



Universiteit Utrecht

VOTING OR VIOLENCE?
ANALYSING POLITICAL VIOLENCE BY ETA AND TERRA
LLIURE DURING AND AFTER THE SPANISH TRANSITION
TO DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the heightened level of political violence within Basque and Catalan nationalism during and after the Spanish transition to democracy (1975-82). During the democratisation process, these peripheral nationalisms, firstly, became legitimate claim-makers that could defend their demands through democratic forms of contention, and, secondly, advanced on their demands by obtaining regional autonomy. Paradoxically, at this moment in time, the Basque ETA and Catalan Terra Lliure embraced a strategy of political violence as the preferred way to voice their demands. Moreover, ETA intensified its armed activity over the years 1978-80, while Terra Lliure stepped up its armed actions in 1987-88.

To understand the puzzling dynamic of democratisation and political violence, I used two theoretical lenses outlined by social movement literature: political opportunity structures on the macro-level and research mobilisation theory on the meso-level. Additionally, to balance these rationalist lenses with a constructivist note, I included movements' perceptions and frames of these notions.

Looking at the choice for political violence during the transition to democracy, I discerned different motivations for ETA and Terra Lliure. ETA perceived no fundamental change in the Spanish political regime: rather, it observed a continuation of Francoism. This perception, in combination with its strong commitment to the armed struggle and popular support for its radical discourse, motivated ETA to continue its political violence. Importantly, Basque society was characterised by a 'culture of violence' as well as a critical stance towards 'Madrid' and the democratisation process. In contrast, the transition was broadly supported in Catalonia, and the united Catalan political parties showed a willingness compromise in their negotiations with the Spanish government. In this context, radical Catalan independentists felt 'sold out' and frustrated with their inability to change the outcomes of transition and with their failure to enter into parliamentary politics. Hence, for Terra Lliure, this disenchantment and position at the political fringes incited political violence as both a tactic of last resort and a strategy designed to mobilise resources.

Zooming in on the escalation of political violence by ETA over the years 1978-80, I pointed out that ETA deliberately stepped up its armed activity to pressurise the Spanish government to accept its demands formulated in the KAS Alternative. Importantly, ETA perceived a certain sense of urgency due to the increasing consolidation of democracy: at this moment in time, it could still prevent what it termed "the stabilisation of the reform". While ETA stepped up its political violence explicitly to advance its political demands, Terra Lliure did so in 1987-88 as a last effort to trigger a broader independentist movement. More specifically, Terra Lliure aimed to show the viability of its struggle in light of different setbacks: the split within its political branch, the emergence of 'decaffeinated independentism', and the extensive popular criticism of political violence triggered by an ETA action in Barcelona and Terra Lliure's first, and only, deadly victim.

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List of abbreviations

BCT	Bloc Català dels Treballadors	Catalan Workers Bloc
BEAN	Bloc d'Esquerra d'Alliberament Nacional	Left Bloc for National Liberation
CDC	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya	Democratic Convergence of Catalonia
CiU	Convergència i Unió	Convergence and Union
CSPC	Comitès de Solidaritat amb els Patriotes Catalans	Committees of Solidarity with the Catalan Patriots
CUP	Candidatura d'Unitat Popular	Popular Unity Candidacy
EA	Eusko Alkartasuna	Basque Solidarity
EE	Euskadiko Ezkerra	Basque Left
EGPGC	Exército Guerrilheiro do Povo Galego Ceive	Guerrilla Army of the Free Galician People
EHAS	Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista	Socialist Party of the Basque Country
EIA	Euskal Iraultzarako Alderdia	Party for the Basque Revolution
EPOCA	Exèrcit Popular Català	Popular Catalan Army
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	Republican Left of Catalonia
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna	Basque Homeland and Freedom
FAC	Front d'Alliberament Català	Catalan Liberation Front
FNC	Front Nacional de Catalunya	National Front of Catalonia
GAL	Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación	Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups
HASI	Herri Alderdi Sozialista Iraultzailea	People's Socialist Revolutionary Party
HB	Herri Batasuna	Popular Unity
IPC	Independentistes dels Països Catalans	Independentists of the Catalan Countries
KAS	Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista	Patriotic Socialist Coordinating Council
LAB	Langile Abertzale Batzordea	Patriotic Workers Council
LAIA	Langile Abertzale Iraultzaileen Alderdia	Patriotic Revolutionary Workers Party
LAK	Langile Abertzale Komiteak	Patriotic Workers Committee

LOAPA	Ley Orgánica de Armonización del Proceso Autonómico	Organic Law for the Harmonisation of the Process of Self-government
MCAN	Moviment Català d'Alliberament Nacional	Catalan National Liberation Movement
MDT	Moviment de Defensa de la Terra	Movement for Defence of the Land
MLNV	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco	Basque National Liberation Movement
NE	Nacionalistes d'Esquerra	Left Nationalists
OLLA	Organització de la Lluita Armada	Organisation of the Armed Struggle
OSAN	Organització Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional	Socialist National Liberation Organisation
PCE	Partido Comunista de España	Spanish Communist Party
PDeCAT	Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català	Catalan European Democratic Party
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	Basque Nationalist Party
PSAN	Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional	Socialist Party of National Liberation
PSAN-P	Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional-Provisional	Socialist Party of National Liberation-Provisional
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya	Socialists' Party of Catalonia
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
PSUC	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya	Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia
UCD	Unión de Centro Democrático	Union of the Democratic Centre

1. Introduction

When opening a Spanish newspaper from either the 1950s, 1980s or 2010s, one is likely to find articles that concern the phenomenon of nationalism. Interestingly, at these different moments in time, different nationalisms have played a leading role in modern Spain. As José Ignacio Torreblanca, editorial director of the Spanish newspaper *El País*, recently noted, “Castilian, Basque and Catalan nationalism have successively tried to impose their identities and exclude dissidents”.¹ The first nationalism, Castilian, refers to the strongly centralised and homogenous image of the Spanish nation dictated by the fascist regime of general Francisco Franco (1939-75).² Illustratively, newspapers had to imprint the lemma “One Fatherland, One State, One Leader” (*Una Patria, Un Estado, Un Caudillo*) on their frontpage.³ This emphasis on the uniformity of Spain entailed the rejection of cultural and linguistic differences, i.e. of the national character of the Basque region and Catalonia.⁴ More specifically, these different cultural and linguistic manifestations were forcefully repressed, autonomous regional institutions were dismantled, and nationalist parties went into exile.⁵ To date, those advocating the uniformity of the Spanish nation are oftentimes accused of being ‘francoists’.⁶ Franco’s death in 1975 signalled the beginning of a transition to democracy (see Table 1 for an overview of the transition). In the following decades, it was mostly Basque nationalism that dominated the headlines. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) realised a heightened level of political violence in pursuit of independence and socialism, resulting in more than 800 deadly victims.⁷ In 2011, however, ETA announced a “definitive cessation” of its armed activity.⁸ From the mid-2000s onwards, Catalan nationalism took over the role of main protagonist. The Catalan bid for independence culminated in the 2017 referendum, which was considered a legitimate

¹ José Ignacio Torreblanca, “El Fracaso Del Nacionalismo Catalán,” *El País*, September 4, 2017, https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/09/01/opinion/1504287433_791609.html, my translation.

² Hereby, Castilian culture and language as well as a conservative form of Catholicism were imposed upon the Spanish population. See: Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1996), 144; Montserrat Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1, 44, 49.

³ Reminiscent of Hitler’s expression “Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer”. See: Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 35.

⁴ Francisco J. Llera Ramo, José M. Mata, and Cynthia L. Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” in *Terrorism Volume 1*, ed. Rosemary H.T. O’Kane (Cheltenham: An Elgar Reference Collection, 2005), 106; Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 36, 44; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 127, 144, 147.

⁵ Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, First ed. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 21; Oscar Jaime-Jiménez and Fernando Reinares, “The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy,” in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Herbert Reiter (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 175; Luis De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 72; Jacques Lilli, “Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence,” *Historia-Geografía* 22 (1994): 334, 337, 341; Edgar Illas, “Is Catalan Separatism a Progressive Cause?,” *Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism* 5, no. 10 (2014): 7; Enric Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 24; Stanley G. Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns,” in *Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation State*, ed. Shlomo Ben-Ami, Yoav Peled, and Alberto Spektorowski (London: MacMillan Press LTD, 2000), 100.

⁶ Patrick Kingsley and Raphael Minder, “A La Par Del Independentismo Catalán, En España Revive El Nacionalismo,” *The New York Times*, October 5, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/10/05/cataluna-espana-independentismo-nacionalismo/>.

⁷ Hereby I only include armed actions executed by ETAm and ETApM, considering these two branches as forming ETA as a whole until ETApM dissolved in 1982. In that sense, I exclude armed actions carried out by other, minor splits from ETA and by the so-called ‘autonomous commandos’. It is outside the scope of this research to include and/or analyse all splits from ETA, and, therefore, I focus on the most important ones during the period under study. See: Florencio Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992* (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco, 1998), 218.

⁸ “Basque Group ETA Says Armed Campaign Is over,” *BBC News*, October 20, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-15393014>.

consultation by the organising Catalan autonomous government but ruled illegal by the Spanish Constitutional Court. In reaction, the Spanish central government temporarily repealed the autonomous competences of Catalonia.⁹ Although trespassing institutional cadres by holding an ‘illegal’ referendum, Catalan nationalism has mainly used democratic, non-violent ways to voice its political claims. Nonetheless, it is a misunderstanding to assume that Catalan nationalism, firstly, called for independence only in the 2000s, and, secondly, confined itself always to peaceful mechanisms. Interestingly, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the radical independentist organisation Terra Lliure used political violence to advance its demands of independence and socialism, though on a much smaller scale than ETA. In its seventeen years of existence, Terra Lliure carried out between 100-200 armed actions and caused the death of one civilian.¹⁰

One would expect the Francoist era to be the high tide of the strategy of political violence within Basque and Catalan nationalism, since it was one of the few available ways to voice political demands under the dictatorial regime. Also, one would expect Basque and Catalan political violence to have declined with the transition to democracy. Importantly, for these nationalisms, this transition entailed a shift from clandestine movements to legitimate political claim-makers.¹¹ Hence, Basque and Catalan nationalists could use the newly created opportunities to pursue their demands within democratic, institutional cadres. Moreover, the demands of Basque and Catalan nationalists were to a large extent realised: these peripheral nationalisms were recognised in the Spanish Constitution (1978) and granted regional competences within their respective Statutes of Autonomy (1979). Paradoxically, at this moment in time, radical sectors within Basque and Catalan nationalism opted for political violence as the preferred way to voice their political demands, and subsequently intensified their armed activity. More specifically, ETA stepped up its armed activity over the years 1978-80, while Terra Lliure was formed in that same period and intensified its political violence in 1987-88 (see Figure 1 and 2). Hence, a puzzling dynamic is at play: ETA and Terra Lliure chose to escalate transgressive, violent forms of claim-making at the moment that, firstly, a democratic form of government was constituted and consolidated, and, secondly, these peripheral nationalisms advanced their demands.

1.1. Historiography

To date, academic literature has seldom focused on the interplay of the democratisation process in Spain and political violence within Basque and Catalan nationalism. Some studies do address this dynamic, but then use statistical methods. For instance, political scientist Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca uses

⁹ For an overview of events, see: “Catalonia’s Bid for Independence from Spain Explained,” *BBC News*, January 31, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29478415>.

¹⁰ Ricard Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, First ed. (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, S.A, 2004), 25; Diego Muro and Simon Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure,” *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 40 (2016): 45; Carles Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punto de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biografía Autorizada*, First ed. (Tafalla: Editorial Txalaparta, S.L.L., 2013), 263–85.

¹¹ Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, i; Lilli, “Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence,” 341.

statistical analysis to explain temporal variation in ETA's armed activity, primarily looking at political events such as elections and referenda.¹² However, most scholars concentrate on either the Spanish transition to democracy, or Basque or Catalan nationalism. Moreover, though Spain is oftentimes used as a case in broader studies on democratisation processes (such as in the work of sociologist and political scientist Juan José Linz¹³), few studies focus on the Spanish transition to democracy as such. Here, the work of political scientist Rafael del Águila Tejerina stands out: he analysed the debate that unfolded after Franco's death on the dialectic of a clear break with Francoist institutions or of a political reform.¹⁴ Turning to academic literature on political violence within Basque and Catalan nationalism, it becomes apparent that much has been written about ETA. For instance, political scientist Francisco Llera Ramo and historian José María Garmendia have published extensively on this organisation.¹⁵ Here it is important to emphasise that most studies on ETA concentrate primarily on its organisational development and strategic orientation (meso-level). Political violence within Catalan nationalism is not extensively discussed in academic literature. Rather, scholars tend to focus on Catalan nationalism in general, tracing back its origins and/or analysing how it manifests itself in recent history. Interestingly, political scientist Ricard Vilaregut published one of few studies on Terra Lliure, in which he primarily looks at the factors leading to its dissolution.¹⁶ Hence, academic literature not only infrequently addresses the interplay of democratisation and political violence in Spain, but also how this dynamic is at play for ETA and Terra Lliure. This leaves a 'blind spot' which I aim to fill.

1.2. Research objective

In this thesis, I aim to explain the interesting radicalisation and escalation of political violence by ETA and Terra Lliure during and after the Spanish transition to democracy. Here I should stress that I aim to account for their choice for political violence as such, as well as the heightened level of political violence at that specific moment in time. To analyse this dynamic, I use two theoretical lenses outlined by social movement studies, corresponding to different levels of analysis. This theoretical framework

¹² Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," *Revista Internacional de Sociología* 67, no. 3 (2009): 609–29, doi:10.3989/ris.2008.03.24. Another study using statistical methods to explain temporal variation in ETA's level of political violence is the one by Carlos Pestana Barros, José Passos & Luis-Gil-Alana, see: Carlos Pestana Barros, José Passos, and Luis Gil-Alana, "The Timing of ETA Terrorist Attacks," *Journal of Policy Modeling* 28 (2006): 335–46, doi:10.1016/j.jpolmod.2005.12.001.

¹³ See: Juan José Linz, "Transiciones a La Democracia," *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 51, no. 90 (1990): 7–33.

¹⁴ See: Rafael Del Águila Tejerina, "La Transición a La Democracia En España: Reforma, Ruptura Y Consenso," *Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Época)* 25 (1982): 101–27.

¹⁵ See for example: Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement"; Francisco J. Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," *Revista Internacional de Sociología* 3 (1992): 83–111; José María Garmendia, Gurutz Jauregui, and Florencio Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, ed. Antonio Elorza, Third ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, S.A., 2000).

¹⁶ See: Ricard Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, First ed. (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, S.A, 2004). Moreover, the study by Diego Muro & Simon Vall-Llosera about Terra Lliure also focuses on explaining its dissolution. See: Muro and Simon Vall-Llosera, "¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure," *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 40 (2016).

is discussed in detail in the following chapter. In basic terms, on the macro-level, I apply the lens of political opportunity structures to look at the political context, and, on the meso-level, I use resource mobilisation theory to analyse organisational motivations for political violence. This leads to the following research question:

From the viewpoints of political opportunity structures and resource mobilisation theory, what can explain the choice for and escalation of political violence by ETA and Terra Lliure during and after the Spanish transition to democracy (mid-1970s/80s)?

1.3. Academic and societal relevance

With this thesis, I aim to contribute to the academic debate in four ways. Firstly, from the historiography described above it follows that I aim to fill the 'blind spot' in literature about the interplay of democratisation and political violence in Spain. Besides, I innovatively include political violence within both Basque and Catalan nationalism in my thesis. Moreover, I aim to add to existing literature by using a social movement approach, which up to this point has been infrequently used in the context of transitions to democracy.¹⁷ Finally, I include both the macro- and meso-level of analysis, while literature on political violence seldom uses more than one level of analysis.¹⁸

Moreover, outlining ETA's and Terra Lliure's motivations to use political violence in the past, I argue, is especially relevant given present-day manifestations of Basque and Catalan nationalisms. Although nowadays both nationalist movements apparently prefer peaceful means to voice their political claims, both continue to challenge 'Madrid' in a certain way. Looking at Basque nationalism, this is manifest in the fact that, to date, ETA has neither officially dissolved nor fully disarmed itself.¹⁹ Besides, in Catalonia, the above-mentioned 2017 referendum on independence and the subsequent intervention of the central government caused turmoil and polarised Catalan society. In this context, analysing the choice for political violence by ETA and Terra Lliure in the past contributes to an improved understanding of this phenomenon. For instance, on the macro-level, this thesis provides insights into radical nationalists' preference for political violence as a reaction to a perceived inability to achieve their objectives via democratic forms of claim-making. Also, this thesis sheds light on the role of political parties to channel the demands of a nationalist constituency and/or integrate radical

¹⁷ Donatella Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19.

¹⁸ Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9.

¹⁹ Interestingly, in early 2017, ETA began to hand over its remaining weaponry to the Spanish and French authorities. While the French Minister of Interior Matthias Fekl spoke of a "major step", his Spanish counterpart Juan Ignacio Zoido stated: "We only hope that ETA announces its final dissolution, that it regrets the suffering it caused, and that it asks for forgiveness from its victims". See: "ETA: Basque Separatists Begin Weapons Handover," *BBC News*, April 8, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39536136>; "Zoido: 'Solo Esperamos Que ETA Anuncie Su Disolución Definitiva, Que Se Arrepienta de Todo El Sufrimiento Causado Y Que Pida Perdón a Las Víctimas,'" *La Moncloa*, April 10, 2017, <http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/mir/Paginas/2017/100417zoidoeta.aspx>, my translation.

nationalists into institutional politics. Furthermore, on the meso-level, this thesis contributes to an improved understanding on the (in)ability of radical nationalist factions to spark broad popular support for political violence. These insights can, in turn, inspire present-day approaches to prevent a recurrence of this strategy within Basque and Catalan nationalism.

1.4. Sources and methodology

To answer the research question outlined above, I make use of different types of primary sources. To understand the macro-context in which the escalation of political violence occurred, I focus on official documents from the Spanish transition to democracy. Examples of these are the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the Statutes of Autonomy for the Basque Country and Catalonia of 1979. On the organisational level, I use documents written by ETA and Terra Lliure, including their bulletin/magazine, internal communications, published manifestos, and issued communiqués.²⁰ I found most of these sources in the Pavelló de la República CRAI Library in Barcelona, which is part of the University of Barcelona. Thirdly, I use interviews with individual Terra Lliure militants and several autobiographies, such as the one by former Terra Lliure leader Jaume Fernández i Calvet. Although for ETA I have not been able to access interviews, I reason this is not problematic because other sources include narratives of individuals involved in radical Basque nationalism. Here I should note that the documents related to Terra Lliure are written in the Catalan language, while those of ETA in Spanish. Most likely, ETA did not publicise in the Basque language (*Euskera*) because it was (and still is) relatively little spoken in the Basque Country.²¹ Additionally, I use articles of the Spanish newspaper *El País*. These articles add to the previous sources in the sense that some include public statements from ETA or Terra Lliure, while others provide additional information on the broader nationalist movements, popular support for political violence, and the attitude of political parties towards these organisations. Here I chose to include a Spanish rather than a regional newspaper to balance the viewpoints of the peripheral nationalisms. Besides these primary sources, I use complementary secondary literature in my analysis. This array of sources, I argue, comprises an appropriate basis for my research. Notably, this selection includes different angles, which allows me to balance the sources and thereby prevent a partisan view.

Some notes on methodology are in place here. Although ETA and Terra Lliure differ on various facets, most evidently the scale of their armed activity, I argue that these organisations constitute a sound basis for comparison. Notably, both sprang from broader nationalist movements within Spain and used political violence in pursuit of similar political objectives in the same timeframe. These two

²⁰ More specifically, for Terra Lliure, I use its internal bulletin *Alerta*, the documentation of the four assemblies held during the organisation's existence, its first public statement (*Crida*), its Declaration of Principles, and different communiqués. Also, I include documentation from the political branch of Terra Lliure, the Movement for Defence of the Land (*Moviment de Defensa de la Terra*; MDT). For ETA, I use (parts of) its bulletin *Zutik* (later called *Zutabe* or *Zuzen*), its first Declaration of Purpose, internal communication between its direction and commandos, and communiqués issued by ETA. Besides, I study documentation from the coordinating body of the Basque nationalist movement, which was dominated by ETA, the Patriotic Socialist Coordinating Council (*Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista*; KAS).

²¹ For example, Clark points to a study performed in 1970 that indicated that less than 20 per cent of the Basque region's population was able to speak the Basque language (*Euskera*). See: Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 11.

peripheral nationalisms are considered the major ones within Spain, both were subject to Francoist repression, and their histories show similar political shifts in the democratisation process. Moreover, I should note that my description of the temporal fluctuations in political violence for ETA and Terra Lliure is based on different variables: the number of fatalities and the number of armed actions respectively. The reason for this is twofold. Since Terra Lliure caused only one deadly victim, and did so accidentally²², I argue fatality numbers are not helpful to describe fluctuations in its level of political violence. Importantly, this does not imply that Terra Lliure did not have the capacity to carry out armed actions, merely that it did so with the intention of averting casualties. The second reason is a pragmatic one: data on the number of armed actions committed by ETA are limited. Nonetheless, I argue that this difference in measurement is not problematic because both approaches allow to describe temporal fluctuations in political violence, though each with its proper merits.²³ Finally, a note on the use of citations of former militants should be made. When quoting a former militant, I do not state whether this individual held a leadership position or was one of the founders, because these positions are sometimes contested.²⁴ Additionally, a remark on the spelling of names or places, i.e. the Spanish, Basque or Catalan spelling, is necessary. Deciding between these spellings would necessarily influence the neutrality of this thesis. Therefore, for names of militants I use the spelling used in the source²⁵, while for places I use the so-termed official name.²⁶

²² The discrepancy between the number of casualties for the two cases under study can partly be explained by their diverging strategies: ETA did target human lives, while Terra Lliure averted victims.

²³ Political violence is not defined per se by an intention to cause as many victims as possible, but instead by the symbolic, representative value of targets. I will return to this in the section on conceptualisation. Hence, political violence can also occur by targeting buildings or other material objects and without causing deadly victims, such as in the case of Terra Lliure. Nonetheless, one could reason that the impact of political violence is related to the number of casualties. In that sense, political violence is arguably more 'effective' when it causes more casualties, because this enhances its communicative effect. Illustratively, media coverage of 'big' attacks is larger, whereas 'small' attacks get less attention. See: Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence," *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005): 165, doi:10.1017/S0020818305050022; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 27.

²⁴ Such as when a former militant identifies himself as an initiator of the organisation while another militant asserts that he entered at a later stage. In particular, Pere Bascompte in an interview stated to be one of the founders of Terra Lliure, while Josep Serra disproved this by alleging Bascompte was not a founder and entered after the formation of Terra Lliure. See: Interviews with Pere Bascompte and Josep Serra in David Bassa, *L'Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, First ed. (Sant Cugat del Vallès: Editorial Rourich, 1997), 29, 46.

²⁵ For example, the Spanish name Juan is spelled as Jon in the Basque language and as Joan in Catalan.

²⁶ For cities in Catalonia the name in Spanish and Catalan is oftentimes similar, while in Basque the official name is oftentimes a combination of the Basque and Spanish spelling (e.g. Donostia-San Sebastián).

