that the RM’s goals have not shifted, but that with the GFA “we believe we have created a framework that allows for the taking forward of the desire for the reunification of our country by purely peaceful means. And we believe we have created the framework and the strategy. [...] and the strategy is very much about building political strength north and south of Ireland”. The idea that the GFA is part of an ongoing process – and the importance of this to Republican strategy – is echoed in the literature:

Senior PSF members take great pains to point out that they are engaged in a process, rather than in the creation of a final settlement (Interview, Alex Maskey, July 2010). This is no mere pedantic distinction but the bedrock of PSF strategy. The present leadership of P[rovisional]SF have taken the Provisional movement “from guns to government” (Clarke and Johnson 2001) During this painful process the Provisional movement has had to endure three splits and the abandonment of “the army” and its hard won weaponry. To have gone through this and achieved nothing in return would be highly damaging. The PSF’s strategy *has* to be seen to be bringing about results. Some members of PSF compare the process they are involved in to riding a bicycle: if it stops moving forward, it falls over. (Frenett and Smith, 2012, p. 390).

As SF2, SFI2 and ISF all note, the GFA provided a framework – the new institutional settings (see Institutions) as well as particular mechanisms through which to pursue their goals. As such the movement strategy is now focused on a wholly political strategy of building support for these goals. ISF,

notes that for a small island, SF believes a unified all-Ireland state to be the only practical means of governance

we are a very small island in the grand scheme of things, you know, and in this small island it makes more sense to have one education system, one health service, one economy, you know, rather than this small island having two split economies you know. [...] Stormont is not the end game. City hall is not the end game. The end game is a united Ireland and it may not be a Sinn Féin united Ireland, probably won't be a Sinn Féin united Ireland as much as we would all like it but the fact is that a united Ireland and that's where we're at, trying to sell that, trying to sell that continually to people that a united Ireland is the best possible scenario for all the people.

As the movement can focus on the long term strategy of building this support, SF2 points out that republicans now have the necessary institutional mechanisms for realizing this goal as “a border poll allows in the longer run an expression of sovereignty so that's an objective of peoples, so if in the longer run I want to have Irish independence, I do need to have a mechanism by way I can get that”. For MacGinty (2006) “[w]hatever the publicly articulated republican interpretation, the constitutional position prevailing as a result of the peace process was far removed from the absolutist republican rhetoric of the 1980s and early 1990s” for all the “strategy has been to forge *de-facto* all-Ireland linkages even if *de jure* unity remains an aspiration” (p.125).

Ambiguity, MacGinty (2006) notes, was one of the key features of the BA, this permitted multiple signatories to interpret and portray the final document in “radically” different fashions, allowing

pro-Agreement unionist to maintain that the agreement had secured the Union and thwarted nationalist constitutional ambitions... the constitutional ambiguity of the Agreement was such that republicans may have believed that their constitutional agenda had been advanced regardless of the reality... the peace process was so complex, and contained so many apparent gains for republicans that they may have been beguiled into de-prioritising their principal constitutional goal of Irish unification. Republican gains in non-constitutional areas, notably in relation to security grievances and self-esteem, may have overshadowed the constitutional agenda” (p. 126).

That being said, MacGinty (2006) further notes that it is unlikely that “republican grievances agenda could have been so comprehensively addressed had Sinn Féin and the IRA maintained an absolutist ‘united Ireland or nothing’ stance” (p. 126). More so than any changing of goals, the RM has undergone a change in its framing of the conflict. This is most clearly reflected by the willingness of the RM to work within existing political institutions (with the abandonment of the policy of abstentionism in 1986), and increased willingness to work to reform those institutions as part of the GFA.

Understanding the State

The British state, as the colonial power and longstanding ally of unionism, has born intense scrutiny from the RM. It is argued that Great Britain's institutional structure has been patterned in such a way as to allow for an understanding of statehood that does not preclude the existence of multiple nations within the state (Keating, 2001). Broadly speaking, for all the accusations of colonial holdovers in policy, much of the RM appears to have over time increasingly understood the British state as largely capable of delivering on the movement goals, though at times constrained by its relationship with unionism. That being said, the respondents make clear that they hold that any move favourable to the RM only occur when it corresponds directly to the State's interest. Such an allegation to any state is rarely unwarranted or unexpected. Over the course of the conflict, as British interests have shifted, the RM holds, it has shifted form in the State's role from unionist protector, to attempts to portray itself as an ‘honest broker’ in the conflict.

That the British state was perceived as capable of delivering on the RMs's goals was near unanimous amongst the respondents: “the demand from republicans was [a] 32 county socialist republic. Was the British state in a position to deliver it? Absolutely, all day long” (11). The state had, after all, been party

to the 1920 Ireland Act, partitioning the island, as well as the SA which sought to implement power sharing. As SF1 explains, this capacity was amply demonstrated when, in and around the GFA, the State made good on a number of key concessions, as well as working to force unionist political forces to the negotiating table. As he notes “The British had that capacity. The things that they had control over, such as the release of political prisoners within a two-year period after the um, the deal was done in 1998, they dismantled the military state here in the north, so they disbanded the local armed militia, which was exclusively unionist”.

What was lacking for most of the conflict, the RM holds, was the will. SF2 notes “It wasn't in the interest of the British government to change. Its back to that question you asked at the start have the British government ever willingly given anything. If it's not in their interest to do it, they're not going to do it”. Nor is this analysis, SF4 holds, foreign to the RM: “I wouldn't expect the British state to deliver on our goals at all. Our goals are totally alien to the goals of the British state. The British are no friends of Irish independence”. For much of the duration of the conflict, the respondents note, the British state served as the protector of unionism, and was at times constrained by unionism (see Political Viability and Institutions). As SFI3 notes, the British state “in essence, w[as] an extension of the unionist family here in the North”. As ISF explains

Well they would have been capable had the will been there, and the will just wasn't there. At one time. At one time it was very much controlled by the Orange State and by the Orange Agenda. I no longer think that that is the case. I think that if the British could pull out of here in the morning they would pull out. Because there is absolutely no benefit to them, whether its politically, economically, or socially, there's no benefit to the British now

It was this shift away from unionism, they argue, that led to the State's decision, beginning in the 1980s and the processes of ‘Ulsterization’ and ‘Criminalization’, and eventually with the AIA, to begin to shift responsibility for the conflict away from itself.

By the early 1990s, with the growing military stalemate, the end of the Cold War and Sinn Féin's electoral inroads, the State's interests in sustaining the status quo began to waver. As SF3 holds "everything that the British government does is based on self-interest. And that's fair enough. That's what governments do". While for many, Brooke's statement of the lack of British selfish, strategic, or economic interest in Northern Ireland was a restatement of the obvious (Dixon, 2006), Guelke (2001) points to the existences of occasions "in which British Ministers had spoken of Northern Ireland in terms that reinforced the republican movement's assumption that British strategic interest was at stake in the conflict. A notable example was a warning by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Prior, in 1983 to a meeting of Conservative MPs, that Ireland could become another Cuba if Sinn Féin came to power" (*Irish Times*, 11 Nov, 1983; in Guelke, 2001, p. 247). Although Prior was trying to push unionists into greater support for constitutional nationalists, the "unintended outcome of Prior's remarks was confirmation of the republican movements' analysis of the conflict and the reinforcement of its belief that British policy was designed to prevent the emergence of a united Ireland which would be neutral and thus could refuse facilities to NATO forces" (Guelke, 2001, p. 247).

SF1 holds that while unionists opposed the eventual inclusion of SF in the GFA talks, the British state demonstrated its capacity as it "said to the unionists, we need to do this for peace in Ireland, we need to do this to keep the IRA in the process otherwise you have the IRA killing British soldiers here and planting bombs in Britain. They didn't want that. So they served their own interests." Accordingly, it took a change in context (see Political Viability) to move the British state to attempt to adjust the role it played in the conflict. Bean (2002) provides a clear overview of this shift in the RM's framing:

The emergence of a new nationalist politics meant a gradual shift from republicanism based on a mass revolutionary movement and armed struggle to a diplomatic and conventional political strategy involving a broad front of Irish nationalism. Potential international allies, such as Irish-America and the US government, would also have an important role in applying pressure on Britain as part of a long term transitional strategy. This strategy was rooted in a re-evaluation of Britain's contemporary role in Ireland; secret contacts between the republican leadership and the British government in the late 1980s and 1990s reinforced a developing perception that Britain was no longer involved in Northern Ireland to pursue interests of its own, and furthermore, wanted to withdraw from direct political involvement... [a role] that stressed crisis management and a *raison d'état* rather than colonial domination and atavistic imperialism" (p.138).

Dixon (2006, p.2012) makes clear the delicate game the British state had to play to maintain Unionist faith in any negotiations.

The British state, SF2 holds, had long been more interested in pacification or a military victory than negotiation with the RM: "they would have been very capable but, I mean, they didn't have the will, the political will to do that. [...] the British state in my view was always more content, more intent on pacification as opposed to solving the long term fundamental issue which was really any British constitutional role in Irish affairs." As SF1 explains "the British government is a player in the conflict. And the colonial policy was to support the unionist community and the unionist view of the world. So, they weren't in the process of making the fundamental changes that were needed to avoid conflict in this society because they were part of the conflict. They had armed combatants in the field, and they had an array of oppressive legislation".

Yet, precisely because, as the respondents note, the State's behaviour was "primarily driven by interests not loyalty" the British government, once it had decided talks were in its interests, was well equipped to attempt a strategic repositioning. The British, SF1 reasoned

set themselves up and they like to think of themselves as arbitrators but they're not. They were, what they do do, what they can do is, because they have that detached relationship is that they can take initiatives independent of unionist interests. They can take initiatives independent of that, and they did. For example, a number, one of the big, big changes that happened, first of all they were involved in direct negotiations with Sinn Féin. It took the unionists much longer to deal directly with Sinn Féin than it did the British. But when the British created the negotiation table the unionists were at it. Because the British basically told them this is the way.

However, as SF2, SFI3, and I1 in particular make plain, is that while they accept that there was a shift in British interest that facilitated the more meaningful engagements of the 1990s, the State was never neutral. As SFI3 explains given the State's history of collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, strategies of internment, alleged shoot to kill etc., the shift in interests is demonstrable: "the British are not neutral in this and never have been. I think that attempts to portray themselves as an honest broker in all of this has been really, quite honestly, torn to shreds. They were never an honest broker, they are not an honest broker". This change in interests, I1 and SFI3 note, began with the Hunger Strikes and accelerated under Tony Blair. The British governmental assessment of their role was impacted, SFI3 notes, beginning with the hunger strikes "their relationships with the political prisoners in the jails, you begin to see, I think, a slight change in atmosphere and energy and there is always a sounding out there of a sort of you know, a recognition if I can use that word or a realization that they're not going to defeat the movement. So things begin to change and then there is a surge to find a compromise."

The process was then reinforced, SFI3 notes, by the early 1990s declaration that, for the British state "there was no strategic or economic importance to the North. And a lot of people, we thought about what that meant and maybe there was an opportunity here to maybe for the first time understand that the British were thinking differently about the conflict here". As discussed in Alliances, this shift was

seen by the respondents to be cemented with the election of Tony Blair as he decided “we need to address this. We need to get in there, we need to make changes[.] He’d seen himself having two terms in office and he didn’t want to be dealing with the Irish question. He wanted to deal with the Irish question in a positive way and he felt, he knew, that the only way to do this was re-engaging, or engaging in discussions.” Senator Mitchell (2002) notes that Blair’s first trip out of London once having taken office was to Belfast, demonstrating his commitment to the process (p.91). Thus while not perhaps seen as neutral, or an honest broker, the British state moved into a role that better facilitated meaningful political negotiations.

RM Understandings of Unionism

While the British state has been the target of much of the RM’s attempts at both political and military manoeuvring, unionism and unionist political forces (UVF, UDR, Orange Order, DUP etc) have held a mutually hostile relationship with the RM. That being said, for the RM unionist forces were less open to engagement and cooperation with them than the British state. While the RM does suggest that some movement towards a more conciliatory pattern of behaviour has been made, they hold that it is a much more recent development than the de-escalation process, and one that would not have occurred if not for British intervention.

For the RM, the primary feature of unionism was a steadfast desire to maintain the status quo. As SF1 candidly explains “the biggest challenge for republicans in the here and now, and over the years, has been the unionist community.” For SF13, unionism was the disproportionate beneficiary of British colonial policy. From a RM perspective, following the Anglo-Irish War, partition cemented unionist control over the northern six counties. In the face of pogroms and massive changes in population as

protestants fled and were forced north, while the same drove Catholics south to the new republic, the boundaries of Northern Ireland were redrawn so as to better ensure a unionist majority in the rump territory. As SFI3 notes, historically, Ulster was made of nine, rather than six counties but the British and unionists chose to exclude Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal as “they wanted a protestant, unionist majority, [...] in a way that they felt things would never change. So you immediately move to a period post-partition where you have a form of apartheid in this country where Catholics are second, nationalists are second class citizens.” As several respondents recall, the first Northern Irish Prime Minister famously suggested that Northern Ireland was a Protestant state for a Protestant people. Having historically occupied such a position of privilege, the RM sees unionism as resistant to a rebalancing of the status quo in Northern Ireland. As SF3 explains “unionism is about stopping change. It's about, it's that siege mentality ... its coming from the position of a people who were in power who don't want to give up power. And again, that's perfectly understandable, but that ideology was never going to have the imagination. And it never is in unionism's interest to change”. The unionist ideology, she suggests is based on the maintenance of status, “what we have, we hold”.

Linked with this “siege-mentality” SFI3, SF3 and SFI2 note, is the significant extent to which much of the working class loyalist community remains disadvantaged. As SFI3 explains that much of unionism feels “it's been disenfranchised, its being left behind. Loyalist working class in particular in terms of resources, but if you know, if you look at the indices around deprivation, I mean 16 of those 20 wards are still nationalist and Catholic areas. So, I mean its a fallacy [although] deprivation works across the divide”. Part of recognizing improvements in many Catholic areas, SFI3 notes, is that these unionist communities see these changes as zero sum; unionism “seems to react rather than respond and I think that by its very nature that's the way it has been. And I think that they feel anything that may represent a gain for republicanism is absolutely terrible for them”.

Despite this, there was as much as shift in the RM's understanding of Unionism as there was of the State. This is evidenced in the rhetoric of Sinn Féin (Bean,2002). In the words of party representatives:

The traditional position that a resolution to the problems with the Unionists would have to await the removal of the British government's involvement in Ireland was wrong. We must now accept that there are divided political allegiances within the nation and that Unionists have a dual identity that must be accommodated – Jim Gibney (*An Phlobacht/Republican News*, 2 Mar, 1995, in Bean, 2002, p.139)

In our vision of a united and independent Ireland there must be a place for those who consider themselves British and those who wish to stay British. – Former Sinn Féin General Secretary Tom Hartley (*An Phlobacht/Republican News*, 2 Mar, 1995, in Bean, 2002, p.139)

Accordingly, the respondents note, without British influence, it would have been unlikely that the RM would have been able to achieve the changes to which the British state agreed, such as the power-sharing, changes to Northern Irish policing, release of prisoners etc.. SFIR is particularly straightforward in arguing that had the RM been negotiating primarily with Unionist forces rather than the British “none of those [issues] would have been resolved. You know, the unionists would not have disbanded their militia, UDR, RIR. They would have refused to get rid of the RUC. They would not have released the IRA prisoners, and they would not have accepted a compulsory power sharing government.”

Overall, the RM's framing of its goals, the nature of the conflict in which it was immersed, and the adversaries it saw itself aligned against shifted overtime. Most notable in the change of goals for the RM was the dropping of socialism – an aspiration that had long been held closer by some elements of the RM than by others (see Fragmentation/Cohesion) – and the shift in position from a maximalist ‘Irish unity now’ position, to the acceptance of institutional changes that would allow for the pursuit of this goal within a political, and peaceful, framework. This is in part linked to the change in the perception of

the causes of the conflict and the British state's role. When the British government and British colonial policy are understood to be the root causes of Republican grievances, it is unsurprising that maximalist demands for British withdrawal and Irish unity are pushed. However, if more nuance is added to the analysis (as was done in great part thanks to the RM's increasing interaction with other nationalist analyses throughout the 1980s), the idea that the State and its structures could be reformed to better address Republican aspirations and grievances takes greater precedence in the movement analysis. As such, motivation for, and optimism in, negotiations increases.

b. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the RM is, to an extent, more clearly structured than that of the MLNV. While Sinn Féin has long resisted calls to denounce IRA activity, and there is frequent overlap in their memberships, in the absence of a formal hierarchy, for much of the history of the conflict, the IRA took the leadership role in the movement (McIntyre, 2008). As they relate to this project, two themes concerning the RM's organizational structure are of note: the importance of collective decision making structures, and the importance of effective leadership.

Decision-making structures

As McIntyre (2008) notes, the self-perception of the RM is one whose primary characteristic of decision making structures within SF and the movement more broadly, is that of collective decision making. For the respondents, the organizational structure of the movement is rooted in and engaged with the community. As Bean (2002) suggests, "Provisionalism reflects the experience of its social base and constituency within the Northern nationalist community; contemporary events and experiences in Northern Ireland have always been more significant in the development of the harder-edged politics of Northern Provisionalism than the Romantic traditions of 1916 [Easter Rising]" (p.137). As such, its

decision making structures are almost necessarily collective, and involve input and discussion starting with the grassroots. For the respondents' communication with the base – at all stages, including negotiation – is critical to ensure the decisions are representative of the base as well as to be sure the base moves along with the leadership. Notably, while the respondents still shy away from many of the more traditional political party structures, they note that SF's growing electoral success has necessitated a professionalization of the party's organizational structure.

As discussed in Support, one of the keys to the RM and its constituent organizations such as the IRA and SF, lies in its roots in and engagement with its community. SF and the RM, SF2 explains "has been successful on a range fronts because first of all we have been recognized by even our political opponents as a party that does work very much at a grassroots level." Similarly, I1 notes that the IRA "was representative of the people, they lived within the neighbourhoods, they came from the neighbourhoods, they were supported by the neighbourhoods. Our weapons were kept by the neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhoods fed us, clothed us, housed us and became our intelligence network." As described by McGarry and O'Leary (1999), for all that the Official IRA was still technically in existence during the Civil Rights movement, it was "practically extinct" as a military organization. As such they note that "[r]epublican paramilitarism mushroomed out of the civil-rights protests of 1967-9" (McGarry and O'Leary, 1999, p. 259) – born locally in response to local conditions. As the respondents discussed in Support and Military Viability, for much of the republican community, the IRA was seen as a protector of both republican interests and the community itself.

With the admission in the mid-1970s that victory was not around the corner, and the adoption of the 'long war' strategy, an organizational restructuring was in order. In 1977 an internal IRA staff report

determined that “its military structure was no longer appropriate, given the need to sustain the campaign for the foreseeable future and argued that ‘we must gear ourselves to *long term armed struggle* based on putting unknown men and women and new recruits into a cell structure’” (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 108). The adoption of this structure led to reduction in the groups dependence on its base and made it a more difficult target for the British and Northern Irish security services, for all that it also “facilitated the British governments’s portrayal of the Provisional IRA as terrorists whose demands needed to be resisted not conciliated” (Guelke and Smyth, 1992, p. 108).

Given this early rootedness in the community, ISF and SF2 note that the structure of the movement has grown out of this base as much for SF as the IRA. For ISF, SF councillors or MLAs “are nothing without that groundwork that goes on, you know who actually do the slog and do the daily... Sinn Féin activists and Sinn Féin... we sort of shy away from being called politicians you know because politicians you know is different from being an activist.” BBC journalist Mark Devenport (2016) notes that SF’s base tactics are those of “full-time activists engaging in assiduous constituency work”. It is engagement with the community, ISF argues, that has led to SF’s success:

I don't, I never see an SDLP person, never, on the street, whereas Sinn Féin is on the streets day in, daily [...]I mean if Sinn Féin ever stop doing that you know , that would be a big, big, mistake, you know because for me that' s what its for. [...]And that's the way I see it, why Sinn Féin are so powerful and why they are getting such a strong mandate. Because they are on the streets. They don't please everybody, they don't do everything for everybody by any means but people do see them actually active in their communities.

Much of this engagement is embedded in the party’s structure. SF2 notes that since the early 1980s, the party has been active in setting up advice centers throughout republican areas to facilitate the community’s engagement in the political process. As he explains, the party’s ideology is “about empowering people” and thus “the party would have been involved in providing support to people at the local level but also mobilizing local people to fight their battles, whether it’s on housing or equality

issues, whether it was on any other anti-repressive measure campaign. So, it's really a campaigning party.” As McGarry and O’Leary (1999) note, SF rhetoric has long included a socialist bent. Echoing SF2’s assertion, Drake (1991) notes that SF developed a strong network of advice centers across Northern Ireland to engage with its constituents. As SF2 discussed in Support, it is this engagement with the community that has translated into SF’s electoral support.

Given this level of embeddedness of both Sinn Féin and the IRA, the respondents note that the processes for decision making necessarily involve the community. Communication with the base, the respondents argue was thus the standard for decision making. SF12 notes that the RM would run

family meetings and we would call a meeting say in the local hall and bring together all the republicans and anybody who wants to come along and so the republican leadership would have given their analysis. So that would have happened at times, you know, whatever ceasefire times, decommissioning, policing, big, big times, whenever we were facing challenges, facing challenging decisions and it would have been part of keeping the community informed and that was important

Although it was not technically the purview of Sinn Féin to call ceasefires, for instance, these discussions allowed for the input of the community, as well as a chance for those within the movement ranks to share their analysis with the community. As I1 holds “we owe so much to our people. We are a people's army and as such any decision that we make, the people need to be informed.”