Table 1: Overview of the transition to democracy in Spain

1975	November	<p>Death of Francisco Franco</p> <p>In the aftermath of Franco's death, political and social uncertainty characterised the context in which debates about a break (<i>ruptura</i>) or reform (<i>reforma</i>) took place. On the one hand, the – still clandestine, but tolerated – opposition parties were in favour of a clear, complete break with the Francoist regime. On the other hand, those surviving the decay of Francoism viewed a reform of the Francoist institutions into democratic ones as the only possible way to secure a peaceful transition to democracy. Since neither political force was strong enough to impose its view on the other, these agreed on a negotiated reform (<i>reforma pactada</i>). As a result, opposition moderates and reformers from the dictatorship entered negotiations about the constitution of a new political regime.</p>
1976	July	<p>Adolfo Suárez (reformist) is appointed prime minister</p> <p>Suárez succeeded Carlos Arias Navarro (hardliner), appointed by Franco in 1974.</p>
	July	<p>The first Amnesty Decree for political offenses</p>
	December	<p>Political Reform Act is ratified in referendum</p> <p>The 1976 Political Reform Act represented the negotiated reform. It was to be approved by the last Spanish parliament instituted under the Franco regime, whereby it dissolved itself and opened the way for a process of democratisation. As a result, a high continuity (in terms of e.g. personnel, organisations, laws) enabled a gradual transition. As Suárez stated in a television speech on the Act, “there cannot exist, or will there be, a constitutional vacuum, nor a void of legality”. In popular referendum, 94 per cent of the Spanish voters approved the Act, with a turnout of 78 per cent.</p>
1977	March	<p>Two Amnesty Decrees for political offenses</p>
	April	<p>Legalisation of the Spanish Communist Party (<i>Partido Comunista de España</i>; PCE)</p> <p>Up to this date, most political parties and trade unions had been legalised by the Spanish government. Importantly, political parties linked to ETA as well as independentist parties in Catalonia were not legalised, and therefore not allowed to participate in the June general elections.</p>
	June	<p>First democratic general elections</p> <p>Suárez' Union of the Democratic Centre (<i>Unión de Centro Democrático</i>; UCD) won the democratic elections. These regime reformists became the leading minority party by winning 35 per cent of the votes. Interestingly, because of its minority status, the UCD counted on the support of Basque and Catalan nationalist parties on various issues, including the Amnesty Law. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i>; PSOE) became the leading opposition party with 24 per cent of the votes. The communist parties and right-wing hardliners both received less than 10 per cent of the votes.</p>
	October	<p>Amnesty Law</p> <p>The Amnesty Law was approved by the newly elected parliament and allowed the release of political prisoners. Although most were released (including ETA members), their liberty had still to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.</p>
	October	<p>Moncloa Accords</p> <p>The Moncloa Accords were a series of political and socio-economic agreements between the UCD government, the main opposition parties, employers' associations and trade unions.</p>
	December	<p>Opposition parties cease fostering mobilisation</p> <p>The first years of the transition had been accompanied by high levels of popular mobilisation and mass protest. Hereby, demonstrations related to nationalism/territorial issues mobilised the largest number of people. This was followed by demonstrations on economic conditions and amnesty. In December 1977, however, the main opposition parties PCE and PSOE – the so-called parties of “the masses” – agreed to cease fostering popular mobilisation to not jeopardise the implementation of the Moncloa Accords. Over the following year, the level of popular mobilisation declined sharply.</p>

1978	December	<p>Constitution approved in referendum</p> <p>The Spanish Constitution defined the new institutions, democratic liberties and paved the way for a system of Autonomous Communities. The latter point of regional decentralisation of power also reflected the negotiated reform. While the Constitution affirmed the “indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation”, it for the first time “recognises and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities” (Article 2). Moreover, Article 155 outlined the mechanisms through which the Spanish sovereignty vis-à-vis the Autonomous Communities could be ensured. The results of the referendum were as follows: for Spain, 88 per cent voted in favour (turnout of 67 per cent). In the Basque Country, 75 per cent voted in favour (turnout of 45 per cent) and abstention reached 55 per cent. Moreover, in Catalonia, 91 per cent voted in favour (turnout of 68 per cent).</p>
1979	March	<p>Second general democratic elections</p> <p>Suárez' UCD again became the leading minority party with 36 per cent of the votes.</p>
	April	<p>First local elections (municipal level)</p>
	October	<p>Autonomy Statutes for Catalonia and Basque Country approved in referendum</p> <p>In the Basque Country 95 per cent voted in favour for their Statute (turnout of 59 per cent), while in Catalonia 88 per cent voted in favour (with a turnout of 59 per cent).</p>
1980	March	<p>First regional elections in the Basque Country and Catalonia</p> <p>In the Basque Country, the Basque Nationalist Party (<i>Partido Nacionalista Vasco</i>; PNV) became the leading minority party with 38 per cent of the votes, followed by Popular Unity (<i>Herri Batasuna</i>; HB, linked to ETA) with 17 per cent of the votes. In Catalonia, the nationalist Convergence and Union (<i>Convergència i Unió</i>; CiU) of Jordi Pujol became the leading minority party with 28 per cent of the votes.</p>
1981	January	<p>Suárez resigns, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (UCD) appointed prime minister</p>
	February	<p>Failed coup d'état</p> <p>During a plenary session of the Spanish Parliament, a group of Guardia Civil led by colonel Antonio Tejero interrupted the assembly. The Members of Parliament were held hostage for more than one day, after which it became clear that the coup d'état had failed. In the aftermath of the attempted coup d'état, the Calvo Sotelo government reached an agreement with the PSOE about the so-called Organic Law for the Harmonisation of the Process of Self-government (<i>Ley Orgánica de Armonización del Proceso Autonómico</i>; LOAPA). This law was intended to harmonise the process of decentralisation to the Autonomous Communities, but in practice entailed the limitation/stop of the transferral of powers from 'Madrid' to the Autonomous Communities. In 1983, after protests of Basque and Catalan nationalists, the Spanish Supreme Court annulled the LOAPA.</p>
1982	October	<p>Third general democratic elections</p> <p>The PSOE wins 41 per cent of the votes and becomes the leading party, while the UCD only secures 7 per cent of the votes. This change in government by electoral means is generally considered the end of the transition to democracy.</p>

Adapted from: Rafael del Aguila Tejerina. "La Transición a La Democracia En España: Reforma, Ruptura Y Consenso." *Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Época)* 25 (1982): 103–109; Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1996), 192; Luis De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 94; Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, Second ed. (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 144–46; Database of the Spanish Congress of Deputies (*Congreso de los Diputados*), accessible via <http://www.congreso.es/consti/index.htm>; Database of the Basque Autonomous Government (*Eusko Jaurjaritza/Gobierno Vasco*), accessible via http://www.euskadi.eus/q93TodoWar/eleccionesJSP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_1&opcion=menu; Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals; Andrew Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, ed. 3rd (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 110, 120; Vincent Druliolle, "Democracy Captured by Its Imaginary: The Transition as Memory and Discourses of Constitutionalism in Spain," *Social & Legal Studies* 17, no. 1 (2008): 81, 85, doi:10.1177/0964663907086457; Oscar Jaime-Jiménez and Fernando Reinares, "The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy," in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Herbert Reiter (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 172–75, 186; Juan J. Linz, "Transiciones a La Democracia," *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 51, no. 90 (1990): 18–20, 30; Enric Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 25; Ignacio Sánchez-Cuena and Paloma Aguilar, "Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy," *Politics & Society* 37, no. 3 (2009): 433–35, 442, doi:10.1177/0032329209338927; *The Spanish Constitution (Spain: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1978)*.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I first outline the social movement approach adopted in this thesis and explain why I consider it appropriate for the subject under study. After doing so, I relate the key concepts ‘political violence’ and ‘nationalism’ to this approach and define how I conceive these terms, although I should note here that it is outside the scope to provide an extensive conceptualisation. This is followed by a discussion of the two theoretical lenses used in this thesis to analyse why the nationalist movements under study seek recourse to and escalate political violence: political opportunity structures on the macro-level and resource mobilisation theory on the meso-level. Finally, I justify my choice to stretch these rationalist lenses to include a constructivist line of reasoning.

2.1. Conceptualisation

In broad terms, social movement literature outlines political claim-making to take place in generic, standardised ways. Together these different forms of contention constitute a finite repertoire of collective action, or, in other words, a menu of alternatives.²⁷ Moreover, literature places these on a continuum from institutional to transgressive contention. On the institutional side of the continuum, contention is done within the cadres of established, institutional routines, and is typically non-violent and tolerated.²⁸ Examples include elections, demonstrations and petitions.²⁹ On the other side of the continuum, transgressive forms of contention either break institutional limits or adopt previously unknown forms of claim-making.³⁰ In that regard, I understand political violence to be a form of transgressive contention situated towards the end of the continuum. The reason why I opted for this social movement approach is as follows: rather than addressing political violence as an isolated phenomenon, it views it as one possible form of contention and places it within a wider context.³¹ This allows me to analyse, firstly, why movements seek recourse to political violence rather than another form of political claim-making, and, secondly, how this choice is related to the broader political and organisational context.

Within this social movement approach, I specify my topic to one form of contention and one type of political movement. This form of contention under research is, as mentioned, political violence. Throughout this thesis, I understand ‘political violence’ as violence, or the threat of violence, used and directed in pursuit of political and/or ideological objectives.³² Here the symbolic aspect of political

²⁷ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, Second Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7, 14, 17; Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, Second Ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 28, 153.

²⁸ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 62–64 112.

²⁹ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 50–55, 63–64.

³⁰ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 62, 112.

³¹ As is often done in terrorism studies. See: Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), ix; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 11–12; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 5, 23; Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” 20–21.

³² Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 6–10; Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, “Terrorism and Related Concepts,” in *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories & Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 28; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 55.

Furthermore, for a discussion on the concept of violence, see: Peter Imbush, “The Concept of Violence,” in *International Handbook of Violence Research*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 13–39.

violence should be emphasised: it is about the communicative effects rather than the immediate physical or material impact.³³ I thereby conceive political violence to, in essence, selectively target institutions and/or individuals for their representative, symbolic significance. Although this definition is closely related – if not partly similar – to that of terrorism, I prefer the term ‘political violence’.³⁴ Likewise, I refrain from using the term ‘attacks’ and instead refer to ‘armed actions’ or ‘armed activity’. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, political violence is inherently more neutral than some alternative terms. Notably, governments oftentimes use the label ‘terrorism’ to delegitimise this phenomenon³⁵, while the endorsing organisations defend the legitimacy of their methods.³⁶ Secondly, I consider the term political violence more appropriate because this broader term better fits the symbolic targets of the two organisations under study. Although the literature is ambiguous on this aspect, some scholars stress that what sets terrorism apart from other forms of political violence is the former’s deliberate and indiscriminate targeting of civilians.³⁷

The type of movement under study is typified by the concept of nationalism. More specifically, I conceive ‘nationalism’ as the defining characteristic of political movements³⁸ that pursue “a set of rights for the self-defined members of the nation, including, at a minimum, territorial autonomy or sovereignty”.³⁹ Hereby, I distinguish between moderate and radical versions of nationalism: autonomy and independence. Moderate versions of nationalism advocate (more) autonomy, possibly as an intermediary stage towards independence. Hereby I understand autonomy as the transferral of political competences to regional, autonomous decision-making bodies within the institutional cadres of the state. In contrast, I perceive radical versions of nationalism to demand immediate independence, which entails complete sovereignty and thus a secession from the central state. This definition of nationalism leads to two observations. Nationalism inherently includes territorial and membership boundaries⁴⁰, to which I will return later. Furthermore, I point to nationalism as the subject of political contention. This is especially relevant for so-called ‘peripheral’ or ‘regional’ nationalisms, because these oftentimes challenge the sovereignty of a ‘central’ state. Hence, I perceive nationalist movements to be political actors that make use of different forms of contention, including political violence, to

³³ Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York: Random House, 2006), 4; Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, 4; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 10.

³⁴ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 5; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 5.

³⁵ On the negative connotation of the term ‘terrorism’, see: Bruce Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” in *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 23; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 8; Randall D. Law, *Terrorism: A History*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 4; Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, 8–9.

³⁶ Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” 37; Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*, 69.

³⁷ For example, while Richardson emphasises that terrorism entails a deliberate targeting of civilians and that this is not an unintended side-effect of these methods, Hoffman instead argues that terrorism is calculated and not indiscriminate. Because ETA’s and Terra Lliure’s strategy – in essence – did not include this indiscriminate aspect, their strategies do fit the above-stated definition of political violence. See: Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*, 4–6; Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” 3–4.

³⁸ Dekker distinguishes between four different conceptualisations of nationalism: [1] as an ideology; [2] as a political movement; [3] as the process of nation-building; and, [4] as the political orientation of individuals. See: Henk Dekker, “Nationalism, Its Conceptualisation and Operationalisation,” in *Ethnic Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Context: A Dutch-Hungarian Comparison*, ed. Karen Phalet and Antal Orkeny (London: Routledge, 2017).

³⁹ Lowell W. Barrington, “‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism’: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science,” *American Political Science Association* 30, no. 4 (1997): 714, doi:10.2307/420397.

⁴⁰ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, Second ed. (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 7; Barrington, “‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism’: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science,” 714.

defend their political demands. According to the social movements literature, what form of contention these movements prefer is “an outcome of the interaction between social movements and their opponents”.⁴¹

2.2. Theoretical lenses

To understand why the nationalist movements under study selected political violence from the repertoire of collective action, I use two theoretical lenses outlined by social movement literature. On the macro-level I look at the political opportunity structures, while on the meso-level I use resource mobilisation theory. In this section, I discuss these lenses in further detail. The decision not to include the micro-level is based on the following reasoning: literature points to this analytical level as increasingly important when political violence is reduced to “a few dozen radicalised individuals”.⁴² Since this thesis is focused on the choice for and escalation of political violence within broad movements, I do not include this micro-level of analysis.

2.2.1. Political opportunity structures

On the macro-level, I look at structural political factors that encourage movements to seek recourse to political violence as the preferred option from the repertoire of collective action.⁴³ On this analytical level, social movement literature views the political process approach, and especially the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, as the most inclusive theoretical lens.⁴⁴ From this rationalist perspective, political opportunity structures are defined as “aspects of a [political] regime that offer challengers both openings to advance their claims and threats and constraints that caution them against making these claims”.⁴⁵ Thus, the form of contention chosen by political claim-makers results from the opportunities/incentives as well as the constraints/limits faced in different political regimes.⁴⁶

Because the setting under study is a transition from a dictatorial regime to democracy, I consider it important to further specify what forms of contention are likely to emerge in these different types of political systems. According to the literature, dictatorial regimes typically foster transgressive, violent forms of collective action.⁴⁷ These regimes are, on the one hand, characterised by the absence of opportunities to defend political interests and voice criticism through institutionalised forms of contention, and, on the other hand, by the high costs of claim-making due to state repression. As a result, movements are pushed towards transgressive forms of contention and this radicalisation is

⁴¹ Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 15. See also: Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 188; Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, 5.

⁴² Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 187.

⁴³ As Tilly & Tarrow note, movements are always affected by the shape of political regimes and institutions. See: Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 145.

⁴⁴ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 9–10, 55.

⁴⁵ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 49.

⁴⁶ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 20, 59, 97; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 29; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 10, 55.

⁴⁷ Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 19.

further fuelled by the repression they meet.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, I should note here that the latter argument is somewhat circular, because violence in turn provokes repression.⁴⁹ In contrast, democracies encourage moderate, institutional forms of collective action.⁵⁰ This is due to the openness of the decision-making process, the opportunities for political participation and the availability of other ways to voice claims directly in democracies.⁵¹ In that sense, as democratic politics is typically receptive and responsive to the population's demands and state repression is normally absent, there is less or even no necessity to opt for transgressive contention. Moreover, a shift in political regime affects the repertoire of collective action. More specifically, democratisation processes, such as the transition in Spain, entail the opening of the political opportunity structures for contention.⁵² During democratisation processes, political actors are therefore likely to institutionalise their forms of contention, i.e. to substitute radical, transgressive forms of collective action for moderate, institutional ones.⁵³ In basic terms, "the more deep-rooted democracy is, the less widespread is political violence".⁵⁴ Furthermore, one would expect that – if occurring – political violence peaks in the earliest phases of the democratisation process, because this is when uncertainty is highest and the 'rules of the game' can best be influenced.⁵⁵

Interestingly, the opposite appears to be true for the transition to democracy in Spain: as mentioned, parallel to the newly created possibilities for political participation and ways to voice criticism, nationalist movements chose (to escalate) transgressive, violent forms of contention. Thus, at first sight, the viewpoint of political opportunity structures seems less relevant for the case of Spain. This preliminary conclusion necessitates the addition of a theoretical lens on another analytical level. Nonetheless, I reason that the lens of political opportunity structures should still be included in the analysis, because the nationalist movements studied here viewed the newly constituted democracy as a perpetuation of Francoist institutions. Therefore, I contend, this lens is useful to analyse these movements' choice to radicalise their forms of contention. Here, though, I should note that this implies some stretching of this rationalist lens towards a more constructivist perspective. To this point, I will return at the end of this chapter.

⁴⁸ Notably, because of the high costs of contention, repression encourages more radical sectors of a society to protest. See: James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 230; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 200–201; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 80–82; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 30.

⁴⁹ Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns," 106.

⁵⁰ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 206; Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1786-2004*, First ed. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 131.

⁵¹ Jesus Casquete, "From Imagination to Visualization: Protest Rituals in the Basque Country" (Berlin, 2003), 15; Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 57; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 222.

⁵² Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 68–70.

⁵³ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 130.

⁵⁴ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 215.

⁵⁵ Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca and Paloma Aguilar, "Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy," *Politics & Society* 37, no. 3 (2009): 430, doi:10.1177/0032329209338927; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 622.

2.2.2. Resource mobilisation theory

The second theoretical lens looks at the choice for political violence from a meso-level perspective. At this analytical level, social movement literature points to resource mobilisation theory because of its emphasis on the organisational dynamics and characteristics that foster the adoption of a certain form of contention.⁵⁶ Resource mobilisation theory focuses on the mobilisation of people and/or financial, material or other resources for collective action. More specifically, organisations make a deliberative, rational choice for a certain form of contention based on strategic calculations.⁵⁷ This calculation of costs and benefits is influenced by, firstly, the availability of different types of resources, and, secondly, the movement's capability to mobilise these and additional resources.⁵⁸ Here, I argue that there is something peculiar about political violence and resource mobilisation. A movement not only chooses political violence on the basis of available resources and its capability to mobilise these, but also as a tactic designed to enhance this mobilisation of resources. Moreover, political violence can also be deliberately chosen in reaction to demobilisation. Thus, in simple terms, the decision for political violence as the preferred form of collective claim-making is taken to "stimulate mobilisation or to replace it".⁵⁹ Various lines of reasoning within this lens can explain these two facets, although the difference between these is not always clear-cut.

Political violence can, on the one hand, be a strategic choice to trigger mobilisation. As outlined above, political violence is a form of symbolic, demonstrative violence, whereby its significance lies in its communicative effect. Besides sending a message of fear to the actors it is contending, political violence is also a tactic of political mobilisation.⁶⁰ In that sense, political violence is meant to inspire sympathy from the citizens whom the movement claims to represent, i.e. from its potentially supportive wider audience. Borrowing from terrorism studies, from this constituency, organisations that employ political violence derive the recruits, practical assistance and legitimisation necessary to survive and thrive.⁶¹ This dynamic is twofold. One aspect of the mobilisation mechanism is collective identity-building, whereby political violence is used to create and/or strengthen a boundary between 'us' versus 'them'.⁶² By targeting 'them', oftentimes identified as 'the state'⁶³, political violence emphasises a "dichotomous image of the world".⁶⁴ In that way, the organisation that opts for this form of contention can "create a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause".⁶⁵ This

⁵⁶ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 14; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 11.

⁵⁷ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 15–16.

⁵⁸ Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 16; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 14; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 84.

⁵⁹ DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 244.

⁶⁰ Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 431.

⁶¹ Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*, 69; J. Pekelder, "The RAF and the Left in West Germany. Communications Processes between Terrorists and Their Constituency in the Early 1970s," in *Gewalt Ohne Ausweg*, 2012, 11–12.

⁶² Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 36, 106–7; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 91–92, 113; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 204; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 74.

⁶³ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 112.

⁶⁴ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 200.

⁶⁵ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 21.

identity boundary is especially relevant for nationalist movements, because, as mentioned, nationalism inherently entails specific membership criteria.⁶⁶ Besides raising consciousness about a collective identity, the mobilising effect of political violence is at play via another, second mechanism. Political violence is also employed as tactical differentiation. Radical movements oftentimes compete with more moderate groups that hold similar political/ideological objectives for the same resources and constituency.⁶⁷ By radicalising their methods, organisations can specify, but at the same time limit, their pool of mobilisation. Because moderates and pragmatists within a movement are not likely to support transgressive forms of contention, the choice for political violence is intended to attract ‘purists’, i.e. the radical, uncompromising part of the constituency.⁶⁸ The hard-core purists thereby search for a ‘niche’ to mobilise resources, and, consequently, polarisation within a movement between moderate and radical sectors takes place.⁶⁹ Here, I should note that this search for a ‘niche’ can also be a reaction to moderation and institutionalisation of some sectors within a movement.⁷⁰ In sum, political violence can be used by a movement/group to mobilise resources by means of collective identity-building and/or by tactically differentiating itself from a more moderate wing.

On the other hand, political violence can also be the preferred form of contention to replace mobilisation. More specifically, political violence can be a reaction to demobilisation or political isolation in the sense that it is a way to compensate for a reduction in popular ‘numbers’.⁷¹ In that manner, the ‘power of numbers’ is substituted by the ‘power of violence’. This is in line with the observation in the literature that political violence is oftentimes adopted by groups that are not able to mobilise mass support and are situated at the political fringes.⁷² Related to this line of reasoning is the perception of political violence as a tactic of last resort, i.e. chosen when other, peaceful forms of contention prove ineffective to achieve the desired objective(s).⁷³ Nonetheless, I should add that the choice for political violence as the preferred form of contention implies a strategic dilemma, since it also reduces popular support and thereby complicates recruitment and obtaining other resources.⁷⁴ Notably, “radical leaders must ask themselves whether violent tactics will create enough additional pressure on the regime to outweigh the support lost by using them”.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 74; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 42.

⁶⁷ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 37; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 110.

⁶⁸ DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 201, 208, 231, 248, 258–60.

⁶⁹ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 130; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 219; Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 12, 196.

⁷⁰ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 11.

⁷¹ DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 200, 229; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 432.

⁷² DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 229.

⁷³ DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 189–90; Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, “Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy,” 429, 431.

⁷⁴ For more on the (political) costs of violent tactics, see: DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 190–93, 200–201, 209, 239; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 192.

⁷⁵ DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, 221.

2.3. Constructivist perspective

Having outlined the two theoretical lenses used in this thesis, I return to a previously stated point about taking on a constructivist perspective. Hereby, I want to stress that the above discussed theoretical lenses are of a rationalist nature, in the sense that they view the adoption of political violence as a tactical choice based on a strategic calculation of the costs and benefits of a particular form of contention within the repertoire.⁷⁶ However, rather than acting autonomously, literature notes that macro- and meso-level explanations interact with and are mediated by frames and perceptions.⁷⁷ Hence, to balance the former rationalist reasoning, I argue that it is important to additionally include a constructivist perspective. This perspective is focused on frames and perceptions, i.e. on understandings and interpretations of reality. Importantly, individuals and movements use frames to make sense of phenomena, i.e. they use “schemata of interpretation” to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences in the world around them.⁷⁸ Thus, I reason, movements opt for political violence as a response to not only an ‘objective’ view of the political context and their resources, but also to their perception or frame of these notions.⁷⁹ Moreover, movements deliberately “frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilise potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystanders support, and to demobilise antagonists”.⁸⁰ Hereby, resonance of a movement’s frame among its constituency is crucial to raise popular support and mobilise other resources.⁸¹ In that sense, the symbolic, representative aspect of political violence is again important since it is meant to propagate a certain frame or discourse. Besides the frame advocated by movements, other actors, including states, hold different frames and thereby influence interpretative processes.⁸²

Although it is important not to forego the subjectivity of each actor, I contend that taking into account frames, discourses and perceptions is essential in analysing motivations for political violence. Interestingly, ETA and Terra Lliure perceived a continuation of ‘franquismo’ during and after the transition to democracy and used this frame to justify political violence as necessary vis-à-vis this type of regime. Furthermore, their frame of the Spanish state as ‘the enemy’ signals a conflict of frames.

⁷⁶ Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 18.

⁷⁷ Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, 136; Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 18; Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, “Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

⁷⁸ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974), 21. See also: Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, “The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements,” in *Social Movements and Culture: Social Movements, Protests, and Contention*, ed. Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 8.

⁷⁹ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, “Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements,” 8.

⁸⁰ David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 198. See also: David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 614; Johnston and Klandermans, “The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements,” 8; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, “Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements,” 6.

⁸¹ Snow and Benford, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” 619; Johnston and Klandermans, “The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements,” 8; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, “Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements,” 8.

⁸² Snow and Benford, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” 613.

Notably, the Spanish state defines Terra Lliure and ETA as terrorist organisations, while they see themselves – as is typical – as fighting for a just cause and making legitimate claims. Therefore, rather than taking the political opportunity structure and the availability of resources as factual, organisations' perceptions of these notions are equally important.

3. Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Basque nationalism

In this chapter, I aim to explain two dynamics: firstly, why did ETA continue its strategy of political violence during and after the transition to democracy, and, secondly, why did its level of armed activity peak in the years 1978-80? This requires, in my view, an analysis from the following angles. Firstly, I shortly describe ETA's formation and I position its choice for political violence as well as the relatively low level of armed activity in the context of Francoism. Secondly, looking at the initial phase of the transition, I aim to account for ETA's decision to continue this form of contention and for equivalent levels of armed activity. This is followed by an analysis of the peak in ETA's political violence in the years 1978-80. Finally, I look at the sharp decline in ETA's level of armed activity over the 1980s and early 1990s, i.e. why ETA did not sustain or further escalate its previous level of political violence. For a full overview of the temporal fluctuations in ETA's level of political violence, see Figure 1.

3.1. The formation of ETA in the context of Francoism (1959-75)

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), meaning Basque Homeland and Freedom⁸³, was formed in 1959 by radical Basque youth groups.⁸⁴ Frustrated with the – in their eyes – passive, moderate stance of the Basque Nationalist Party (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco*; PNV), these youth groups advocated a more radical course of action.⁸⁵ Notably, in the context Francoist repression of peripheral nationalisms, the PNV had to operate from exile in France and preferred a non-violent strategy in opposition to the dictatorial regime.⁸⁶ ETA's primary objectives were formulated as follows. In its 1962 statement of principles, ETA defined itself as “a revolutionary Basque movement for national liberation”.⁸⁷ Interestingly, in its declaration of purpose issued some months before, it justified the use of “all the means possible[,] including violence”.⁸⁸ Hence, ETA opted for a strategy of political violence⁸⁹, whereby it primarily targeted institutions of the Spanish state.⁹⁰ In particular, ETA centred its actions on “all sectors of the security forces”⁹¹ because of their symbolic significance and their perceived responsibility for the “occupation” and “exploitation” of what it termed *Euskadi*, i.e. the Autonomous

⁸³ Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 610; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 106.

⁸⁴ Goldie Shabad and Francisco J. Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 411; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 66–68; Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns,” 104; Barros, Passos, and Gil-Alana, “The Timing of ETA Terrorist Attacks,” 336.

⁸⁵ Lilli, “Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence,” 335; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 106; Barros, Passos, and Gil-Alana, “The Timing of ETA Terrorist Attacks,” 336; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 68.

⁸⁶ De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 68.

⁸⁷ ETA's first formal statement of principles was adopted by its First Assembly in May 1962, cited in: Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 37.

⁸⁸ In early 1962, ETA's first declaration of purpose was issued by the Executive Committee established by exiles in France, cited in: Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 37.

⁸⁹ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 123.

⁹⁰ ETA also targeted individuals labelled ‘ideological enemies’, and those accused of collaborating with the Spanish police. This latter category was called “chivatots”, meaning spy or traitor. As stated in *Zutik* №65 in 1975, “their knowledge [...] makes them the eyes and ears of the apparatus of repression”. Cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 239, my translation.

⁹¹ As declared by ETA in April 1974, cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 232, my translation. The Spanish security forces were understood to be comprised of the Spanish police, Guardia Civil and Armed Forces, see: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 231.

Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre in Spain as well as the Northern Basque Country in France.⁹² From 1965 onwards, this tactic formed part of ETA's action-repression-action strategy⁹³ aimed at provoking disproportionate reactions from the Spanish government and its security forces.⁹⁴ Notably, in 1968 ETA for the first time put this strategy into practice by killing an inspector of the Policía Nacional and a member of the Guardia Civil.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, in the 1960s and early 1970s, ETA only sporadically carried out violent actions.⁹⁶ Noteworthy is that in 1973 ETA realised what is oftentimes depicted as the organisation's most remarkable action: the assassination of admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, a confident and possible successor of Franco who was recently appointed prime minister of Spain.⁹⁷

Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed analysis of the formation of ETA, some notes on its choice for political violence as the preferred form of contention are in place. Here, both theoretical lenses can be applied. From the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, it is not surprising that a radicalisation within Basque nationalism occurred in the context of Francoism. Accordingly, Basque nationalists had to operate outside of institutional cadres because of the absence of legitimate ways to express their political interests.⁹⁸ Furthermore, ETA's perception of the political context points to a rational decision for a violent form of contention. Its view of the *Euskadi* as an occupied, oppressed country⁹⁹ necessitated – in ETA's eyes – “the destruction of the Spanish state apparatus in the Basque national territory”.¹⁰⁰ From the perspective of resource mobilisation theory, ETA's recourse to political violence can also be seen as a rational decision. According to this theoretical lens, as outlined above, the choice for political violence should be interpreted as a strategic decision based on the availability of resources. In that sense, political violence was ETA's preferred form of contention for two reasons: it was viable with its limited popular and material resources, and, additionally, it was a suitable strategy to mobilise resources for its struggle. Correspondingly, in its internal documentation, ETA repeatedly linked its “armed struggle” to the “struggle of the masses”.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the dynamic of resource mobilisation is manifest, I contend, in two ways. On the one hand, the strategy of political violence enabled ETA to delegitimise the dictatorial regime as well as to

⁹² Interestingly, in ETA's Zutik Nº 62 it stated: “our common enemy, which is the apparatus of OCCUPATION AND EXPLOITATION imposed on Euskadi by the French and Spanish oligarchies”. See: Zutik Nº 63 in *ETA Documentos Y, Volume 12*, ed. Joseba Ereño et al. (Donostia - San Sebastian: Hordago, 1972), 375, my translation. See also: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 297; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 242; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 231.

⁹³ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 49; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 241; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 610; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 109, 116.

⁹⁴ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 231; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 49.

⁹⁵ Barros, Passos, and Gil-Alana, “The Timing of ETA Terrorist Attacks,” 337; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 92.

⁹⁶ Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 411.

⁹⁷ Initially, ETA planned to kidnap Luis Carrero Blanco and release him in exchange for the liberty of imprisoned ETA militants. However, when named prime minister, Carrero Blanco's security was intensified. This, together with his increased profile, incited ETA to prepare an attack with explosives. See: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 230; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 76.

⁹⁸ Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 419; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 108.

⁹⁹ Communiqué by ETA from June 1982, cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 257.

¹⁰⁰ As stated in a strategic document elaborated by ETA in 1969, cited in Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 231, my translation.

¹⁰¹ See for example Zutik Nº 54 in *ETA Documentos Y, Volume 11*, ed. Joseba Ereño et al. (Donostia - San Sebastian: Hordago, 1971), my translation.

propagate the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy between the “occupied” Basque Country and the “occupying” Spanish state.¹⁰² On the other hand, this transgressive form of claim-making constituted a clear tactical differentiation from the PNV. Notably, the PNV advocated a moderate position: it argued that aspiring more than autonomy was unrealistic and preferred a strategy of non-violent resistance.¹⁰³ Arguing that the PNV’s strategy was insufficient to bring about independentism, ETA signalled in its bulletin *Zutik* that its novelty lies in its “methods and formulation of political objectives”.¹⁰⁴ Thus, ETA radicalised both its discourse and its form of contention to polarise the nationalist constituency. In this way, ETA could awake the nationalist consciousness of its social base and rally radical sectors behind its struggle.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, the mobilisation of these resources would allow ETA to increase its offensive capacity and build a radical, nationalist movement.¹⁰⁶

Although the theoretical lenses explain ETA’s choice for political violence as such, these do not explicitly account for the low level of political violence during the Francoist regime. An important explanation for ETA’s inability to intensify its armed actions, I reason, is its precarious organisational situation. This was firstly due to fragmentation within ETA, which was in turn caused by the extensive ideological and political debates in its initial years¹⁰⁷ and the several splits that occurred. Notably, in 1966 between ETA-Berri (New ETA) and ETA-Zarra (Old ETA)¹⁰⁸, and in 1971 of ETA into ETA-V and ETA-VI.¹⁰⁹ In 1974, a debate on the most adequate political strategy resulted in a split into ETA militar (ETAm) and ETA político-militar (ETApM).¹¹⁰ Moreover, the severe repressive response of Francoist regime further limited ETA’s ability to develop into a solid, stable organisation.¹¹¹ Markedly, the Francoist regime declared several states of exception between 1967 and 1969¹¹², most of ETA’s leadership was arrested in 1969¹¹³ and in 1975 a large part of ETApM’s ‘comandos’ were dismantled.¹¹⁴ Thereby, interestingly, the repression ETA deliberately provoked by its above-mentioned action-repression-action strategy also hindered its ability to consolidate. Hence, the two dynamics of fragmentation and repression hindered ETA’s operational capacity and thereby explain its relatively low level of armed activity during the Francoist period.

¹⁰² See for example: ETA, “Zutik Nº 63,” 375, my translation.

¹⁰³ De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 68; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 32.

¹⁰⁴ Zutik Nº 52 in *ETA Documentos Y, Volume 11*, ed. Joseba Ereño et al., my translation.

¹⁰⁵ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 114; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 74, 89.

¹⁰⁶ Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 612; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 241; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 115.

¹⁰⁷ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 32–35; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 113–17.

¹⁰⁸ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 44.

¹⁰⁹ Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 429; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 62.

¹¹⁰ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 260, 264; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 623; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 117.

¹¹¹ Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns,” 105, 106; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 116.

¹¹² Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 428.

¹¹³ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 147–48, 253; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 428.

¹¹⁴ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 86; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 265.



Figure 1: Number of fatalities caused by ETA, 1970-1997

The number of fatalities caused by ETA presented in this figure is a calculated average based on four studies that each report slightly different numbers of fatalities. Adapted from: *Florencio Domínguez Iribarren, ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992 (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco, 1998), 220; Francisco J. Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," Revista Internacional de Sociología 3 (1992): 86; Enric Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," International Journal on Multicultural Societies 4, no. 1 (2002): 27; Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," Revista Internacional de Sociología 67, no. 3 (2009): 613-14, doi:10.3989/ris.2008.03.24.*

3.2. ETA and the first years of the transition (1975-77)

From the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, as outlined before, the transition to democracy in Spain would incite political actors towards institutional forms of contention. Based on this line of reasoning, ETA would have been encouraged to make use of the newly available democratic, institutional forms of contention and thereby to have given up, or at least, reduced its level of political violence. Interestingly, as mentioned, ETA instead continued its strategy of political violence, whereby its level in the initial phase of the transition was equivalent to that of the years before. This requires two explanations: firstly, why did ETA continue its strategy of political violence, and, secondly, why did ETA not yet step up its level of political violence as it did later? These questions I will now discuss in further detail.

3.2.1. ETA's continuation of political violence

To understand why, paradoxically, ETA continued to endorse political violence as the preferred form of contention, I discern various dynamics. In the first place, I go back to the lens of political opportunity structures. Although this rational perspective at first sight does not seem to explain ETA's continued preference for political violence, it is nonetheless useful when adding a constructivist approach to this lens. Accordingly, I consider ETA's view on and perception of the way in which the transition process unfolded. Interestingly, ETA perceived the transition not as a fundamental change, but as a continuation of Francoism.¹¹⁵ Illustratively, in a 1977 communiqué, ETA stated that the Spanish government "does nothing but make promises and halfway concessions, such as the pardon decrees of its most recent Council of Ministers, but which refuses to suppress the fascist institutions and promulgate the measures necessary to reach a true democratisation..."¹¹⁶ In particular, three aspects of the transition signalled the perpetuation of Francoism in the eyes of ETA. Firstly, for ETA, the adoption of the Political Reform Act in 1976 symbolised the continuance of the Francoist regime: this Act represented a negotiated reform instead of a clear break with Francoist institutions (see Table 1).¹¹⁷ Secondly, popular manifestations were still forcefully repressed by the Spanish police.¹¹⁸ As the Spanish Minister of Interior from 1976-79 Rodolfo Martín Villa later acknowledged, the reform of the armed forces and security structures did not begin until 1979 due to fears for a possible rebellion.¹¹⁹ As a result, police officers appointed during the Francoist regime remained in their posts and continued to respond to demonstrations in almost the same way as before.¹²⁰ This aspect was

¹¹⁵ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 119.

¹¹⁶ Communiqué of ETAM of March 1977 following an attack on the Guardia Civil, cited in: Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 100.

¹¹⁷ More specifically, a high level of continuance in terms of institutions, personnel and rules characterised the negotiated reform. See: Javier Angulo, "Tampoco Los Grupos 'abertzales' participarán En El Referéndum," *El País*, November 25, 1976, https://elpais.com/diario/1976/11/25/espana/217724405_850215.html; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 432; Del Aguila Tejerina, "La Transición a La Democracia En España: Reforma, Ruptura Y Consenso," 104; Vincent Druliolle, "Democracy Captured by Its Imaginary: The Transition as Memory and Discourses of Constitutionalism in Spain," *Social & Legal Studies* 17, no. 1 (2008): 81, doi:10.1177/0964663907086457.

¹¹⁸ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, xv, 89; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 280.

¹¹⁹ Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, "The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy," 174.

¹²⁰ Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, "The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy," 171, 173-74.

especially relevant in the Basque Country because of the high amount of popular demonstrations there in the first phase of the transition.¹²¹ Illustratively, in March 1976, manifestations in Vitoria-Gasteiz resulted in the death of five individuals due to police interventions.¹²² A third aspect that signalled the continuation of Francoism for ETA is the fact that the Spanish government did not legalise all political parties in the run up to the 1977 elections. Particularly, the political parties linked to or supportive of ETA remained illegal and thus excluded from participation in the elections.¹²³ For these reasons, ETA perceived the transition as a mere continuation of Francoism. This, in turn, justified its persistence in the use of transgressive, violent forms of contention.¹²⁴

Moreover, I look at the parallel processes of institutionalisation and radicalisation to explain ETA's choice to continue its political violence. In conformity with the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, some sectors of ETA were inclined towards a more moderate stance because of the newly available institutionalised forms of contention. This tendency towards institutionalisation, however, entailed a parallel process of radicalisation. This becomes manifest when looking at the split between ETApM and ETAm in 1974. In basic terms, ETA's leadership considered its system of different, separate fronts to cause a tendency of division.¹²⁵ Therefore, it proposed to configure a unified organisation capable of combining military and political tactics in order to mobilise the masses.¹²⁶ However, a minority sector linked to the military front exclusively favoured a strictly armed route and suggested to form a military organisation.¹²⁷ According to its manifesto, this faction decided "not to enter into democratic legality and maintain [its] clandestine structure".¹²⁸ This resulted in a split between ETApM and ETAm. As their names suggest, ETA político-militar (ETApM) opted for a unified leadership that combined its dual strategy of political and military action, while ETAm stressed the primacy of the militarist leadership and saw the "armed struggle" as separate from the "mass struggle".¹²⁹ Moreover, in the initial phase of the transition, ETAm strongly rejected ETApM's decision to participate in the 1977 elections, a point to which I will turn shortly.¹³⁰ From that moment onwards, Basque nationalism

¹²¹ Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, "Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy," 443–44; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 117.

¹²² Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 89.

¹²³ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 90, 98.

¹²⁴ ETA's opposition to the Francoist regime served as its primary justification for violent, transgressive contention. See: Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 242; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 425.

¹²⁵ ETA was characterised by a military, workers and cultural front. See: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 263–64.

¹²⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 263–64; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 79–80; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 623; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 117.

¹²⁷ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain"; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 264; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 623; Lilli, "Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence," 337; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 80.

¹²⁸ Manifesto of ETAm setting out its strategy, November 1974, see: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 264, my translation.

¹²⁹ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 118; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 264.

¹³⁰ Javier Angulo, "Crisis En Los Partidos Autonomistas de Izquierda Vascos," *El País*, February 19, 1977, https://elpais.com/diario/1977/02/19/espana/225154819_850215.html; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 279; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 99.

decisively polarised between moderate and radical sectors¹³¹, although ETApM and ETAm still shared the same political objectives and basic strategy of popular revolution.¹³² This polarisation leads to two observations. Upon the beginning of the transition, a strong preference for transgressive, violent contention existed within ETAm, i.e. the purist, intransigent branch of ETA.¹³³ Furthermore, this stance was reinforced by the fact that it was no longer subject to internal criticism, since the somewhat less radical factions were now organised in ETApM. Illustratively, for these ETAm militants, moderation would be equivalent to “concession and defeat” and thereby would have “trivialised the torture and death endured by the martyrs to ETA’s cause”.¹³⁴ Thus, ETAm became increasingly radicalised and committed to the armed struggle.

Additionally, in line with resource mobilisation theory, I contend that ETA’s persistence of political violence can also be explained by looking at the resources ETA had at its disposal to continue this strategy. During the first years of the transition, ETA possessed both the organisational structure as well as popular support to persist in its armed struggle. Regarding ETA’s organisational situation, this seems a contradictory argument. While I just argued that ETA suffered an important split, I now state that ETA’s organisational structure remained sufficient to continue its strategy of political violence. The main reason for this is the set-up of the Patriotic Socialist Coordinating Council (*Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista*; KAS) in 1975.¹³⁵ This coordinating body was initially formed to stimulate mobilisations around the trial of two ETA militants, but also to overcome the growing fragmentation in the nationalist movement in the broader sense.¹³⁶ Hence, the purpose of the KAS was to unite and coordinate the so-called Nationalist Left (*Izquierda Abertzale*).¹³⁷ Although its composition changed over the years, the KAS was initially comprised of both branches of ETA, the political parties Popular Revolutionary Socialist Party (*Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista*; EHAS) and the Patriotic Revolutionary Workers Party (*Langile Abertzale Iraultzaileen Alderdia*; LAIA), as well as the labour unions Patriotic Workers Committee (*Langile Abertzale Komiteak*; LAK), and the Patriotic Workers Council (*Langile Abertzale Batzordea*; LAB).¹³⁸ Interestingly, ETA was the dominant force in the KAS¹³⁹, whereby I should remark that ETApM was a full member of the KAS, while ETAm supported

¹³¹ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 119; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 627; Angulo, “Crisis En Los Partidos Autonomistas de Izquierda Vascos.”

¹³² Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 431; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 117.

¹³³ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 35, 57.

¹³⁴ Cited in: Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 425.

¹³⁵ The KAS summarised its main goals as “a Basque socialist state, independent, reunified and Basque-speaking”. See: Diego Muro Ruiz, “Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism” (University of London, 2004), 184.

¹³⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 341; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 118; Muro Ruiz, “Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism,” 184.

¹³⁷ Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 432; Muro Ruiz, “Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism,” 184; Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, “Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy,” 443.

¹³⁸ Javier Angulo, “KAS Afianza Su Unidad Ante Las Elecciones,” *El País*, February 24, 1977, https://elpais.com/diario/1977/02/24/espana/225586811_850215.html; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 341; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 99; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 432; Muro Ruiz, “Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism,” 184–85; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 118.

¹³⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 269, 278.

it without actively participating in it.¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, after ETAp decided to participate in the 1977 elections, the KAS came under the leadership of ETAm.¹⁴¹ In sum, in the first phase of the transition, the set-up of the KAS and its endorsement of ETA's radical stance provided ETA with the necessary organisational structure to continue its strategy of political violence.

Besides organisational structure, ETA maintained popular support for both its political objectives and radical form of contention. During the Franco-dictatorship, ETA had aroused great sympathy in broad sectors of Basque society.¹⁴² Importantly, in its *Zutik* of December 1971, ETA spoke of a "boom in the struggle of the masses [...] not only in quantitative, but also in qualitative terms".¹⁴³ Interestingly, throughout the first years of the transition, broad popular support for ETA continued. This is especially signalled by the high number of popular manifestations throughout the Basque Country in this period.¹⁴⁴ These demonstrations were most often held in support of amnesty for ETA-prisoners, for a statute of autonomy, and against the repression by the Spanish state.¹⁴⁵ Illustratively, in the summer of 1977, over the course of 48 days, manifestations occurred in different locations in the Basque Country under the so-called "Freedom March".¹⁴⁶ These culminated in a large demonstration in Pamplona whereby more than 100.000 Basques participated, according to *El País*.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, popular resonance of ETA's struggle in Basque society is also illustrated by the comprehensiveness of the Basque National Liberation Movement (*Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco*; MLNV).¹⁴⁸ The MLNV was comprised of a wide array of organisations and associations in support of ETA and included not only political parties and trade unions, but also Basque language programmes, mass media organs, and associations for youth, ecologists, women and ETA prisoners.¹⁴⁹

Related to popular support for ETA is the argument of a 'culture of violence' that characterised the Basque society.¹⁵⁰ Throughout the Francoist dictatorship, violence had become a typical element of daily life and thus deeply rooted in Basque society.¹⁵¹ This was particularly fostered by the direct experience of many Basques with the repression by the Francoist regime.¹⁵² Upon the beginning of the

¹⁴⁰ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 86, 99.

¹⁴¹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 341–42.

¹⁴² Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns"; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 162.

¹⁴³ ETA, "Zutik Nº 54.", my translation.

¹⁴⁴ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 90; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 117; Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, "Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy," 444.

¹⁴⁵ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 87; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 624; Jesús Ceberio and Fermin Goñi, "Cien Mil Personas Pusieron Término a La Marcha de La Libertad," *El País*, August 30, 1977, https://elpais.com/diario/1977/08/30/espana/241740025_850215.html; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 279.

¹⁴⁶ Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 624; Ceberio and Goñi, "Cien Mil Personas Pusieron Término a La Marcha de La Libertad."

¹⁴⁷ Ceberio and Goñi, "Cien Mil Personas Pusieron Término a La Marcha de La Libertad."

¹⁴⁸ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 432; Muro Ruiz, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism," 184.

¹⁴⁹ ETA thus formed the vanguard of the MLNV. See: Muro Ruiz, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism," 184; Casquete, "From Imagination to Visualization: Protest Rituals in the Basque Country," 20–21; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 21; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 435; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 271.

¹⁵⁰ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 425, 445.

¹⁵¹ Alfonso Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots of Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006), 79.

¹⁵² Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 162, 258, 267; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 424; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 109.

transition, this culture of violence marked the context in which ETA was still able to mobilise popular support for its transgressive form of contention.¹⁵³ Interestingly, the Spanish central government intended to appease the Basque nationalist constituency by means of concessions on various issues. These include the legalisation of Basque symbols, the permission of Basque newspapers such as *Deia* and *Egin*, and amnesty for political prisoners.¹⁵⁴ Despite these concessions, Basque society generally remained critical towards the central government and the transition.¹⁵⁵ Here I should note that the central government could not give in too much to the demands of the Basques, because of the disapproval of the armed forces and former Francoists. These latter forces could potentially disrupt the democratisation process, as became evident in the 1981 attempted coup d'état.¹⁵⁶

Hence, I discern five explanations for ETA's decision to continue its strategy of political violence as the preferred form of contention during the initial years of the transition: its perception of continued Francoism, a parallel process of moderation and radicalisation, ETA's organisational structure, popular support for both its discourse and methods, and the existence of a culture of violence. To these aspects, I will return when analysing the peak in ETA's political violence in the years 1978 to 1980.

3.2.2. Explaining an equivalent level of armed activity

The aspects that induced ETA to continue its political violence can also be interpreted as motivations to step up its armed activity. Moreover, since this initial phase of the transition was marked by high uncertainty about the outcomes of the democratisation process, one could expect ETA to have stepped up its level of political violence to influence the 'rules of the game'. In particular, I would foresee this escalation to have happened during the first years of the transition rather than later, i.e. before the new democratic system consolidated. Paradoxically, as mentioned, ETA's level of political violence did not increase, but remained equivalent to the previous period.