Beyond keeping the base informed, SF3 and SF2 note that Sinn Féin’s organizational structure in particular facilitates grassroots involvement in the party’s decision making process. As SF2 argues “the party is very democratic. Some people would probably argue it’s maybe overly democratic because we have a lot of layers”. As he explains, “it's very, very, grassroots based and the decision making process is quite convoluted in that the decision making goes from that is called the local common which is really like a local committee right through to what we call our *ard chomhairle* [...national executive

committee]”. While the *ard chomhairle* runs the party year round, the “real decisions of the party are taken, in terms of strategy and so on, are set by the annual conference that we call the *ard fheis* and that is where the members have the full control of the party strategy and policy making opportunity [...] So the decision making, the absolute decision making lies with the membership.”

The IRA for its part, has attempted a more cellular structure which has had consequences both for its military viability and the cohesion. Structurally, the IRA was beset with informers very early on. As Dixon (2012) explains, by the late 1970s, the IRA introduced a cellular structure in order to help prevent precisely such a problem, but it remained a problem well into the 1980s. As Drake (1991) explains, given that the “nominal organisation of the PIRA into companies, battalions, and brigades, with some Belfast companies containing up to 50 men, meant that one informer could name several men” (p. 45). Despite the adopted cellular structure of the Active Service Units (ASUs) containing only 5-12 individuals (Drake, 1991, p.47), the very embedded nature of the organisation would also play against it, as “in closely knit societies such as West Belfast, where everybody knows everybody, it is very difficult to ensure that such hermetic isolation exists” (Clark, 1987 in Drake, 1991, p. 47).

These decisions, SF3 holds, are the results of multiple layers of discussions throughout the republican community, both because the discussions take place at the local level on up, and because the members of the RM organizations are themselves part of, and active in, these communities. As SF12 explains “there was a lot of discussion. People were, I would say, consulted, people were encouraged to talk about it, to discuss what was happening and put ideas forward.” ISF explains those members of Sinn Féin who hold public office “we all live in our own communities and we all represent our own

communities which just adds to it you know". As SFIR notes, if only counting those who served jail time for involvement with the RM has been estimated at 25-30,000: this in a community that (as of the 2011 census) had a total population of only 737,412 (island wide) of which 1,6 million are in Northern Ireland. Even leading into negotiation processes, SF3 argues, discussions from the base upwards through the movement are part and parcel with the RM process: "there is a lot of collective decision making you know? What would happen, people would have discussions beforehand, sometimes interminable discussions beforehand, [...] that's your negotiating position in a sense". These were discussions, SFIR that also sought to engage those republicans serving sentences. As he recalls, the RM brought in delegates from South Africa's ANC to share their experiences on how and why to move toward a wholly political strategy (see Learning Processes). As SF2 summarizes "for us the people have to be sovereign, so that is why the party reflects itself in its policy making, that the membership makes the final decisions annually. So the party would have been a campaign party".

This propensity for embeddedness and collective decision making is one the respondents argue that Sinn Féin (given the cessation of IRA activity) in particular cannot afford to lose. While they suggest that the party has had cause to professionalize its organizational structures over the course of the decades, they argue it has maintained this commitment to collective decision making structures and engagement with the community; a community, that many of the respondents suggest must now be expanded to those within the unionist community. As SF2 and SFI2 discuss, the Hunger Strikes of the 1980s brought home for the RM the need for a professionalized political party. For SF2, as each Hunger Striker died,

there wasn't one political party in Ireland that changed its position during that period. And for me the hunger strike was a shocking lesson for that because you can have all of the theoretical discussion about broadening your base - and republicans were having those debates [...] because an armed struggle in its own right is never going to achieve [military victory, and so] for me the hunger strike period really, in a sense brought those debates to the practical level.

The lesson in the importance of electoral participation was received (see Political Viability), and with SF's increased participation and electoral success came a need to adjust structurally. While, SFI2 this process began in the 1980s, it was reinforced after the ceasefires in the early 1990s. SF, she notes, has grown

its a more structured organization in that Sinn Fein now employs people, [...] many more elected representatives. All that requires money so we have a big management structure as well. Big organizations need to be managed so the organization is changed. We have streamlined. We've all got political education, we've professionalized I suppose.[...] when you have a lot of political representation and then you're a mainstream political party there is a lot of responsibility that comes with that. So you have to professionalize and you have to be at your game.

Along with these organizational structural changes, SF2 notes that the profile of SF has become even more representative of its community "if you took a photograph of all of our party now and looked at it 10, 15, 20 years ago, it's just a total transformation [...] we have an awful lot of younger people, expanded our age profile, our gender profile in the party now, which is all very important and we've still a long way to go." Thus while there existed organizational structures for decision making, they were not absolute due to both the embeddedness of the organization in their support base, as well as the conscious decision of the IRA to implement a cellular structure.

Leadership

Within its constituent organizations, despite the frequent near independent operation of cells, particularly in rural areas (Neumann 2007), the IRA was significantly centralized and hierarchical organization (Heger, et al., 2012). Leadership – particularly strong and consistent leadership – was an oft repeated theme by the respondents. Indeed, as detailed below, while there have been changes in key position holders, there has simultaneously been a remarkable degree of continuity in some key leadership positions. The respondents suggest that much of the RM's effectiveness strategically relates to what SF2 describes as a "consistent, core leadership", particularly in the form of the high level Sinn

Féin leadership. Further, as noted by Bowyer-Bell (1990), between 1970 and 1990 the IRA leadership itself had “consisted of a small, tightly-knit group, and has thus built up a formidable wealth of experience, and continuity of purpose” (in Drake, 1991, p. 54). Such experience, the respondents agree developed trust by key leaders in the movement – most notably Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams – cemented much of the RM’s ability to manoeuvre in negotiations with the British state. Despite its claims to grassroots origins, the RM and its constituent organizations have benefited from core centralized and hierarchical structures functioning as the backbone for the movement itself.

Though SF arguably solicits input from the grassroots, that information is funneled through successive meetings and representations to a core leadership. Even within overlapping structures, the IRA’s position was the dominant one “[p]eople with a Sinn Féin role, even if they served on the Army Council, were not viewed as having the same gravitas” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 120). While in the late 1970s the Adams led factions were able to assume the leadership positions in both the IRA and SF, organisational structures were used to manage dissent, at no point was the movement without dissenting voices.

The IRA’s overall core centralized and hierarchical structure contributed to its military viability. By the late 1970s it had created an internal department which investigated botched and failed operations for both traitors and incompetents (Moloney 2002 in Heger, et al., 2012, p. 748). Accordingly, Heger, et al. (2012) note “[t] these types of mechanisms provided an incentive structure based on accountability that enabled IRA leadership to punish traitors and create more professionalized operatives” (p.748). However, given both the cellular structure adopted and the embeddedness of the movement created an organization both formally hierarchical

highly decentralise[d] nature of the PIRA, particularly since the formation of a separate Northern Command in 1976, has meant that to a very large extent local commanders, especially in border areas, have a great deal of discretion in carrying out operations. One commentator goes so far as to say that in order to avoid discouraging initiative and causing possible schisms, the PIRA leadership often retrospectively approved operations which given the choice it would not have authorized (Bowyer-Bell, 1990, in Drake 1991, p. 47).

Thus while the RM itself could boast of collective decision making and grass roots participation, the core centralized structures of both the IRA and Sinn Féin, given the degree of contact and familiarity with one another, were well equipped to coordinate and fight a “war” on multiple social, political, and military fronts. Coordination, as demonstrated above, does not necessarily amount to control. As Owen (2007) explains “there had been deep cynicism about the peace strategy of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness among the IRA in South Armagh since the August 1994 ceasefire” (p.42). RUC Constable Hugh Annesley admitted to then head of the decommissioning body, Senator George Mitchell that Adams could not convince the IRA to accept decommissioning before talks, saying “No, he couldn’t do it even if he want to. He doesn’t have that much control over them” (Owen, 2007). McIntyre (2008) further notes that dissenting voices within the IRA – many of whom would later form part of the Real IRA – were significantly influential in the breaking of the ceasefire. However, while an attempt by this group to move away from the talks, the fact that the Adams leadership had been willing to re-engage in armed struggle “won the trust of many doubters and [the Adams leadership] was able to fortify its position and regain control” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 122). Thus Adams leadership skills – and those of the rest of the leadership of the organization – were crucial for convincing the most of the movement to follow them into the GFA. Decision-making structures and the often collegial nature of much of the movement mean that such a decision could not have simply been dictated by the upper echelon.

Unsurprisingly then, there was notable overlap in membership of the RM. Adams' number two in Sinn Féin, Martin McGuinness, was arguably at the center of the IRA planning of the "Tet Offensive" (Moloney, 2002), thus suggesting at the very least, to a degree, SF knew what the IRA was up to and vice versa (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1428). Three SF leaders (Adams, McGuinness, and Martin Ferris) have long been considered to be, and reported as, members of the IRA Army Council (Moloney, 2002 in Pruitt, 2007, p. 1539), with English (2003) dating Adams' membership as early as 1977, and allegations that his role was that of PIRA Chief of Staff (Drake, 1991, p. 44). Further, Craig (2012) notes that Adam was present as part of an IRA delegation in meetings with representatives of the British government as early as 1972 (p. 105). However, early on in the conflict, intermediary Brendan Duddy noted that the IRA "had a dichotomous approach to their struggle, explains that "this is the department that bombs, and this is the department that talks" (Duddy, 2008 as cited in Craig, 2012, p. 112).

Republican leadership was, the respondents suggest, very important to the movement. For I1, the ability of the leadership with the IRA and SF to work with one another such as the IRA declaring a ceasefire to facilitate SF's involvement in talks demonstrates the strength of leadership as "knowing that you could move things forward by making really hard decisions, unpopular decisions, [...] that's where you see your leadership. That's where you see the ability within the leadership to lead. So anything we have gained has been through the strategy of the IRA and its leadership within Sinn Féin." As SF1 notes "there was little change in terms of personnel or personality on the republican side". While SFIR points out that fear and fatigue would have had an effect on much of the membership, who "simply went home or the moved down to the south of Ireland, they moved away from the conflict zone. It wasn't a major factor with regard to the leadership project". SFI2 holds it was critical to the RM's success "that we had a very, very, strong leadership of people who had been around the struggle since day one." That is not to say

that there were no changes to the leadership at any level. While some leaders, such as Adams, have been consistent figures since the 1970s, there have been other changes:

if you look at the leadership of the republican movement and the leadership of Sinn Fein has stayed very intact, the same people are there. But having said that, if you go down in terms of the local leadership, there's people who left, people who stayed and people who came on board. So maybe not so much at the overall, national leadership there would have been changes. And both are important, you know, people who stayed would have brought their own gravitas to it, and who went, you might have lost them, but some you were glad to lose, let's be honest. (SF3)

I1 notes that much of the upper leadership of the IRA, came to the RM in the 1970s and has benefited from a learning process over the course of decades of engagements – both military and political – with the British state (see Political Viability). As he explains, by the 1990s, much of the membership of the RM and the IRA in particular, had a wealth of practical experience not confined to particular individuals but that contributed to the overall leadership:

the leadership, and politically, our people, and what you have to remember to is, in the early, mid 80, early 90s a lot of people who would have been in prison for decades, who had fought the political struggle through hunger strikes, blanket protest in the H-Blocks and Armagh had been released so they generated that understanding of tactics, change the tactic and sometimes you made a conscious decision, that was very hard to make, but you knew it could deliver, that was guaranteed

This experience, as well as the familiarity and dedication to the movement such long term involvement demonstrates, has helped build a base of trust SF3, SF4, SF2, SFI2 and I1 argue, that in turn contributed to the effectiveness of the leaders of both the IRA and SF up to and around the process of de-escalation. As SF3 notes, once entered into a process of negotiation, a certain amount of control is ceded, and so discussions, engagement with the base and trust in the leadership is needed so that the leadership avoids “bringing some people too far, too quickly that it would end up blowing up in your face” (see Fragmentation/Cohesion). As SF4 explains, much of the work the leadership of the RM had to do was, by

its nature, secretive, making it at times more difficult for the base to understand. In such instances, he argues, the leadership would not have been able to function effectively and implement strategic changes if they did not hold the trust of the base. As I1 puts simply “trust is a major element”. Like SF4, SF12 holds that the RM had a leadership that “people believed in and knew to be genuine. So say even if it were to turn out that they got it wrong, they were doing it from the best of intentions.” While not to suggest, she argues, that the leadership is beyond reproach, she notes that this faith arose from demonstrated success, but also their ongoing commitment. Adams, she holds as one such example: “whatever [else] about him, Gerry Adams is genuine and the worst thing is that he might have got it wrong, but that is the worst thing. He was doing it for genuine reasons. He sacrificed his whole life so, I think people recognize that and people buy into that.”

Organizationally, the RM has been characterised by an almost contradiction in structure: consistent leadership within predetermined structures, a top an embedded, cellular structure for the IRA, over which the leadership has only nominal control. Within SF, the organizational structures are largely more clear cut – owing largely to fact that (after 1974) McGarry and O’Leary 1999) it was a legal organization – with a broad base embedded within its constituent communities and a series of broad collective decision-making structures that funnel upwards to a more centralized leadership. The IRA, given its clandestine nature, sought to both harness the support and resources it could garner by being embedded within republican communities, with the corresponding susceptibility to informers, which was only marginally improved by its adoption of a cellular structure. While a core leadership structure existed in the form of the Army Council to which representatives of battalions and smaller cells reported, the fact that the cells were dispersed and embedded within their communities meant that often times the Army Council’s ability to ‘command’ these disparate cells was almost nominal.

Accordingly, the organizational leadership, which from the late 1970s on through the negotiations of the peace process, was largely composed of a core group. While Adams and his counterparts assumed the dominate positions within the organizations in the late 1970s, previous leaders within the movement were both kept involved with the movement, or expelled, depending on their willingness to conform with the new leaderships' strategy. As is further discussed in Fragmentation/Cohesion, the overlapping leadership of the Republican organizations thus had to balance control toward the central strategy, and not overstepping the strategic tolerances of those less in line with the central leadership's strategy. As such, any changes in strategy or orientation in the leadership of the IRA, if too far removed from those of its volunteers, would risk serious organizational fragmentation. Sinn Féin's more open and collegial structures helped ensure its' strategic plays were not too far removed from the realm of the acceptable of its constituents. Thus, Sinn Féin was in a greater position to push toward a pro-negotiation stance than the IRA. While the overlapping leadership would suggest Sinn Féin might be able to pull along the IRA, its subordinate position within the Republican Movement arguably made this more difficult. In this sense, the RM benefited from the collective experience – both relationally, and in terms of skill sets – of the core leadership of the movement.

c. Fragmentation/Cohesion

The Sinn Féin and IRA characteristic of the 20th century incarnation of the Troubles, refers to the Provisional Sinn Féin and Provisional IRA. Throughout the course of the decades of conflict, both organizations have seen little major fragmentation. However, with each major strategic decision – from the reversal of abstentionism to the signing of the GFA – each organization has experienced a degree of fracturing that is not without consequence for both movement decision making, and the long term

stability in the region. The most notable of which is perhaps the ongoing, though much reduced, activity of so called dissident republicans who remain militarily active in Northern Ireland at the time of writing. In this vein, considerations of the dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion revolve around two primary themes: the presence of fractures within the RM and threats to movement unity; and the means of managing such threats.

Fragmentation in the Republican Movement

As SF2 and SFI2 explain, fracturing is not uncommon in the history of the RM. For all that both SF and the IRA would experience significant splintering in 1986 and 1996, McIntyre (2008) notes there existed a long history of dissent and cross-purposes within the organizations for years prior to both splits. The Provisional movement itself split from the Official IRA (OIRA) in the 1960s over its leftist focus and perceived inaction to the onset of the Troubles. While the OIRA declared a ceasefire in 1972, its more militant members formed the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and its political wing the Irish Republican Socialist Party (M.L.R. Smith 1995, p. 81-90 in Frenett and Smith, 2012, p. 379-380). This is not surprising, SF2 holds, given the historical weight of the militarily and economically stronger British state on Irish affairs. As he has noted, colonialism created a situation wherein, in the north, along with the SDLP, and the Irish government in the south, all claimed to speak for Irish nationalism but until the mid1980s, were not speaking to one another. Even within the Provisional IRA and SF, SFI2 notes that as early as 1986 when SF voted to take its seats in the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament), that a faction split from SF. As she phrases it “on every road as we took a decision - decommissioning, Good Friday Agreement, cease fires - people just broke away all the time and formed different groups”. The Continuity movement, for instance, which split from the Provisionals in 1986 over the move toward greater electoral participation, is often denounced by other groups as elitist, for its refusal to cooperate with other republican groups, which it sees as impure (Frenett and Smith, 2012, p. 379-380).

Such group that “step[s] up their activity”, the respondents point out, are dissident republicans unsatisfied with the peace process. Dissident republicans, as the organization currently exists, is largely formed from the merger of two smaller splinter groups, the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA. (Frenett and Smith, 2012). AS ISF explains, while it might be understandable why such fragmentation exists, she as the rest of the respondents, do not hold these groups to be representative of the RM and who do not accept the deals made during the negotiation process “but for them then to try and drag us back and to drag the whole community back is just madness you know. As I said, if the IRA couldn't win it with the powerful machine that they had, then, nobody in their wee pockets today is going to make any difference, they're not going to free Ireland.” For ISF the “the military sense has ceased, but the political conflict is still just as strong and important.” Those dissidents who disagree she, like I1, argues will meet with not success “they are out there just sort of rattling their sabers [...] if the IRA couldn't win in it, straight forward with military means than nobody else is going to do it.” Such splintering is the result, SFI3 holds, of the fact that change does not come easy to those invested in conflict and threats to movement unity have and will continue to crop up. In particular, there appear to be four fears that can, and often have proven to be catalysts for fragmentation within the RM: a fear that too much has been conceded; that too little has been gained; that change is too slow; and a fear of having been sold out.

Negotiations, SF2, SF3, ISF and SFI3 note are often a source of tension. Not only does, ISF notes, negotiation imply a degree of compromise and thus not absolute victory, but it involves handing over a degree of control – both to representatives, and by the representatives to the negotiation process itself. As SIF3 explains, “there is always a nervousness about negotiations quite honestly. I mean, you know, we entered this unsure. It was uncharted waters for us you know.” SF3 further elaborates “once you enter into those negotiations with other people you are always giving away an element of control [...]

obviously there are red lines that you cannot cross, and you make judgements. And part of it is, is the red line about bringing some people too far, too quickly that it would end up blowing up in your face?"

With this lack of control comes a fear that the negotiators whether through fault of skill or fault of circumstances, may cede more to their opponents than the base, and more importantly for fragmentation – the active membership – is willing to yield. In his discussion of the central coalition in negotiating parties, Pruitt (2007) highlights the dangerous role to be played by outliers and spoiler groups who, though part of a given movement, are not on board with the process underway. This "red line" as SF3 phrases it, has manifested at a variety of different points over the course of RM engagements with the state. SF2 notes that part of the role of both the negotiating team as well as the more local leadership was to try to manage risks and expectations but the uneasiness within the movement was genuine. Certainly almost half the respondents note they were not initially in agreement with the ceasefires and the move toward de-escalation. These fears can be so weighty that, as McIntyre (2008) notes, that it was fears concerning over commitment during the GFA talks that led dissenting voices in the IRA to push the Adams leadership into the breaking of the 1994 ceasefire. In this situation, SF2 notes he "never felt that we were in too deep now that we can't get out. You know, I never felt that but there were people that were making that argument to us. You know, for me, a lot of people would have been saying that if the IRA gives up its arms you'll never have anything to negotiate with". As ISF explains "some people think entering into the cease fire talks was a concession too far. [...]and I think that fear you know with some people who claim to be opposed to the Republican strategy at the minute, is that Stormont is a wee step too far you know for some, you know and they can't accept that". Others such as SF4 and I1 note the removal from the Irish constitution of the claim to the whole of Ireland, too significant a concession, albeit a symbolic one.

At the same time, fracturing has occurred, it must be noted, out of a sense that the RM has stopped short of its goals – either by SF taking their seats in the assembly, the calling of the ceasefires or the renunciation of the military strategy. Part of negotiations ISF notes, is the simple fact that “in any negotiations everybody has to go in with the realization that something is going to have to give. Nobody was going to walk away with 100 percent what they wanted and that's why you always aim high because you have to be able to come down but you just don't come down too far”. This zero-sum understanding of both the role of negotiations and the negotiation process itself, leads to unrealistic expectations, SF2 argues. There were many he notes, who held “you should only be going in to negotiations with the British to manage how they'll leave. [...] that wasn't going to happen so that maybe would be a nice idea that you'd just go in and negotiate with the when they would leave and what time they'd be on the boats at, but that wasn't going to work out.” Accordingly, he suggests that

if someone said to me, the critics of our party were to say the IRA fought its campaign, had a ceasefire, you don't have a united Ireland, you failed. I don't feel that way at all because you know the armed struggle was part of a set of circumstances, nobody, certainly not in my generation had planned [...] I was born into it. It wasn't my fault. I inherited it but what I am determined to do is make sure we don't transfer it on to another generation. [...] yes we want to have our political objectives, but there is more than one way to do that and if we can find a way which didn't require people being hurt or killed or going to prison than obviously we are going to go for that.

This long term perspective SF2 raises, is one continued by SF3. The processes both of reaching agreement within the movement, and seeing those changes the RM negotiates with the State implemented, are often painfully slow. In the face of such slow progress, SF3 notes, it is both difficult and critical to keep the whole of the movement on board with the process. To this first point, she argues “the need for change and the drive for change and then, it was about bringing everybody else, in a sense, on to the same script. So, that did take a long time and as that was happening, you still had the conflict going on, and as I say, still at times had the conflict escalating.” In the context of ongoing

violence, it can often be difficult to promote a more conciliatory path. Accordingly, it was a long term process she notes, to try to limit fragmentation as much as possible: “these talks had been going on and these talks had been going on for a good number of years. So it was about turning that tanker and you just had to keep focused in terms of the end goal at the particular time which was I supposed ending the conflict and moving it on to a political level because, as I said, I think anybody with any bit of wit would have known that that is just what had to happen”.