Looking firstly at ETApM, I argue, two facets can account for its low level of armed activity in the years 1975-77. On the one hand, ETApM was affected by the arrest of its leadership in 1975.¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, ETApM was fragmented by debates on continuing the armed struggle in the context of democracy. Hereby, the faction that was inclined to follow the path of institutionalisation got the upper hand. As a result, over the course of the transition, ETApM was increasingly willing to pursue its objectives via conventional electoral politics.¹⁵⁸ In its Seventh Assembly in October 1976, the majority of ETApM agreed to form a new independentist, leftist political party that was to compete in the 1977

¹⁵³ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 425; Lilli, "Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence," 349.

¹⁵⁴ Amnesty was granted in phases: first via two decrees and later, in 1977, an amnesty law was passed by the Spanish parliament. While amnesty was granted to almost all political prisoners, it was still adjudged on a case-by-case basis (see Table 1). See: Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 89-90.

¹⁵⁵ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 89.

¹⁵⁶ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 90.

¹⁵⁷ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 78, 92, 99; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 92.

¹⁵⁸ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 278; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 78, 99; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 431; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 117.

elections.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, this branch of ETA formed the Party for the Basque Revolution (*Euskal Iraultzarako Alderdia*, EIA), which participated in the 1977 elections through the coalition Basque Left (*Euskadiko Ezkerra*; EE).¹⁶⁰ According to ETApM, “where it was previously based on force, today legitimacy comes from popular suffrage”.¹⁶¹ For that reason, ETApM deliberately reduced its level of political violence over the following years. Nonetheless, this shift towards institutionalisation did not entail the immediate end of ETApM’s armed activity.¹⁶² The persistence of some level of political violence was meant to provide ETApM with a stronger position in the negotiations with the Spanish government about its shift to conventional, non-violent contention.¹⁶³

Moreover, ETAm neither stepped up its level of political violence. Importantly, after the split in 1974, ETAm’s leadership had installed a pause in its active combat. This in order to clarify ideological, strategic and organisational issues that resulted from its purely military orientation.¹⁶⁴ From 1978 onwards, however, ETAm had overcome its reorientation, signalling an escalation of political violence over the following years. To this peak I will turn now.

3.3. ETA’s escalation of political violence (1978-80)

Over the years 1978-80, ETA sharply increased its political violence, reaching the highest level of armed activity in its history.¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, although the ‘rules of the game’ had not been formally established, it was clear that these would be formulated through democratic decision-making. Also, during this period, these ‘rules of the game’ would be definitely established, especially with the 1978 Constitution and the 1979 Statute of Autonomy. So, at the moment that institutional forms of political claim-making became increasingly accessible and the Spanish democracy consolidated, ETA did not reduce but instead sharply stepped up its political violence.¹⁶⁶ In this section, I look at the motivations of ETA to increase its level of armed activity, and, additionally, at the resources that enabled this escalation. Here I should note that most political violence came from ETAm rather than from ETApM. Over the years 1978-80, ETAm carried out almost 550 armed actions and was responsible for more than 200 killings. In contrast, ETApM realised about 120 armed actions in which it killed less than 15 individuals.¹⁶⁷ To explain the escalation of political violence, I thus primarily consider ETAm and, for the sake of readability, refer to this branch when writing ETA.

¹⁵⁹ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 93–94; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 118.

¹⁶⁰ Although EIA was not legalised in the run up to the 1977 elections, the Spanish government did grant a legal status to the coalition EE. See: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 266; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 98; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 623; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 120.

¹⁶¹ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 278, my translation.

¹⁶² Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 220.

¹⁶³ As outlined in a proposal of ETApM in 1975, see: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 292; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 431.

¹⁶⁴ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 83.

¹⁶⁵ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 217, 273; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 445; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 610, 612; Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, “Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy,” 438; Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” 26.

¹⁶⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 277.

¹⁶⁷ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 218, 220.

3.3.1. Motivations to scale up the armed activity

The escalation in ETA's armed activity can first and foremost be interpreted in light of its strategy to, in the words of ETA, "accentuate the contradictions until the Madrid government sits down to negotiate".¹⁶⁸ Adopted in 1978, this strategy centred on pressuring the central government to accept the so-called KAS Alternative.¹⁶⁹ The KAS Alternative included the following five demands: [1] full amnesty for all political prisoners and legalisation of all political parties, including the independentist; [2] the withdrawal of the Spanish police and armed forces from *Euskadi*; [3] improvement of the social and economic conditions of the popular masses and, in particular, the working class; [4] recognition of the national sovereignty of *Euskadi*, whereby the Basque language (*Euskera*) must become the official language, and the security forces and army are controlled by the Basque government; and [5] recognition of the right for self-determination, which included sufficient powers for the Basque population to establish the economic, social and political structures they consider most convenient and to alter these institutions autonomously.¹⁷⁰ Here I should stress that ETA's term 'negotiations' is somewhat misleading: ETA was willing to discuss the terms of its implementation, but not its contents.¹⁷¹ As stated in its bulletin *Zutabe*, "the five minimum points [of the KAS Alternative] by their very nature are not negotiable".¹⁷² Hence, by sharply stepping up its armed activity, ETA aimed to pressurise the Spanish government to accept its demands. The KAS announced in *El País* that "to succeed in normalising life in Euskadi, to achieve a ceasefire for both parts, the only possible way is the negotiation of the KAS Alternative".¹⁷³ It is important to add that, although addressing the Spanish state as an interlocutor, ETA continued to describe it as disguised Francoism.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, its strategy to pressurise the Spanish government is also reflected in the fact that ETA continued to selectively target the Spanish police and armed forces.¹⁷⁵ According to ETA, these constituted "one of the pillars on which the oppressive Spanish state could count to continue to subjugate the south of

¹⁶⁸ Citation from *ETA-K Euskal Herria* from May 1978 in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 218, my translation.

¹⁶⁹ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 249; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 121; "ETAm Trata de Obligar Al Gobierno a Negociar," *El País*, October 9, 1980, https://elpais.com/diario/1980/10/09/espana/339894001_850215.html; Muro Ruiz, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism," 183-84.

¹⁷⁰ "La 'Alternativa KAS,'" *El País*, January 29, 1988, https://elpais.com/diario/1988/01/29/espana/570409204_850215.html; "ETAm Trata de Obligar Al Gobierno a Negociar"; Muro Ruiz, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism," 184-85; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 119; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 97; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 411-13; Javier Angulo, "Los Candidatos Electos de La Izquierda Abertzale No Ocuparán Sus Escaños," *El País*, January 11, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/01/11/espana/284857223_850215.html.

¹⁷¹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 292.

¹⁷² As stated in *Zutabe* from June 1980, cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 292, my translation.

¹⁷³ Javier Angulo, "KAS Insiste En Negociar Públicamente Con El Gobierno," *El País*, 1978, https://elpais.com/diario/1978/07/05/espana/268437632_850215.html, my translation.

¹⁷⁴ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 121; Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," 97; Javier Angulo, "KAS Recomendará La Abstención En El Referéndum Sobre El Estatuto Vasco," *El País*, August 17, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/08/17/espana/303688810_850215.html; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 433.

¹⁷⁵ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 433; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 231; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 293, 338.

Euskadi".¹⁷⁶ Thus, ETA deliberately stepped up its level of armed activity in order to delegitimise and destabilise the Spanish government up to the point that 'Madrid' would give in to its demands.

Nonetheless, to some extent, the question remains: why did ETA adopt this strategy of negotiations in 1978 and consequently intensify its armed activity at that particular moment in time? Here I contend that the on-going consolidation of the Spanish democracy implied a certain sense of urgency for ETA.¹⁷⁷ This urgency for ETA to significantly increase its armed activity at this moment in time is manifest in two ways. On the one hand, ETA opposed the manner in which the transition unfolded and the upcoming constitution as well as the statute of autonomy would definitely set the 'rules of the game'. This would make the KAS Alternative more difficult to attain. Escalating at this moment in time meant for ETA that it would still be able to influence the 'rules of the game' before they were adopted. On the other hand, ETA had to step up its armed activity to still be able to pressurise the central government. In ETA's view, 'Madrid' would have less incentives to negotiate once the Constitution had been approved.¹⁷⁸ This is particularly manifest in the level of armed activity surrounding the Constitution: ETA sharply increased its offensive when parliamentary debates on the Constitution started and in the run up to the 1978 referendum.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, 1978 was a critical year for ETA in an attempt to prevent, what it termed, the "stabilisation of the reform".¹⁸⁰

In addition to ETA's aim to force negotiations and to prevent the consolidation of democracy, I discern four other motivations for ETA to escalate its political violence at that this moment in time. Firstly, ETA increasingly perceived democratic, institutional forms of contention as ineffective to achieve its political objectives. In this stance, ETA was strengthened by the outcomes of the 1977 elections, whereby the political coalition backing ETAp, EE, secured only one seat in the Spanish Parliament.¹⁸¹ As a consequence, EE proved unable to set the agenda or to advance the issues of Basque independence, socialism and the reunification of *Euskadi*. Moreover, in the eyes of ETA, the adoption of the 1978 Constitution and the 1979 Statute of Autonomy further proved the ineffectiveness of democratic, institutional contention.¹⁸² While the affirmation within the Constitution of the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation" by definition excluded independence for the Basque Country¹⁸³, the Statute of Autonomy further stipulated Basque regional autonomy within this constitutional framework. Most importantly, this Statute provided the Basque Country with its own parliament and executive, jurisdiction over matters such as education and culture, a regional police force and full fiscal autonomy.¹⁸⁴ In the eyes of ETA, institutionalised Basque nationalism was not able

¹⁷⁶ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 298, my translation.

¹⁷⁷ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 106.

¹⁷⁸ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 106.

¹⁷⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 293; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 98; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 618–19.

¹⁸⁰ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 293.

¹⁸¹ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 98.

¹⁸² Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 106, 210; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 294; Angulo, "KAS Recomendará La Abstención En El Referéndum Sobre El Estatuto Vasco."

¹⁸³ Article 2 of *The Spanish Constitution* (Spain: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1978), <https://www.boe.es/legislacion/documentos/ConstitucionINGLES.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 24; Andrew Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, Third ed. (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 114; *Ley*

to avert these concessions. This, in turn, affirmed for ETA that democratic politics was neither the appropriate way to influence the 'rules of the game' nor to pursue its political objectives. For this reason, ETA continued to endorse the 'legitimacy of force' and thus base its strategy on the rejection of the new democracy and its forms of claim-making.¹⁸⁵

Interestingly, radical Basque nationalist factions supportive of ETAm did form a political coalition.¹⁸⁶ This coalition, named Popular Unity (*Herri Batasuna*; HB), participated in the general and regional elections from 1979 onwards.¹⁸⁷ However, it did so on an abstentionist basis: HB did not occupy the parliamentary seats that it won.¹⁸⁸ Interestingly, in 1979, a HB spokesperson stated that the parliamentary alternative "was not adequate for the Basque people, because in one year and a half it only resulted in a Basque General Council [a pre-autonomic body active from 1978-80, LvD] without powers and without Navarre [that ETA claimed as part of *Euskadi*, LvD], and in a Statute of Autonomy trapped by the limits of the Constitution".¹⁸⁹ In particular, HB accepted the use of violence and included convicted ETA militants on its electoral rolls.¹⁹⁰ There was thus an inherent contradiction in ETA's stance towards institutionalisation: while it explicitly rejected democratic politics, it – though indirectly – participated in this system to a certain extent.

Moreover, to explain ETA's peak in political violence, I return to the point of polarisation discussed above. In the context of the transition, the co-existence of different political forces defending Basque nationalism encouraged further radicalisation within the movement.¹⁹¹ From the viewpoint of resource mobilisation theory, this radicalisation would permit ETA to tactically differentiate itself from these other nationalist political forces. In turn, this differentiation would provide ETA with a 'niche' within the Nationalist Left and thereby enable the mobilisation of resources for its radical discourse and methods. This dynamic was especially relevant in the context of the transition to democracy, whereby ETA needed to differentiate itself not only from the PNV, but also from ETAp. As for the PNV, the party returned from exile in France and was granted legal status in 1977.¹⁹² This enabled the PNV to participate in electoral politics and thereby to legally ascertain its political objectives within institutional cadres.¹⁹³ This shift contributed to an improved image and appreciation of the PNV as a representative for moderate Basque nationalists. Furthermore, for ETA, differentiation was more difficult given that the PNV was ambiguous in its position towards ETA and retained a rather

Orgánica 3/1979, de 18 de Diciembre, de Estatuto de Autonomía Para El País Vasco (Spain: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1979), <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/1979/BOE-A-1979-30177-consolidado.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 279, 302.

¹⁸⁶ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 105; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 120; Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns," 101.

¹⁸⁷ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 120–21.

¹⁸⁸ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 271, 302; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 112; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 120–21; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 22; Angulo, "Los Candidatos Electos de La Izquierda Abertzale No Ocuparán Sus Escaños."

¹⁸⁹ Javier Angulo, "Los Candidatos Electos de La Izquierda Abertzale No Ocuparán Sus Escaños," *El País*, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/01/11/espana/284857223_850215.html, my translation.

¹⁹⁰ Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 22.

¹⁹¹ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 421.

¹⁹² Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 89.

¹⁹³ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 218.

uncompromising stance towards the transition.¹⁹⁴ For example, in 1979, a PNV party official stated that he “would never speak of ETA terrorism”¹⁹⁵, thereby pointing to the PNV’s reluctance to explicitly renounce ETA’s armed activity. Here I should note that the relationship between the PNV and ETA is sometimes described as one of mutual convenience in the sense that the PNV seemed to want to take advantage of the pressure ETA put on the Spanish government.¹⁹⁶ Also, the PNV explicitly rejected the Constitution and asked its sympathisers to abstain during the referendum.¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, however, the PNV did endorse the 1979 Statute of Autonomy as the best possible compromise for Basque nationalism.¹⁹⁸ This provided ETA with an opportunity to stress the breach between moderation and intransigence within Basque nationalism.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, ETA needed to differentiate itself from a relatively proximate political force, ETApM, which had turned to institutionalised politics but, as mentioned, continued to pursue the same political objectives. Because ETA could not differentiate itself via its political discourse, it needed to step up its campaign of political violence as an explicit rejection of the institutionalisation of ETApM. This rejection would enable ETA to find a ‘niche’ through an escalation of its methods. Therefore, tactical differentiation had both become more important and more difficult for ETA as a result of the opening of opportunity structures and the relatively similar stance of ETApM and, to some extent, of the PNV. This search for a ‘niche’, in turn, motivated ETA to escalate its political violence.

Additionally, I discern two more explanations for ETA’s peak in political violence at this moment in time. Interestingly, ETA stepped up its level of armed actions in reaction to a decline in mass mobilisation from 1978 onwards.²⁰⁰ In its bulletin *Zutik*, ETA referred to this drop in mobilisation: “After the Freedom March and the latest demonstrations for amnesty, popular mobilisations plummeted and the masses shifted from actors to spectators in the parliamentary game”.²⁰¹ From the viewpoint of resource mobilisation theory, the motivation for ETA to increase its political violence in the face of demobilisation can be twofold: to re-mobilise the masses and/or to compensate the reduction in the ‘power of numbers’ with the ‘power of violence’. Finally, ETA was further encouraged to escalate its armed activity because it had the necessary resources at its disposal. Because this aspect also enabled ETA to step up its political violence, I discuss this in the next section.

In sum, I reason, ETA deliberately stepped up its political violence first and foremost in light of its strategy of forcing negotiations with the Spanish government, whereby it sought to the acceptance of its five-point KAS Alternative in return for a truce. That this escalation occurred at this moment in time was spurred by a certain sense of urgency on ETA’s side, which stemmed from the increasing

¹⁹⁴ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 459.

¹⁹⁵ PNV official in an interview in 1979, cited in: Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 453.

¹⁹⁶ Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns,” 104; Lilli, “Basques, Catalans, Primordialism and Violence,” 337.

¹⁹⁷ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 104; Casquete, “From Imagination to Visualization: Protest Rituals in the Basque Country,” 25.

¹⁹⁸ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 105; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 458.

¹⁹⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 279.

²⁰⁰ Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, “Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy,” 445; Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 612, 624.

²⁰¹ *Zutik* № 69, cited in: Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 624.

consolidation of the Spanish democracy. Moreover, additional strategic motivations for ETA to increase its armed activity include the perceived ineffectiveness of institutional forms of contention, the need to tactically differentiate itself from both the PNV and ETApM, in reaction to demobilisation, and, finally, because it had the resources to do so.

3.3.2. Availability of necessary resources to escalate

The fact that ETA could, in practice, endorse and sustain its campaign of heightened political violence, I argue, stems from the available resources it had at its disposal. Although I stated that in previous years ETA also developed the necessary organisational structure and popular support to carry out its strategy of political violence, at this moment in time, ETA could materialise on these as well as additional ones. Thereby, from the viewpoint of resource mobilisation theory, ETA's decision to scale up its armed activity was a rational decision based on the wide availability of resources as well as its ability to mobilise more resources. This I will now discuss in further detail.

Looking at the organisational situation, ETA's ability to scale up its political violence resulted from the reorganisation and reorientation towards the struggle initiated in 1974. Having overcome this adaptation phase in the years 1977-78, ETA was now equipped with the organisational structure and military strength to escalate its strategy. Its highly centralised leadership was questioned neither through internal participation mechanisms nor by those in favour of a more moderate discourse, since the latter had formed ETApM.²⁰² As a result, collective ideological and political reflection was pushed into the background and the primacy of the armed struggle became self-evident.²⁰³ Besides, ETA's military strength resulted from a strong military preparation as well as its clandestine organisational structure.²⁰⁴ In basic terms, this structure was based on the division between 'legales' and 'ilegales'. While the 'legales' lived a normal life in the Spanish Basque Country, the 'ilegales' were the leaders of ETA, who resided in France and crossed the border clandestinely to realise armed actions.²⁰⁵ The former group facilitated the 'ilegales' with accommodation, transportation, information, and other necessities.²⁰⁶ Additionally, the advance in ETA's organisational structure is manifest in two more facets. Firstly, ETA's resources were increased by the incorporation of the 'comandos Bereziak' from ETApM. In late 1977, these 'special' commandos rejected ETApM's shift towards institutional politics and ultimately decided to integrate into ETA.²⁰⁷ As these commandos constituted the bulk of armed groups aligned to ETApM, the consequence of the secession was twofold. While for ETA this significantly increased its resources to carry out armed actions, it left ETApM practically without the

²⁰² Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 277; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 276.

²⁰³ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 278.

²⁰⁴ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 265-66.

²⁰⁵ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 286-87; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 438.

²⁰⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 287; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 438.

²⁰⁷ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 80-81, 93; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 11, 218; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 266.

possibility to engage in armed activity.²⁰⁸ Secondly, in this period, ETA was apparently not negatively affected by the efforts of the Spanish police to arrest its militants. Notably, over the years 1978-79, ETA was able to organise twenty-four commandos more than dismantled by the Spanish security apparatus.²⁰⁹

In terms of popular support, this period was marked by a high level of approval and explicit support in Basque society for ETA's radical discourse and methods. Illustratively, in surveys conducted in 1978 and 1979, less than 20 per cent of Basque respondents perceived ETA militants as 'crazy' or 'common criminals'.²¹⁰ In contrast, almost half of the Basque respondents described ETA militants as either 'patriots' or 'idealists'.²¹¹ This popular support can also be seen in the votes for HB, the party linked to ETA, during the elections in this period. While in the 1979 general elections HB obtained 15 per cent of the vote, this increased to 17 per cent in the 1980 regional elections and thereby HB became the second party in the Basque parliament after the PNV.²¹² As a spokesperson of the KAS stated in *El País*, HB offered "a programme that includes the KAS Alternative [and which] should replace the parliamentary alternative".²¹³ Interestingly, in these 1980 elections, the party backing ETApM, EE, won less votes than HB (10 compared to 17 per cent) and the PNV constituted an absolute majority as a result of HB's abstentionist stance.²¹⁴ Moreover, in ETA's view, popular support for its rejectionist stance towards the transition was also manifest in the 1978 referendum on the Constitution. Hereby, ETA added the 'no'-votes (25 per cent) to the abstentions (55 per cent) and interpreted this as a rejection of the Constitution by a large majority in the Basque Country.²¹⁵ Interestingly, the Basque Country was the only region in Spain where the Constitution was not passed by a large majority of the population.²¹⁶ As a result of its extensive popular support, ETA could rely on Basque society for endorsement of its radical stance and methods as well as a flow of militants and other resources.²¹⁷

Finally, I note that ETA's strength in terms of resources and popular support can also be induced from its ability to realise different strategic campaigns over the years 1978-80. Besides targeting the Spanish government in light of its negotiation strategy, ETA deliberately carried out armed actions against other actors for different purposes. For example, ETA carried out a large number of actions against French targets in 1979, such as the French consulate in Seville, and French

²⁰⁸ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 282.

²⁰⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 286, 288.

²¹⁰ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 449.

²¹¹ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 449.

²¹² Database of the Basque Autonomous Government (Eusko Jaurlaritzza/Gobierno Vasco), accessible via http://www.euskadi.eus/q93TodoWar/eleccionesJSP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_1&opcion=menu.

²¹³ Javier Angulo, "Los Candidatos Electos de La Izquierda Abertzale No Ocuparán Sus Escaños," *El País*, 1979, https://elpais.com/diario/1979/01/11/espana/284857223_850215.html, my translation.

²¹⁴ Interestingly, the PNV obtained only 38 per cent of the votes: its absolute majority was due to the fact that HB did not occupy its parliamentary seats. See: Database of the Basque Autonomous Government (*Eusko Jaurlaritzza/Gobierno Vasco*), accessible via http://www.euskadi.eus/q93TodoWar/eleccionesJSP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_1&opcion=menu; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 117; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 302.

²¹⁵ Database of the Basque Autonomous Government (Eusko Jaurlaritzza/Gobierno Vasco), accessible via http://www.euskadi.eus/q93TodoWar/eleccionesJSP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_1&opcion=menu; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 253-54; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 452.

²¹⁶ Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns," 101; Casquete, "From Imagination to Visualization: Protest Rituals in the Basque Country," 25.

²¹⁷ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 276.

companies and banks.²¹⁸ This campaign was an explicit response to the arrest of ETA militants by the French police and the subsequent extradition of seven detainees to Spain.²¹⁹ Here, I should add that it was the first time that the French government made such a decision, since it generally tolerated ETA presence in return for ETA to keep Basque nationalism in France ‘under control’.²²⁰ To this point I will return later. Other campaigns in this period include one against the energy company Iberduero for its plans to construct a nuclear power plant in Lemóniz (Basque Country)²²¹, one against the transfer of ETA detainees to a maximum security prison outside the Basque Country²²², and one against drugs as a “tool of alienation and repression”.²²³ ETA’s ability to realise these campaigns, in addition to pressuring ‘Madrid’ to accept its KAS Alternative, illustrate the large availability of resources in this period.

Therefore, in sum, I argue that ETA’s escalation of political violence over the years 1978-80 can be explained by looking at both its strategic motivations as well as its ability to materialise on the available resources. Especially its organisational structure and extensive popular support for its radical methods enabled ETA to endorse and sustain a heightened level of armed activity in this period.

3.4. ETA’s reduced level of political violence (1981-90s)

Following ETA’s escalation, the next period was characterised by a sharp decline in its armed activity.²²⁴ More specifically, in 1981, the number of deadly victims decreased by more than half compared to the previous year. This reduced level of political violence was more or less sustained over the next years, but from 1988 onwards, ETA’s level of political violence decreased to that at the time of the Francoist regime and the beginning of the transition. In this section, I look at why ETA did not sustain or further escalate its strategy of political violence after 1980.

3.4.1. Continuity in ETA’s strategy and campaigns

Approaching ETA as a rational actor, one possible explanation for the reduction in ETA’s armed activity could be that it was the consequence of deliberate decisions or strategic changes. Paradoxically, I argue, no apparent shifts in ETA’s strategy or campaigns can be observed. Firstly, the reduction in armed activity was neither preceded by advances in ETA’s strategy of pressuring ‘Madrid’ to accept the KAS Alternative, nor by ETA’s abandonment of this strategy. Interestingly, during a reunion of the KAS in early 1981, the People’s Socialist Revolutionary Party (*Herri Alderdi Sozialista Iraultzailea*; HASI), which formed part of the political coalition HB, considered that at that moment in time they

²¹⁸ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 245–46.

²¹⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 290; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 245.

²²⁰ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 290.

²²¹ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 251–53; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 299; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 100.

²²² Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 110; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 314.

²²³ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 309, my translation.

²²⁴ Sánchez-Cuenca, “Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA,” 612; Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” 32.

were “much closer to negotiation” with the central government.²²⁵ Moreover, in a 1983 document, the KAS reaffirmed the importance of the armed struggle by stating that “the independentist strategy constitutes the motor of the class struggle that in the south of Euskadi adopts the form of a struggle for national liberation, in which the maximum exponent, its safeguarding axis and key success is the armed struggle”.²²⁶ Thus, ETA persisted in its strategy of negotiations and continued to underline the primacy of the armed struggle.

Furthermore, ETA continued some of the campaigns it had initiated during its escalation phase and initiated new ones. For example, ETA persisted in its violent actions against Iberduero and the nuclear power plant under construction in Lemóniz.²²⁷ When, in 1982, ETA killed a second engineer of the plant and generalised its threat to all personnel, Iberduero and the Spanish government decided to end the Lemóniz nuclear project.²²⁸ In the eyes of ETA, this decision symbolised that violence was an effective instrument to achieve political results.²²⁹ Another example of a campaign of armed activity by ETA is the one against Spanish banking entities in the years 1982-84, viewing these as “one of the key supporter of the regime of oppression and exploitation”.²³⁰ In this campaign, main Spanish banks received letters demanding a specified amount of pesetas under the threat of an “armed offensive” against the bank’s assets or board of directors if not paid within the specified timeframe.²³¹ Moreover, in response to regular French efforts to arrest ETA militants residing there from 1984 onwards, ETA carried out a campaign of armed actions against, in the words of ETA’s leadership, “everything French”, that lasted until 1991.²³² Furthermore, in 1991, ETA initiated a campaign aimed at forcing negotiations with the central government by threatening to disrupt the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992.²³³ Yet other examples include the campaigns against tourism in 1985-86²³⁴, against prison officials from 1988 onwards²³⁵, and in opposition to the Navarre-Guipúzcoa highway from 1989-92.²³⁶

Additionally, I argue that several events in this period provided ETA with the necessary justification to continue its discourse of disguised Francoism and thus to persist in its intensified armed activity. Importantly, this discourse was reinforced by the 1981 attempted coup d’état: this led to ETA’s observation of “a process of refascisation”²³⁷ and of the Spanish government as “the last

²²⁵ Citation from a reunion of the KAS published in *Zutabe* Nº 24, April 1981, see: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 229, my translation.

²²⁶ KAS document titled ‘Ponencia KAS Bloque Dirigente’ cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 342, my translation.

²²⁷ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 252; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 307.

²²⁸ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 254; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 307.

²²⁹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 308.

²³⁰ Communiqué by ETA from June 1982, cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 257, my translation. See also: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 308.

²³¹ Communiqué by ETA from June 1982, cited in Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 257, my translation.

²³² Letter by ETA’s leadership from March 1984, seized from the ‘comando Buruntza’ and collected in the Atestado 86/84 of the Guardia Civil de Guipúzcoa, cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 246, my translation.

²³³ Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” 32; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 377.

²³⁴ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 333.

²³⁵ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 358.

²³⁶ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 254–56.

²³⁷ *Zuzen* from January 1982, cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 305, my translation.

endeavour before the formation of a military government".²³⁸ Besides, this discourse of continued Francoism was strengthened by the adoption of the Organic Law for the Harmonisation of the Process of Self-Government (*Ley Orgánica de Armonización del Proceso Autonómico*; LOAPA) in the aftermath of the attempted coup. Intended to harmonise the process of decentralisation under the Statutes of Autonomy, this law in practice limited the transferral of powers from 'Madrid' to the Autonomous Communities, including the Basque Country.²³⁹ Although the LOAPA was annulled in 1983, for a time it added to ETA's claims of a dictatorial government unwilling to grant autonomy to the Basque Country. Furthermore, between 1983 to 1987, so-called Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups (*Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación*; GAL) aimed to eliminate ETA militants.²⁴⁰ These GAL were allegedly organised and controlled by the Spanish government. The significance of the GAL, I contend, lies not so much in their effect on ETA's organisational resources, since these are reported to have killed a relatively small number of ETA militants.²⁴¹ Rather, the GAL and its 'dirty war' supplied ETA with legitimising arguments, i.e. adding to its claims of disguised Francoism.²⁴² In sum, ETA continued its strategy of negotiations, persisted in campaigns of armed activity and initiated new ones, and sustained its justification for political violence because of disguised Francoism.

From this, I reason that ETA did not deliberately scale down its armed activity from 1981 onwards: the drop in political violence was neither a rational decision nor an intentional result of a changed strategy. This argument is sustained when specifically looking at communication from the mid-1980s between ETA's leadership and its 'comandos'. Herein, ETA's direction repeatedly addressed the issue of lower than expected numbers of armed actions in the campaign against French interests.²⁴³ For instance, in October 1985, ETA's leadership communicated that "we must take the campaign against French interests more serious, because it gives us the feeling that you do not put in all the eagerness that is needed for this campaign to advance".²⁴⁴ The question therefore remains: why did a decrease in ETA's armed activity occur?

3.4.2. Explaining the decrease in ETA's political violence

To understand the drop in ETA's political violence from 1981 onwards, I firstly use the lens of political opportunity structures. From this viewpoint, democracy and institutional claim-making further consolidated and the 'rules of the game' had been definitely formulated. With the adoption of the Constitution and the Statute of Autonomy, ETA's attempt to prevent the consolidation of the transition

²³⁸ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 305, my translation.

²³⁹ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 119.

²⁴⁰ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 317; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 37; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 620.

²⁴¹ According to Law, the GAL killed at least twenty-seven people, of which nine were ETA-members. See: Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 243.

²⁴² Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 37; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 243.

²⁴³ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 247-48.

²⁴⁴ Letter dated 1 of October 1985 signed by 'Artapalo' and addressed to 'comando Oker', cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 248, my translation.

in the short run disappeared from the horizon.²⁴⁵ Also, the Statute of Autonomy was implemented, whereby importantly in 1980 the Basque autonomous government led by the PNV took office, and in 1982 a new Basque police force, Ertzaintza, was created and took over ordinary police tasks from the Spanish security forces.²⁴⁶ Here I should emphasise that moderate Basque nationalism, in the form of PNV, thus strengthened its position: it governed in the Basque Country. Furthermore, the consolidation of democracy is also manifest in the definite shift towards institutionalisation by ETApM. From 1980 onwards, ETApM was increasingly inclined to fully give up its armed activity. Illustratively, in 1980, former ETA member and the leader of EE Mario Onaindia publicly criticised ETApM's continuation of political violence, considering this "harmful to the democratic process".²⁴⁷ This was fuelled by both the participation of its political coalition EE in the Basque autonomous parliament and ETApM's cooperation in the so-called 'policy of reintegration'.²⁴⁸ The latter policy opened the way for former ETA militants to abandon their weapons and receive individual pardons.²⁴⁹ As a result, ETApM carried out only ten armed actions in 1981 and decided to dissolve itself later that in that same year.²⁵⁰ Therefore, I view the consolidation of democracy, in particular the PNV's dominance in the Basque autonomous government, and the dissolution of ETApM, as signifying a definite turn towards institutionalised contention within broad sectors of Basque society. Illustratively, in 1986, eight out of ten Basques expressed their confidence in the democratic system.²⁵¹

Furthermore, I again look at the organisational structure and popular support to understand the decline in political violence from 1981 onwards. In terms of organisational situation, two facets account for organisational problems that hindered ETA's ability to realise a (further) escalation of armed activity: police efforts and internal criticism. Regarding this first facet, the 1980s stand out for the high number of arrests made by the Spanish police and the shift in the French government's attitude towards ETA. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Spanish police arrested much more ETA militants than in previous years.²⁵² Besides, in the mid-1980s, the French government changed its tolerant attitude towards ETA militants residing in the French Basque Country. Until then, with the exception of the French arrests in 1979, the French authorities had neither actively gone after ETA militants nor responded to Spanish requests to cooperate on this issue.²⁵³ However, from 1984 onwards, the French authorities started to arrest ETA militants residing there on a regular basis.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁵ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 303.

²⁴⁶ Jaime-Jiménez and Reinales, "The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy," 172; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 36, 39.

²⁴⁷ "ETAm Trata de Obligar Al Gobierno a Negociar.", my translation.

²⁴⁸ Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 120-21; Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," 102; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 436.

²⁴⁹ Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," 102.

²⁵⁰ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 218; Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 433.

²⁵¹ Llera Ramo, "Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992," 88.

²⁵² Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, "ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement," 133; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 626.

²⁵³ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 315; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 246.

²⁵⁴ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 246.

Moreover, two years later, the French authorities also began to turn over ETA militants to Spain²⁵⁵ and to carry out police operations aimed at dismantling ETA's infrastructure.²⁵⁶ Importantly, in 1992, ETA's leadership was arrested during a police operation in Bidart, France.²⁵⁷ Shortly afterwards, those militants who had substituted this leadership were also detained by the French police.²⁵⁸ ETA was particularly touched by the French efforts because, as mentioned, the French Basque Country had served as a de facto sanctuary for ETA's leadership and other 'ilegales'.²⁵⁹ This is especially manifest in the further decline in ETA's armed activity from 1992 onwards. As a consequence of the arrests by both the Spanish and French police, ETA faced a precarious organisational situation. More specifically, ETA's organisational resources were affected by problems in terms of coordination and communication within ETA and the KAS as well as difficulties to reorganise itself to avert further detentions.²⁶⁰ Moreover, this precarious organisational situation was further aggravated by new policies of the Basque and Spanish security forces. For example, in 1987, the Basque Ministries of Justice and Interior reversed the Spanish policy of concentration of detained ETA militants in maximum security prisons outside of the Basque Country.²⁶¹ Instead, these ministries implemented a policy of dispersion that entailed the redistribution of detained ETA militants to different prisons throughout Spain in order to rupture the communes of especially ETA leaders in prison.²⁶² Additionally, while in the previous period ETA had been able to draw on excesses by the Spanish police to justify its discourse and mobilise resources, this was no longer the case from the beginning of the 1980s onwards. On the one hand, the Spanish police interventions during demonstrations became less transgressive, which resulted in less victims in protests, and from 1985 onwards became preventive rather than reactive.²⁶³ On the other hand, the Spanish police adopted a new, selective strategy towards what they deemed terrorism, whereby indiscriminate detentions occurred much less.²⁶⁴ These shifts in Spanish policing, I reason, contributed to the fact that ETA could no longer rely on support stemming from its claims of continued repression and public disapproval of the Spanish security forces.

Turning to the second facet that resulted in organisational problems for ETA, internal criticism of ETA's armed activity emerged within the KAS. As part of the Lemóniz campaign, in 1981, ETA

²⁵⁵ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 444; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 248.

²⁵⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 272.

²⁵⁷ Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 615; Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 28; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 219; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 347.

²⁵⁸ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 11-12; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 389.

²⁵⁹ Martínez-Herrera, "Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001," 29; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 326.

²⁶⁰ Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," 436, 444; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 272, 352; Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 626.

²⁶¹ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 356-57.

²⁶² Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 356-57.

Currently, the policy of dispersion is still being implemented. In 2017, the Spanish Minister of Interior, Juan Ignacio Zoido, stated that first "the definitive dissolution of ETA [and] final disarmament" should take place, before "some steps can be taken", hereby referring to inter alia the policy of dispersion. See: Pedro Gorospe, "El Gobierno Mantendrá La Dispersión de Presos Mientras ETA No Se Disuelva," *El País*, August 2, 2017, https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/08/02/actualidad/1501668224_985878.html.

²⁶³ Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, "The Policing of Social Protest in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy," 171, 180, 185.

²⁶⁴ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 356.

kidnapped and killed the chief engineer of operations of the nuclear power plant José María Ryan.²⁶⁵ This resulted in criticism from within the KAS for one of the first times. Nonetheless, when some days later an ETA member in prison died from the consequences of torture by the Spanish police, this internal disapproval withered soon.²⁶⁶ The previously critical HASI, that formed part of HB and the KAS, now stated that “Ryan’s action is a qualitative leap”.²⁶⁷ Especially when ETA’s actions became more indiscriminate, a point to which I return shortly, sectors of the KAS started to again criticise its targeting of civilians.²⁶⁸ Importantly, the party leader of HASI, Txomin Ziluaga, overtly expressed his disagreement with ETA’s bombing of the Hipercor supermarket in Barcelona in 1987, which caused 21 deaths and 45 wounded.²⁶⁹ He stated that ETA “should take a vacation” and opt for a “tactical withdrawal”.²⁷⁰ This internal criticism, I reason, further contributed to organisational problems for ETA and thereby hindered its ability to sustain a heightened level of political violence.

Besides its precarious organisational situation, a reduction in popular support can furthermore explain ETA’s drop in political violence. Notably, ETA saw its popular support decline over the course of the 1980s and 1990s.²⁷¹ In 1981, the first big popular manifestation against ETA was organised.²⁷² The previously mentioned assassination of the chief engineer of operations of the Lemóniz nuclear plant by ETA resulted in an unprecedented rejection in Basque society.²⁷³ Moreover, in March 1989, in the words of *El País*, the “biggest manifestation in Basque history” took place in Bilbao during which around 200.000 Basques called for “peace now and forever”.²⁷⁴ Additionally, in a survey conducted in 1991, 78 per cent of the Basque respondents agreed with the statement “ETA has become an obstacle for progress in the Basque Country and the best it can do is dissolve itself without further ado”.²⁷⁵ Besides, the reduction in popular support was fuelled by the fact that civilians were more often victims in ETA’s armed actions.²⁷⁶ The previous escalation of political violence was accompanied by an increase in the number of civilian victims, although this was more of a side-effect than an intentional effort of ETA. In particular, from the mid-1980s onwards, ETA’s actions became increasingly indiscriminate and it deliberately targeted civilians.²⁷⁷ This was a consequence of ETA’s

²⁶⁵ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 252–53.

²⁶⁶ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 307; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 253.

²⁶⁷ *Zutabe* Nº 24, April 1981, cited in: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 253, my translation.

²⁶⁸ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 341.

²⁶⁹ Terra Lliure moreover names the results of the various elections and the ‘harsh’ treatment of its imprisoned militants. See: Luis Aizpeolea, “Hipercor, El Mayor Crimen de ETA,” *El País*, June 19, 2017, https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/06/18/actualidad/1497806670_627626.html.

²⁷⁰ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 343, my translation.

²⁷¹ Llera Ramo, “Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992,” 92; Shabad and Llera Ramo, “Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain,” 443.

²⁷² Llera Ramo, “Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992,” 95.

²⁷³ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 307; Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 253.

²⁷⁴ “La Mayor Manifestación de La Historia Vasca Pide La ‘paz Ahora Y Para Siempre,” *El País*, March 19, 1989, https://elpais.com/diario/1989/03/19/espana/606265203_850215.html, my translation.

²⁷⁵ Llera Ramo, “Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992,” 101, my translation.

²⁷⁶ Here I should note that between 60 and 70 per cent of ETA’s victims were policemen and military officers, while the remainder were civilians either accidentally killed or deliberately targeted by ETA. See: Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 222; Llera Ramo, Mata, and Irvin, “ETA: From Secret Army to Social Movement - The Post-Franco Schism of The Basque Nationalist Movement,” 132; Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 135.

²⁷⁷ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 275–76.

augmented usage of more damaging tactics, most importantly car bombs, although I should note that ETA implemented these tactics primarily outside of what they understood to be the Spanish Basque Country, i.e. the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre.²⁷⁸ One example of such an action is the previously mentioned bombing of the Hipercor supermarket in Barcelona in 1987.²⁷⁹ These indiscriminate tactics, I argue, triggered a further reduction of popular support for ETA in the late 1980s. This is also evident when looking at the newly created pacifist movements in Basque society, for instance ‘Gesture for Peace’ or ‘the Association for Peace in Euskal Herria’.²⁸⁰

Criticism of ETA did not only emerge in the KAS and in Basque society, but also across the political spectrum in the Basque Country. Interestingly, the PNV shifted its attitude and started to explicitly distance itself from ETA from the 1980s onwards. Illustratively, in late 1980, representatives of the PNV together with the Union of the Democratic Centre (*Unión de Centro Democrático*; UCD) and the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*; PSOE) convoked a demonstration “against terrorism and for peace” in Donostia-San Sebastián.²⁸¹ Moreover, political parties in both the national and Basque parliament unified themselves to pressure ETA to put down its weapons. In 1987, all political parties represented in the Spanish parliament signed the Pact of Madrid, including the PNV and EE, but with the exception of HB²⁸² and a splinter party from the PNV named Basque Solidarity (*Eusko Alkartasuna*, EA). Herein, these parties “denounce[d] the lack of legitimacy of ETA to express the will of the Basque people and, consequently, reject[ed] ETA’s claim to negotiate the political problems of the Basque people”.²⁸³ Moreover, they addressed ETA to “definitively abandon its weapons and accept the democratic system”.²⁸⁴ These points were repeated by all political parties with representation in the Basque autonomous parliament, again expect for HB, with the signing of the Agreement for the Normalisation and Pacification of the Basque Country (*Acuerdo para la Normalización y Pacificación de Euskadi*), better known as Pact of Ajuria-Enea.²⁸⁵ Interestingly, ETA observed this pact to resonate in Basque society, admitting that the signatory political parties were “attacking with a violence and unity never seen and recently obtaining social recognition”.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁸ Domínguez Iribarren, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa Y Actuaciones 1978-1992*, 260, 276–76; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 333.

²⁷⁹ Terra Lliure moreover names the results of the various elections and the ‘harsh’ treatment of its imprisoned militants. See: Aizpeolea, “Hipercor, El Mayor Crimen de ETA.”

²⁸⁰ Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 272, 350.

²⁸¹ Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 119.

²⁸² Interestingly, the support for HB remained relatively constant over these years, ranging between 15 and 18 per cent of the vote in elections between 1982 and 1994. This can be explained, I argue, by the continued support of a radical ‘nucleus’ in Basque society. The reduction in popular support can thus not be explicitly observed within these radical sectors, but instead among broader sectors in Basque society. See: Database of the Basque Autonomous Government (*Eusko Jaurlaritz/Gobierno Vasco*), accessible via http://www.euskadi.eus/q93TodoWar/elecciones/SP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_1&opcion=menu.

²⁸³ *El Pacto de Madrid* (Spain, 1987), http://www.elmundo.es/eta/documentos/pacto_madrid.html, my translation.

²⁸⁴ *El Pacto de Madrid*, my translation.

²⁸⁵ *El Pacto de Ajuria Enea*, 1988, http://www.elmundo.es/eta/documentos/pacto_ajuria_enea.html; Barros, Passos, and Gil-Alana, “The Timing of ETA Terrorist Attacks,” 337; Llera Ramo, “Violencia Y Opinión Pública En El País Vasco, 1978-1992,” 88, 103; Martínez-Herrera, “Nationalist Extremism and Outcomes of State Policies in the Basque Country, 1979-2001,” 30; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 272.

²⁸⁶ Cited in: Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 369, my translation.

In sum, I argue that the sharp decrease in ETA's armed activity from the year 1981 onwards was not the consequence of a strategic, rational decision. Instead, this drop can be explained by looking, firstly, at the consolidation of democracy and a subsequent confidence in institutional forms of contention in broad sectors of Basque society. Moreover, in this period, ETA's resources became more scarce and its ability to mobilise these resources dropped. On the one hand, its organisational strength was negatively affected by police operations of both the Spanish and French security forces as well as internal criticism within the KAS. On the other hand, popular support for its strategy of political violence reduced and most political parties, including the PNV and EE, acted in unity to pressure ETA to abandon this strategy. As a result of these dynamics, from 1981 onwards, ETA was neither able to sustain or further intensify level of political violence, nor to resume its previous escalation at a later moment. Moreover, this inability is manifest in the fact that ETA was willing to enter talks with the Spanish government, i.e. to negotiate in the literal sense of the word. Interestingly, in early 1989, ETA declared two ceasefires that enabled talks between representatives of ETA and the PSOE-government in Algiers, Algeria.²⁸⁷ These talks, however, did not result in a definite end of ETA's armed activity. After declaring new ceasefires in 1996, 1998, 2006 and 2010, ETA announced a "definitive cessation" of its armed struggle in 2011.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Sánchez-Cuenca, "Analyzing Temporal Variation in the Lethality of ETA," 615, 618; Garmendia, Jauregui, and Domínguez Iribarren, *La Historia de ETA*, 360–62.

²⁸⁸ "Basque Group ETA Says Armed Campaign Is over."

4. Terra Lliure and Catalan nationalism

In this chapter, I shift the focus to Terra Lliure and Catalan nationalism and I again aim to explain two dynamics: why did Terra Lliure opt for political violence as the preferred form of contention from 1978 onwards, and why did its level of armed activity peak over the years 1987-88? To understand why Terra Lliure was formed in 1978, I begin by looking at why political violence did not take off during the final years of the Franco-regime and the initial phase of the transition. This is followed by an analysis of why a radicalisation within Catalan nationalism did occur in 1978. Here, I study the emergence of Terra Lliure, its strategy of political violence, and the initial low level of armed activity. In the next sections, I analyse the record peak in political violence in 1987-88, and I look at the subsequent reduction in Terra Lliure's level of armed activity. For a full overview of the temporal fluctuations in Terra Lliure's level of political violence, see Figure 2.

4.1. Catalan nationalism during the Franco-regime (1940s-75)

On the basis of political opportunity structures, as outlined above, the context of Francoism inclined movements towards transgressive forms of contention due to the absence of institutional forms to voice political claims. In line with this lens, different radical organisations within Catalan nationalism sought recourse to violent forms of contention in this period. These include the Popular Catalan Army (*Exèrcit Popular Català*; EPOCA), the Catalan Liberation Front (*Front d'Alliberament Català*; FAC), the Organisation of the Armed Struggle (*Organització de la Lluita Armada*; OLLA), and the Socialist Party of National Liberation–Provisional (*Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional–Provisional*; PSAN-P).²⁸⁹ Interestingly, the OLLA and PSAN-P emerged from the in 1969 formed Socialist Party of National Liberation (*Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional*; PSAN)²⁹⁰, a dynamic similar to that of ETA-PNV in the late 1950s. Nonetheless, the above-named groups were neither able to energise a broad campaign of political violence nor to develop into solid organisations.

Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to provide an in-depth analysis of this dynamic, I point to two facets that explain why political violence did not take off in Catalonia during the Francoist period. Firstly, the unity that characterised Catalan nationalism signals the relative absence of radicalisation and differentiation within this movement. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, the former nationalist parties formed the National Front of Catalonia (*Front Nacional de Catalunya*; FNC).²⁹¹ Although the FNC broke up in 1969, which gave rise to the PSAN, this unity of opposition was

²⁸⁹ Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L'Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 38–39; Jaume Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, First ed. (Barcelona: El Llamp, 1986), 17–18; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 48–49.

²⁹⁰ Document titled "Per una política independentista de combat" as approved during the Second National Assembly of the MDT in April 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988* (Sant Boi de Llobregat: Lluita, 1988), 82.

²⁹¹ Document titled "Per una política independentista de combat" as approved during the Second National Assembly of the MDT in April 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 81; Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 14; Illas, "Is Catalan Separatism a Progressive Cause?," 7; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 126; David Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, First ed. (Barcelona: Llibres de l'Índex, 1994), 21; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 55.

soon restored.²⁹² Formed in 1971, the Assembly of Catalonia (*Assemblea de Catalunya*) included most Catalan political parties as well as cultural associations and trade unions.²⁹³ Interestingly, the Assembly also included the independentist PSAN, though the Left and in particular the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (*Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*; PSUC) was the driving force.²⁹⁴ Functioning as a unified platform against the Francoist regime²⁹⁵, the Assembly agreed on four minimum demands: [1] amnesty for political prisoners and exiles, [2] fundamental democratic liberties, [3] provisional restoration of the 1932 Catalan statute of autonomy, defined as the path to attain the full right to self-determination, and [4] coordination of the struggle for democracy.²⁹⁶ This unity of Catalan nationalism throughout the Francoist period points to the marginal position of partitioning, radical factions. This is particularly interesting given the relatively fragmented and radicalised political landscape in the Basque Country.²⁹⁷ Another, second reason why violent forms of contention did not materialise in Catalonia is the effectiveness of Francoist repression. Importantly, due to the relative small size of the above-named groups, the arrests of its militants disrupted the consolidation of these organisations. Moreover, in comparison to the Basque Country, I reason, the scale of repression was not large enough to energise a further radicalisation within the Catalan nationalist constituency. In sum, to understand why violent forms of contention did not take off in Catalonia during the Francoist period, it is important to consider that only minor factions radicalised its discourse and methods, and repression further prevented the consolidation of these organisations.