Despite, these efforts, as SF2 and ISF noted, there were many who viewed the RM’s move into the peace process, and into Stormont in particular, as having been sold out by their political leaders, causing many to opt for splinter organizations, fragmentation has remained a problem in the implementation of the GFA. As author’s such as Patterson (2001) note, the RM sold a ‘victory’ to its base that did not include a united Ireland in the here and now, and could thus also thus have been framed as a defeat. This is certainly the stance adopted by those who split from both Sinn Féin and the IRA with the renewal of the 1996 ceasefire (Frenett and Smith, 2012). While the Provisional movement has announced the end of its military campaign, 2010 saw more violent activity by anti-agreement republicans than in the five previous years (Frampton, 2010, p. 7-9 in Frenett and Smith, 2012, p. 375). For SFIR, this reaction is often two-fold. Firstly, there are those

who have been disempowered with the end of the armed struggle. Former comrades, a small number of former comrades who would have had a particular status within our communities, once the war ends, what do they do? They don't really know what else to do? [...] There's a criminal activity by others. There's the ego factor that you know, they find it hard just to be an ordinary guy on the street and I suppose people see it as upholding the traditional armed groups within nationalist areas. [...] in general it seems to be they can articulate what they are against, what they have great difficulty in is in articulating what they are for or how they are going to get there. So that for me is an indication of sort of a lack of, lack of political realism.

In terms of the effectiveness of violent anti-GFA groups, Frenett and Smith (2012) note the “disunity of anti-GFA groups makes it less likely that any campaign(s) launched will reach the intensity of the Provisional campaign, but it certainly makes a negotiated end to violence less likely” (p. 382). At the same time, many SFIR notes, feel that they were sold out by politicians. Thus, this zero-sum understanding of negotiations, along with potential difficulties reintegrating into an increasingly post-violent conflict society, create ongoing challenges to both maintain and foster the RM’s unity, as well as the peace process. Factionalism within the anti-GFA republicans appears to be the result of “ideological divisions; personal rivalries and animosities; fear of infiltration; and the persistence of informal networks of cooperation” (Frenett and Smith, 2012, p. 378), in much the same way as it was over the course of the Provisionals history (McIntyre, 2008). As discussed in Organizational Structure, dissent – though expressed and managed in different ways – has long be a characteristic of the RM behind closed doors. While since the arrival of the Provisional movement to the scene there have been no catastrophic divisions, the movement has experienced significant fracturing in both its political and military organizations when the core leadership has been unable to bring the whole of the membership onboard with its strategic changes.

Cohesion – Holding Together the Republican Movement

While the fragmentation has existed within the RM, unity in a movement of its size, is a perhaps a natural struggle. Accordingly, it can be suggested that demonstration of progress, engagement with the membership and the base, as well as consistent leadership have been crucial tools for working to maintain the movement’s unity - to the large extent that it has been maintained.

Given the support awarded to the movement, I1 argues that the success of any negotiation or settlement depends on the ability to create by in to the process. As SF3 explains, in negotiations,

you have to carry your people with you, if you don't, then you're in difficulty. You only have to look at the history of Ireland you know in terms of the civil war [...] its about trying to bring your own organization intact and also trying to deliver. If you're negotiating, its fine and negotiations are fine but you also have to come out of negotiations with, being able to deliver what you've negotiated on. And if you're not able to deliver than you end up lame duck later anyhow.

Though a hierarchical organisation in which the Army Council “enjoyed substantial formal powers”, Neumann (2007) notes that particularly in parts of rural Northern Ireland, some IRA units “regarded with skepticism the peace initiatives of Gerry Adams... and ignored directives demanding that operations scaled down ahead of elections in the late 1980s and early 1990s” (p.131). Accordingly, he argues the leadership had to walk a fine line between enforcing orders and maintaining cohesion: “Had the IRA leadership insisted on its authority the organization might have split up. Instead it persuaded the skeptics to support Adam’s plan with a mixture of subtle threats and deception, arguing that laying down arms was a ruse to, as Moloney has put it “expose the Brits”” (Neumann, 2007, p. 131). As I1 elaborates, whether achieved militarily or through negotiations “you have to ensure to keep the things moving, that people can see change, people can relate to the type of politics that's being delivered because if there is a detachment from the people on the ground and whatever they are realizing in the political world there will be a complete and utter breakdown of the de-escalation of military operations or so called peace settlements.” SFIR notes that while the de-escalation represents the end of the ‘war’, he argues that the end game is still being played (see Target Framing). Accordingly, demonstrating the advantages of the peace process is a necessary step to both create buy in, as well as keep those who initially invested in the process from splintering off in dissatisfaction.

As SF12 notes, there remain difficult issues to tackle and “spectrum of opinions and range from extreme at one end to extreme at the other [...] and it's about convincing people that this, that you know, what we are at, and these decisions we are taking, [...] we've gained enough ground, enough concessions or

enough commitments” that the Republican Movement can use that demonstrated progress to continue moving forward. As SF3 notes, the membership and the base need to be able to “look at the evidence” of what the RM has been able to deliver on, to keep them on board through the process. As SF1 explains with the calling of the IRA ceasefire, for most there was a sense

that something quite fundamental and world changing in their world was happening. And so [...] the release of prisoners, demilitarization of society by the British government, the new police service, the disbandment of the armed militias that were killing people and repressing people, all of those different things, people were living the change, the young people particularly you know, were taking advantage of the new society that was emerging and the backdrop of peace. So people lived the experiences as it unfolded

This demonstration on issues that were important to the republican community were important to maintain the unity of the movement. This included demonstration of Provisional strength. The Provisional movement has long used violence to police its own;

[i]n 1992, following pressure from the nationalist community, the PIRA forcibly disbanded a group calling itself the Irish Peoples Liberation Organization (IPLO). This group was exceedingly violent and involved in numerous criminal enterprises. PIRA attacked its leading members and force it to dissolve (Holland and MacDEonal, 1994, p. 16). Further, in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing of August 1998 many leading members of the RIRA received a “knock on the door” from the Provisionals who informed them, in no uncertain terms, that if they “stepped out of line again [they would be] shot” (Ravesncroft, 2010). (Frenett and Smith 2012, p.389-390)

Part of this ability to demonstrate progress comes from the Republican Movement’s commitment to engaging with its base. This means, the respondents argue, that the membership and the base are involved in setting the agendas for any strategy changes or laying out the objectives for negotiations. In this way the progress demonstrated above, or the confidence building measures, are reflective of the movement interests and to the movement is better able to maintain unity before, during and after any negotiations. For SF12, as the RM moved into the negotiation process “the big thing about the republican movement was keeping people on board, you know, maintaining unity.” This thus meant discussions, balancing transparency and openness, and strong leadership. It must however be noted, as

McIntyre (2008) does, that there long existed dissenting voice to any dominate stream of Republicanism within the movement, and the Adams leadership, as much as any other, made use of organization structures to quiet, dissenting voices, through debate, expulsion, and at times, intimidation.

Discussions SF12 and SF3 with the base and membership (see Organizational Structure), were crucial for determining where exactly the “red lines” were as the RM moved into negotiations. Despite splits in 1986 and 1997, Frenett and Smith (2012) argue that “Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have been very skillful in how they steered the Provisional movement away from violence. They have avoided large scale splits, slowly siphoning off those who disagree with their directions” (p. 380). As SF3 explains

there is a lot of collective decision [...] people would have discussions beforehand, sometimes interminable discussions beforehand as to you know, where you're going, what you're doing, you know that type of thing and then decisions were made as to what could you give and what couldn't you give. You know, war was a, how could you, that's your negotiating position in a sense so, people would have gone in clearly knowing what they could do and what they couldn't do and then you would have to judge as any negotiations go on, and things are thrown into the mix.

Throughout the peace process it “was reported that Sinn Fein and the IRA leadership invested considerable energy in briefing rank-and-file IRA members on the merits of the peace process” and while Continuity IRA broke off in July 1986 (only becoming active in 1996) and Real IRA in November (taking with them “a small number of key militants in the IRA, including its chief bomb-makers”), the majority of the RM followed the leadership through the turn (MacGinty, 2006, p. 131). These discussions were particularly important SF12 notes, because not everyone within the movement started on the same page: “everybody sort of didn't move into the same frame of mind at the same time. And some people didn't actually move into that.”

These discussions, along with demonstration provided by confidence building measures, such as the release of prisoners, are all the more important SF2 and SF3 argue to counteract the often secret nature of negotiations. SF3 elaborates, during negotiations “its only a small number of people can really be privy to the details of the negotiation but there is a wider group of people out there that you are trying to bring along. So by the nature of the negotiations you can't make it public, [...] because that is when you do lose, really do lose control in terms of all of that.” As such communication and debate with the membership and the base, SF2 argues can work to mitigate much of the centripetal forces at play:

be aware of the risks before doing anything, minimize the risks as you go on, make sure that the people that you represent, particularly in our connection with the grassroots ideology, the people in your community are your heart and soul, are aware of those risks even though you might not be able to say everything that you're doing or what stage a particular discussion or negotiation is at, you still need to let people know where you're at, what you are trying to do so there are no surprises. And part of that is bringing people with you and people aren't fools and they aren't clones and so there would have been a lot of debate, a lot of local briefings going on, in our local communities explaining to people where we are at

However, communication is not always sufficient given the stakes and the secretive nature of negotiations, thus, the respondents argue, strong leadership is necessary (see Organizational Structure).

The importance of IRA unity for the potential negotiated resolution of the conflict was further acknowledged by the British security services with “[s]uccessive British governments hav[ing] acknowledged that the IRA must remain intact for prospects of a lasting peace to endure (O’Dowd, 2000), while RUC leader Ronnie Flanagan, when head of its Special Branch, spoke of the need to maintain a united IRA (quoted in *Irish News* 18 January 1995, in McIntyre, 2001, p.205). As SF12 notes, it is “especially in times where change happens, that's when leadership is most required”. In times of change and negotiation, SF3 argues requires balancing between “not showing your hand but also trying to make the people who you are not telling, understand the reason why you can't always do that. And I

suppose that comes down to the idea again of having confidence in the group of people that are there negotiating, the leadership". As discussed in *Alliances*, Dixon (2006) argues that successive British governments recognized the importance of cohesion in the RM for any chance of a negotiated agreement. He notes that then Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew was revealed to have suggested that "the British had to help Adams carry the hard men in the republican movement with him. Otherwise he might "be replaced by someone much harder" (*The Irish Times*, 9 January, 1995, in Dixon, 2006, p. 66). The notion that republican leadership should be further engaged in the political process to impede a return to a more military focused strategy was one echoed by the UUP leader James Molyneux (O'Clery, 1995, in Dixon, 2006, p. 66). This helps to maintain the unity of the movement, I1 holds, because although many may not be in complete agreement with the strategy "they know it's being led for one, for the right reasons; two, it's being led by the very people that fought the British government to a standstill. So, trust is a major element."

In all, the RM's ability to move toward a negotiated agreement has been impacted by two sets of interacting forces. The embedded nature of the constituent organizations of the movement contributed to the airing of opinions from the base – particularly within Sinn Féin – while simultaneously reinforcing the more nebulous control of the existing decision making structures - particularly within the IRA – as regional and often functionally independent cells were not under the direct control of the core leadership. This has led to competing forces of cohesion and fragmentation. While the broad nature of the involvement of the community in the constituent organizations contributed to the existence of a plurality of opinions, the cellular nature of the IRA allowed these opinions to take hold in isolated groups outside of an existing central leadership and thus meant that it was relatively common that significant changes in strategy would see the creation of a splinter group. At the same time, the tendency of potential 'spoiler' groups to splinter, as Frenett and Smith (2012) note, meant that at each break, the

core group remaining both within Sinn Féin and the IRA was on board with the leadership group's vision and plan, thus allowing it to move more concertedly in the direction of that plan.

d. Learning Processes

The idea that republicanism as a movement, as well as individuals within the RM underwent a learning process was emphatically confirmed by the respondents. For SF12 “certainly the Republican Movement was very open to learning and that has been an aspect of republicanism...We have definitely been beneficiaries of learning.” SF13 argues that learning over the course of the conflict and the de-escalation, was a given for Republicans: “whenever you enter into a process like this, I think for Republicans, well let me think, it’s always about learning isn't it? I think no matter what you do you can always learn”. ISF for her part argues that the learning processes that impacted the RM’s move toward the process of de-escalation were not solely restricted to the Republican Movement, but experienced by the British state as well “there was a learning curve for everybody.” Thematically, the discussion of learning processes below touches on two subtopics: lessons learnt from engagements; that the RM has been historically outward looking and has not just recruited allies from other conflicts, but has sought to learn from their experiences as well. Further, the respondents argue that over the course of decades (and in some respects, centuries) of conflictual interactions with the British state, the RM has undergone a learning process of their own based on these interactions.

Learning from global conflicts

Although, as SF1 notes “there is no blueprint for peace. Every um, every set of circumstances in every country ...people have to find their own plan for change”, the RM holds that it was able to learn from other conflicts around the world in which they saw reflections of their own struggle. SF4 concurs, expressing that “Irish republicanism has always been influenced by international affairs”. SF12 holds that

“we would also have had a tradition of looking at other conflicts and seeing what you can learn from that and bringing in all that experience. So we would have taken a lot of learning from the South African experience, and shared experiences, shared experiences with the Basque people”.

The earliest expression of learning from outside conflicts noted by the respondents relates to the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Inspired in part by the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., in 1967 the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was founded (Kennedy-Pipe, 2006, p.44). As SF4 explains, they observed the movement in the U.S.A, its strategies, and the subsequently violent state response. Accordingly, “people in Ireland that were interested in change were looking at what was happening in America and developed their own civil rights movement, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement. Again this movement, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement was met with the full weight of the powers of the state in trying to intimidate it, bully it and threaten it off the streets” (SF4). Within the context of what the respondents refer to as the Orange State, nationalists in Northern Ireland, and to an extent some members of the unionist and loyalist communities, SF3 notes the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement (NICRM) sought “voting rights, housing rights, equality rights all of that and it start off as a peaceful protest. It was modeled and people did take their inspiration from [...] the United States at the time you know, that was a sort of different way of trying to get your rights in the Northern State. And the State response to that was violence”. As the NICRM was overshadowed by outbursts of sectarian violence and the arrival of British troops, the RM continued to look outward for inspiration.

The global context at the time, SF4, and I1 note, was one in which Irish republicans were able to see many potential allies and lessons. Guelke (2001) notes that RM comparisons between the conflict in

Northern Ireland and those of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) or that of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) became "an important part of the rhetoric" of the RM in the 1980s, notable in the writings of Gerry Adams as well as the murals of West Belfast (p.249). As SF4 notes,

This was taking place in a world that had been swept by anti-colonial movements, decolonization that had taken place after the Second World War, where you had, especially where Britain was concerned, you had conflicts in places like Malaysia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, places like that. So anybody that was looking at socialist change was looking at these factors taking place. [...], we were actually seeing a small guerilla army, the Vietnamese taking on one of the world's super powers, the Americans, and defeating them

Thus the RM was able not only to find allies in these conflicts, but saw demonstrated the potential effectiveness of guerrilla tactics, experiments in the implementation of socialist change, as well as the how various organizations were able to interact with their host state with varying degrees of success.

As the 1970s came to a close with relatively little progress for republicanism, the RM increasingly focused its attention on South Africa, Palestine and Latin America. For SF4 a number of factors combined in the late 1980s to create a

radical rethink of the Republican struggle[...] the guerilla war might not have been making the political progress that one would have expected [...T]he collapse of many states that had been hitherto very supportive of the Irish Republican struggle, I think all them factors combined - the negotiations between the ANC and Afrikaners, the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the negotiated settlement to the conflict in El Salvador, the way that the Sandinistas fought the, won the revolution but lost the peace, if you want to... the attempts by Iran to break out of international isolation, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, all them factors combined together to, if you want to dictate that a new way, a new strategy had to be formulated

As SF13 explains "there was an international dimension to it where we would've been reaching out to understand different conflicts in other parts of the world, how that may have informed our own war in this country and our own strategy in this country". The South African conflict in particular was

highlighted by the respondents as a source of tactical military, as well as negotiation and engagements lessons. ISF highlights the importance of the willingness of the RM leadership to not only engage with the leaders of other conflicts but highlights the “vision of taking advice and taking examples from across the world”. As SF2 explains, for a movement whose leadership was most often pulled from the community rather than a professionalized political class “I have often heard people say to us where did you learn your negotiating skills? We just learnt them on the job. We looked at history, we looked at other scenarios, we talked to people, for example, from South Africa, including people from ... we had very good relations, obviously, with the ANC [...] and we got very good, important insights from them.” This is in keeping with account in Craig (2012) that notes that early negotiating teams sent by the IRA in the early 1970s, were lacking in negotiation skills, in sharp contrast to later years.

The ANC took its links with Northern Ireland seriously and “willingly did all it could to assist Sinn Fein in its peace strategy” from inviting all parties to a seminar in South Africa on transition (1996), to sending senior delegations to meet with both Sinn Fein members as well as republican prisoners (Guelke, 2001, p. 251). Dixon (2006) suggests that the impact of the changes in international context, such as the movement towards resolution in the South African conflict, have been exaggerated as much of the groundwork for the GFA was laid prior to those events. However, while that does suggest that such events in and of themselves were not causal, that does not demonstrate that in so complex a process – wherein equifinality is highly probable – that such events did not facilitate developments.

As SF1, I1 and SFIR note, not only did the RM look for lessons in other conflicts for how to “create a set of circumstances in which other things happen” (SF1), but they also took more targeted lessons in the form of tactics and direct interactions with activists and militants from these conflicts. While the move

toward resolution in South Africa helped set an example for Northern Ireland, the “special significance of the analogy” for republicans has, Guelke (2001) suggests, often been masked. This significance has been “to underpin its anti-colonial analysis of the conflict in Northern Ireland, thereby legitimizing the objective of a united Ireland. That perspective is further reflected in the republican movement’s insistence that the Belfast Agreement is merely transitional, in effect a stepping stone to its ultimate aim” (Guelke, 2001, p. 252). For I1 and SFIR, observing the process by which Scottish nationalists have made headway over the course of the last decade has helped cement the republican belief that there is a possibility of achieving the RM goal in the absence of armed struggle. As I1 explains, looking at Scotland “there’s a possibility that independence could occur in Scotland, but it has to be done within a democratic process which they say is the will of the people... I don’t think there is any obstacle to the British government delivering in what’s happening in the North.”

As for the more direct learning from interacting with those actively involved in other conflicts, SFIR note that not only did the RM learn from observing the growing resolution process in South Africa, but they benefited from the presence and instruction of some of their leaders on a more individual bases. The two describe how in an attempt to communicate with the membership the reasoning and approach behind the move away from armed struggle, republican prisoners were assembled from both Long Kesh and Maghaberry prisons with ANC chief negotiators such as Cyril Ramaphosa, and “like theater style and we had the opportunity to engage, to listen to the stories from the ANC representatives and then to interrogate them as to what about this and what happens with this and at that stage”. Further SFIR notes that other officials under Mandela “went and talked to IRA units around the country, explaining to them the politics of endgame and how to move from conflict into post-conflict, and how you organize your politics in that period.” Thus, the RM was able to take the experiences and opinions of allies in

similar situations into account when assessing their own strategies. In particular, benefitting directly from the experiences of colleagues in South Africa.

Learning from engaging the British state

As the RM learnt from the experiences of conflicts around the globe, they also accumulated lessons from their ongoing interactions – both military and political – with the British state. From these interactions a series of lessons emerged concerning the relative effectiveness of armed struggle and the importance of political engagement, and lessons about negotiating as a skill set.

As discussed in Military Viability, it was the original plan of the RM in the 1970s that hitting the British government hard with an armed campaign would see British withdrawal from Irish shores. However, there came to be over the course of decades of engagement with the UK a sense that while the armed struggle had its uses, it was insufficient to bring about the changes to which the RM aspired. As SF2 and SF3 explain earlier strategies from partition onward built off the notion of an armed campaign. Since partition, SF2 notes

almost every decade there would be some form of outbreak of conflict, [...] and every decade that came to an end unsuccessfully and the IRA basically would have, the phrase is 'dumped arms' saying we did our best but we have to rest our case for another day, [...] they did their best every decade to try and bring, what they would have described as 'we raised the flag' and passed it on to another generation, and that would have been their measure of success, they didn't get anywhere with an armed insurrection but they made sure that that generation had made its bid and obviously that was a failure militarily and politically because it didn't move Britain to change from partition and that period of campaign came to an end (SF2)

For SF3 with the escalating violence surrounding the NICRM there were entire communities under attack with “people resorting to arms to defend them, to defend their communities” leading to a sense within the republican community that “we are never going to have rights within the Northern State, it is

a sectarian state, the only way we can do it is by wresting it. [...] we went through a very complex conflict and if you look at how the conflict developed, it would have been very, very, clear that while the IRA were never going to be beaten, they IRA were never going to beat the British either.”

The more this became obvious the armed struggle needed to be used in conjunction with political pressure. This switch in turn caused RM to move away from as heavy a focus on armed struggle as,

I don't mean this to sound trite but carrying out an armed conflict in one way, its there, its done, its over and done with. If there is a bomb explodes ... it has its own repercussions and because you're in that situation and you are not, you are not particularly worried about the political fallout of it... You've done what you've done and that's what you're set to do. When you shift into a political mode that is completely different because, maybe the whole political element becomes, you know, in a sense, media is very important for getting you message out. (SF3)

As the military campaign failed to push out the British, and the policies of criminalization by Westminster sought to delegitimize the armed campaign, there was a push within the RM for greater involvement on the political front (see Political Viability). As SFI3 explains, these processes of criminalization, particularly the Hunger Strikes they sparked “certainly changed, I think, the shape of everything. And I think emerging from that period you have the... for the first time we enter electoral politics [...] we've seen many opportunities than that we were able to go forward and demonstrated the validity of struggle. Unfortunately, war made politics possible.” There was a strong conviction within the RM that addressing the RM’s interests and goals was not in the interests of the British, who, would have been capable of facilitating their achievement (see Political Viability; Target Framing). The RM thus had to find a way to either change this willingness, or remove it from the equation.