4.2. Catalan nationalism and the beginning of the transition to democracy (1975-78)

Again looking from the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, a different expectation can be formulated for the transition to democracy. As outlined before, the opening of institutional forms of contention would encourage political actors to defend their political interests in non-transgressive ways. Accordingly, this route of participation in democratic mechanisms characterised the political landscape in Catalonia in this period. In this context, I argue, political violence could not take off. This line of reasoning I will now explain.

Although the Catalan political parties were initially in favour of a full break with the Francoist regime, they dropped this vision after the 1976 referendum on the Political Reform Act (see Table 1). Despite the fact that these parties had called on their voters to abstain, 94 per cent of the Catalan voters

²⁹² Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 164; Illas, "Is Catalan Separatism a Progressive Cause?," 7; Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 15; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 21.

²⁹³ "Assemblea de Catalunya, Portaveu de La Comissió Permanent Nº 1a," 1972; Josep Maria Sòria, "Naixement i Mort de l'Assemblea de Catalunya," *La Vanguardia*, November 6, 2011, <http://www.lavanguardia.com/encatala/20111106/54237588105/naixement-i-mort-de-l-assemblea-de-catalunya.html>; Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 96; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 23.

²⁹⁴ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 96.

²⁹⁵ Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 164; Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 96.

²⁹⁶ "Assemblea de Catalunya, Portaveu de la Comissió Permanent, Nº 1a.", my translation.

²⁹⁷ Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns," 104; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142.

were in favour and only 26 per cent abstained.²⁹⁸ Consequently, the Catalan political opposition instead opted for a negotiated reform.²⁹⁹ This signalled their willingness to use institutional mechanisms to defend their political interests as well as to negotiate their shared demands with the central government.³⁰⁰ Here I should add that, after the death of Franco in 1975, the Assembly of Catalonia continued to represent a united opposition that demanded “freedom, amnesty and a statute of autonomy”, whereby this final point was still regarded as the path to attain self-determination.³⁰¹ To this end, it set up the Council of Political Forces of Catalonia (*Consell de Forces Polítiques de Catalunya*) tasked to negotiate these demands with the new regime.³⁰²

The continued unity of the opposition, I argue, leads to two important observations. On the one hand, there was no explicit need for radical Catalan nationalists to differentiate themselves from the Assembly. Nationalist demands were included in its minimum demands and thus shared across the united Catalan political opposition.³⁰³ In particular, by defining autonomy as an intermediary stage towards the broader goal of self-determination, the Assembly channelled both moderate and radical visions of nationalism. On the other hand, the continued unity of the opposition encouraged political forces to remain within the cadres of the Assembly’s strategy of negotiations. In particular, a radicalisation of political claims, or a deviation in other ways, implied that these would not be represented at the negotiating table with the central government. Hence, to explain why transgressive contention did not take off during the initial phase of the transition, I reason that radical Catalan nationalists took a rational decision to stay with institutional contention. This rational decision was based on two considerations: firstly, their demands were included by the Assembly, and, secondly, these factions considered the chances of the realisation of these demands higher when pursuing these within the cadres of the Assembly.

Additionally, over the course of the first years of the transition, two dynamics encouraged political claim-making to remain within institutional cadres in Catalonia. Firstly, the demands for “freedom, amnesty and a statute of autonomy” were largely met: the ban on publishing in the Catalan language was lifted in 1976³⁰⁴, the Catalan autonomous government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) was provisionally restored in 1977³⁰⁵, an Amnesty Law was approved in 1977³⁰⁶, democratic elections were held from 1977 onwards, a provisional autonomous government was decreed in 1977³⁰⁷, the

²⁹⁸ Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 62; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 170.

²⁹⁹ Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 170; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142.

³⁰⁰ Although the Catalan political parties gradually took over the initiative. See: Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 167; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142.

³⁰¹ “Assemblea de Catalunya: Portaveu Nº 2,” 1978.

³⁰² Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 64; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 167.

³⁰³ Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 1.

³⁰⁴ The daily newspaper *Avui* and radio station *Ràdio 4* started reporting and the Institute for Catalan Studies (*Institut d’Estudis Catalans*) was officially recognised. See: Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 169.

³⁰⁵ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142–43; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 26–27; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 172.

³⁰⁶ Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar, “Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy,” 434, 437.

³⁰⁷ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142–43; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 27.

1978 Constitution guaranteed fundamental democratic rights and recognised the “right to self-government of the nationalities”³⁰⁸, and a new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia was approved in 1979.³⁰⁹ In this Statute, amongst other things, the *Generalitat* and Catalonia’s own parliament were reinstated, the Catalan language was granted a co-official status, and matters of culture and education became largely regional competences.³¹⁰ This, I argue, signalled to the Catalan public and political parties that the central government was responsive to their political claims and that conventional, democratic forms of contention proved appropriate to accomplish their objectives.

Moreover, the Catalan public supported the demands prioritised by the Catalan political parties in the negotiations with the central government as well as at the outcomes of these negotiations and the transition in general. That the demands formulated by Assembly resonated among the Catalan population was reflected by the high level of political mobilisation: during the 1977 National Day of Catalonia (*Diada*), for instance, more than one million people are reported to have demonstrated for “freedom, amnesty and a statute of autonomy”.³¹¹ Moreover, the Catalan population widely supported the 1978 Constitution and the 1979 Statute of Autonomy, with respectively 91 and 88 per cent voting in favour in the endorsing referenda.³¹² This illustrates the broad public approval of both the outcomes of the transition and of the moderate, compromising stance of the Catalan political parties. Hence, the ability of the Catalan political parties to largely realise their demands, together with public support for this route, resulted in a positive evaluation of the transition. This, in turn, encouraged the Catalan public and the political parties to continue contention within conventional, institutional cadres. In this context, I reason, political violence was unlikely to materialise. Paradoxically, over the following years, radical nationalists did opt for transgressive, violent forms of contention. To this radicalisation, I turn now.

4.3. The formation of Terra Lliure and its strategy of political violence (1978-83)

Despite the broad support for the transition in Catalonia, small radical factions continued their advocacy for a complete break with the Francoist regime and opposed the outcomes of the democratisation process. In contrast to the viewpoint of political opportunity structures, these factions opted for forms of contention outside of the democratic framework. In particular, in 1978, different

³⁰⁸ Article 2 of *The Spanish Constitution*.

³⁰⁹ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 145.

³¹⁰ Instead of granting Catalonia the exclusive jurisdiction over matters of education, the construction of a ‘full’ competence made it possible for the Spanish state to reserve the right to intervene. See: *Ley Orgánica 4/1979, de 18 de Diciembre, de Estatuto de Autonomía de Cataluña* (Spain: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, 1979), <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1979-30178>; Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 115.

³¹¹ Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 164; Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 107–10; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 142.

³¹² Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals.

radical nationalist factions³¹³ formed Terra Lliure, meaning Free Land.³¹⁴ To bring about its political objectives of “Independence, Socialism, and the Reunification of the *Països Catalans!*”³¹⁵, Terra Lliure continuously stressed the importance of the armed struggle. This radicalisation within Catalan nationalism gives rise to question: why did political violence did take off at this moment in time?

4.3.1. Disenchantment among radical nationalists

To understand the incentives for radical nationalists to embrace a strategy of political violence, I discern three factors that marked the context in which Terra Lliure took root. Firstly, those in favour of independence for Catalonia felt ‘sold out’ by the main Catalan political parties: illustratively, they called the democratisation process the “transition of sales”.³¹⁶ Disapproving of the concessions done by the main Catalan political parties, former Terra Lliure militant Pere Bascompte recalled: “the only ones that defended the four points of the Assembly of Catalonia were the pro-independence parties”.³¹⁷ Interestingly, from 1977-78 onwards, the major Catalan parties, the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (*Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*; PSC), the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (*Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*; PSUC) and Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (*Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya*; CDC)³¹⁸, toned down their nationalist aspirations.³¹⁹ Here I should stress various aspects that are important for this line of reasoning. In the first place, one should consider that the unity of the Assembly of Catalonia ceased from 1977 onwards, mainly because the political parties needed to differentiate themselves in the run up to the general elections.³²⁰ Furthermore, I should emphasise the pragmatic and compromising stance of the main Catalan political parties, i.e. their willingness to negotiate ‘pactes’ with the central government. Illustratively, nowadays, the pragmatism that characterised Catalan nationalism from the 1970s to the early 2000s is oftentimes referred to as ‘a bird in the hand’ (*peix al cove; pájaro al mano*), hereby pointing to the saying ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’.³²¹ Moreover, although most Catalan political parties explicitly embraced nationalist

³¹³ These include the EPOCA, the FNC, the PSAN, and the Independentists of the Catalan Countries (*Independentistes dels Països Catalans*; IPC). Notably, most militants derived from the IPC and PSAN. The IPC was fruit of an alliance between the PSAN-P and the Socialist National Liberation Organisation (*Organització Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional*; OSAN), which originated from Northern Catalonia (France). See: Document titled “Per una política independentista de combat” as approved during the Second National Assembly of the MDT in April 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 80–119; Illas, “Is Catalan Separatism a Progressive Cause?,” 8.

³¹⁴ A communiqué spread by Terra Lliure in 1985 stated that the organisation was “unofficially” born in 1978. However, some other sources note later years. Former militant Jaume Fernández i Calvet for example defines 1980 as the year in which the armed faction was given its name of Terra Lliure. For this thesis, 1978 is taken as the year in which Terra Lliure took root, because it permits to include the first years of the organisation. See: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 46; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 9, 45.

³¹⁵ Communiqué by Terra Lliure titled “Terra Lliure al poble treballador català” from September 1982 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, First ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones El Jonc, 1999), 29, my translation.

³¹⁶ Cited in: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 62, my translation.

³¹⁷ Interview with Pere Bascompte in Bassa, *L'Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 20, my translation.

³¹⁸ In Catalonia, during the 1977 general elections, the PSC emerged as the biggest party with 29 per cent of the votes, PSUC as the second biggest obtained 18 per cent of the votes. The CDC, as the leading party within a broader coalition, received almost 17 per cent of the votes. Suárez' UCD turned out the third biggest party, also obtaining 17 per cent of the votes. See: Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals

³¹⁹ This is not to say that the negotiations were smooth and effortless, rather that the Catalan political parties were willing to negotiate. See: Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 177, 185.

³²⁰ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 113.

³²¹ Interestingly, in the run up to the 2017 referendum on independence, the then president of the Catalan autonomous government Carles Puigdemont explicitly rejected this ‘bird in the hand’. See: “Puigdemont Defensa que ‘Ni Autonomisme, Ni Peix Al Cove, Ni

viewpoints, they defined themselves primarily along left-right positions, rather than seeing nationalism as the fundamental element of their political view.³²²

The second factor that pushed radical Catalan nationalists towards transgressive contention is, I contend, their frustration with the outcomes of the transition. Notably, the PSAN and other independentist groups set up the Catalan Committee Against the Spanish Constitution (*Comitè Català Contra la Constitució Espanyola*), arguing that the 1978 Constitution denied the right to self-determination and imposed a division into artificial Autonomous Communities that disregarded the *Països Catalans*.³²³ In the eyes of radical Catalan nationalists, the *Països Catalans* correspond to the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands as well as Northern Catalonia in France. According to a former PSAN-member, if approved, the Constitution would be “the rules of the game for the next decades [and a] game in which the deck is stacked against us, one that we could never win”.³²⁴ Catalan independentists also opposed the 1979 Statute of Autonomy, viewing it as another instrument of state dominance and a deviation of popular interests.³²⁵ Nonetheless, with the adoption and subsequent ratification of the Constitution and the Statute of Autonomy, the independentist factions turned out unsuccessful in changing the course of the transition. Importantly, this resulted in disenchantment with institutional forms of contention.

Finally, I reason, frustration with these forms of contention was fuelled by the fact that independentist political parties were not able to defend their claims in the newly created democratic institutions. In the run up to the 1977 general elections, these parties, importantly the PSAN, were not legalised and thus not allowed to participate.³²⁶ In subsequent elections, independentist parties did participate, but failed to obtain parliamentary representation. In the 1979 general elections, the secessionist coalition Left Bloc for National Liberation (*Bloc d'Esquerra d'Alliberament Nacional; BEAN*)³²⁷ received insufficient votes to obtain a parliamentary seat.³²⁸ The 1980 Catalan regional elections produced a similar result: the BEAN and the newly formed independentist alliance Left Nationalists (*Nacionalistes d'Esquerra; NE*)³²⁹ participated with the intention of doing politics within the new autonomous parliament of Catalonia, but neither attained sufficient votes for parliamentary

Tripartits' i Garanteix El Referèndum,” *La Vanguardia*, April 15, 2017, <http://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20170415/421711365610/puigdemont-defensa-que-ni-autonomisme-ni-peix-al-cove-ni-tripartits-i-garanteix-el-referendum.html>, my translation.

For more on the saying ‘bird in the hand’, see: José Luis Barbería, “Cómo Hemos Llegado a Esto Y El Fin Del ‘Peix Al Cove’ (Pájaro En Mano),” *El País*, February 18, 2015, https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/02/17/actualidad/1424193589_368930.html; Pere Ríos, “El Estado Ha de Venir a Poner Orden En Cataluña,” *El País*, October 21, 2017, https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/10/19/catalunya/1508437257_177018.html.

³²² Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 197; Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 113.

³²³ Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 31, 78; Muro and Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure”; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 26; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 71.

³²⁴ Interview with Jordi Puig, cited in: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 241, my translation.

³²⁵ Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 27.

³²⁶ Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 65.

³²⁷ Formed in 1979 and dissolved in 1984, the BEAN comprised of the PSAN and the Catalan Workers Bloc (*Bloc Català dels Treballadors; BCT*). See: Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 35.

³²⁸ The BEAN received only 1.6 per cent of the votes in Catalonia. See: Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 35.

³²⁹ The NE was formed in 1979 by members of, amongst others, the PSAN and the FNC, and dissolved in 1984.

representation.³³⁰ Due to this extra-parliamentary position, Catalan independentists were frustrated with the democratic possibilities for contention and distanced themselves from it. To this latter point I will come back later. In sum, I argue that radical nationalist factions were disenchanted with the manner in which the transition unfolded. This frustration was, I reason, a result of their idea of being ‘sold out’, their disapproval of the outcomes of the transition, their apparent failure to change these outcomes, and their inability to enter into the newly created democratic institutions. This marked the context in which radical sectors opted for forms of contention outside of the democratic framework.³³¹

Additionally, radical nationalists perceived a social base to follow a transgressive path. While in November 1977 the majority of the independentist factions were still opposed to the use of political violence, as became clear during the Conference of Organisations of the Independentist Left (*Conferència d’Organitzacions d’Esquerra Independentista*), this attitude shifted shortly afterwards.³³² In the aftermath of the detention of independentists in 1977 in the so-called ‘Caso Bultó’³³³, attributed to EPOCA, a new anti-repression organisation, Socors Català, became the axis behind manifestations demanding “Freedom for Catalan Patriots”.³³⁴ This precluded the formation of the Committees of Solidarity with the Catalan Patriots (*Comitès de Solidaritat amb els Patriotes Catalans*; CSPC) in 1979 as a wider platform in defence of nationalist detainees. Interestingly, former Terra Lliure member Jaume Fernàndez i Calvet described the CSPC as “the first organisation within independentism with a broad base”.³³⁵ He interpreted the participation of Catalans without a direct connection to the prisoners in the CSPC as “a sign of political solidarity and identification by a sector of the Catalan people with the independentists’ political line and the role of the armed struggle in itself”.³³⁶ This perceived social base for a violent path, I argue, further incited radical nationalists to voice their demands outside of democratic, institutional cadres.

4.3.2. Political violence as the preferred form of contention

In this context of disenchantment with the democratisation process, Terra Lliure explicitly distanced itself from institutionalised politics. It defined the “independentist alternative” as directly opposed to the “constitutional/autonomist block”.³³⁷ In that regard, Terra Lliure radicalised both its discourse and methods. Looking at its discourse, it perceived autonomism a “cul de sac” and a mere perpetuation of

³³⁰ The NE obtained 1.7 per cent of the votes, while the 0.5 per cent of the census voted in favour of the BEAN. The nationalist coalition CiU, in which the CDC of Jordi Pujol was the dominant faction, became the leading minority party. See: Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 105; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 177.

³³¹ Interview with Pere Bascompte in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 19.

³³² Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 23.

³³³ In July 1977, the police detained four independentists in Barcelona for the murder of the industrialist José M. Bultó Marquès. See: Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 21; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 31–32.

³³⁴ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 22, my translation.

³³⁵ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 33, my translation.

³³⁶ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 32, my translation.

³³⁷ Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 73, my translation.

Spanish domination.³³⁸ Moreover, it saw the transition as a continuation of the dictatorship³³⁹, i.e. as a step from “franquisme” to “transfranquisme”.³⁴⁰ In terms of a radicalisation of its methods, Terra Lliure opted for political violence as the preferred form of transgressive contention. In the words of former militant Josep Serra, violent tactics were a way to “make progress in politics”.³⁴¹ Terra Lliure thus focused on symbolic violence, considering armed action not justifiable in itself.³⁴² This strategy of “propaganda armada” entailed a high selectivity of targets and an aversion of killing.³⁴³ More specifically, in line with the perception of continued Francoism, its targets were mainly buildings and institutions representing the Spanish state and individuals considered enemies of the Catalan nation.³⁴⁴ Here I should emphasise that Terra Lliure considered its self-defined “armed struggle”, as essential and a key point of reference.³⁴⁵ In particular, Terra Lliure specified the armed struggle as “the motor and vanguard of the movement”³⁴⁶, thereby embedding it in a broader, political strategy of what it termed ‘combative independentism’.³⁴⁷

To understand why Terra Lliure selected political violence as the preferred form of transgressive contention, I use the lens of resource mobilisation theory. From this viewpoint, I contend that Terra Lliure first and foremost opted for political violence to replace mobilisation, i.e. as a tactic of last resort. As outlined in the theoretical section, organisations are inclined towards political violence when institutionalised claim-making proves ineffective as well as in reaction to a position at the political fringes. This is especially relevant for Terra Lliure given the above-explained failure of radical independentists to influence the outcomes of the transition and to enter into parliamentary politics. Importantly, Terra Lliure specified that it was formed at the moment that Catalan independentism “became aware that its struggle was irremediably condemned to the margins and was preparing to continue its resistance”.³⁴⁸

Besides, I argue that Terra Lliure also opted for political violence because it was a particularly appropriate strategy to mobilise resources for its struggle. This line of reasoning is, interestingly,

³³⁸ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 11”, August-September 1986, 4.

³³⁹ Document Nº 2 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled “Una estratègia de resistència per endegar el procés d’alliberament nacional”, Fall 1988 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 132; Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 48.

³⁴⁰ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 11”, August-September 1986, 10.

³⁴¹ Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 43, my translation.

³⁴² Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles from January 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 42–43; interview with Carles Castellanos in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 85.

³⁴³ Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in February 1986 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 227; interviews with Carles Castellanos and Xavier Barberà in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 68, 85; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 33, 45, 75; Muro and Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure,” 47.

³⁴⁴ Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 75.

³⁴⁵ Communiqué by Terra Lliure titled “Terra Lliure al poble treballador català” from September 1982 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 28; Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles from January 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 43, 46; Alerta Nº 3 item titled “El moviment que necessitem” from June 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 55–57; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 15”, July 1987, 5.

³⁴⁶ Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles, January 1984, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 46, my translation.

³⁴⁷ Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in February 1986 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 226; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 10”, May 1986, 6; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 15”, July 1987, 5; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 21”, August 1988, 11; Interview with Pere Bascompte in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 21.

³⁴⁸ According to a communiqué issued by the Collective of Terra Lliure prisoners, cited in: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 46; Bassa et al., *L’independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 45, my translation.

somewhat similar to that of ETA in the 1960s. For Terra Lliure, the armed struggle functioned as a catalyst, i.e. to energise a broader Catalan National Liberation Movement (*Moviment Català d'Alliberament Nacional*; MCAN).³⁴⁹ This dynamic of mobilisation is twofold. On the one hand, the use of symbolic violence served to expose contradictions between, what Terra Lliure called, “mutually exclusive concepts”.³⁵⁰ These were formulated by Terra Lliure as “the Spanish state/the Catalan people”³⁵¹ or “our nation”/“the occupying forces”³⁵². In that regard, political violence served to create and/or strengthen the dichotomy between ‘us’ versus ‘them’. This emphasis on differences, in combination with Terra Lliure’s habit to seek media exposure of its actions³⁵³, was aimed to create awareness and mobilise its constituency.³⁵⁴ On the other hand, for Terra Lliure, political violence served to tactically differentiate itself from moderate nationalist parties. This was particularly important because, initially, most Catalan political parties voiced nationalist demands, and, later, the leading party in the *Generalitat*, Convergence and Union (*Convergència i Unió*; *CiU*), a coalition which included the CDC, had a strong nationalist orientation.³⁵⁵ To this latter point I return in the next section. By differentiating itself from these political parties, Terra Lliure could arouse support and resources from the radical, uncompromising part of the Catalan nationalist constituency. Hence, I contend, Terra Lliure opted for political violence both as a tactic of last resort and to mobilise resources for its struggle. Additionally, in its internal documentation, Terra Lliure pointed to the following justifications for the armed struggle: it gave credibility to its claims³⁵⁶, demonstrated the vulnerability of “the enemy”³⁵⁷, and served to maintain a spirit of combativity.³⁵⁸

4.3.3. Terra Lliure’s low level of armed activity in its first years

Terra Lliure’s motivations for political violence can also be interpreted as incentives to realise a high number of armed actions. Nonetheless, over the years 1978-83, Terra Lliure only sporadically engaged in armed activity.³⁵⁹ This was, I argue, not a deliberate decision: the actual level of political violence remained scarce also in the eyes of its founding militants.³⁶⁰ In this section, I look at why Terra Lliure could not realise a high number of armed actions.

³⁴⁹ Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles, January 1984, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 46; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 21”, August 1988; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 12.

³⁵⁰ Alerta Nº 22, November 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 154, my translation.

³⁵¹ Alerta Nº 22, November 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 154, my translation.

³⁵² Communiqué by Terra Lliure titled “Terra Lliure al poble treballador català” from September 1982 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 27.

³⁵³ Notably, after an armed action, Terra Lliure called news agencies or newspapers and left a communiqué in an appointed telephone booth. See: interview with Xavier Barberà in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 68; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 52.

³⁵⁴ Document Nº 2 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled “Una estratègia de resistència per endegar el procés d’alliberament nacional”, Fall 1988 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 140.

³⁵⁵ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 112; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 177; Payne, “Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns,” 100.

³⁵⁶ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 11”, August-September 1986, 6.

³⁵⁷ Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles, January 1984, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 46. Interview with Pere Bascompte in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 25.

³⁵⁸ Terra Lliure’s Declaration of Principles, January 1984, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 43.

³⁵⁹ Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punt de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biografia Autoritzada*, 266–67; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 75, 81; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 175–82; *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 273–81.

³⁶⁰ Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 48.

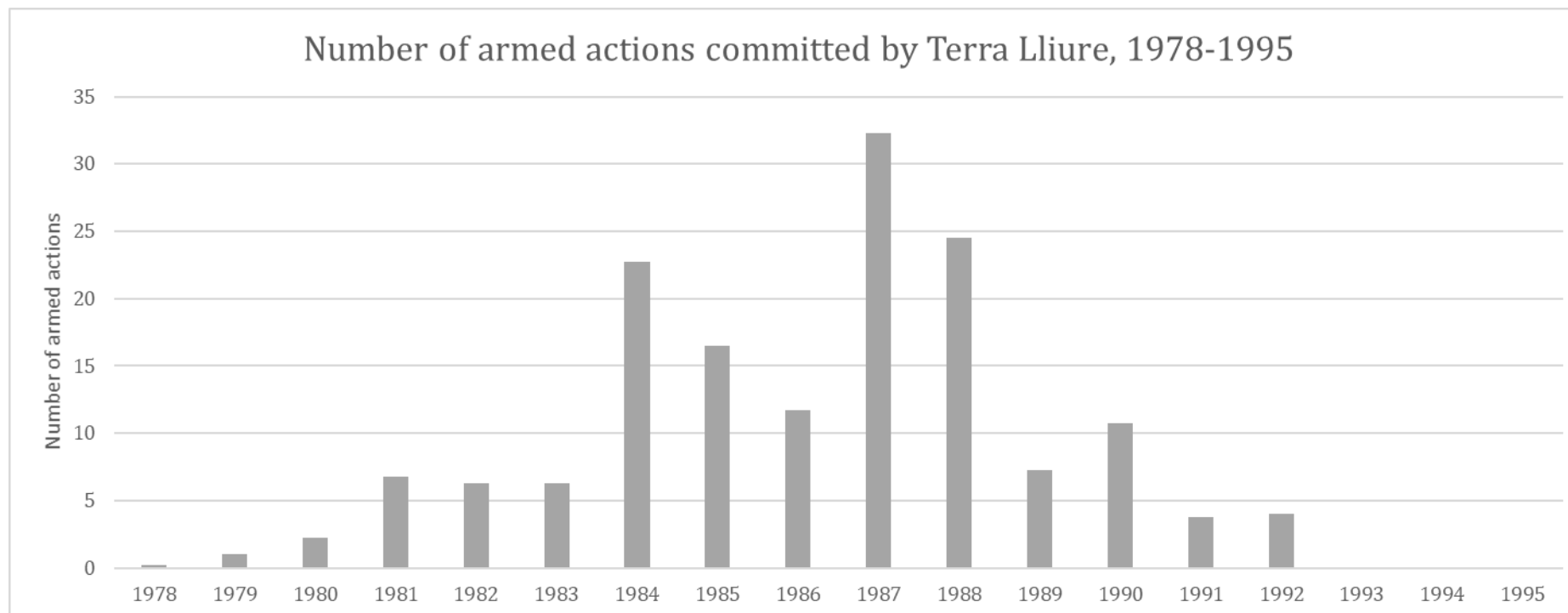


Figure 2: Number of armed actions committed by Terra Lliure, 1978-1995

The number of armed actions committed by Terra Lliure presented in this figure is a calculated average based on four studies that each report slightly different numbers of armed actions. Adapted from: David Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, First ed. (Barcelona: Llibres de l'Índex, 1994), 175-82; *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de L'organització Armada Catalana*, First ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones El Jonc, 1999), 273-81; Carles Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punto de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biografía Autorizada*, First ed. (Tafalla: Editorial Txalaparta, S.L.L., 2013), 263-85; Ricard Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, First ed. (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, S.A, 2004), 75.

The relatively low level of political violence throughout this period, I contend, can firstly be explained using the lens of political opportunity structures. From this viewpoint, the consolidation of democratic forms to defend political interests complicated transgressive forms of contention. This is particularly manifest in the above-mentioned willingness of the Catalan political parties to negotiate with the central government and the broad popular support for the transition. Accordingly, as former militant Josep Serra recalled, this political context made it “more difficult to create an armed organisation”.³⁶¹ Moreover, looking at the years 1978-80, another reason for the scarcity of actions lies in the following dynamic. In the late 1970s, Terra Lliure faced both a certain demoralisation among its militants and a precarious organisational situation.³⁶² This was mainly a consequence of the death of two of its militants in the first half of 1979: Martí Marcó was killed in January in a shooting incident with the police and Fèlix Goñi died in July while preparing an explosive artefact.³⁶³ In reaction, Terra Lliure’s founders installed a period of reflection in order to correct organisational deficiencies and to acquire the resources necessary for armed actions, for instance by attracting new militants and contacting other Catalan armed groups, notably EPOCA.³⁶⁴ As a result, at the beginning of the 1980s, in the words of former member Jaume Fernàndez i Calvet, Terra Lliure “could count on a minimum infrastructure and training to be able to shift to action”.³⁶⁵

Although in the period 1981-83, Terra Lliure’s level of political violence increased somewhat, armed actions remained relatively scarce. This, I argue, can be explained by the following four aspects. Firstly, the risk of detention as well as actual arrests of Terra Lliure militants by the Spanish police hindered its operational capacity. Regarding the risk of detention, the following events are important. In October 1980, the detention of a section of EPOCA caused a moment of anxiety about the repercussions for Terra Lliure due to the contact between the two. Furthermore, Terra Lliure had to limit its actions because of increased police surveillance in the aftermath of an assault by ETApM in Catalonia, in which independentists belonging to the PSAN were implicated³⁶⁶, and the kidnapping of a F.C. Barcelona player.³⁶⁷ In terms of arrests by the Spanish police, the following police actions stand out. Notably, in March 1981, several founding members of Terra Lliure were arrested and, consequently, others sought refuge in Northern Catalonia (France).³⁶⁸ Moreover, at the end of 1981 and shortly after its First Assembly in 1982, some 30 independentists were detained on the

³⁶¹ Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 49, my translation.

³⁶² Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 35, 42.

³⁶³ The MDT described Terra Lliure’s initial phase as the “worst beginning”. See: Document titled “Per una política independentista de combat” as approved during the Second National Assembly of the MDT in April 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 83; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 133; Muro and Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure,” 45.

³⁶⁴ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 41-44.

³⁶⁵ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 45, 47-48, my translation.

³⁶⁶ The PSAN denied all links to ETApM and to this assault on the military barracks in Berga. See: Enric Canals, “El PSAN Niega Cualquier Vinculación Del Partido Con El Asalto Al Cuartel de Berga,” *El País*, November 20, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1980/11/20/espana/343522807_850215.html.

³⁶⁷ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 48-51.

³⁶⁸ It concerns the detentions of inter alia Carles Castellanos and Pere Bascompte, while Jaume Fernàndez i Calvet fled to France. See: Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 72-75.

presumption of belonging to Terra Lliure.³⁶⁹ The consequence of these police actions was twofold: it added to the organisation's precarious situation, and it caused insecurity among its militants. According to a former militant, after the detentions in 1982, Terra Lliure's direction was unable to regain confidence among its own militants and to revive the organisation.³⁷⁰

A second explanation for the scarcity of armed actions in this period can be found in the decision of Terra Lliure's leadership to prohibit dual membership of the organisation and a political party. In particular, in the aftermath of the above-mentioned arrests, the Spanish police attempted to link these dual memberships. This decision caused a disconnection between Terra Lliure and the 'political world' and thereby restricted the former's possibilities to recruit new members.³⁷¹ Thirdly, internal tensions hindered Terra Lliure's ability to take off with its armed struggle. Some militants advocated a halt of the use of political violence in order to enter a phase of reflection about the future of Terra Lliure.³⁷² These tensions culminated in 1983 when the newly elected direction decided to expel critical members.³⁷³ From that moment onwards, Terra Lliure was no longer hindered by internal criticism of the dialectic of political violence.³⁷⁴ To this point I come back shortly.

Finally, a fourth reason why Terra Lliure could not escalate in the years 1978-1983 can be found, I argue, in the little popular support for its struggle. In particular, the earlier explained inability of independentist political parties to attain parliamentary representation and the wide support for the outcomes of transition signal the lack of popular support in Catalonia for independentism and transgressive forms of contention. This lack of popular support, in turn, implies that Terra Lliure could not mobilise the necessary resources for a heightened level of political violence. Moreover, Terra Lliure's efforts to obtain popular support were further complicated by two dynamics within Catalan politics. On the one hand, the major Catalan political parties, notably CiU, PSC and PSUC, explicitly denounced Terra Lliure's strategy.³⁷⁵ On the other hand, as briefly mentioned, the Catalan nationalist constituency was not inclined to radicalise due to the strong nationalist orientation of the CiU as the leading party in the in 1980 constituted *Generalitat*.³⁷⁶ Importantly, as the leading minority party, the CiU was able to accomplish a number of concessions from the central government, especially from the

³⁶⁹ Estimates of the precise number of arrests vary between 20-23 detentions at the end of 1981 and between 7 to 9 shortly after the First Assembly. See: Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 57; Muro and Vall-Llosera, "¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure," 47, 50; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 85; "Detenidos 20 Presuntos Independentistas de 'Terra Lliure,'" *El País*, December 4, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/12/04/espana/376268416_850215.html; Miguel Barroso, "Fueron 9 Los Detenidos En La Operación Policial Contra Terra Lliure," *El País*, November 18, 1982, https://elpais.com/diario/1982/11/18/espana/406422017_850215.html.

³⁷⁰ Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 79-82.

³⁷¹ Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 78.

³⁷² De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 94; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 82, 90; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 77.

³⁷³ Amongst whom Josep Serra. See: Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 77.

³⁷⁴ Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L'Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 43; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 77-78.

³⁷⁵ Enric Canals, "El Profesor Jiménez Losantos, Herido En Un Atendado," *El País*, May 22, 1981,

https://elpais.com/diario/1981/05/22/espana/359330421_850215.html; Muro and Vall-Llosera, "¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure," 55; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 192; Illas, "Is Catalan Separatism a Progressive Cause?," 8; Fernando Reinares, "Nationalist Separatism and Terrorism in Comparative Perspective," in *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*, ed. Tore Bjørgo (London: Routledge, 2004), 124.

³⁷⁶ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 112; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 177; Payne, "Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns," 100.

Súarez government whose UCD needed the support of inter alia the Catalan nationalists to reach a majority in the Spanish parliament.³⁷⁷ Another example of CiU's ability to appease the Catalan nationalist constituency was its reaction to the LOAPA. As explained before, approved in 1981, this law limited the transferral of powers from 'Madrid' to the Autonomous Communities. Given the wide popular disapproval of the LOAPA, the CiU and other Catalan political parties claimed it to be unconstitutional³⁷⁸, which resulted in the annulment of the LOAPA in 1983. This annulment, in turn, further substantiated these nationalist parties' position.³⁷⁹ Hence, I argue that the majority of the Catalan nationalist constituency embraced democratic politics and in particular the CiU's nationalist policy. This becomes especially manifest when looking at the substantial win of the CiU in the 1984 Catalan regional elections, whereby it obtained an absolute majority.³⁸⁰ In sum, Terra Lliure's relatively low level of armed actions over the years 1981-83 was a consequence of the high risk of detention and arrests by the Spanish police, the disconnection with political parties, internal tensions about the importance of the armed struggle, and a lack of popular support.

Here I should stress that, although these facets limited Terra Lliure's operational capacity in this period, these were not sufficient to hinder its further continuation and advancement. Importantly, for Terra Lliure, the 1981 attempted coup d'état and adoption of the LOAPA reaffirmed its vision of a continuation of Francoism that deprived the Catalan people of their rights. As a former militant Fernàndez i Calvet noted, there was "no need for a coup d'état", [because the regime] of 1936 was still fully in place, there had been no substantial change."³⁸¹ Moreover, in May 1981, Terra Lliure carried out (one of) its first high-profile actions: the kidnapping of an initiator of the so-called "Manifiesto de los 2.300" in which Spanish-speaking Catalans denounced the alleged discrimination of the Castilian language in Catalonia.³⁸² Shortly afterwards, in June 1981, Terra Lliure made its first public appearance during a manifestation organised as part of the "We are a nation" campaign (*Som una nació*) of the newly formed platform *Crida a la Solidaritat*³⁸³ in reaction to the Manifiesto.³⁸⁴ At the Camp Nou soccer stadium in Barcelona, where according to newspaper *El País* 80.000 people gathered, Terra Lliure distributed its first manifest, *Crida de Terra Lliure*.³⁸⁵ In the aftermath, Terra Lliure not only increased its number of armed actions somewhat, it did so for the first time in the region of Valencia and directly

³⁷⁷ Guibernau i Berdún, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 80; De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 95–96.

³⁷⁸ Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 53; Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, 147.

³⁷⁹ Dowling, *Catalonia Since the Spanish Civil War: Reconstructing the Nation*, 120.

³⁸⁰ While in 1980 the CiU obtained 28 per cent of the vote in the regional elections, this percentage increased to 47 per cent in 1984. As a result, the CiU was granted 72 of the 135 seats, constituting an absolute majority. See: Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals.

³⁸¹ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 52, my translation.

³⁸² This concerns the kidnapping of Frederico Jiménez Losantos. See: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 75; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 54; Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 53–54; "Entre El Independentisme Y El Ecologisme," *El País*, December 5, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/12/05/espana/376354817_850215.html.

³⁸³ Under the full name of *Crida a la Solidaritat en Defensa de la Llengua, la Cultura i la Nació Catalanes*. See: Muro and Vall-Llosera, "¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure," 46.

³⁸⁴ Muro and Vall-Llosera, "¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure," 46; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 47.

³⁸⁵ Enric Canals, "80.000 Personas Participaron En La Concentración de Afiracion Nacionalista," *El País*, June 25, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/06/25/espana/362268028_850215.html.

against the Guardia Civil.³⁸⁶ Thus, although its operational capacity was initially hindered, Terra Lliure was able to advance both its organisational structure and its armed struggle. This provided the setting in which Terra Lliure was able to step up its armed activity over the years 1984-88. This escalation I will now discuss.

4.4. Terra Lliure's escalation of political violence (1984-88)

In 1984, Terra Lliure sharply stepped up its number of armed actions, after which this reduced somewhat over the years 1985-86, though not below the level of the first phase. This was followed by the biggest escalation of political violence in the history of Terra Lliure: its highest number of armed actions are reported for the years 1987-88.³⁸⁷ In this section, I look at why an escalation of political violence by Terra Lliure occurred at this moment in time. Because I discern different explanations for the sharp increase in 1984 than for the record peak over the years 1987-88, I discuss these separately.

4.4.1. Terra Lliure's first peak in armed activity in 1984

Besides the fact that Terra Lliure sharply increased its number of armed actions in 1984, I point to another advance in this year. Importantly, in its internal documentation, Terra Lliure for the first time looked and planned ahead. In its bulletin *Alerta* of October 1984, it published the item "Olympics 1992: resist or die" (*Olimpiades 1992: resistir o morir*).³⁸⁸ Herein, Terra Lliure set out its strategy in the run up to the 1992 Olympic Games that were to be held in Barcelona, whereby it saw this event both as an illustration of the "Spanishisation" of Catalonia and as an opportunity to pressure the Spanish government to give in to its demands.³⁸⁹

To understand the heightened level of political violence and Terra Lliure's ability to plan ahead at this moment in time, I point to the following four aspects. Firstly, Terra Lliure was able to largely overcome its internal divisions in 1984. In particular, with the above-mentioned expulsion of critical members that questioned the dialectic of political violence, Terra Lliure was no longer hindered to take off with this strategy.³⁹⁰ Illustratively, the Declaration of Principles, which was approved during the Second Assembly in January 1984, sets out the "armed struggle" as "a key point of reference" in the sense that it acts as "the motor and vanguard of the movement".³⁹¹ Secondly, this year stands out for the fewer arrests of Terra Lliure militants by the Spanish police. Thirdly, Terra Lliure's operational capacity was enhanced by the set-up of a political branch in support of its discourse and methods. In June 1984, the Movement for the Defence of the Land (*Moviment de Defensa de la Terra*; MDT) was

³⁸⁶ Enric Canals, "Estallan Seis Bombas En Edificios Públicos de Cataluña Y País Valenciano," *El País*, September 11, 1981, https://elpais.com/diario/1981/09/11/espana/369007208_850215.html; Fernández i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 63–64.

³⁸⁷ Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punto de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biografía Autorizada*, 263–85; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 75, 81; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 175–82; *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 273–81.

³⁸⁸ "Alerta, Portantveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 5", October 1984, 1–2, my translation.

³⁸⁹ "Alerta, Portantveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 5", October 1984, 1–2, my translation.

³⁹⁰ Interview with Josep Serra in Bassa, *L'Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 43; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 77–78.

³⁹¹ Terra Lliure's Declaration of Principles from January 1984, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 46, my translation.

created. Importantly, the MDT would form “an instrument in the fight for independence” and “a platform for debate”.³⁹² Hereby, it united the different “nuclei” of Catalan independentism, that is the PSAN and the Independentists of the Catalan Countries (*Independentistes dels Països Catalans*; IPC).³⁹³ This dynamic was applauded by Terra Lliure, as it responded to its ambition to embed its political violence in a unitary political movement.³⁹⁴ In *Alerta*, Terra Lliure specified: “the armed struggle alone would be nothing more than a series of actions disconnected from our people, unless there is a strong and organised independentist political movement that advances in parallel”.³⁹⁵ Thus, the set-up of the MDT, I argue, signals the apparent unity of the independentist political forces. In turn, the existence of a political branch supportive of its armed struggle provided Terra Lliure with the recruits and resources necessary to advance its discourse and methods. Fourthly, this ability to mobilise resources can also be deduced from an increase in popular support reported by Terra Lliure. Notably, it evaluated the manifestations surrounding the Catalan National *Diada* as “an important step forward”.³⁹⁶ Former militant Jaume Fernàndez i Calvet stated it was “a total success in terms of the organisation and participation”.³⁹⁷ Hence, I reason, the year 1984 was marked by the unquestioned primacy of the armed struggle, the relatively low number of arrests, the set-up of a supportive political branch, and increased popular support. These aspects enhanced both Terra Lliure’s organisational structure as well as its ability to mobilise resources. This, in turn, enabled a sharp increase in its level of political violence at this moment in time.

The explanations for the peak in 1984 make one wonder why a decrease in the level of armed activity occurred over the years 1985-86, i.e. why this momentum could not be sustained. This, I argue, can first and foremost be explained by the detention of part of Terra Lliure’s leadership in January 1985.³⁹⁸ In reaction to these arrests, Terra Lliure shifted its focus away from political violence, while in other instances it continuously emphasised the importance of this strategy. In the *Alerta* following the detentions, Terra Lliure explicitly stressed the importance of popular mobilisation and manifestations rather than its strategy of political violence.³⁹⁹ Moreover, I should note here that Terra Lliure still generally lacked the material resources and skills to realise complex armed actions. This becomes evident from the deaths of two more Terra Lliure militants while preparing an explosive artefact: Josep Antoni Villaescusa in July 1984 and Qium Sànchez in December 1985.⁴⁰⁰ Interestingly,

³⁹² *Alerta* Nº 3 item titled “El movement que necessitem” from June 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 55–56, my translation.

³⁹³ *Alerta* Nº 3 item titled “El movement que necessitem” from June 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 55–56; Document titled “Per una política independentista de combat” as approved during the Second National Assembly of the MDT in April 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 84.

³⁹⁴ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 94–95.

³⁹⁵ *Alerta* Nº 3 item titled “El movement que necessitem” from June 1984 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 57, my translation.

³⁹⁶ “Alerta, Portantveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 5”. October 1984, 2, my translation.

³⁹⁷ Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 99, my translation.

³⁹⁸ Muro and Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure,” 50; Fernàndez i Calvet, *Terra Lliure 1979-1985*, 12; Albert Montagut, “La Policia Cree Que Ha Frenado Un Endurecimiento de Terra Lliure,” *El País*, January 22, 1985, https://elpais.com/diario/1985/01/22/espana/475196405_850215.html.

³⁹⁹ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 6”, March 1985, 1–3.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in February 1986 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 225; “Alerta, Portantveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 4”, August 1984, 1; “Voló Con La Bomba Que Transportaba,” *El País*, December

in an *Alerta* item on the death of Villaescusa, Terra Lliure stated that it was “aware of its organisational and operational weaknesses.”⁴⁰¹ Moreover, in an interview dating early 1986, Terra Lliure indicated that Sánchez’ death had “affected [them] a lot” and led to a “rethinking of [its] way of acting”.⁴⁰²

Despite the lower number of armed actions over these years, I should note that Terra Lliure spoke of a “growth in its militancy”⁴⁰³ and “a constant increase in the independentist consciousness throughout the Catalan nation”.⁴⁰⁴ Furthermore, in different publications of *Alerta* throughout 1986, Terra Lliure expressed its ambition to “make a qualitative step forward”⁴⁰⁵ and to “move on to the offensive”.⁴⁰⁶ Notably, the organisation publicly announced that the September 1986 action against the Guardia Civil supposed such a leap.⁴⁰⁷ Hence, I reason, Terra Lliure seemed unable to step up its armed activity in the years 1985-86, so to correspond to the growth in popular support it reported, due to organisational problems to rapidly overcome the arrest of part of its leadership. In the following years, however, Terra Lliure was able to materialise on this increased popular support. To this escalation I turn now.

4.4.2. Terra Lliure’s second peak in armed activity in 1987-88

A second peak in political violence by Terra Lliure occurred in 1987-88, this time reaching a record level in the number of armed actions. Over these years, Terra Lliure continued to point to the growth of ‘combative independentism’, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.⁴⁰⁸ Quantitative in the sense of more actions and an increasingly broad popular base of support for independentism, qualitative in the terms of passing from the defensive to the offensive.⁴⁰⁹ For example, Terra Lliure stated that its action in May 1988 against the Spanish security forces, marked by its first time use of a booby trap, was of an “explicitly offensive character”.⁴¹⁰

Approaching Terra Lliure as a rational actor, as outlined by both theoretical lenses, I interpret this escalation as the result of a deliberate intent to increase its armed activity. In August 1986, Terra

17, 1985, https://elpais.com/diario/1985/12/17/portada/503622002_850215.html; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 88.

⁴⁰¹ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 4”, August 1984, 2, my translation.

⁴⁰² Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in February 1986 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 225, my translation.

⁴⁰³ Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in February 1986 in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 225, my translation.

⁴⁰⁴ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 11”, August-September 1986, 2, my translation.

⁴⁰⁵ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 10”, May 1986, 3, my translation.

⁴⁰⁶ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 9”, March 1986, 2, my translation.

⁴⁰⁷ “Terra Lliure Anuncia Que El Atentado de Barcelona Fue ‘un Salto Cualitativo’ en Sus Accions,” *El País*, September 15, 1986, https://elpais.com/diario/1986/09/15/espana/527119208_850215.html.

⁴⁰⁸ Document Nº 1 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled “L’independentisme combatiu davant el repte del ‘92”, Summer 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 121; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 17”, October 1987, 5; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 19”, February 1988, 2.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with a spokesperson of Terra Lliure in December 1987 titled “La cara oculta de l’independentisme” in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 230; Document Nº 1 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled “L’independentisme combatiu davant el repte del ‘92”, Summer 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 121; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 21”, August 1988, 4; “Alerta Nº 22, November 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 153.

⁴¹⁰ Document Nº 1 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled “L’independentisme combatiu davant el repte del ‘92”, Summer 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 125, my translation. See also: “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 21”, August 1988, 5; “Terra Lliure Coloca Por Primera Vez Una Bomba Trampa Contra La Policía,” *El País*, May 3, 1988, https://elpais.com/diario/1988/05/03/portada/578613601_850215.html.