In the early stages of the Troubles, as I1 notes, there was “a view that military strategy alone could deliver the ultimate objective which was a 32 county socialist republic with the removal of British presence”. However, over the course of the following decade,

after a very long period, those with an understanding of strategy became aware that there needed to be in tandem a negotiated, or sorry, a political dynamic and legal, running parallel with the military strategy. I think there was also realization that the only possible position of disengagement by the British State was going to be after a period of negotiations. So the strategy of that time was to ensure that the military machine of the Irish Republican Army fought the British government and the British state to a position where they needed to negotiate our future within this country.

SFI2, SFI3, SF2, SF1, and ISF in particular notes how the lack of response as successive hunger strikers died, brought home for the RM the importance of having weight within the existing institutional framework (through electoral politics), and the corresponding importance of expanding its base and allies. For SF2, “the Hunger Strike was a shocking lesson”. SFI3 concurred, noting that “the Hunger Strikes certainly changed, I think, the shape of everything”. The Hunger Strikes, or rather, the perceived lack of responsiveness of the British and Irish governments in the face of each Hunger Strikers death brought the debates in the RM around electoralism and expanding its base down, as SF2 recalls, to a “practical level” (see Political Viability; Alliances).

In response to this need, SF1 explains, SF “introduced what it called its peace strategy in about the mid 1980s and it also met with its main political opponents on the nationalist side, which was the SDLP and out of that came the peace talks with John Hume and Gerry Adams, all of which was major in terms of moving things forward.” Though began in the 1980s, SFI2 notes that this strategy was reinforced in the 1990s, particularly in response to the calling of the ceasefires and the growing possibility of negotiations with the British state. Building on the experiences of the Hume-Adams talks, the RM’s new strategy of

the early 1990s, the Tactical Use of Unarmed Strategy (TUAS), reinforced the importance of its pan-nationalist alliance for the success of any peace process (English, 2003, p. 283)

Along with these strategic lessons, the RM also came to deepen its understanding of the British state as its target and potential negotiating partner. The RM's history of engagement with the British state fuelled attempts to internationalise both the conflict and its resolution. As leading Sinn Féiner Mitchell McLaughlin phrased it in 1992 "Everyone knows that attempts in the past at internal solutions have always failed. There can be no internal solution" (Mitchell McLaughlin as quoted in AP/RN, Nov 4, 1993 in English, 2003, p. 280). As SF3 describes, the British state, much like the RM itself, can be characterized as large tankers – any adjustments in their course have to be made incrementally and are immensely difficult. Thus, she argues, the decision had to be made that "politics needed to take primacy. [...]. So it was about turning [a] tanker and you just had to keep focused in terms of the end goal [...] ending the conflict and moving it on to a political level because, as I said, I think anybody with any bit of wit would have known that that is just what had to happen". This assessment was reinforced by an increased appreciation for the constraints under which the British state operated. While the RM was adamant the state maintained the capability to overcome these constraints should it muster the will, the movement nonetheless appeared to appreciate them to a greater degree over time. This was particularly true as the potential for political process grew. As SF2 notes, during negotiations the RM "learn[t], yes they are big political parties, and you're dealing with the British government. You also learn very quickly the British government is not a big monolithic block, that there are various different elements to that, different dynamics at work, different levels of interest, different levels of dismissal of people's views here as well. So you have all that to deal with including parties here, [...] we just had to work our way through that. So we learnt." To this end, the RM kept a close watch on state responses as an assessment of the viability of the political approach. While the criminalization and ulsterization tactics of the 1980s

(see Tactics) put constraints on the hopes raised by SF's electoral strength, many of the gestures such as the Downing Street Declaration, helped to convince the RM that, at least to a degree, the change in willingness they had hoped to illicit was beginning to appear, increasing the viability of the political process, and the more nuanced reading was reflected in SF's eventual concession of the right of unionists to have in Northern Ireland's constitutional future. Thus motivation for a political route increased as an acceptance of the right to a unionist voice excludes the viability of the military strategy.

Accordingly, the series of confidence building measures undertaken by both British and RM military and political forces were crucial for solidifying the move toward negotiation and potential de-escalation. These gestures served to demonstrate to both sides the commitment and potential viability as a negotiating partner of the other (see Concessions). As SF3 notes

on all sides that was important. And in a sense it is about people showing their good faith. You know, things about, if you go back again to the release of prisoners, you know those confidence building measures obviously by the British. And you know all of that type of thing. The cease fires, the decommissioning of weapons. [...are] a sign of good faith that you are in a sense projecting to your political enemies now. So all of that is important. In fact, not just important but it's a vital probably, it's part of it.

Concessions such as cease fires or a halt in military activity by either side, SF13 notes can be vital for building the necessary conditions for talks "the absence of physical force created an atmosphere, an environment where negotiations, discussions, conversations could be had".

That being said, as SF4 notes, neither republicans nor the British "suddenly discovered pacifism". Rather, a return to physical violence in the form of the Canary Wharf bombing in the absence of progress of political talks makes this point abundantly clear. Rather, having learnt from previous engagements such as those surrounding the SA of the early 1970s, as I1 suggests, the RM became more effective at dialing

violence up or down as necessary rather than rely solely on a military or political strategy. SF2 and I1 argue that the RM learnt both from its experiences with the British government during the SA as well as in examining other conflicts that periods of ceasefire had to be closely monitored and that not all negotiations were undertaken in good faith with “every letter of the agreement always was scrutinized because there was a fear maybe that there was always a trap” (I1). Thus, confidence building measures such as the release of prisoners were all the more crucial. However, both SFIR and I1 note that having observed the treatment of prisoners in the 1980s, the republican prisoners were wary that they be used as a bargaining chip to disadvantage the RM negotiating team. As they explain, republican prisoners were anxious for this not to be the case:

we discussed this in early 1994, the possibility of moving things onto a new ground, all of it became very clear that prisoners were not an issue. The way I've seen conflicts throughout the world, the first thing that is on for negotiations is prisoners, and in some way releasing prisoners creates confidence. Our position was very clearly no, [...] We are there to be discussed at a later date when the core issues are being addressed. [...]. So we very clearly told our negotiators do not worry about us. We very clearly told our families, and our support base that we were not an issue.

In addition to learning about and adjusting their expectations of the British state, the ongoing political and military interactions provided the RM with an opportunity to develop tactical skills both on the battle field and at the negotiating table. As SF1 holds “certainly republicans learnt about how you engage with your opponents and your enemies.” As he elaborates building a peace process is both “difficult and unpredictable”. He likens it, as a process, to “almost like a chain of opportunities, links in a chain of opportunities that you try to take advantage of [...] one set of sequences follow another set and you couldn't write the script when you are making peace. You just have to have the ability to take advantage of what comes along in terms of promoting change.” The respondents in particular highlight the learned political and negotiating savvy accumulated by the republican leadership over successive

interactions with both the political system and the British government. Alonso (2004) notes “a clear contrast between the flexibility of Republicans in the 1990s peace process and their intransigence in the two previous decades” (p. 699). As discussed in Engagements, even prior to the back channel talks of the early 1990s, there had existed such a pathway – though not in constant use – between the British government and SF (English, 2003, p. 267). Activated during moments of crisis, such a channel would have provided a useful opportunity for both sides not only to engage with one another, but to observe the other’s process, as well as responses, thereby gaining experience not just in interacting with the other, but in negotiation processes. This would have been particularly important for the RM whose leaders, though long serving, typically lacked the formal political training of their British counterparts.

As SF1, SF3, I1 and SF2 note, the leadership of the RM’s ability to negotiate these chains of opportunity improved over the course of its interactions with the British state. For many republicans, the British ceasefire surrounding the SA was, as I1 describes it “phony”, and as such they were wary from previous experiences as they moved into the ceasefires of the 1990s. As I1 explains:

the experiences of past initiatives carried by the republican movement became a learning process. The 72, 74 cease fires and previous negotiations or secret negotiations or secret discussions with representatives of the British state allowed the republican movement to recharge its ability to carry out negotiations on a very knowledgeable point of view. I think it became very clear that the leadership of the negotiating team were very fluid in their ability to negotiate regardless of who they were negotiating with

For all that, SF2 summarizes, negotiation skills were skills that republicans took lessons from conflicts around the globe, in the end, he argues, they “learnt on the job”. As he explains, the lessons learnt from abroad were both informative and helpful, but “you then have to work out what your own dynamic was, your own circumstances you know, but I think that we as we went along, as there were ceasefires you tried to monitor how that was working out and what's happening in the meantime and we always had to

make sure in our mind, as the leadership we're trying to steer a process through here and sometimes you have to just work with what is evolving.” Further, SF3 notes, a longer view history of the conflict in Ireland, dating back to the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War provided a stronger cautionary example for the need to move slowly so as to avoid a fracture in the republican community once more. She notes, by their nature, during negotiations “you do lose an element of control [...], its about trying to bring your own organization intact and also trying to deliver. If you're negotiating [... you] have to come out of negotiations being able to deliver what you've negotiated on. And if you're not able to deliver then you end up a lame duck later anyhow.”

Longitudinal Perspectives

Part of the learning processes engaged in by the Republican Movement over time relate simply to the length of the conflict and the organizational structure of the movement’s constituent organizations. As discussed in Organizational Structure, the RM has benefitted from the experience of activists and militants who been with their organizations for long periods of time. While there is an element of generational change-over in the organizations, there is sufficient consistency in leadership to facilitate learning processes (as discussed) as well as slowly integrate new information, strategies, and tactics.

All of the respondents suggest that the conflict was not one to which they were a party to creating but rather, as SF2 phrases it, once which they “inherited”. As he notes, generations of republicans had, before the NICRM, sought to carry on the republican military struggle, ultimately achieving little success, “dumping arms”, and leaving the conflict for the next generation. For SF2, while he is adamant that he does not fault or decry previous generations of republicans, he notes this generation of republicans (those who became involved after the 1960s, and generally associated with the Provisional IRA or

Provisional SF) is “fundamentally different” because they are determined to “make sure we don't transfer it on to another generation. [...] yes we want to have our political objectives, but there is more than one way to do that and if we can find a way which didn't require people being hurt or killed or going to prison than obviously we are going to go for that”. That this consistency in leadership, as well as involvement of the base (see Organizational Structure), existed, facilitate the movement's ability not only to assess changes in their effectiveness of particular strategies, but also in better understanding their targets. As I1 explains, from the 1970s onward, the shape of the conflict changed:

The structure of the army has changed to a point where the, to fight an effective war, techniques, weaponry had changed. That happened. There was a clear understanding of the difficulties face by the British state to economic warfare [...]. There started to be an understanding of what really hurt the British state. [...] But the leadership, and politically, our people, and what you have to remember to is, in the early, mid80s, early 90s, a lot of people who would have been in prison for decades, who had fought the political struggle through hunger strikes, blanket protest in the H-Blocks and Armagh had been released so they generated that understanding of tactics, change the tactic and sometimes you made a conscious decision, that was very hard to make, but you knew it could deliver, that was guaranteed.

As SF1 and SF3 note, while the republican goals remain the same, the benchmarks by which they are measured have adapted to reflect these changes in strategy. Making these changes was and is a long term project, particularly if the unity of the movement is to be maintained (see Fragmentation/ Cohesion). As such, the RM has had to adapt to a more long term perspective of achievement of movement goals, and redirect its strategies accordingly. For SF3:

if you look at the idea of any movement, you know, any sort of movement like the republican movement or even, let's look at the British government or let's look at all of them, I sort of see them sometimes as a big tanker, you have to manoeuvre to change, and to do all of that and that involves a lot of very complex issues and it is about a change in attitudes, [...] about bringing people along with you, and bringing as many people as you possibly can along with you. You're always going to have different views in any organization, but trying to bring as many along with you as possible, intact, because the thing is that a split, really a wide open split down the middle would not have, would really not have got us to where we needed to be today.

This applies, she argues, not just to the movement's understanding of itself, but to that of both the British government and unionist public. The way forward for the RM is now, SF1, SF2, SF3, SFI2, ISF and SFIR explicitly note, is one of demonstrating to the unionist community as well as the nationalist community that the best interests of the island lies in a united Ireland. This, they argue, is a long term project involving changes in attitudes that by its nature is a long term process: "building those relationships between unionism and nationalism on the island, and that is going to take time. People sometimes get very frustrated at the length of time that the political process is taking and the very slow pace of change. We are trying to impact centuries of conflict so it's not going to change overnight" (SF3).

Intimately related with all of the previous factors, the RM has without a doubt undergone learning process – both in terms of skills and target framings – over the course of the conflict. Over the course of repeated interactions with the State, as well the involvement of its allies both at home and abroad, the RM developed a more nuanced understanding of the conflict, the role of the British state and Northern Irish Unionists within it, and the most practical means through which to achieve its long term goals. Compounded with the accumulation of significant technical skills, the RM was thus able to implement a slow but significant change in strategy in the 1980s, and was able to make tactical adjustments in response to changing conditions such that it is now able to continue the pursuit of its goals through wholly democratic and peaceful means. These adopted skills and understandings helped build faith in the RM's ability to negotiate effectively and thus optimism for negotiations.

e. Leadership Discussion

The GFA is notable for the absence of the achievement of the maximalist understanding of the RM's goals: that of a united Ireland. However, as noted in both State Responses and Target Framing, this

represents less the notion of the 'defeat' of republicanism and more a notable commutation of republican methods to embrace more institutionalized strategies for the pursuit of these goals. This was largely made possible by an increasingly nuanced understanding on the part of the RM, and particularly within its leadership, of the nature of the conflict and the roles of the British state and Unionism within it. These changes in target framing were facilitated by learning processes both from an accumulation of interactions with the British state, as well as the leadership's growing interaction with nationalist allies such as the SDLP, the Irish and American governments. This increasingly nuanced understanding, couple with shifts in the responses of the British state (see State Responses) led to an increase in optimism in the possibility of negotiations, and the viability of the State as an negotiating partner.

Concurrently, the existing of a longstanding leadership group that spanned both the IRA and Sinn Féin, meant that those lessons and skills accumulated through years of interactions and engagements with the State and allies, increasing the leadership's optimism in its ability to bring the movement along with it, allowing the leadership to 'lead from in front' and pull the movement in the direction of a negotiated settlement. However, such leadership was, as discussed, far from absolute given both the cellular nature of the IRA, its embeddedness in local communities, and the existence of long term leaders at the lower levels, meant that the control of the Army Council, particularly outside its stronghold was often nominal. Accordingly, the organizational structure, for all that it facilitated a relatively quick and dramatic shift from armed campaign to negotiated settlement, fell prey to dynamics of fragmentation and as such a portion of the RM did not make the move to the negotiated agreement with its leadership. However, the leadership was able to sufficiently capitalize on the embeddedness of the movement organizations, the experience, of its leadership and the trust it afforded them, to lead the vast majority of the RM into a negotiated agreement and a situation in which its goals are pursued through entirely peaceful means.

Part Four: Chapter 3 Overview

As SFI2 summarizes, with the move to negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement “I believe that we all had something to gain because peace is something that we all gain from and if the conflict is removed from our streets then that's a win-win for everyone.” As ISF explains the move from a strategy dominated by armed conflict to one of institutional and community politics is not a defeat of the IRA but reflective of the changing dynamics of the conflict as tactics and strategies “are always changing for any movement to be successful, they have to. ... A movement is exactly that, it has to keep moving ...so if lives can be saved and still fight your fight through the political arena, that's the way to go. And I think that the graduation in that change in policy, from going into politics from going to the electorate has proven to be so successful”. For the RM as the move to a new political an institutional scenario following the GFA is a step closer to it's long term goals. The adjustments in RM strategy followed a path reaching back into the 1980s with critical junctures with the 1983 participation of SF in elections, the AIA, the 1994 ceasefire, the admission of SF to the GFA talks, and the 2005 IRA termination of armed struggle.

After the collapse of the SA, enthusiasm for negotiations, and faith in the British government as a negotiating partner had waned. However, there remained those within the movement who were interested in the pursuit of a political strategy in tandem with that of the military. The assumption of the Adams faction of leadership roles in SF and the IRA in the late 1970s, the support demonstrated for RM organizations and projects through the election of Bobby Sands, and the mobilizing impact of the State tactic of criminalization, all served as permissive conditions for SF's move into electoral politics in the early 1980s. Once this shift had been initiated, the demonstrated political viability of SF and the ongoing support for the movement projects acted as productive conditions cementing the change, for all that the organizational structures were insufficient to prevent the fragmentation of the constituent organizations of a smaller splinter groups.

At the same time, beginning with overtures in 1980s, the relationship between the ROI and the UK began to thaw, leading to the AIA which significantly altered the landscape of the conflict. The UK's focus on criminalization and the vehement nature of its rejection in the RM, along with the ongoing viability of the IRA, led the UK government to attempt to reframe the conflict as one in which the ROI had a role in order to gain the southern state's cooperation in policing efforts. This shift permitted the signing of the AIA. For the RM, the concession of a restructured institutional role for the ROI, not only marked a shift in the perception of the UK as a viable negotiating partner, but allowed for closer involvement with the ROI as an ally at the political level (for all that it would lose it to a degree as a tacit ally in the armed struggle), increasing both optimism in and motivation for a negotiated agreement. These thus served as productive conditions to further lock the RM into a joint political-military strategy.

By 1994 conditions had built to allow for the calling of an IRA ceasefire. Permissively, these conditions included the military stalemate with the State, the increased viability of the UK as a negotiation partner as demonstrated by the concessions implied and suggested within a series of conciliatory statements, and the growing optimism and motivation for negotiations born from the expansion of allies of the RM, and the more nuanced appreciation learnt for the role of the unionist community, and the way in which this acknowledgment problematized continued armed struggle. The commitment to this ceasefire was reinforced by the productive conditions of SF's political viability, the support for its movement projects, the breadth of its allies, and the attempts by the leadership to apply lessons from the South African context and ensure its base was informed and committed to the ceasefire.

The commitment of the RM to the ceasefire was tested by the State's changing of the minimum requirements for SF's participation in talks, in part as it sought to maintain a degree of unionist buy-in to

the process. The breach of the ceasefire with the Canary Wharf bombing set in motion the inclusion of SF in the talks. This was made possible by the demonstrated continued viability of the IRA, and with it the leadership's lack of complete control over the IRA and thus concession to elements in favour of breaching the ceasefire. Following the bombing, SF's inclusion was locked in by the breadth of its allies, SF's political viability and the RM's support, the willingness of the British government to act quickly in response and bring unionist forces along with it, and the RM's willingness to demonstrate its commitment to the more radical elements of its organization which helped maintain a greater degree of commitment and cohesion (though not complete) to the ensuing negotiations.

While the RM retreated from the maximalist framings of the movement goals in the resultant agreement, for the RM, the GFA and resultant institutional and political changes have created a possibility for the pursuit of movement goals through wholly democratic means, for all that their achievement has likely been pushed from the short- to the long term. As recent poll data suggests, although there remains support in the nationalist and republican communities for a united Ireland, it is not the communities most pressing concern. As SF13 notes "we believe we have created a framework that allows for the taking forward of the desire for the reunification of our country by purely peaceful means." SF4 for his part agrees, arguing that "the whole move to negotiations, no matter how troublesome and tricky and things like that there that it was, was a willingness by republicans to create a framework and structure that could attain their ultimate goals by not using armed struggle".

While the implementation of the agreement remains ongoing, and political and sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland still experience flare ups, the IRA's 2005 decommissioning and exit from the political stage mark an important juncture in full commitment to the pursuit of movement goals through entirely

peaceful and democratic means. The support within its community for the GFA, along with the institutional changes produced through the UK's willingness to make significant concessions, along with those of more immediate impact such as the prisoner release schemes, SF's surge in electoral viability, the decrease in support military struggle post-9/11, along with the movement leadership's ongoing work to engage with its base and support the view of the GFA as a stepping stone, served as permissive conditions for the move to call a permanent end to the IRA's military campaign. The potential for further growth electorally, increased political viability, the successful framing of the GFA as part of the continued path to movement goals, the UK's demonstrated commitment to make the institutional changes – such as NSMC, disbanding the RUC etc. – for all that there remained important caveats, helped to cement the RM commitment to the negotiated end to the conflict.

For the RM, the State's role, as they saw it, had to change. As SFIR explains "the movement's goals were for the British to become neutral in this situation... [It's] written, you know, it's still written in the Good Friday Agreement that if 50% plus one person in the Northern state opts for independence, for a severing of the British connections, that that's it, it's over. Now that's written into legislation here." Thus there exists significant support for the shift in strategy. Thus as SF2, ISF and SFIR note, it is now the responsibility of the RM to convince the people of Northern Ireland that their interests are best served by a united Ireland: "republicans have a job of work to do to try and create a momentum towards that objective. So, to all intents and purposes, that momentum, it's entirely within our own gift, that we have to convince not only the nationalist republican population but a section of what has historically been the unionist population. We have to convince a section of them that their best interests lie with the rest of us" (SFIR).

Chapter Four: Basque Country and Northern Ireland Compared

As Whitfield (2015) summarizes “the unusual trajectory of the Basque peace process offers important lessons for others who seek to persuade violent actors to return to the channels of democratic politics” (p. 1). Intractable conflicts are almost by definition complex and multifaceted, with many aspects shifting over time. The conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country are no exception. In both cases the strategic decisions of the RM and MLNV were impacted by: the interplay of material and relational resources (political and military viability, support, and alliances); their interpretations and reactions to the responses of their host states (institutions, engagements, concessions, and tactics); and funnelled through their leadership structures (target framing, organizational structures, fragmentation/cohesion, and learning processes). Each of these twelve variables will be examined in turn before turning to an overview comparison of the cases, and a final assessment of the roles of each variable grouping (Resources, State Responses, and Leadership).

Part One: Resources

a. Political Viability

In both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, electoral participation appears to have been supported and rewarded by *abertzales* and republicans. Irvin (1999) notes that Spanish and British governments alike had claimed that support for ETA and the IRA respectively, to be highly limited. Support, the governments held “was limited only to the most ‘fanatical’ individuals...no distinctions were made between members of Sinn Féin and the IRA, or between members of Herri Batasuna and ETA” (Irvin, 1999, p. 128). Despite the difficulties of using electoral results as a direct measure of support, the subsequent electoral support garnered by both HB and Sinn Féin once they entered the

contests appear to belie their respective host state's assertions. Both the IRA and ETAm would publicly endorse voting for SF and HB, using similar justifications (Irvin, 1999, p. 119). ETAm held that HB's "work will be the denunciation and condemnation for the constitution while supporting those methods of struggle that have always characterized our people" (Irvin, 1999, p. 120).

Both Sinn Féin and HB and its successors were vulnerable to electoral punishment and rewards for the actions of the IRA and ETA, respectively (though HB more so). Both SF and HB and its successors received notable electoral support despite the fact that there existed ideologically similar parties (such as the SDLP and EA) that took harder stances against the use of violence. Yet in neither case was electoral support so strong as to be able to justify its singular pursuit as the whole of the movement's strategy. In Irvin's (1999) analysis, in the 1980s and early 1990s, "shifts in the level of regime repression, organizational support, and the strength of competing organizations were related to the decision by the IRA and ETA to encourage participation of their respective political wings...in the parliamentary process and to adopt a dual strategy of armed struggle and electoral mobilization" (p. 127). While this encouraged the pursuit of institutionalized politics, in neither case was it sufficient to bring either the RM of the MLNV toward a de-escalation process.

Respondents and literature alike suggest that, having made shifts into the political strategy, a state's engagement with the sub-state group can help improve the group's political viability thereby encouraging the political route over the military. Not only do such engagements grant legitimacy to the group, but increase optimism of the sub-state group in negotiations. Furthermore, as Neumann (2007) notes, it "exposes the terrorist groups to democratic practices. The terrorists will have to subject their political program to the public's judgement in election, and – once negotiations have begun – interact

and engage with their opponent's concerns, build coalitions, and strike compromises" (p.135). This can help groups make the transition away from violence and help moderate and reinforce existing moderate voices within the movement. By having stakeholders encourage a push toward political engagement, rather than denying access to expressions of institutions, terrorist associated social movements can be "obligated to reorganize and deal with the mundane" leading to more overt, less clandestine, and more institutionalised focusing of activities (Comas et.al. 2015, p. 56). Neumann (2007) notes that SF was itself led to moderate its views on unionism's role in Northern Ireland's future through its contact with other parties (p. 135). HB, and now EH Bildu, have made a number of concessions – such as the renunciation of all forms of political violence – as a result of participation (and desire to continue participating) in Spanish constitutional politics. As such, rather than fear the addition of a dissenting voice with the sub-state group's inclusion in the political process, Neumann (2007) argues that such participation, encouraged by engagement with the State, can provided "an incentive to shift resources from the armed struggle to the building of its electoral capacity" (p. 135).

This process can be further facilitated, as Rudolph (2008) explains, when the movement is linked to platforms that take into consideration social justice concerns of their respective constituencies. In keeping with this both Sinn Féin and HB and its successors have held (to varying degrees) to the left of the political spectrum. While Sinn Féin officially renounced socialism in 1988, as noted in Target Framing, it did so arguing that addressing the social justice issues implied with socialism came part and parcel with independence, and later, institutional reform. As for the organizations of the MLNV, even the nomenclature is suggestive of the left leaning stance – *izquierda abertzale*, the Basque patriotic left. Further, both parties, as they have increasingly embraced a political dominated strategy, have argued that part of their responsibilities derived from their electoral mandate is to, as JEEGELBS explained, build the Euskal Herria to which they aspire. SFI2 further noted the importance for Sinn Féin of being able to

demonstrate to nationalist and unionist communities alike that the less politically conservative politics of the party benefit members of both communities – and admittedly ideologically motivated debate. Both parties seek to use credentials in social justice issues to contrast their policies with those of the State, thereby building support both for the party, as well as their long term constitutional aspirations.

While arguably what Neumann (2007) discusses is a process rather than a switch, it alone cannot explain the moves toward de-escalation or why one would pass through a negotiated agreement but not the other. Both the Republican Movement and the MLNV began their forays into electoral politics in the late 1970s, early 1980s. Both received significant electoral support, yet neither received sufficient support as to suggest they could achieve their goals through a growth in their electoral mandate alone, or through translating that support into sufficient political influence as to negotiate their desired outcome with the state. Further, by the late 1980s, early 1990s, both the Republican Movement and the British state showed increased signs of optimism and motivation for negotiation (Pruitt, 2007). Though attempts were made to negotiate in Algeria between 1987-89, neither the Spanish state nor the MLNV demonstrated comparable levels of readiness. However, both the Republican Movement and the MLNV saw a potential for improved electoral viability given a change in context. This began in the 1980s for Sinn Féin, and the 1990s for HB. Thus political viability, and the potential for greater political viability helped increase the emphasis placed on the political strategy, but on its own, is not sufficient to determine the likelihood of de-escalation taking the form of unilateral de-escalation rather than that of a negotiated agreement.

b. Military Viability

Militarily, ETA never matched the capacity of the IRA. At the same time, neither had the capacity to achieve their aims through military means alone, and neither of their host state's had been able to permanently dismantle or remove either organization from the playing field. As Kriesberg (1998) notes, it is important for a negotiated agreement that those involved in negotiations should not fear for their extinction, as this can promote more, rather than less, intransigent behaviour. As neither the IRA nor ETA were able to claim the use of force as a guaranteed means of achieving their ends, the question became one of usefulness. Both HB and SF had at times received electoral punishment for perceived over steps or abuses by ETA and the IRA respectively. Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) argues that in looking at rates of arrests and recruits, neither the RM nor the MLNV could maintain a strategy of war of attrition by 1990 and 1992 respectively. However, this alone cannot account for de-escalation. The IRA maintained sufficient capability to undertake a series of costly bombing campaigns on English soil for much of the 1990s. ETA, for its part, adopted a strategy of *kale borroka* that saw an upsurge in attacks and casualties from 1992 to 1995, and a spike to 1980s levels following the collapse of the talks of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty.

Further, killings or deaths are not necessarily an accurate measure of the viability of either military organization. Often times the purpose of an operation is economic or property damage, psychological, intimidation or some other type of pressure that has more to do with a demonstration of power than accumulating a body count. Take for instance the highly economically costly campaign on English soil of economic and business interests by the IRA in the early 1990s; or the Hipercor bombing of 1988 – for all that there were significant numbers of injured and killed, casualties were meant to have been avoided with a warning called in ahead of time. Thus, physical injury and deaths caused were not measures of

the success of such operations – by the paramilitary organization’s standards -, and often led to the assessment of such operations as failures. Additionally, the use of *kale borroka* as well as the prevalence of paramilitary style assaults – both with and without guns – by the IRA, demonstrate an operational engagement not necessarily reflected in accounts of bombings and shooting attacks. As to the effectiveness of policing efforts, Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) found “[i]n the case of the IRA it is clear that a greater number of arrests lowers the number of killings; however, more killings do not seem to lead to more arrests.... In the case of ETA, the pattern is opposite. More killings lead to more arrests but it does not seem to be clear that more arrests lead to fewer killings” (p.299).

However, as the 1990s progressed, and particularly after the attacks of September 11th (for de-escalation in the Basque Case and discouraging a return to violence in the Northern Irish case) it can be said that much of what sympathy remained for violent methods began to evaporate. This would have had a much stronger impact on ETA than the IRA, as the IRA had already declared a permanent ceasefire. Both groups had made use of their military strength to push their respective states to the table in the past: Algeria for ETA, and Sunningdale for the IRA. While both talks ultimately failed, the talks in Algeria did so without ever having really gotten off the ground, while the talks around Sunningdale had resulted in an agreement – ill-fated though it was. ETA again pushed for talks around the Anoeta Proposal, (see Engagements) but these too failed to advance. Whereas both groups could, at various points, make use of military pressure to get their respective state’s to the table, only the IRA had sufficient military impact to raise the cost of exiting negotiations by the State to a level that gave pause. As noted, both ETA and the IRA sought to use a bombing attack to kick-start floundering negotiations, those of Canary Wharf and Barajas Airport, respectively. However, differences both in the strength of their military capabilities as well as base support for the armed campaign led to different results. Woodworth (2007) notes that while ETA was able to pull off the bombing and similar attacks, its military viability was not

comparable to that of the IRA – nor, arguably, had it ever been. Further, while both bombings were intended to cause structural and economic damage only, both nonetheless resulted in two deaths. Resultantly, the IRA’s “supporters were willing to write off the Canary Wharf deaths as collateral damage and the organization was able to continue hitting key economic targets often enough and hard enough to convince the British establishment that a peace process with major concessions was in its own interests. In contrast, many of ETA’s demoralized political supporters [were] no longer comfortable with civilian casualties under any circumstances (Woodworth, 2007, p.65). As he concludes “tactically speaking, ETA needed to get the Barajas bombing just right – massive damage, no deaths – and it failed” (Woodworth, 2007, p.65).

Further, both ETA and the IRA were the subject of significant policing and counterterrorist efforts. As discussed, ETA had demonstrated a remarkable capacity to rebuild in the face of near complete debilitation. This was not an ability the IRA ever had to demonstrate. ETA drew on a much smaller pool of armed activists than did the IRA (Woodworth, 2007; Jones and Libicki, 2008) and after a decade under *la vía policial*, for every period of growth, and addition of new activist, the Spanish state was able to cut ETA down once more (Woodworth, 2007). As SKB describes, the early 2000s saw an intense campaign by ETA, but when the smoke cleared, little had changed “[Y]ou’re battered from all sides, it became necessary to remove the armed struggle as an excuse for the State to hit [the movement] quite so much”. Such an armed campaign, spending its energy rebuilding, hitting back, only to be dismantled again and having to rebuild once more, combined with the fact that the whole of the IA was taking hits on ETA’s behalf, undermined faith in the utility of the armed struggle.

In neither case was military debilitation the sole cause for de-escalation. However, neither was military strength alone sufficient to guarantee that parties to a negotiated agreement would stick around long enough to reach a deal. Thus, not only was military viability an important variable in pushing for a negotiated agreement – neither group could win but neither did either feel itself on the verge of extinction without military leverage -, but it was important as a tool to demonstrate to their respective State's the importance of such negotiations. However, in the case of the Basque Country such a demonstration of force served to amplify the voices of critics of government engagement. A degree of military viability is thus an important, but not sufficient variable for the achievement of a negotiated end to nationalist conflict.

c. Support

Support for the MLNV and the RM and their impact on the presence of a negotiated agreement in the de-escalation process, can be sub-divided into three: support for the organizations themselves, for the projects and goals, and finally for the strategies employed.

Organizationally both the MLNV and the RM enjoyed initially high degrees of support from their constituent communities. Hayes and McAllister (2005) note the inherent difficulty in measuring support for the IRA through the use of surveys, as many respondents are loath to admit support, and such support is “usually contingent upon the particular circumstances at the time” (p. 606). Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) holds that support for both the IRA and ETA, characterized as voting for the affiliated party, or actively providing support for the organizations to be between 20 and 30 percent of the population (p. 301). While hardly insubstantial, it is even greater if one considers the proportion of those who support movement goals but not armed struggle. This support was born both of the perceived embeddedness or indigeneity of the organizations, as well as a sense, particularly early on in the conflict, that the military

organizations protected their community's best interests. In both contexts this support dwindled over time for the military branches of the organizations, while support for their political and social organizations has remained stable. These organizations, particularly the political parties of HB and Sinn Féin, are thus possessed of a degree of legitimacy that lends optimism to their assessment of the viability of negotiations, as they see themselves as representing a real and existing mandate.

Concurrently, the stated goals of the movements and their respectively political projects continue to draw significant support from their publics. Though somewhat reduced from the early stages of the conflict in both cases, support for movement goals and projects remained notable. Just as the legitimacy awarded to the organizations themselves helps improve optimism for negotiations, so too does the support for their projects by reinforcing the belief in the legitimacy of their political project.

Finally, both ETA and the IRA have experienced drops in the support for their military strategies over the course of the conflict. This drop has been most pronounced for ETA, however it is also notable that the post-violence stage of the conflict was reached nearly a decade and a half later than that of Northern Ireland. Potentially, this could allow for changing perceptions of the legitimacy of violence and terrorist tactics to take a greater toll on ETA's already diminishing support of violence. This drop in support for violence may help explain the difference in the importance of the military viability of the organizations alluded to above. Whereas the IRA was able to use continued, and the threat of continued, violence to attempt to prod the British State into pushing forward more quickly with negotiations with the Canary Wharf bombing, a similar attempt by ETA with the Barajas Airport bombing saw the collapse of the ongoing negotiations. At the time of the Canary Wharf bombing, the IRA still maintained a significant degree of support for armed struggle. At the time of Barajas bombing, support for ETA's military strategy was and had slipped. As O'Dochartaigh and Svensson (2013) note, even when both sides can

see that negotiations have faltered, neither one wants to take the public blame for the collapse of the talks. Thus the Spanish state, was able to exit the negotiations more easily by assigning blame to the MLNV (see Chap 2. Engagements). Indeed, Whitfield (2014) makes clear Zapatero's preoccupation with ensuring that should the talks fail, that ETA would be held solely responsible. In the case of the IRA, as Dixon (2012) notes, the parties to the peace process were not operating under the assumption that the IRA was or was about to be defeated, as was arguably the hope for Spain's PP. Thus, for the British, the threat of a return to the previous situation was a weighty one. With less support for the strategy from within its own constituency, blaming the collapse of the talks on ETA was much easier for the Spanish government, which was already under significant pressure not to negotiate with the MLNV from the opposition party.

Accordingly, support for both the movement organizations and political projects are important in improving the optimism and motivation for a negotiated end to conflict by legitimizing both the parties and their aims. Additionally, for the use of the military campaign at a late stage in engagements to help bring about the cementing of the agreement, the military strategy itself must have sufficient support from the community it claims to represent so that the State cannot so easily safe face by assigning blame for the exit of the negotiations to the sub-state parties, knowing that their own constituents are unlikely to be supportive of such a show of force. Had the bomb not caused casualties, as had been intended, the repercussions for the MLNV might not have been so harsh. However, in the context of reduced support for violence, the death of two innocent bystanders was hard for many MLNV supporters to justify, not to mention for those already opposed to negotiations.

d. Alliances

As Klandermas (1992) notes, identifying not only allies but those who oppose as well as those who are indifferent to, the group in question can help better explain the substate group's access to, and ability to mobilise, resources so as to take advantage of moments of opportunity (in Fernandez and Antolín, 2000, p. 156). This concerns allies both political and military, at both the local and international levels. At the local level, alliances with other nationalist parties were facilitated in both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country by the differing demographic pools of SF and HB as opposed to the more moderate, upper middle-class SDLP and PNV (MORI June 24-28, 1984; FOESSA 1981; Linz 1986 in Irvin 1999, p. 126). As such, once other conditions aligned more suitably, alliances were not prevented by competition from voters.

Though both movements sought local electoral coalitions at various points, Alonso (2004) argues that the shifts towards broad nationalist coalitions prior to attempts at negotiations with the State in the republican/nationalist and Basque nationalist communities were qualitatively different. Whereas republicans moved towards the SDLP's more constitutionalist stance, the PNV moved away from constitutionalism toward the more traditional radical Basque nationalist solution of seeking greater Basque self-determination, largely beyond the state. However, for all that the PNV moved away from an acceptance of the existing constitutional order, as evidenced, he notes, by the sovereigntist turn of the Ibarretxe Proposal (Alonso, 2004), while this most certainly has impacted the shape of negotiations, it arguably did not distance the possibility of initiating a productive negotiation process with the State. Certainly, it would have made a more state normative agreement – in the sense of reinforcing the state positions - more difficult to achieve. That being said, removing preference for the particular shape of the negotiated agreement from consideration, the creation of a nationalist front can be examined for its

potential importance in facilitating political engagement between the State and Basque nationalism in all its forms.

At the international level, as Owen (2002) reminds, nations, particularly large ones “do not like calling for outside intervention, whether diplomatic or military, to help in dealing with conflict within their own sphere of influence, let alone within their own sovereign boundaries” (p. 25). Despite this, the importance of international allies and support can be important for the resolution of a conflict: “negotiating with freedom fighters/terrorists or paramilitaries can be helped by having other powerful nations supporting one’s diplomacy, not just by bringing to bear international diplomatic pressure, but also for domestic political reasons, to help overcome the criticism that merely talking to such people who hold and use arms is condoning violence” (Owen, 2002, p.37); criticism that, as Woodworth (2007), Casanova, (2007), and Whitfield (2014) note, were particularly strident in the Basque Country around the Loiola Process. Further, outlining the political moves –both symbolic and in terms of commitment of time and resources – Owen (2002) suggests that the positive involvement of the United States in the Northern Irish peace process provides support for the notion that “when the parties and governments most closely involved cannot agree then internationalization with an impartial body drawn from outside nations can sometimes break the deadlock” (p.40). The implementation of an International Body on Decommissioning provided a means of moving forward with talks without either ignoring the question of decommissioning or allowing it to bog the process down.

While both movements attempted to recruit such international backing to complement the local, the RM was considerably more successful. As Dixon (2007) discusses of the pan-nationalist front in Northern Ireland (which sought to include the United States), the cohesive front, even just the belief in

it, was important for bringing republicans unsure of a wholly political strategy into negotiations, as well as keeping them engaged. Whitfield argues that “even when formal international involvement is not possible, international actors can fulfill a variety of useful functions” (p.14) from facilitation, verification, or even providing neutral spaces in which to proceed with meetings. The creation of a unified front, regardless of its constitutional stance, gives members at the more radical end of the nationalist spectrum assurance that they are not alone and thus a more viable position from which to engage with the State, thereby improving optimism for negotiation. Further, the inclusion of such allies as the electorally viable SDLP, as well as the weight of the Irish and American governments all contributed to the Republican Movement’s motivation through their encouragement of the pursuit of a negotiated resolution (Pruitt, 2007).

In the Basque Country, the alliance did not unfold as neatly. The nationalist block lacked any external allies that might have given an encouraging weight to their voice and helped build optimism for negotiations even further, as well as add emphasis to calls for engagement and thereby contribute to the MLNV’s motivation. The potential of the nationalist front was sufficient for the MLNV to push for negotiations at the time of the Lizarra-Garazi Treaty. However, the resultant failure and the sense that the PNV had not held to its end of the bargain, has undermined MLNV faith in the potential for such an alliance to provide sufficient weight to its demands so as to effectively pressure the State. While the RM sought, and the British government accepted and increasingly encouraged, international involvement in the Northern Irish conflict, similar efforts by the MLNV were more often rebuffed, or kept to a minimum by the Spanish state which saw the conflict as an internal one. Thus the motivation and optimism these alliances were able to offer the Republican Movement were largely absent for the MLNV.

Part Two: State Responses

a. Institutions

For both the RM and the MLNV, the root causes of their conflict with their respective host states, could be in large part traced back to the institutional framework in which they sought to exercise their movement goals. Not only this, but many of the grievances of both movements were further tied to the institutional structures of their respective states. Thus, as Sederberg (1995) iterates, it is important for the lasting viability of any negotiated agreement, that it is seen by the participants as addressing the root causes of the conflicts, and not simply its consequences. Any negotiations that sought to address the consequences – such as amnesty for prisoners – would arguably fail at preventing the resurgence of the conflict. Notably, this was sentiment strongly echoed by respondents from both the RM and MLNV. For example, while the Spanish state was able to negotiate the dissolution of ETAp^m with concessions that focused largely on the granting of amnesty and release for exiles and prisoners, it failed to make any structural adjustments, and thus ETAm remained unimpressed.

Various authors noted the importance that the GFA addressed many of the outstanding grievances of the republican community. Of further import is that, as SF2 explains, the changes to the institutional structure of Northern Ireland and the increased institutional connectivity with the Republic of Ireland meant that, for many republicans, the GFA dealt with not just the consequences of the conflict (such as prisoners) but the causes as well. This idea of addressing the causes as well as the consequences was one further addressed by the MLNV, who given their secessionist aims (see Institutions, Concessions, and Target Framing) clearly see the institutional framework of Spain as one of the primary and underlying causes of the conflict. While the Statute of Autonomy has done much to address these institutions as the root causes of conflict, for the MLNV they remain significant obstacles.

That existing institutional arrangements prevented the achievement of movement goals (for example the centrality of unity to the Spanish constitution), offered motivation for both the MLNV and RM to pursue some form of negotiation. That the Statute of Autonomy for the Basque Country had loosened some – but hardly all – the restraints on the exercise of Basque autonomy, was nonetheless deemed insufficient as the failure to recognize the right of the region to self-determination was viewed as a roadblock insurmountable from within the existing institutions. Thus, that the Statute of Autonomy had been negotiated provided optimism that some greater changes might be reached through extra-institutional means. Concurrently, the centrality of unity to the Spanish institutional framework and the continuity of ideology and leadership from the Franco era reinforced the need for the MLNV to bring about the sought changes by force, and delegitimized the institutions as a means of pursuing their goals. That many of those concessions and competencies awarded to the Autonomous Community with the Statute remained undeveloped further delegitimized the possibility of pursuing its goals through existing institutions; a position to which the PNV would move closer by the end of the 1990s.

Thus, while in the Basque Country the institutional framework which was considered stagnant increased motivation for negotiation as a means of achieving its goals, it also significantly dampened optimism for this same result. In contrast, the increased willingness of the British state to consider the participation and involvement of the Irish Government in the affairs of Northern Ireland suggested to the RM that though institutional problems remained, there was a greater possibility that institutional changes to Northern Ireland could be negotiated with the British government, thereby increasing both its optimism and motivation for negotiation.

b. Engagements

As Kim and Pruitt (2004) note, conflict resolution processes are rarely linear (in Pruitt, 2007). What is more, they are very much a *process*, a series of engagements, based not just on a willingness to be present in a room with representatives of one's adversaries (this is neither always necessary, nor always helpful), but a willingness to *dialogue*. Given the association of armed groups with terrorism, the notion of 'talking', let alone 'dialoguing' with terrorists, is not one easily manoeuvred by States. This question of "talking to terrorists" the legitimacy it implies, raises further concerns. As Whitfield (2015) points out 'talking' is not the same as negotiating; a point vehemently echoed by the MLNV. The Spanish state's reticence to engage, Whitfield (2015) notes "confirms the value of engagement and dialogue at multiple levels. Indeed, it suggests that more rather than less engagement with ETA... would have been desirable, perhaps especially during its period of greatest isolation under the Aznar government... The issue, is not whether contacts with an illegal armed group are desirable but how, when, and what end they should be pursued" (p.13). With respect to Northern Ireland, Craig (2012) holds "[s]ecret talks, however formulated, were an essential part of changing the mode of communication as it was hoped that they would give political focus to groups that were otherwise seeking their goals through the use of paramilitary violence and terrorism" (p. 111).

The reticence of State governments to grant the legitimacy implied by engaging with a sub-state group is an obstacle for the State. The question of the legitimacy awarded through the undertaking of negotiations, is a legitimization that States largely seek to avoid. Labelling a conflict a 'war' potentially awards combatants a privileged political status: hence the policy of criminalization under Prime Minister Thatcher. Even when states are made to go beyond policing efforts and mobilize their armies – such as in Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland or Columbia - Zartman and Faure (2011) note "[r]ecognition of an armed

conflict both elevates the problem above internal security that can be appropriately handled by national actors and triggers the application of international humanitarian law. At a political level, it also vests a degree of legitimacy on the opponent, suggesting an equivalence that might open the door to negotiation” (in Whitfield, 2015, p. 3). As Clark (1990) explains, the “two-track approach offers a way around the unwillingness or inability of...officials to negotiated ‘political’ issues directly with terrorists” (p. 498). This can be facilitated by the inclusion of a political party with an existing electoral mandate (such as SF or HB) or made all the more palatable for the State if this is part of a coalition – as was the case during the lead up to, and during the talks, of the GFA. When the State has spent years suggesting that the political party and paramilitary group are none and the same – as was the case in Spain throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, - it again becomes difficult for the state to engage without risking a loss of face.

For the RM, the British State’s gradually ameliorating relationship with the ROI, along with conciliatory gestures such as those of Brooke’s public statements, helped build republican optimism that the State was interested in more than just ‘talking’. Contrarily, the Spanish state’s perceived fixation on solely discussing the dissolution of ETA, and as the Spanish Minister of the Interior stated “politically give them nothing” (Whitfield, 2015, p. 8) decreased the MLNV’s optimism that negotiations were a viable avenue for the pursuit of their goals.

The difficulty of getting a party to the table is one applicable not just to the sub-state group, but a difficulty that the governing party may face with existing state parties. While the Northern Irish peace process had support across party lines in the House of Commons as well as in the British public (Woodworth, 2007), not only has such cross- party support not characterized the attitude of the Spanish

governing parties, but such support has also been absent in the broader Spanish public (Woodworth, 2007; Whitfield, 2015; Target Framing). Neumann (2007) notes that although ETA held its 2006 ceasefire, the pressure the governing party was under from the opposition PP to demand full demobilization (if not to demand a cessation of talks altogether) put the PSOE in “a near-impossible position” (135). With the PP not only not on board with negotiations, but actively seeking to prevent them in favour of a military solution, ETA eventually broke the ceasefire for the process’s lack of progress. During the GFA talks, though Paisley led the DUP out of talks when SF was admitted, Pruitt (2007) notes that there remained sufficient unionist voice through the UUP and loyalist affiliated parties to reach an agreement. However, it must be acknowledged that the DUP’s lack of commitment to an agreement to which they did not sign up, would be a source of significant political tension in Northern Ireland for years after. Only with the St. Andrew’s Agreement of 2006 and the Hillsborough Agreement of 2010 was the DUP – by then the largest unionist party – brought fully on board. That the DUP was unarmed and unionist voices were still represented in the GFA talks allowed for the talks to continue in their absence. Even so, they had to be brought back on board for the functioning of Northern Irish politics. As Neumann (2007) notes of the PP’s reticence to dialogue in the early 2000s, talks that are non-inclusive run the risk of appearing illegitimate, as the GFA did to the DUP. That the British state was largely, and demonstrably willing to push more reticent parties to participate in the talks, further improved Republican optimism – particularly considering the role of unionist discontent in the collapse of the SA. Contrarily, even when elements of the Spanish government, most frequently the PSOE, were willing to undertake negotiations, the government were unable to deliver those opposed – particularly the PP – to a supporting position, thereby decreasing MLNV faith in the potential to reach a negotiated agreement.

The creation of meaningful engagement, Whitfield (2015) argues is important to facilitate the moves of a group away from violence by aiding in its ability to do so without losing face. This is not a process she argues, that ceases once a group has made a commitment to strategic change, such as the 2011 Aiete Declaration (Whitfield, 2015). Dixon (2006) suggests as “tendentious and distorted” the logic that “bad behaviour (talking to the IRA in 1972) leads to increased violence. Good behaviour (talking to the IRA when they have been defeated in the early 1990s) reaps its just reward: peace” (p.309). He further argues that the

‘defeat’ claim is important to neo-conservatives in order to reject the efficacy of politics, diplomacy, negotiation, compromise, ‘soft power’ and moral ‘greyness’ in favour of ‘hard power’ and ‘dirty war’. Terrorist should only be talked to when they have been defeated. The state then adopts an uncompromising ‘negotiating’ stance in which moral clarity lead to the establishment of clear ‘red lines’ and a ‘robust insistence on democratic norms’ (Dixon, 2006, p. 312).

The ability of the State to act with a degree of unity is an important in the sub-state movement’s assessment of the viability of the State as a negotiation partner, and thus its optimism in negotiations.

Both the RM and the MLNV have significant histories of engagement over the course of their conflicts with their respective states. However, this history demonstrated to the RM that, when so disposed, the State would engage in meaningful negotiations of republican concerns, and increasingly that they demonstrated a willingness to follow through on those commitments in the face of unionist opposition, increased republican optimism for negotiations. Contrarily, the history of engagement largely demonstrated to the MLNV that the Spanish state was not interested in dialogue, only ETA’s dissolution, that any agreements reached are unlikely to be maintained in the face of opposition, and finally that any concessions gained would not be implemented in accordance with agreements (see Concessions). As such, the MLNV increasingly lost faith in the Spanish state as a credible partner in negotiations.

c. Concessions

Prior to any parties sitting down to the conflict, as Kim and Pruitt (2004) explain, the offering of small – often symbolic – reciprocated conciliatory gestures can lead to escalating confidence in the feasibility of a negotiated way out of conflict (in Pruitt, 2007). However, as discussed in Engagements, the idea of “talking” to terrorists, is not one easily swallowed by the State, particularly following longstanding policies concentrating on military and policing approaches to the conflict. Nonetheless, such moves were very much in evidence by the British state towards the end of the 1980s. Public admissions that if the IRA “weren’t around” that there might be talks, that the State itself had no vested interest in preventing republican goals if democratically achieved, contrast sharply with the public statements by the Spanish state to “give them nothing” politically.

When divided in to ‘political’ and ‘technical’ negotiating streams, addressing a group’s grievance agenda (as MacGinty, 2006, phrases it) can allow for the stabilization of the negotiations. In this way progress on more technical issues such as prisoner releases, can be used to demonstrate the ongoing viability of the negotiations in the face of often more difficult “political” issues. Further, it provides the sub-state group with something to show their constituents as proof of the viability of such negotiations, provided negotiations do not appear to be limited to just that. Discussions during negotiations will inevitably deal with questions of demobilization and prisoner release. As discussed in Engagements, calling for the sub-state group’s disarmament prior to an agreement is likely to cause engagements to stall out, thus some authors (Neumann 2007) suggest the importance of leaving such discussions to the negotiation process itself – specifically secondary track negotiations. The granting of what are oftentimes politically painful concessions can be key for the achievement of a negotiated agreement and subsequent stability. It has been argued that the effect of a state granting of concessions is to demonstrate to terrorist groups the effectiveness of violence (Brandt and Sandler 2009 in Gaibullov and Sandler, 2013, p. 777). Despite the

potential political headache of accusations of negotiations with terrorists, or letting murderers go free, prisoner and amnesty related matters can be a crucial instrument in the state's negotiation arsenal. The release of political prisoners Owen (2002) recounts "[was an essential element in the Northern Ireland peace settlement. It was arguably whether it was necessary for there to be a wholesale release but at least this was tempered by the provision that the prisoners were only released on license and it was essential to see Peter Mandelson [Secretary of State for Northern Ireland 1999-2001] start to revoke those licences when faced by obvious breaches" (p. 29).

This is a point about which respondents themselves were well aware. As was discussed by respondents from both the RM and MLNV (see Tactics Ch.2 and Ch.3) their respective states were well aware of the importance of such matters and sought to use prisoner rights and amnesty programs both to pressure (criminalization in Northern Ireland in the 1980s, dispersion in Euskadi, increased sentences for street violence or attempts to lengthen existing sentences for *etarras*) as well as to encourage participation in negotiation and as part of a negotiated concession (prisoner release schemes in Northern Ireland as part of the GFA, *Transición* era and ETApm focussed amnesty agreements in the 1970s and 1980s). Thus Neumann (2007) argues that such concessions are important to the State as they "strengthen the hand of the politically minded members of the terrorists group and remove a pretext for dissidents to justify returning to violence. They also provide a strong incentive for the terrorists to give ground on primary-track issues" (p. 136). It is a usefulness of which sub-state groups are well aware. As McLoughlin (*BBC News* 4 May, 2011) and I1 noted, republican prisoners, while desirous of release programs, were nervous about being used to extract concessions, as the RM was adamant that while prisoner and prisoner rights were important, the 'causes' of the conflict had to be addressed in negotiations, not just the 'consequences'. Both sets of respondents made clear a sense that for all the importance of prisoner and amnesty issues, if negotiations failed to address the underlying issues, the jails would once more be

filled with republicans and *abertzales* fairly quickly. This had demonstrably been the case following Suárez's amnesty decrees in the 1970s (Casanova, 2007).

Further, Senator Mitchell (2002) highlights the importance of compromise in any serious negotiation aimed at the resolution of conflict: "[p]eace and political stability cannot be achieved in sharply divided societies unless there is a genuine willingness to understand the other point of view and enter into principled compromise" (p. 93). While such a willingness was clearly demonstrated by the British state, to an increasing degree, from the late 1980s onward, Spain has largely held to an uncompromising posture, allowing occasional concessions on primarily technical, rather than substantive issues. In all the British state has shown itself to be more willing to consider discussing, and conceding to republican demands, and just as importantly, addressing republican grievances, than has its Spanish counterpart to the MLNV. This willingness to consider, to take a more conciliatory public stance, demonstrated over time and particularly since the late 1980s, as well as to acknowledge the political nature of the sub-state groups goals and grievances, has made the British state appear a viable partner for negotiations, while the MLNV continued to perceive the Spanish state as not only uncompromising but hostile, and thus unsuitable as partner for meaningful negotiations.

d. Tactics

Successive governments in both Great Britain and Spain sought to make use of policing and military means to end the conflicts within their territories. Further, both undertook tactical changes to highlight the 'criminal' nature of the acts committed by the RM and MLNV, disregarding the political nature of the movement aims and grievances. States should not be faulted for seeking to eliminate acts of violence within their borders, and both Spain and Great Britain's policing and military tactics managed to

significantly curtail such violence within their state, though they were unable to eliminate them. Yet by failing to acknowledge the political nature of the conflict, the States' all but ensured the continuation of the conflict. In his analysis of the economic impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism policies in the Basque Country, Pestana (2003) is critical of the prominence of hardline counter-terrorism policies. As he concludes "[p]olicy should be focused on deterrence and political issues... the hardline political oriented policy should be abandoned, since it is fruitless after all these years... Banning political avenues or protest action is likely to increase terrorism" (p.42). While this position shifted in the 1980s for Great Britain, it was a position consistently reinforced under successive Spanish governments. As discussed in Engagements, even those administrations more open to the idea of talks with the MLNV, were more interested in discussing the dissolution of ETA than engaging on the MLNV's concerns.

The notion of addressing the concerns of "terrorists" is not one easily grappled by the state. After all, any state would be unwilling to set a precedent that suggested any group that could cause such violence would have a say in running the state. Thus, states must walk a fine line between funnelling such grievances away from violent means, and not encouraging further terrorist actions. Thus as Neumann (2007) suggests, the requirement of a commitment to a ceasefire is an important marker for the state. However, there is a difference in demanding a ceasefire and a demanding a group's ceasefire take the form of its disarmament or dissolution. The timelines for peace processes and steps taken are not always linear and sequential: "political discussions aimed at reaching agreed constitutional and political structures sometimes start while violence is still prevalent, or follow the declaration of a ceasefire. A common sticking point is an insistence on pre-conditions – insistence on abjuration of violence or decommissioning, or the inclusion of certain parties in the negotiation process" (Darby and MacGinty 2000, p.14). Clark (1990) notes "[n]egotiations should *precede* not follow, the termination of conflict" (p. 497). For the sub-state group violence is often their only significant leverage against the state. As Clark

(1990) explains, “numerous ETA strategists have pointed out [that] the only thing they have to offer at the bargaining table is their ability to turn off the violence. If they have already played that card before the game even begins, Madrid has no incentive to negotiation in good faith” (p. 497).

Relatedly, state and sub-state groups alike must manage their commitment to any engagement, as the way in which any such engagement breaks down, may have repercussions for their subsequent political viability and support. Clark (1990) notes that “by stating that an armed attack will cause the suspension of talks, one gives the anti-truce forces the power to block negotiations simply by committing that act” (p.494) or even frustrating the other party into doing so. Such anti-truce forces are not uncommon on both sides of any given conflict. As demonstrated with the failure of the 1975 ceasefire in Northern Ireland, though talks had failed much earlier, by waiting for the IRA to take action, the British government was able to shift responsibility for the failure onto the Republican Movement. Perhaps not dissimilarly, in the face of months of stagnated talks during the Loiola process, following ETA’s bombing of Madrid’s Barajas airport when ETA nonetheless remained engaged in the process for several months, the Zapatero government eventually used the event as justification for a “broad consensus that ETA could never again be trusted to abide by a cease-fire and that no further negotiations would be pursued” (Whitfield, 2015, p. 8) thus absolving the state of any responsibility for the collapse of the talks, and further justifying *la vía policial*.

Thus while the tactics of both the Spanish and British states were long characterized by a focus on Britain’s ‘dirty war’ or Spain’s ‘*la vía policial*’, that the British state increasingly acknowledged the political nature of the conflict, created a greater sense of the viability of the State as a negotiation

partner. A similar tactical shift does not appear to have occurred in Spain, and the State, remains for the MLNV an unwilling and ineffective partner in meaningful negotiations.

Part Three: Leadership

a. Target Framing

While the explanation and analysis of the cause of conflict and the factors leading to group mobilization in either of the conflicts in question are not of priority to this project, an understanding of how each movement frames its goals and targets, and interprets the nature of its conflict are important for understanding the strategies – and changes therein – each movement has taken in the pursuit of the movement’s goals. This is particularly important as Guigni (1998) explains, as such framings may change in substance and priority over the course of a conflict.

While some, such as Patterson (2001) see republicanism’s acceptance of the GFA as a victory only in the sense that its leadership had managed to convince its base that its surrender was in fact a victory, others, such as Todd (1999) acknowledge a less static understanding of target framing. Unlike Alonso (2004), Todd (1999) holds that Provisionalism “has not been transformed into constitutional nationalism, but rather that Sinn Féin leadership has extended the “Ideological repertoire” of republicanism by subordinating traditional long term goals, which are unachievable in the immediate term, to a more practical agenda of “radical egalitarian democratic transformist principles” (in Bean, 2007, p. 139). However, it must be noted that this does reflect a scaling down from the maximalist agenda espoused by the movement over the course of the Troubles. The MLNV’s move toward *unilateralidad* can be described in similar fashion.

While the MLNV and the RM maintain key goals of independence and social justice as primary to the movements, both have undergone a shift over time as to what the achievement of these goals would look like. Bean (2007) summarizes the change in republican perspectives as the “new nationalist paradigm can clearly be discerned in the pluralist and nuanced assessment of Britain’s role in Northern Ireland and the redefinition of the nature of unionism in terms of multiple national identities within a contested political space” (p. 138). In this vein, Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland [1992-7] “rejected triumphalist claims of victory and defeat, ‘There is no victory and no defeat. This military language is out of place. What is needed is the language of trust’ (Irish Times, 21 Spt. 1995 in Dixon 2012).

These shifts were intimately related to the movements’ understandings of their primary adversary. Both the MLNV and RM have long understood their respective host states to be both the cause of the conflict and the obstacle to the achievement of their aims. However, over time and following changes in British policy that saw closer cooperation with the Irish state, along with a series of symbolic conciliatory gestures beginning in the late 1980s, the RM came to see the British state in a slightly different light. In contrast to the focus of the Spanish national identity on unity, Northern Ireland was much less intrinsic to the broader British narrative. With Brooke’s statement on Britain’s lack of selfish interest in Northern Ireland, along with the Downing Street Declaration, Woodworth (2007) argues that the British demonstrated that they “no longer considered a few relatively impoverished and very troublesome counties on another island a contributor to their wellbeing or a core part of their identity” (p.66). Though the RM is still largely unprepared to accept the British state as neutral, in part due to the abovementioned conciliatory gestures, as well as Adams discussions with Hume and other nationalist actors, the RM was increasingly willing to accept that the British state was not as invested in maintaining

the status quo as was once thought. With this shift, the Northern Irish institutional framework became increasingly appealing if only it could be reformed.

Contrarily, the shift undergone over the course of the conflict on the part of the MLNV, is not reflective of such a potentially positive scenario. Rather, over time and successive interactions with the Spanish state, the MLNV has come to hold the Spanish state to be so deeply unwilling to countenance the idea of nationalist aspirations as to be practically unable to engage with them in any meaningful fashion at a negotiating table. Thus, as the respondents discussed, the MLNV has begun to try and build, *de facto*, the Euskal Herria to which they aspire from within the state.

Thus, while the shift in the understanding of its adversary motivated and increased the Republican Movement's optimism in the viability of negotiating a new framework through which they could pursue their goals, the same cannot be said of the MLNV. Rather, as subsequent interactions appeared to confirm the immovability of the Spanish state on MLNV aspirations, optimism for a positive outcome in negotiations dissipated. Instead, the MLNV and its allies in the broader IA and Basque nationalist community more generally, increasingly seek to by-pass the State altogether.

b. Organisational Structure

Social movements, as Rascheke (1994) notes, are more than just those organizations which function within it, nor are they defined by their organizational structure (p. 126 in Fernandez and Antolín, 2000, p. 155). Kriesi (1996) introduces jointly characteristics of formalization and professionalism as indicators of internal differentiation (in Fernandez and Antolín, 2000, p. 156). However, Friedberg (1992) points

to the existence of both formal and informal rules as cause to rethink a strict dichotomization of formalization and professionalism in favour of a continuum (in Fernandez and Antolín, 2000, p. 156).

However, even when more formally structured, they nonetheless tend to “have flattened hierarchies to be nimble and loosely coupled” (Comas et.al., 2015, p. 49).

Accordingly, organizational structure can have a direct impact on the military viability of a group’s paramilitary wing. Heger, et al. (2012) demonstrate the increased potential for the lethality of attacks under centralized and hierarchical organizational structures. However, lethality was not always the goal of the IRA and ETA attacks. As ETA1 explains, *etarras* were often given the responsibility of minimizing unintended casualties, noting that very often bomb threats were called in to allow for the evacuation of an area. As Heger, et al. (2012) explain “this is significant in the sense that ETA was able to coordinate attacks in such a way against transportation hubs and infrastructure that they did influence policy without hurting civilians. The change in using violence to destroy infrastructure, rather than kill individuals, demonstrates both the effect of hierarchical accountability and agenda-setting” (p. 761). Casanova (2007) notes that this was even the case in one of ETA’s most deadly attacks - the Hipercor bombing of 1988 – though the warnings went unheeded. That is not to suggest by any stretch that either group is not responsible for civilian injuries or deaths. Rather, the organizations were not always served by the lethality of the attacks by number of victims, as much as displays of force of the removal of specific targets. Thus lethality is an imperfect measure of the effectiveness of IRA and ETA operations. However, the *potential* for lethality demonstrated the potential effectiveness of the group – while perhaps not necessary of military effectiveness depending on aim or context, the existence of such structures are indicative of a depth of capacity that speaks to military viability. Such lethality was amplified due to the hierarchical nature of ETA in the early 80s which allowed for a structured and rigorous vetting process for new *etarras* (Clark 1984; Heger et al. 2012, p. 762). However, frequent

arrests and high turnover rates served to undermine the establishment of any permanent structures. As Whitfield (2015) and the respondents make clear, leadership structures in the MLNV were of a much more horizontal nature. Recognizing the often organizationally fluid nature of terrorist groups from formal organization, network and or social movement is important, Comas et.al. (2015) note because it highlights that “goals and means are continually in a state of flux” (p. 49) as well as the necessity of adaptability of structures and accountability in response to often changing mission parameters” (p. 49).

In their analysis of the fractured nature, yet continued persistence of anti-GFA republican groups, Frenett and Smith (2012) note such fragmentation impedes political negotiations as there is no central leadership or set of goals to engage, and any who disagree, rather than being pulled along with the process are more likely simply to abandon ship to another group, leaving any agreed resolution a hollowed and flimsy shell – much like the Sunningdale Agreement. Thus a degree of structure facilitates major shifts in strategy. As networks, terror groups are “diverse self-managed and self-controlled teams networked with multiple coordination centers” (Boje et.al. 1996 as cited in Comas et.al. 2015, p. 49) which “fold and unfold according to the requirements of the talks. They are temporary and lack the hierarchy, with members empowered and involved in getting the job done” (Comas et.al. 2015, p. 49).

Both the IRA and ETA sought to make use of cellular structures with a coordinating leadership body. However, the ‘control’ exercised over the cells in both organisations was not absolute. While Republican leadership fought to retain control of the IRA, conceding to the Canary Wharf bombing, the MLNV’s political party was caught unawares by the bombing of Barajas airport. Accordingly, Woodworth (2007) notes “the evident disjuncture between ETA and Batasuna leadership... contrasts with the synchronicity of the IRA and Sinn Féin” (p. 67). In the case of the IRA, a longstanding leadership worked

carefully to attempt to placate dissenting voices unprepared for an abandonment of the armed struggle – going so far as to agree to a breach of the 1994 ceasefire. While this helped pull a large portion of the dissenting voices back in line with the leadership’s strategy, a number of militants – including longstanding activists and chief bomb makers – chose to break off and continue armed struggle. In the case of the MLNV, like the IRA, ETA was less prepared to renounce the armed campaign than its political counterpart. However, given repeated damaging blows to its leadership, there arguably existed fewer longstanding factions within the organization than there did in the IRA – such as those of Ó’Brádaigh and the Real IRA. As such, the willingness to accept the change in strategy had to come, to a greater extent, from within the organization base, as there was less of a ‘steady hand’ attempting to steer the strategy. While this arguably prolonged the acceptance of the strategy within the militant base, it also helped assure that once the decision was taken, there has been no splintering or return to armed struggle.

Within the political branches of the respective movements, both organizations are characterised by a degree of collegiality within the confines of established decision making structures. Given the institutional parameters in which they must operate, both SF and HB and its successors are possessed of a more formal organizational structure than their clandestine counterparts. However, just as with their paramilitary counterparts, the MLNV organization has been less able to avail itself to a long term leadership than has SF. Yet, similarly to the implications of ETA’s lack of leadership, a lack of a strong leadership hand meant that any strategic changes of note, likely had to have percolated within the movement and its base for some time before being enacted – thus both slowing down the process, and enabling a greater degree of commitment to strategic changes.

Finally, as discussed in both Political Viability and Support, both movements were able to draw support from their constituent communities. This has meant that while each organization has at times been slow

to react, they are required to respond to the desires of the communities in which they are embedded if they wish to maintain any political or military viability. In both cases, the bulk of their communities appear to have been less radicalized than the organizational activists and militants, and have thus helped push the organizations away from militarized versions of the conflict through both their support for political organizations, and particularly in the Basque Country, growing intolerance for violent action.

c. Fragmentation/Cohesion

Organizational structure and dynamics of fragmentation and cohesion are unquestionably intimately linked. While significant differences in both ideology and strategy contributed to the early highly fragmented nature of the MLNV, strategy – more often than not – was the leading cause of the fewer, though arguable more lasting, splinters that appeared within the RM over the course of the conflict. As the MLNV was able to pare down factionalism early on by shedding those who disagreed with it, by the mid-1980s both ETA and HB were possessed of a high degree of cohesion that would largely be maintained up until the time of writing.

As understood by the MLNV, this cohesion is due largely to the embedded nature of its organizations and its organizational structure, which while possessed of hierarchical substructures, has largely functioned as coordinating leadership more so than exercising strict decision making functions. This can be contrasted with the structures of the IRA and Sinn Féin. While the IRA maintained a backbone of central authority, tensions existed between practice and intent, as particularly outside of the larger strongholds, the IRA was often characterized of a relatively independent cellular structure. Thus the leaderships, while it attempted to exercise control over its pieces, was not always able to do so in practice. That SF has maintained deep roots within its community and continued to make use of public

discussions and citizen involvement in its decision making structures, the overlapping leadership with that of the IRA – wherein again, control was often nominal – meant that SF was strategically beholden to the same possibilities of dissent and splintering as the IRA.

Furthermore, while the RM was under largely the same leadership from the late 1970s onward, frequent and pervasive turnover in leadership meant that the MLNV could not come to rely on any individual or group of individuals to function long term to ‘control’ the movement. As Zirakzadeh (2002) notes, unlike Sendero Luminoso, ETA for all that it has respected figures, did not have a long term charismatic leader making decisions as to the movement’s future. While the RM benefited from the buildup of knowledge, experience and trust of, and in, its leadership, this also meant that the republican leadership was more likely than that of the MLNV to be ‘leading from the front’. Given that the MLNV largely functioned with a highly fluctuating leadership, as the respondents outline – ideas largely came from within the movement and its activists. ETA2 is very succinct on this point: “It is true that there was a group leading the way down this path but I believe it was more the process itself, that it was not individuals but the *izquierda abertzale* itself was there, all of us”. Thus, while this undoubtedly slowed down any possibility of changes in strategy – consider S1’s analogy of needing to steer a large tanker - it also meant that there was less risk of significant strategic changes leading to a splinter in the movement. Thus, the MLNV, once a course correction had sufficiently permeated the movement, can more likely be relied on to commit to a strategy. Contrarily, even during the negotiations around the GFA, the Adams’ leadership was acutely aware of the disquiet within the movement ranks about the negotiation strategy, arguably requiring a demonstration of their willingness to return to armed struggle to convince much of the movement to get on board with the strategy. Even, then, as noted, a portion of the membership splintered and has remained an issue for stability in Northern Ireland for more than a decade and a half after the agreement itself was signed. Thus the organizational structure and the corresponding ability of

the movement organizations to maintain cohesion have notable implications for both the pace and the durability of any significant shift in movement strategies.

d. Learning Processes

In conflicts that have run for decades – such as the two examined here, it is not unexpected that the participants should seek to apply lessons learnt from other conflicts, and even from their own. Such was the case for both the RM and the MLNV. Both movements made use of experience born from their own interactions with their target state to re-evaluate and re-engage. As SF2 notes, the growth in negotiation and leadership skills accumulated by the leadership was “learnt on the job”. S1 reminds that “I believe that yes, we learnt a lot as a collective “. For SKB, in the MLNV, every interaction with the State imparted some new information. However, arguably the RM was organizationally better equipped to capitalize on this learnt experience. Whereas successive top negotiators and leaders in the MLNV were frequently forcibly removed from involvement – through arrest, exile or death- the RM was able to benefit from the growing experience of a consistent core leadership. This may help to account for the movement’s adoption of a more nuanced understanding of the conflict earlier on than the MLNV

Further, both the RM and the MLNV have attempted to apply lessons from other conflicts to their own. Notably, the RM made use of the experience of allies within the ANC to facilitate the building of support for the move away from armed conflict. The MLNV, Esser and Bridges (2011) as well as Whitfield (2015) note, looked to the peace process in Northern Ireland for inspiration. As SE noted ““we studied the Irish process; we studied the process in South Africa. [...] there is a whole methodology to conflict resolution. [...] a series of protocols, internationally accepted for dialogue process, a mediation process. We studied them and tried to apply them.” However, Alonso (2004) argues that the MLNV interpretation of the

Northern Irish peace process and subsequent lessons learnt, to be flawed. Their interpretation, he argues, was based on a pair of erroneous assumptions: that “a pan-nationalist front offered the republican movement... an alternative through which they could achieve their objectives and compensate for the weakness evidenced in their electoral and social support”, and that “cessation of violence was a direct consequence of the British and Irish government’s recognition of the right to self-determination” (Alonso 2004; 696).

However, this notion is largely prefaced on an interpretation of the GFA which sees the republicans as renouncing their core goals. This is not an uncommon interpretation of the GFA. A great deal of literature has been devoted to determining the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of an admittedly often ambiguous agreement. As I1 notes, for republicans, an important point is that the GFA is seen as an agreement, not a settlement: a stepping stone for the wholly peaceful pursuit of the movement’s goals. SF2 further highlighted the legislative recognition- rather than simply publicly stated British recognition – of the right of Northern Ireland to self-determination, and most importantly, a mechanism through which this right may be exercised (see Target Framing Ch. 3). Accordingly, such zero- sum explanations focused on winners and losers fail to illustrate the complexity of these resolution processes. As Dixon (2012) explains: “The peace process also indicates the potential for radical shifts away from violence by paramilitary organisations that were portrayed as ideological fundamentalist, criminals and psychopaths. In Northern Ireland provisional Irish republicans pursue their ideological goals but no longer through violence. They have ended their ‘armed struggle’ but not their ideological commitment to a united Ireland” (p. 306)

Part Four: Summary of Empirical Cases Comparison

Based on the accounts detailed above, resources, state responses and leadership structures all interacted within the studied sub-state nationalist movements to condition the shape of the de-escalation processes they experienced.

In this way, both movements' political branches had notable political viability that was likely to benefit from a process of de-escalation. The existing political viability gave both the Republican Movement and the MLNV optimism that their mandate would give weight to their demands in negotiations with their respective states. Given the dual political-military strategies of the movements in question, assessments of the political viability simultaneously interacted with those of the military viability of the movement. Though ETA was weakened and the IRA infiltrated, both remained sufficiently viable organizations to continue their campaign, but insufficiently viable to 'win'. Thus in both cases a military stalemate increased motivation for a negotiated agreement. However, while the IRA's strength increased optimism for a positive outcome in negotiations for the RM, the perceived decrease in usefulness of ETA's campaign increased the motivation for de-escalation of the military campaign with or without a negotiated agreement.

These assessments of political and military viability were impacted by each movement's assessment of its support. Both movements enjoyed support for their constituent organizations, goals and projects, which contributed to a sense of a strong mandate which increased optimism for a positive negotiated outcome for both the MLNV and the RM. Yet while both movements saw a decrease in support for their military campaigns, this drop was far more pronounced for ETA, increasing the MLNV's motivation for de-escalation and or negotiation. In the case of the IRA, the scale of continued support for the military

campaign was such that it both increased optimism in a negotiated agreement and simultaneously decreased motivation for de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated agreement.

In addition to the support of their constituents, movement assessments took into account the relational power that was, or could be, developed through the recruitment and mobilization of allies. Existing alliances at both the local and international level both increased the RM's optimism for negotiations by providing an increase in relational power, and an increase in motivation for negotiation through pressure brought to bear on them by those same allies. Comparatively, the absence of such firm allies at both the local and international and local levels meant that similar effects of the MLNV were largely absent. However, the 'potential', as SE phrased it, for new allies in the absence of armed struggle increased movement optimism in negotiations as well as motivation for de-escalation. Thus the interaction of the variables of resources (Political Viability, Military Viability, Support, and Alliances) was such that the RM experienced greater optimism and motivation in favour of negotiating with the state while the MLNV experienced greater motivation for the decision to de-escalate regardless of the presence or absence of a negotiated agreement than did the RM.

As a conflict requires at least two sides, it is critical to consider the role that the responses of the target states had on their respective sub-state movements strategic choices. Notably, that the British state increasingly demonstrated a willingness to discuss the possibility of institutional changes to address what the RM saw as root causes of the conflict increased the perceived viability of the State as a negotiating partner and increased optimism in negotiations. A contrasting lack of willingness of the part of the Spanish state to do so delegitimized the State as a negotiating partner in the eyes of the MLNV and reduced optimism in negotiations. At the same time, the narrative undertones to each state's

institutions played a role in movement assessments. Whereas Great Britain's national narrative of a union of constituent parts allows for a greater acceptance of sub-state nationalism, thereby increasing the State's viability as a negotiating partner and thus optimism for negotiations, Spain's national narrative focus on the unity of State and Nation decreases its viability as a negotiating partner and thus MLNV optimism for negotiations.

Further, the decades of interactions between the State and sub-state nationalist movements was such as to increase the optimism in negotiations experienced by the RM due to the State's increased willingness to engage with the movement on both the perceived causes and consequences of the conflict. This once again contrasts sharply with the MLNV's decrease in optimism brought on by the Spanish state's perceived disinterest in dialogue on anything other than ETA's dissolution. The viability of the British state as a negotiating partner was further impacted by the perception that it was increasingly willing to exercise pressure on unionist and loyalist groups to get on board – and stay on board – with negotiations. Contrarily, the Spanish state, even when seemingly more willing to engage with the MLNV, found itself under intense pressure against such engagement from opposition parties and the Spanish public. The possibility of dealing with a cohesive front increased optimism within the RM while its lack decreased optimism about negotiations for the MLNV. Further, the Spanish state's inflexible stance on decommissioning (combined with changes in assessments of the armed campaign's utility) increased the MLNV's motivation for de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated agreement, while the British' state's flexibility engendered no such motivation in the RM.

Associated with the State's willingness to engage with its corresponding sub-state nationalist group is its behaviour concerning the granting or withholding of concessions. The British state has demonstrated a

more flexibility in committing to the possibility of, and following through on, concessions to the core concerns of the RM than has the Spanish state to those of the MLNV, be it on a symbolic or practical level. Such responses have contributed to an increase in the perceived viability of the British states as a negotiating partner and thus optimism for negotiations for the Republican Movement, and a decrease in such perceptions about negotiations with the Spanish state on the part of the MLNV.

A final consideration of state responses is that of the main tactics employed in dealing with the conflict throughout its duration. While both the British and Spanish states relied heavily on military and or policing tactics in their approaches to the conflict, the British state began to adjust its tactics in the 1980s. Alongside military and policing efforts the British state increasingly acknowledged the political nature of the conflict, the impossibility of an entirely military or policing approach to ending the conflict, and opened itself up to greater communication with the RM. This served increase republican optimism for negotiations without increasing motivation for de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated agreement. The Spanish state has made no similar adjustment, and further, has frequently sought to reinforce the criminality framework of the conflict, thus reducing optimism in negotiations and increasing motivation for de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated agreement so as to force the State into acknowledging the political nature of the conflict.

Accordingly the responses of the British state to the conflict engendered a great deal more optimism for the possibility of negotiated agreement than did those of the Spanish state. Relatedly, while the British responses did little to motivate the IRA to end its campaign in the absence of a negotiated agreement, the inflexibility of the Spanish state, and its focus on the criminality of the MLNV, combined with a decrease in the movement's assumption of the usefulness of the armed campaign, encouraged the

MLNV to seek the end of ETA's campaign even in the absence of a negotiated agreement so as to remove an obstacle to which the State could point when trying to avoid more meaningful engagement.

Structurally, the sub-state groups examined here have more in common with social movements than a state. Accordingly, assessing the strategic choices of the RM and the MLNV must not only take into consideration its optimism and motivation for negotiation or de-escalation based on their own viability of accumulated resources, and the viability of the of their host state as a potential negotiating partner, but it must also consider the structures through which framings, motivations and assessments are funneled before being implemented as a change in strategy. Negotiating the de-escalation of conflict between two states or between a state and a sub-state nationalist movement require slight variations in approach. While there often exists a backbone of a hierarchical organization within the broader movement, sub-state nationalist movements, particularly those that pride themselves on arising from a broader social movement, lack the depth and breadth of organizational command and decision making structures of a state. As Pruitt (2007) points out, it is important to consider the existence of central coalitions within a given party when assessing the likelihood of a negotiated settlement to a conflict. While an important departure point, central coalition theory does not sufficiently account for the impact of organizational structure – particularly within the typically more nebulous social movement concept – that often characterizes sub-state nationalist groups. As Frenett and Smith (2012) note, leaders and leadership groups must walk a fine line between pushing forward with a change in movement strategy, and risking the fragmentation of the movement. States are typically better structured to see their strategic changes carried out on the ground. Thus it is suggested here that in addition to the sub-state movement's motivation and optimism concerning the possibility of a positive outcomes to negotiations with the host state, consideration must also be given to the impact of the leadership structures of the constituent movement organisations on the strategic decision making process and implementation.

In this sense, while both the RM and MLNV hold to their respective host states as the target and sources of conflict, the RM's framing of the conflict and its targets adjusted in response to greater exposure to competing framings (such as during the Hume-Adams talks) and in response to significant overtures on the part of successive British governments. Contrarily, the MLNV maintained the State as a target for negotiations over successive and failed attempts at negotiations before concluding that the State's reticence to engaging with the MLNV on its core concerns was so great that a military campaign, could not push it to concessions, and was at times useful to the State as a means of deflecting calls for engagement. Accordingly, the RM increasingly precise framing of the interests and capabilities of the British state increases optimism in negotiations while simultaneously improving motivation. However, the same growth in precision on the part of the MLNV led to a decrease in optimism for negotiations and increase in motivation for de-escalation even in the absence of a negotiated agreement.

These framings and assessments to take effect in movement strategies, are processed through the leadership structures of the constituent organizations and weighed against the dynamics of group fragmentation and cohesion. As mentioned, the political branches of both MLNV and the RM, while containing hierarchical structures, were highly collegial in nature and embedded with their base. Thus they are not able to move too far ahead of their base in any given change of strategy. Militarily, while both the IRA and ETA make use of cellular structures, the IRA has sought to maintain an internal hierarchical structure that attempts, as best it can, to control its cells, with the centralizing body of ETA has functioned much more as a coordinating body. The IRA leadership (which overlaps with that of SF) has sought to implement strategic decisions, whereas changes in strategy in ETA, particularly in later years, are less the result of an imposition from above and more of changes in frames and assessments as

the move through the organization and its constituents. This is in part related to the long term leadership available to the IRA that was not available to ETA. While both movements were able to learn from the experiences of other conflicts as well as their own interactions with their host States, the long term leadership of the RM largely consisted of a consistent core group while that of the MLNV was subject to frequent turnover. Thus the RM was better able to capitalize on such learnings and experiences, both technical and analytical. As such while the republican leadership has been able to impose changes in strategy based on the leadership assessments, changes in strategy in the MLNV are more the result of the synthesizing of percolating debates as guided through changing leadership groups. Change is able to happen at a sharper pace within the RM, while changes in the MLNV are subject to much longer processes of debate. The trade off with this is that while the MLNV undertook its move toward de-escalation without any splits occurring in the movement, the same cannot be said of the RM, where anti-GFA republicans continue to perpetrate low levels of terrorist violence.

Chapter Four Overview

This project sought to explore why the processes of de-escalation in two in many respects, similar, sub-state nationalist conflicts, took such drastically different forms: unilateral de-escalation (the MLNV) and a negotiated agreement (the RM). Accordingly, it is the conclusion of this investigation that:

Variable Grouping 1 Resources (Political Viability, Military Viability, Support, Alliances)

While both the RM and the MLNV were possessed of significant support for their projects as well as electoral viability, neither were these variables so strong as to suggest that the movement goals could be reached solely through electoral politics. Both the RM and MLNV maintained their military viability. However, the stronger decrease in support for the military strategy and narrower field of allies of the

MLNV did not provide the optimism and motivation for negotiations that the presence of these variables provided to the RM.

Variable Grouping 2 State Responses (Institutions, Engagements, Concessions, Tactics)

Whereas the institutional framework available to the MLNV was seen as stagnate, the RM increasingly saw the British state as willing to make adjustments that would render the institutional framework more viable. Over the course of successive engagements and with the State's granting of concessions the RM's sense of the viability of the British state as a viable partner in negotiations increased, while the inverse was experienced by the MLNV. Further the MLNV saw the Spanish state as overly reliant on tactics (sticks) over concessions (carrots) decreasing its viability as a negotiating partner. Further, in conjunction with the variables in grouping 1, this increasingly made the armed struggle a liability thereby increasing motivation for de-escalation regardless of the presence or absence of negotiation. Contrarily, the British states increasing balancing of tactics with important concessions, increased the view of the State as a viable partner, and in conjunction with the variables in grouping 1, provided greater optimism for the possibility of a negotiated outcome. This, then reinforced the motivation for negotiation outlined in variable grouping 1.

Variable Grouping 3 Leadership (Target Framing, Organizational Structure, Fragmentation/Cohesion, Learning Processes)

Over the course of successive engagements and interactions with their respective host States, both the RM and MLNV increasingly developed a more nuanced framing of the conflict and their adversaries which problematized the effectiveness of armed struggle and built motivation for a de-escalation of conflict. However, whereas variable grouping 2 had served to allow the RM to build confidence in the

viability of negotiations with the British state, it had served to undermine such confidence in a negotiated agreement with the Spanish state for the MLNV. Further, the MLNV was less well structurally equipped to more quickly internalize and implement significant changes in movement strategy than the Republican Movement. While this led to a slower shift in strategy than was experienced in the Republican Movement, it is also one which had near complete support of the movement's base and militants, and was able to institute changes without experiencing any organizational fragmentation.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

For Sánchez-Cuenca (2007) “despite the different nature of the nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, the IRA and ETA are remarkably similar in terms of strategy, target selection, and popular support” (p.303). The question of how to constructively transform conflicts is one of continued importance in the development and maintenance of democratic stability. This is no less true within already democratic states. If transforming sub-state nationalist conflicts is to be understood, as it is in this project, not as ending a debate on the interplay of national identities, but as moving this debate to a field that necessitates only peaceful and democratic means, then an entirely military or policing based ‘end’ to the conflict through defeat of representative parties, is insufficient. As Keating (2001) reminds, the relationships between state and identity is one of ongoing dialogue and debate, not one to be solved and shelved. As an attempt to contribute to the understanding of this issue, this project sought to compare the processes of de-escalation in two similar, but different, examples of sub-state nationalist conflict.

Thus while both the Republican Movement and the MLNV experienced motivating pulls toward de-escalation and pursuit of movement goals increasingly dominated by institutional politics (Grouping 1), the differences in the responses of the host States (Grouping 2), and the organizational structures through which movement assessments and decisions are funnelled (Grouping 3), allowed for the MLNV to make the more radical commitment to de-escalation in the absence of a negotiated settlement, while the Republican Movement was able to move the bulk of, but not all, its membership into a negotiated agreement with the British state. The Republican Movement experienced greater optimism for and motivation in negotiations than did the MLNV, while the MLNV experienced greater motivation toward de-escalation more generally.

This investigation arrives at the conclusion that the interplay of resources was such that the Republican Movement experience greater optimism and motivation in favour of negotiating with the state while the MLNV experience greater motivation for the decision to de-escalate regardless of the presence or absence of a negotiated agreement than did the Republican Movement. Thus, a desire or readiness for negotiation, as Pruitt (2007) suggests, must be present across both potential parties. SFIR provides an illustrative comparison:

the problems that I see for the Basques is that, whenever we were negotiating, whenever republicans were negotiating in the run up to the Good Friday Agreement and what came out of the Good Friday Agreement, all the major, sort of, problematic areas were dealt with to a large extent by the IRA and the British government. Ok? You talk about the release of IRA prisoners, you talk about the weapons issue, you talk about the removal of the British Army from the streets, you talk the disbandment of the British Army militia here that used to be called the UDR and then it became the RIR, gone. Right? And you talk about the end of the RUC. All of those were done with republicans ... all those were resolved between the IRA and Republicans and the British government. Each one of those issues. If it had of been the Unionist we were negotiating with instead of the British, none of those would have been resolved. You know, the unionists would not have disbanded their militia, UDR, RIR. They would have refused to get rid of the RUC. They would not have released the IRA prisoners, and they would not have accepted a compulsory power sharing government. So, the unfortunate thing for the Basques is that they are negotiating with the unionists. There is no British government there. *Colonial, imperial, malign as they had been during their involvement here but, the Basques have to work with the equivalent of the unionists so that's where the problems are.*

The above illustration represents a very particular, sub-state nationalist bias, that of the sub-state nationalist movement, and it is a lens through which much of the project is analysed. This project involved a particular focus on the strategic choices of sub-state nationalist movement in the de-escalation of conflict. While this focus was deliberately chosen to shed light on the agency of such groups, it by default spends little time addressing the interest and motivations guiding state actions. The

'state' as it is portrayed here, is largely represented as understood and framed by the sub-state nationalist movement. This is necessarily so as it is based on these framings – not how the state and state actors understand their own motivations and behaviours – that the sub-state nationalist movement adopt, and adapt, their strategies. Accordingly, while this project may appear to prioritise the sub-state over the state, this is a deliberate choice of focus rather than an assertion of the primacy of sub-state movement in determining the shape of de-escalation. Thus while this project offers insight into the factors impacting the strategic choices of sub-state nationalist movements on determining the shape of de-escalation, there is an important role for further research into assessing and analyzing those factors impacting the strategies employed by the state in response to the sub-state nationalist actors.

Another point for further study concerns the impact of the difference in the number and nature of the groups party to the conflict on such strategic choices. As SFIR describes above, in Northern Ireland, though the RM framed the conflict as one against the state, there existed a second sub-state population, loyal to the state and highly mobilized: namely the Unionist and Loyalist communities. While there exists a portion of the population in the Basque Country who consider their primary allegiance to be to the Spanish state, it has not mobilized in the same way as has the Unionist/Loyalist community in Northern Ireland. The behaviour of this group, and how it interacts with both the state and the sub-state group is an important part of understanding the puzzle that sub-state nationalist conflicts represent.

Further, it should be noted that within the respondent interviews, though there are a few individuals in both movements who occupied positions of significant leadership, the bulk of the respondents represent mixture of middle-tier elites, with some committed, though 'unranked' activists and militants. While the researcher did not have access to the highest levels of leadership within these movements,

the lack was mitigated by the referencing of public statements, as well as literature that had more direct access to such leadership positions. Nonetheless, the project would benefit from the opportunity to engage with the higher levels of leadership of the sub-state movements, to a greater extent, regarding the conclusions drawn.

Lastly, a point must be made as to any normative claims arising from the comparison. It is at no point attempted here to draw a conclusion as to which of the two paths toward de-escalation was 'better'. While the path taken in Northern Ireland allowed for a speedier transformation, there nonetheless remains a portion of the movement that does not embrace the Good Friday Agreement or resultant institutions. In the Basque Country, the process was much slower, but has allowed the whole of the movement and its base to make the transition. Whether these states of fragmentation or cohesion remain the case in the coming years, is beyond the scope of this investigation. Nor does this investigation seek to make any analytical claims as to which process will better allow for the pursuit of its respective movement's long term goal. However, both of these are important questions in an ongoing interaction between state and sub-state nationalism, and offer potential lines of investigation for future research.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Glossary

Abertzale - patriot

Etarra – ETA member

Lehendakari – President of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country

Ekintza – ‘actions’, usually referring to those undertaken in the cause of Basque nationalism

Taoiseach – Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland

Ard Fheis – High assembly, or annual party conference of Sinn Féin

Appendix 2 Respondent Details

Northern Ireland

Identifier	Membership	Gender	Interview Location	Date
I1	Provisional IRA	Male	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
SF1	Provisional Sinn Fein	Male	Café in West Belfast	Nov 2013
SF2	Provisional Sinn Fein	Male	Constituency Office, Belfast	Nov 2013
SF3	Provisional Sinn Fein	Female	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
SF4	Provisional Sinn Fein	Male	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
ISF	Provisional IRA; Provisional Sinn Fein	Female	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
SFI2	Provisional Sinn Fein; Provisional IRA	Female	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
SFI3	Provisional Sinn Fein; Provisional IRA	Male	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013
SFIR	Provisional Sinn Fein; Provisional IRA; Republican Youth	Male	<i>Coiste na n-larchimí</i> Offices, Belfast	Dec 2013

** Ages between mid 40s and 60s.

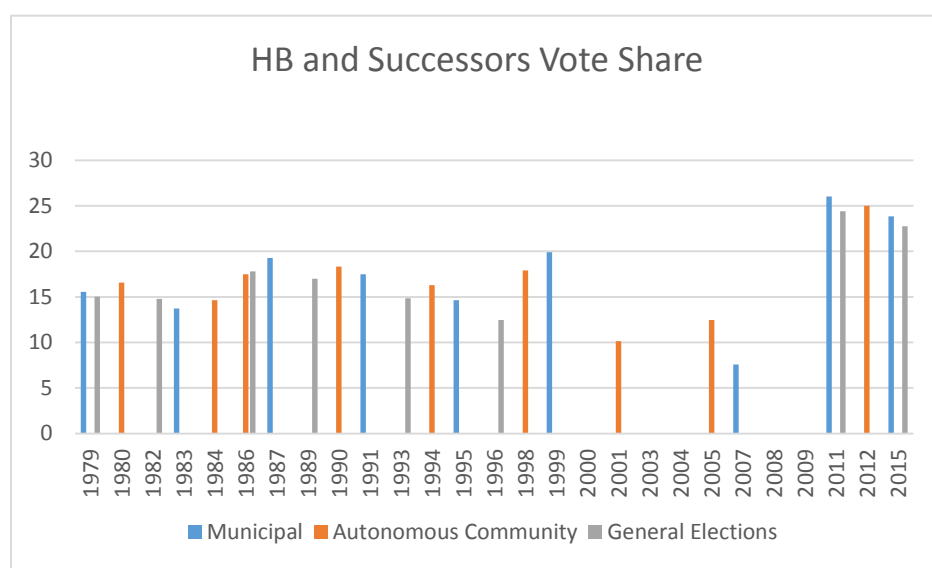
Identifier	Membership	Gender	Age	Interview Location	Date
ETA1	ETApM	Male	45-70	Bar, Gipuzkoa	Mar 2014
ETA2	ETA	Female	45-70	Bar, Gipuzkoa	Apr 2014
ETA3	ETA	Female	45-70	Bar, Gipuzkoa	Apr 2014
ETA4	ETA	Male	45-70	Bar, Gipuzkoa	Apr 2014
JAETA	Jarra; ETAm	Male	30-45	Park, Bizkaia	July 2014
MLNVJA	Movimiento de Liberacion Nacionalist Vasca; Jarrai	Male	30-45	Home, Bizkaia	May 2014
S1	Sortu	Female	30-45	Café, Gipuzkoa	May 2014
BS	Herri Batasuna/Batasuna; Sortu	Male	45-70	Park, Gipuzkoa	May 2014
SE	Sortu; Ekin	Male	30-45	Constituency Office, Bizkaia	May 2014
ETAPNV	ETA (pre 1970s); Partico Nacionalist Vasco –Basque Nationalist Party	Male	45-70	Home, Bizkaia	June 2014

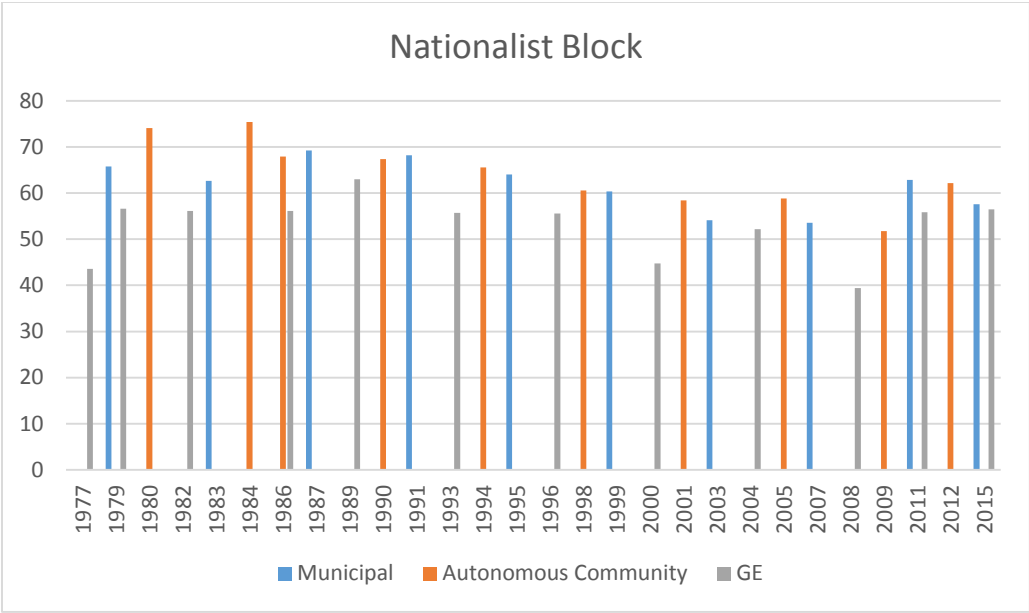
SKB	Sortu; Participation in Kale borroka, organization not identified	Male	30-45	Café, Nafarroa	May 2014
JEEGELBS	Jarrai; Ekin; ETAm; Gatze Abertazaleak; Eginzan; LAB; Batasuna; Sortu	Female	30-45	Union office, Lapurdi	

The Basque Country

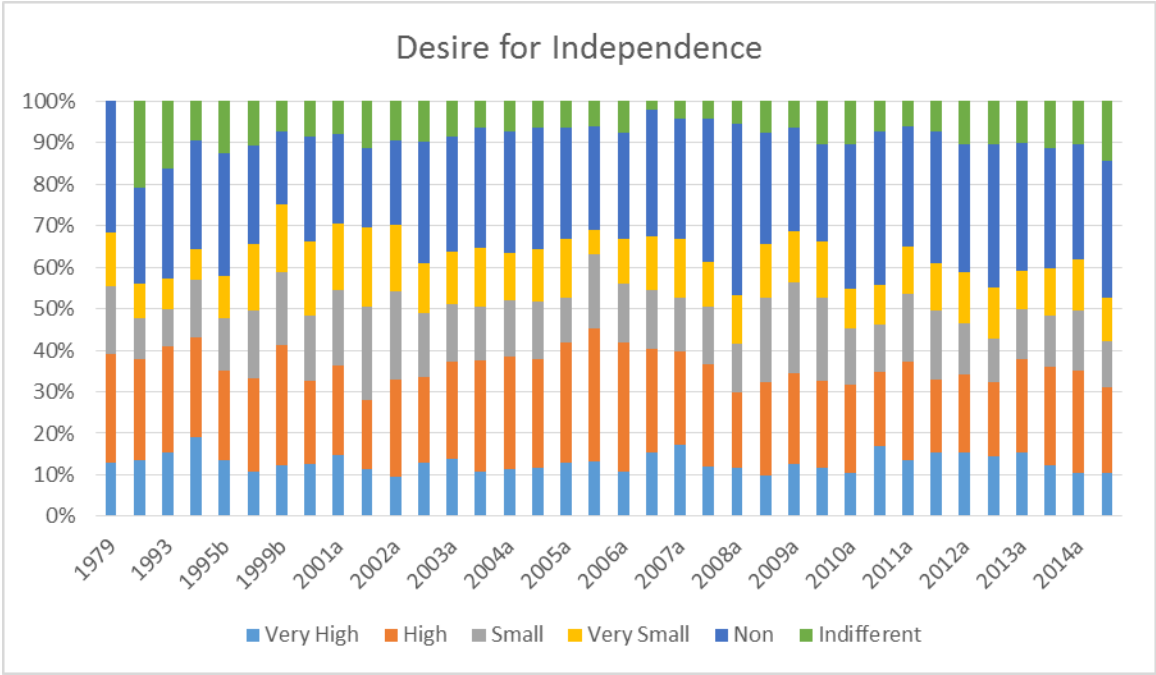
Appendix 3.

(EA-GV, 2014)

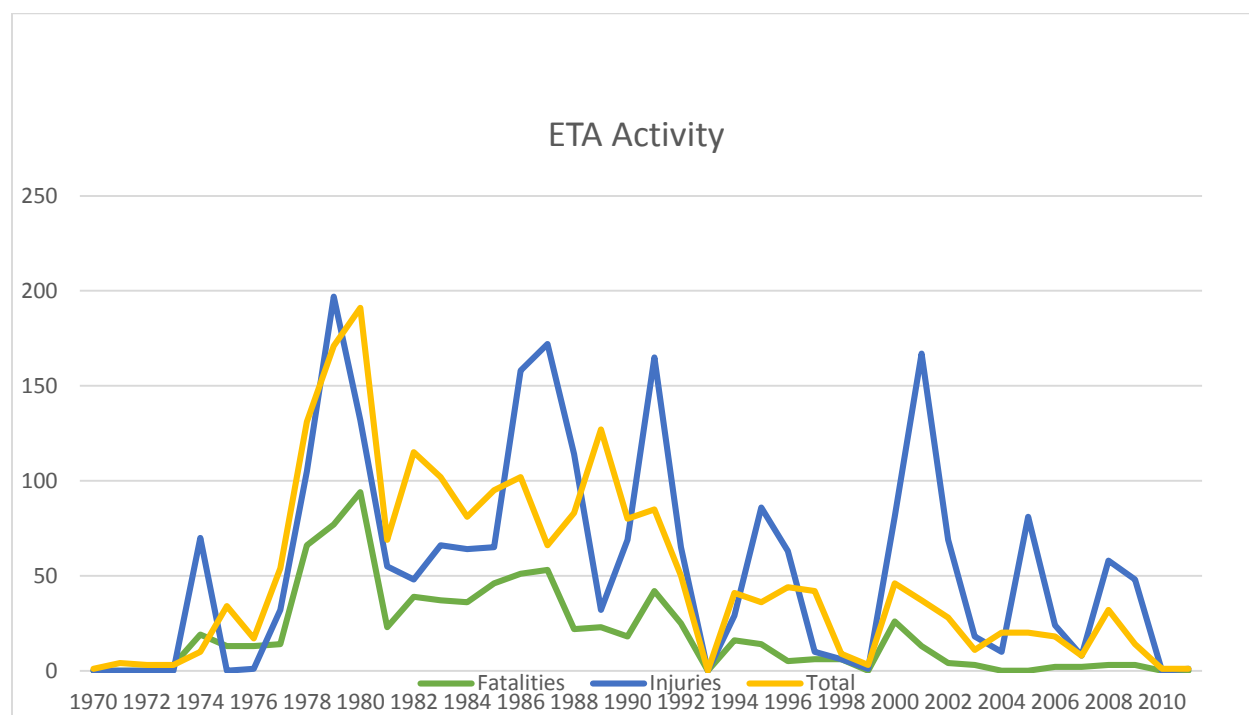




Appendix 4. Euskobarometro. 2014



Appendix 5: ETA activity. Figures compiled from Miller et.al. 2014 Global Terrorism Database



Appendix 6 Alternativa KAS:

1. Amnesty for all Basque prisoners
2. Legalization of pro-Basque independence parties
3. Withdrawal of the Spanish police
4. Recognition of the right to self-determination and the inclusion of Navarra

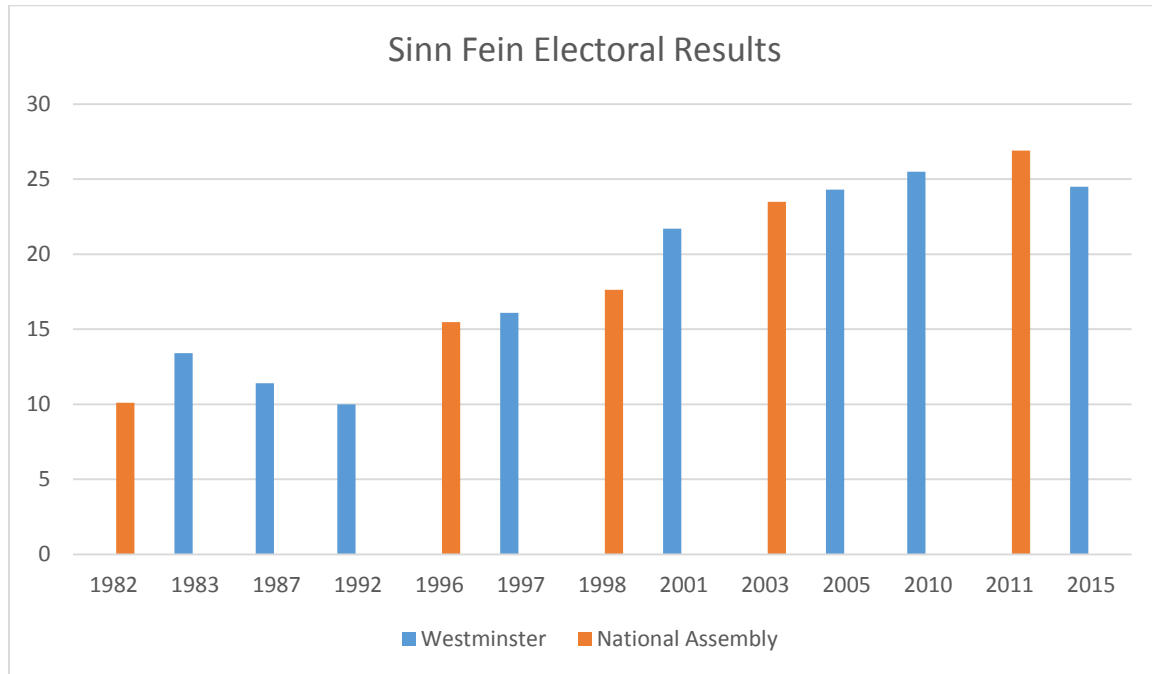
An improvement of basic living conditions of the working class

Appendix 7 Signatories to the Sunningdale and Belfast Agreements from Wolff (2001)

Casanova 2007

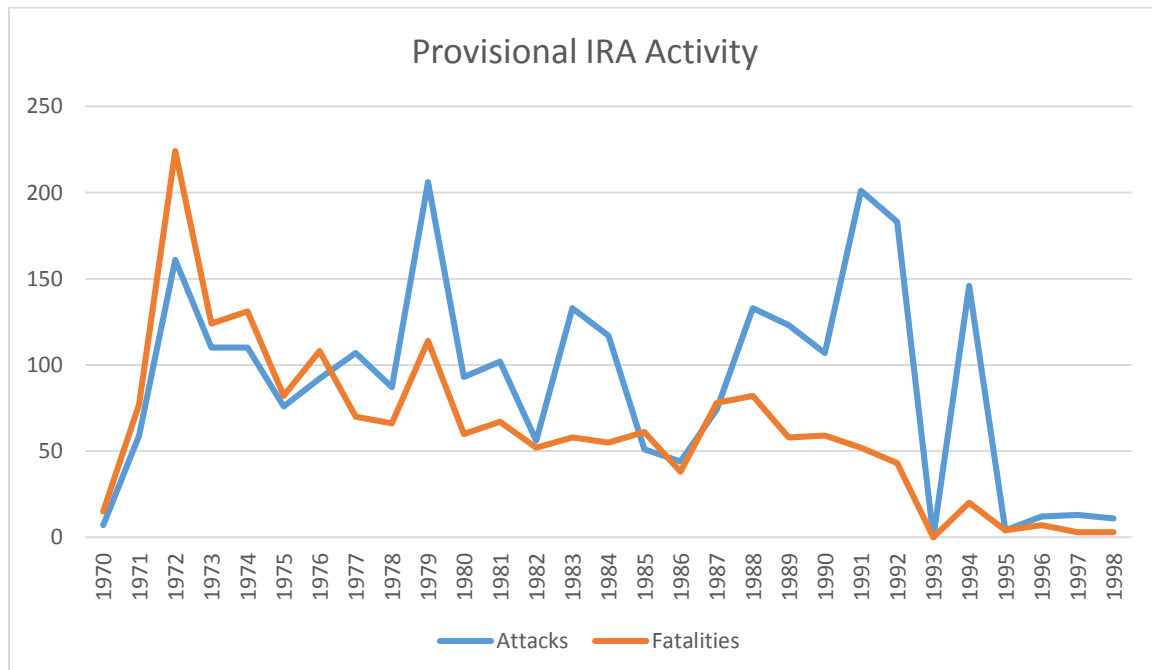
Sunningdale Agreement	Belfast Agreement
United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Republic of Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Ulster Unionist Party	Ulster Unionist Party
Social Democratic and Labour Party	Social Democratic and Labour Party
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
	Ulster Democratic Party
	Progressive Unionist Party
	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
	Sinn Fein
	Labour

Appendix 8: Sinn Féin Electoral Results



Appendix 9: Provisional IRA activity

Figures compiled from Miller et.al. 2014 Global Terrorism Database



Legend

HB	Herri Batasuna – Basque Unity
IA	Izquierda Abertzale – Basque Patriotic Left
IRA	Irish Republican Army – typically referring to the Provisional Irish Republican Army
MLNV	Movimiento de Liberación Nacionalista Vasca – Basque national liberation movement
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco – Basque Nationalist Party
PP	Partido Popular – Popular Party
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español – Spanish Socialist Workers Party
RM	Republican Movement
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SF	Sinn Féin

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