Lliure expressed that in the light of several setbacks it was important to “not only reflect on them, but also act accordingly [: t]hat is, going far beyond verbal radicalism, graffiti and manifestations. [...] There is no doubt that this strategy combines the armed struggle with popular mobilisation”.⁴¹¹ Hence, Terra Lliure deliberately stepped up its level of political violence to demonstrate that ‘combative independentism’ was still viable in light of various events that (potentially) eroded its ability to mobilise resources. Here I point to three setbacks in particular. Firstly, as *El País* reported, Terra Lliure’s escalation was closely related to the division within the MDT, its political branch.⁴¹² Although tensions between the MDT’s two dominant political forces, the PSAN and the IPC, already manifested themselves in 1984, a decisive split within the MDT occurred at the beginning of 1987.⁴¹³ The latent tensions culminated around the importance of the class struggle within independentism. In the first part of the MDT’s Second Assembly in November 1986, the PSAN proposed to create a Patriot Front that included the entire Catalan society.⁴¹⁴ In its counterproposal titled “For a Independentist Policy of Combat” (*Per una Política Independentista de Combat*), the IPC argued that independentism was intrinsically linked to the class struggle.⁴¹⁵ To discuss these proposals, the direction of the MDT, dominated by the PSAN, decided to hold a second part of the Second Assembly in Valencia, where it had most support.⁴¹⁶ This was challenged by the sectors grouped around the IPC, who decided to organise the second part in Barcelona.⁴¹⁷ This, in turn, signalled a decisive split within the MDT.⁴¹⁸ Hence, I reason that by reinforcing its political violence, Terra Lliure aimed to demonstrate that its strategy was still viable despite the split within its political branch. Secondly, Terra Lliure referred to the emergence of what it termed ‘decaffeinated independentism’ as another setback in this period.⁴¹⁹ Here it pointed to the political reorientation of the Republican Left of Catalonia (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*; ERC), which resulted from the ingression of the in 1981 formed independentist platform *Crida a la Solidaritat* into this political party.⁴²⁰ This ingression preceded a definitive shift of the ERC towards independentism in 1989. To this point I will come back later. Thirdly, Terra Lliure also referred to the 1987 action by ETA on the supermarket Hipercor in Barcelona, that caused 21 deaths and 45 wounded, as well as the demonstrations in the aftermath of this latter event as setbacks.⁴²¹ This points to an interesting dynamic: the Hipercor action was realised by ETA and subsequently eroded

⁴¹¹ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 16”, August 1987, 2–3, my translation.

⁴¹² Jordi Busquets, “La Escalada Del Independentismo Callan Ha Propiciado La Escalada de Violencia Protagonizada Por Terra Lliure,” *El País*, April 17, 1988, https://elpais.com/diario/1988/04/17/espana/577231216_850215.html.

⁴¹³ Interview with Carles Castellanos in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 86; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 99; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 84.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Carles Castellanos in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 86; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 88.

⁴¹⁵ Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 101.

⁴¹⁶ Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 101–2; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 89–90.

⁴¹⁷ Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 102; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 90.

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Carles Castellanos in Bassa, *L’Independentisme Armat a La Catalunya Recent*, 86; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 4”, August 1984; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 101–2; Bassa et al., *L’Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 100–101.

For a more detailed overview of the reasons and dynamics underlying the split within the MDT, see for example: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 83–99.

⁴¹⁹ “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 15”, July 1987, 5; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 16”, August 1987, 2–3.

⁴²⁰ Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 106–7.

⁴²¹ Terra Lliure moreover names the results of the various elections and the ‘harsh’ treatment of its imprisoned militants. See: “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 16”, August 1987, 2–3; Aizpeolea, “Hipercor, El Mayor Crimen de ETA.”

support for political violence within the Basque Country, but, at the same time, the fact that this indiscriminate action happened in Catalonia triggered disapproval of Terra Lliure's transgressive methods.

In sum, I contend that Terra Lliure stepped up its level of political violence in reaction to three, what it termed, setbacks: the split within its political branch, ingression of independentism in parliamentary politics, and popular disapproval of ETA's Hipercor action. In particular, Terra Lliure used an escalation as a sort of last resort to show the viability of 'combative independentism', because these events (potentially) eroded its ability to mobilise resources. In the longer term, however, these and other events caused Terra Lliure's inability to sustain this heightened level of political violence. To this point I come back shortly.

Finally, I reason that Terra Lliure was further encouraged to escalate its armed activity because it had the necessary resources at its disposal. More specifically, Terra Lliure was able to realise this escalation as a result of an increase in popular support. Here I point to the previously outlined growth of popular support over course of the mid-1980s. Accounts of a growing social base for independentism in Catalonia were also published in *El País*, for example in the article titled "Screams in favour of Terra Lliure during a pro-independence event".⁴²² The increase in popular support is important in two ways. On the one hand, this provided Terra Lliure with the necessary resources to step up its armed activity. On the other hand, in line with resource mobilisation theory, Terra Lliure aimed to mobilise the expanded social base via this escalation of political violence, i.e. to generate a shift among its constituency from awareness to actual support.⁴²³

4.4.3. Terra Lliure's interaction with conventional, electoral politics

Before turning to the decline in Terra Lliure's armed activity in the late 1980s, I would like to stress two aspects about the interaction between Terra Lliure and conventional, electoral politics in the years 1984-88. This is interesting because it points to a starkly different interaction than between ETA and Basque political parties: ETA's political branch HB won parliamentary seats and not all political parties consistently rejected ETA's methods. Hence, the first aspect that I emphasise is that the set-up of a political branch did not mean that the MDT entered into parliamentary politics. In contrast, Terra Lliure and the MDT distanced themselves from the conventional politics on all levels by not participating in elections as well as by calling on their constituency to abstain from voting.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Xavier Domenech, "Gritos a Favor de Terra Lliure En Un Acte Independentista," *El País*, 1987, https://elpais.com/diario/1987/07/20/espana/553730421_850215.html, my translation; "La Diada de Cataluña Tendrá Hoy Un Fuerte Cariz Independentista," *El País*, September 11, 1988, https://elpais.com/diario/1988/09/11/portada/589932003_850215.html.

⁴²³ Alerta Nº 22, November 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 154.

⁴²⁴ With the exception of the 1987 elections for the European Parliament. In the run up to these elections, the section pertaining to the IPC called to vote for Herri Batasuna, the Basque independentist party connected to ETA. See: Communiqué of the MDT titled "CATALANS, NO VOTEU! Nosaltres no som Espanyoles" from May 1986, in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 42; "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 10", May 1986, 1-2, 4-6; "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 11", August-September 1986"; Communiqué of the MDT titled "Sobre les eleccions autonòmiques i municipals" from May 1987 in *Catalunya, Terra Lliure: Documents Del Moviment de Defensa de La Terra, 1984-1988*, 120-21; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 103.

Independence thus remained extra-parliamentary throughout this period. As briefly mentioned, this would change from 1989 onwards with the political reorientation of the ERC. This I further discuss in the next section. A second aspect I stress is that the CiU as well as the other Catalan political parties persisted in their rejection of political violence, especially after Terra Lliure in September 1987 accidentally caused its first, and only, deadly victim.⁴²⁵ Illustratively, the then president of the *Generalitat*, Jordi Pujol, affirmed that “every kind of terrorism should be rejected: [...] the type that seeks to kill people and the type that does not seek to kill people, but, in fact, also kills, as happened now”.⁴²⁶ Moreover, the CiU, that remained in power throughout this period⁴²⁷, continued to channel most nationalist demands. It did so primarily by negotiating further concessions from the central government and by sponsoring the Catalan linguistics movement.⁴²⁸ For Terra Lliure, this political context continued to complicate the mobilisation of popular support for its armed struggle.

4.5. Terra Lliure’s reduced level of political violence (1989-91/95)

Despite the high number of armed actions in the previous period, Terra Lliure could neither escalate nor sustain this pace of political violence over the years 1989 to 1991/95. Instead, this phase is characterised by a sharp decrease in Terra Lliure’s number of armed actions and concluded with it being reduced to zero.⁴²⁹ In this section, I look at the reasons for Terra Lliure’s inability to continue or further escalate its previous levels of armed activity.

4.5.1. Erosion of its social base and division into two branches

Similar to the decline in ETA’s level of political violence in the 1980s, Terra Lliure’s reduced level of armed activity was neither preceded by an apparent shift in its strategy nor by advances in its political objectives. From this, I reason that Terra Lliure did not deliberately scale down its armed activity from 1989 onwards, but that this was an unintended outcome. To understand this decline, I return to the three, what Terra Lliure termed, setbacks explained above. Though I argued that these setbacks motivated Terra Lliure to step up its level of political violence, these same facets also made it impossible to sustain this escalation in the longer term. More specifically, these facets eroded popular support for Terra Lliure and thereby limited its ability to mobilise the necessary resources for its armed struggle.

⁴²⁵ Terra Lliure’s only deadly victim occurred when it aimed to commit an attack against the court in Les Borges Blanques (Lleida). A 62-year old woman living adjacent to the site of the explosion was killed accidentally. See: Enric Company, “El Atentado No Supone Un Cambio En La T ctica de Terra Lliure, Seg n Los Pol ticos Catalanes,” *El Pa s*, September 11, 1987, https://elpais.com/diario/1987/09/11/espana/558309617_850215.html; Bassa et al., *L’Independ ntisme Catal  (1979-94)*, 105; “Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, N  17”, October 1987, 2.

⁴²⁶ Company, “El Atentado No Supone Un Cambio En La T ctica de Terra Lliure, Seg n Los Pol ticos Catalanes.”, my translation.

⁴²⁷ See: Results of the regional elections in Catalonia in 1984 and 1988 in the Database of the Catalan Autonomous Government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), accessible via:

http://governacio.gencat.cat/ca/pgov_ambits_d_actuacio/pgov_eleccions/pgov_dades_electorals.

⁴²⁸ De la Calle Robles, *Nationalist Violence in Postwar Europe*, 95–96; Guibernau i Berd n, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 2.

⁴²⁹ Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punto de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biograf a Autorizada*, 263–85; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptaci  Armada a Catalunya*, 75, 81; Bassa et al., *L’Independ ntisme Catal  (1979-94)*, 175–82; *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organitzaci  Armada Catalana*, 273–81.

Firstly, I point again to the split within its political branch, the MDT, which implied the recurrence of fragmentation within Catalan independentism. This not only directly hindered Terra Lliure's ability to recruit new militants and mobilise other resources, but also affected its strategy in two other ways. On the one hand, public confrontations between the two sectors of the MDT, for instance during the *Diada* in 1988, discredited 'combative independentism'.⁴³⁰ On the other hand, Terra Lliure's unsuccessful aspiration to revive a broader, unitary movement frustrated the trajectory of growing independentism.⁴³¹ Secondly, I return to the appearance of 'decaffeinated independentism'. From 1989 onwards, the ERC defined itself as independentist and aimed to organise both radical and pacifist independentism around its party.⁴³² This signified that independentism was represented in the Catalan autonomous parliament from this moment onwards, i.e. that it was also pursued via conventional, institutionalised forms of claim-making. Interestingly, the ERC also played an important role in bringing about negotiations between a faction of Terra Lliure and the *Generalitat*.⁴³³ To this dynamic I come back later. Thirdly, the above-mentioned action of ETA on the Hipercor supermarket in Barcelona and Terra Lliure's first deadly victim in 1987 triggered, in the words of Terra Lliure, an "avalanche" of popular manifestations in Catalonia against the use of political violence.⁴³⁴ This extensive public criticism made it more difficult for Terra Lliure to justify its armed struggle.⁴³⁵

Besides these three setbacks, Terra Lliure pointed to an internal crisis as an explanation for the decrease in its armed activity.⁴³⁶ Importantly, in February 1989, this crisis resulted in a division into two branches. While Terra Lliure initially remained neutral regarding the split within the MDT⁴³⁷, this division was reproduced when Terra Lliure militants related to the PSAN organised a Fourth Assembly in February 1989 and those grouped around the IPC did not recognise its resolutions.⁴³⁸ Although each branch continued under the name Terra Lliure, the former sector pertaining to the MDT-PSAN is commonly referred to as Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea, while the latter is called Terra Lliure-III Assemblea.

4.5.2. A democratic alternative for independentism

From the division within Terra Lliure in 1989 onwards, a parallel process of institutionalisation and radicalisation can be observed. Interestingly, this is a similar process to that of ETAm and ETApM in

⁴³⁰ Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 106, 114.

⁴³¹ Alerta Nº 22, November 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 155; Document Nº 1 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled "L'independentisme combatiu davant el repte del '92", Summer 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 124.

⁴³² Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 80.

⁴³³ José Antich, "El Gobierno Catalán Negocia Con La Organización Terrorista Terra Lliure El Abandono de Las Armas," *El País*, June 29, 1989, https://elpais.com/diario/1989/06/29/espana/615074405_850215.html.

⁴³⁴ "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 16", August 1987, 2, my translation. See also: Document Nº 1 of the third Assembly of Terra Lliure titled "L'independentisme combatiu davant el repte del '92", Summer 1988, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 124.

⁴³⁵ Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 107; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 165.

⁴³⁶ Resolution following Terra Lliure's fourth Assembly in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 160.

⁴³⁷ "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 14", April 1987, 7; "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 20", April 1988, 5; "Alerta, Portaveu de Terra Lliure, Nº 21", August 1988, 12.

⁴³⁸ Note of the editor, Carles Sastre, regarding the Resolution following Terra Lliure's fourth Assembly in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l'Organització Armada Catalana*, 161; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 83; Bassa et al., *L'Independentisme Català (1979-94)*, 114.

1974, but the outcome is the opposite: while within ETA a radical discourse took precedence, for Terra Lliure it signalled the end of the armed struggle.

Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea showed an increasing willingness to bridge the gap with democratic forms of claim-making. In March 1989, shortly after the breach, this branch expressed its ambition to present a Catalan independentist candidacy for the 1989 elections for the European Parliament. This candidacy of the newly formed party Free Catalonia (*Catalunya Lliure*) was first and foremost meant to serve as an instrument to create a broad organisation that unified ‘combative independentism’.⁴³⁹ Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea furthermore specified that this candidacy would represent “the beginning of a new style of struggling”, whereby independentism would participate in electoral contests while it continued to view the armed struggle as “the basis” of its strategy.⁴⁴⁰ Hence, instead of continuing to explicitly distance itself from institutional politics, Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea sought a rapprochement to conventional, democratic forms of contention. This shift, in combination with the ERC’s political reorientation discussed before, opened the way for conversations between Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea and the *Generalitat*, which started in June 1989 according to *El País*.⁴⁴¹ Importantly, by acting as a mediator in these negotiations and offering former Terra Lliure members to join its party, the ERC enabled the integration of radical independentism into institutionalised politics. Ultimately, these negotiations resulted in the decision of Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea to adopt a unilateral, indefinite truce in June 1991 and to announce its self-dissolution in July 1991.⁴⁴² This, I argue, can be interpreted as a tactic of last resort, but not in the sense I explained before. Rather, Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea sought recourse to institutional politics because violent tactics proved ineffective to bring about its objectives. In its announcement, Terra Lliure stated that it for the first time believed that there was “a real possibility” to obtain independence through democratic forms of contention, pointing to the changed European context: the fall of the Berlin Wall and the referenda that led to the independence of the Baltic states.⁴⁴³ Here I should add that the electoral success of the ERC in the 1992 Catalan regional elections, going from 6 to 11 parliamentary seats, affirmed the positive prospect of advancing independentism via democratic, institutional politics.⁴⁴⁴

Parallel to Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea’s tendency towards institutionalisation, Terra Lliure-III Assemblea aspired to continue the armed struggle.⁴⁴⁵ Interestingly, in the run up to the 1989 European Parliament elections, this latter branch did not defend the participation of a Catalan independentist

⁴³⁹ Alerta Nº 24, June-August 1989, published by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 172; Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 93.

⁴⁴⁰ Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea titled “El poble català davant les eleccions europees”, March 1989, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 165–66, my translation. See also: Alerta Nº 24, June-August 1989, published by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 172, 175.

⁴⁴¹ José Antich, “El Gobierno Catalán Negocia Con La Organización Terrorista Terra Lliure El Abandono de Las Armas.”

⁴⁴² Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea titled “Davant el procés d’unitat europea, l’opció democràtica cap a la independència”, June 1991, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 196–97; Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea, no title, July 1991, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 200.

⁴⁴³ Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea titled “Davant el procés d’unitat europea, l’opció democràtica cap a la independència”, June 1991, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 196–97, my translation.

⁴⁴⁴ Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 173; Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 195.

⁴⁴⁵ Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-III Assemblea titled “Terra Lliure davant el Pi de les Tres Branques de 1991”, July 1991, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 202.

party and demanded, what it named, the PSAN to withdraw its candidacy.⁴⁴⁶ Nonetheless, I argue, three facets resulted in the fact that Terra Lliure-III Assemblea could not sustain its strategy of political violence. Firstly, I point again to the hindered ability of to mobilise resources, resulting from the previously explained decline in popular support and the fragmentation of ‘combative independentism’. Secondly, the fact that the ERC defended similar objectives but then via democratic, pacifist forms of contention complicated Terra Lliure-III Assemblea’s effort to keep up the dialectic of political violence.⁴⁴⁷ Finally, the detention of about 50 independentists in the so-called ‘Operación Garzón’ in 1992 further hindered Terra Lliure-III Assemblea’s ability to realise armed actions.⁴⁴⁸ As a result of these facets, Terra Lliure-III Assemblea did not carry out any armed actions from the year 1993 onwards and decided to dissolve itself in 1995.⁴⁴⁹ According to its communiqué, dissolution was appropriate for the phase in which ‘combative independentism’ found itself, whereby the causes for this situation were “the exhaustion of armed propaganda [and] of human resources”.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ Communiqué issued by Terra Lliure-III Assemblea titled “Terra Lliure I les eleccions al parlament europeu”, April 1989, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 170–71.

⁴⁴⁷ Sastre et al., *Terra Lliure, Punto de Partida 1979-1995: Una Biografia Autorizada*.

⁴⁴⁸ The operation was named after the Spanish Supreme Court’s judge Baltasar Garzón. See: Vilaregut, *Terra Lliure: La Temptació Armada a Catalunya*, 81; Muro and Vall-Llosera, “¿Cuándo Fracasa El Terrorismo? El Papel de La Política Antiterrorista, La Fragmentación Organizativa Y Los Costes Individuales En El Final de Terra Lliure,” 48.

⁴⁴⁹ Manifesto of Terra Lliure-III Assemblea published in September 1995, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 219.

⁴⁵⁰ Manifesto of Terra Lliure-III Assemblea published in September 1995, in *Parla Terra Lliure: Els Documents de l’Organització Armada Catalana*, 219, my translation.

5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I signalled an apparently successive intent of different nationalisms in Spain to impose their proper discourse: Castilian nationalism under the Franco-regime, followed by Basque nationalism, and, most recently, Catalan nationalism. While Basque nationalism is generally linked to ETA, Catalan nationalism is oftentimes described as a relatively recent and peaceful phenomenon. This understanding I contravened by pointing out the history of Terra Lliure. Interestingly, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, radical Basque and Catalan nationalists embraced political violence as the preferred form of contention. This timeframe points to a puzzling dynamic: ETA and Terra Lliure chose (to continue) political violence at the moment that, firstly, peripheral nationalisms became legitimate claim-makers that could defend their demands through institutionalised forms of contention, and, secondly, these nationalisms advanced their demands by obtaining regional autonomy. Here, I should emphasise that ETA and Terra Lliure not only opted for political violence, but also stepped up their armed activity during and after the transition to democracy. More specifically, ETA escalated its political violence over the years 1978-80, while Terra Lliure was formed in that same period and escalated its political violence in 1987-88. Hence, to analyse this interesting dynamic, I focused on the following research question: *From the viewpoints of political opportunity structures and resource mobilisation theory, what can explain the choice for and escalation of political violence by ETA and Terra Lliure during and after the Spanish transition to democracy?*

When, firstly, analysing the choice for political violence as the preferred form of contention during the transition to democracy, I pointed to different motivations for ETA and Terra Lliure. To understand why ETA continued its armed activity, I argued that it is important to consider that ETA perceived no fundamental changes in the political regime: ETA regarded the transition as disguised Francoism and “a process of refascisation”. Additionally, I reasoned that ETA’s continuance resulted from the unquestioned primacy of and commitment to political violence within ETAm as well as the available resources to do so. Regarding the latter aspect, ETA created a coordinating body (KAS) to overcome fragmentation and broad sectors of Basque society supported its radical discourse and methods. Shifting the focus to Terra Lliure, I discerned starkly different motivations for its formation relatively late in the democratisation process. Here I reasoned that a radicalisation within Catalan nationalism took off in reaction to the willingness of the Catalan political opposition to endorse a negotiated reform and to compromise. In particular, radical Catalan independentists felt ‘sold out’ by the other Catalan political parties, with whom they formed a united opposition until 1977. These other parties showed a pragmatic stance during the negotiations with the central government and subsequently toned down their nationalist aspirations. Moreover, I argued, Catalan independentists opted for political violence in reaction to their perceived inability to change the course of the transition through institutional forms of contention and their failure to enter into parliamentary politics. This disenchantment and position at the political fringes incited political violence as both a tactic of last resort and a strategy designed to mobilise resources, whereby Terra Lliure signalled a social base for

its independentist stance and transgressive methods. Besides, Terra Lliure justified its armed struggle by pointing to autonomy as a “cul de sac” and a perpetuation of Francoism, the latter point being similar to that of ETA. Hence, I conclude that ETA persisted in its political violence based on strategic considerations, i.e. because it chose to do so based on its perception of disguised Francoism and the available resources for its struggle. In contrast, for Terra Lliure, political violence was a tactic of last resort in the face of its position at the political fringe and the perceived ineffectiveness of institutionalised forms of contention. Here I should add that the concessions of the Spanish government to appease the Basque nationalist constituency were apparently of no avail, while similar concessions to Catalonia were positively appraised. In particular, Basque society was characterised by a ‘culture of violence’ as well as a critical stance towards ‘Madrid’ and the democratisation process. In contrast, Catalan society broadly supported the outcomes of the transition and institutionalised forms of contention. This implies the importance of the fact that ETA took off in the context of Francoism to explain the intransigence in Basque society in general and the broad popular support for ETA’s radical discourse and methods. This, in turn, makes one wonder why political violence took root in Basque society but not in Catalonia during the Franco-regime. To this question I come back shortly.

Having outlined the motivations for ETA and Terra Lliure to adopt political violence during the transition to democracy, I now turn to their respective escalations. As mentioned, ETA stepped up its armed activity over the years 1978-80 while Terra Lliure did so in 1987-88. This firstly required to look at why such an escalation did not happen in the context of Francoism, i.e. when Basque and Catalan nationalisms had to operate outside of institutional cadres because of the absence of legitimate ways to express their political interests. Interestingly, I discerned two common explanations for ETA’s and violent Catalan nationalist groups’ low level of armed activity: Francoist repression and fragmentation. These aspects, furthermore, are helpful to understand why political violence did not peak in the initial years of the transition. While ETAp’s leadership was arrested shortly before the transition and was fragmented around the issue of institutionalisation, ETAm imposed a pause to reorganise and clarify strategic issues. In Catalonia, the different radical independentist groups also faced a precarious organisational situation and did not coalesce until 1978. Moreover, to explain why political violence did take root in Basque society and not in Catalonia, I argued it is important to consider the unity of opposition that prevailed in Catalonia during the Franco-regime and the initial years of the transition. In contrast to the fragmented political landscape in the Basque Country, the Catalan political opposition was united first in the FNC and later in the Assembly of Catalonia. This unity, in turn, signalled the relative absence of radicalisation as well as the marginal position of partitioning factions. Here I reasoned that independentist factions remained within the cadres of this united opposition because, firstly, their interests were channelled in the broader goal of self-determination and, secondly, in this way they could make sure that their demands were represented at the negotiating table with the Spanish central government. Besides, the relatively small size of violent groups in Catalonia signalled that repression occurred on a smaller scale than in the Basque Country, thereby not provoking a further radicalisation within the Catalan nationalist constituency.

Zooming in on the escalation of political violence by ETA over the years 1978-80, I pointed out that ETA deliberately stepped up its armed activity to pressurise the central government to accept its KAS Alternative as well as in light of various campaigns. Interestingly, while the Catalan political parties negotiated with 'Madrid' in the literal sense of the world, ETA termed its strategy one of negotiations but was not willing to compromise on its demands. Nonetheless, apart from this strategy, this still makes one wonder why an escalation occurred from 1978 onwards. Here I contended that ETA perceived a certain sense of urgency due to the increasing consolidation of democracy. In particular, at this moment in time, ETA could still influence the 'rules of the game' before these were definitely set and, once these 'rules' were approved the central government would have less incentives to negotiate the KAS Alternative. In addition, I discerned four more reasons why ETA stepped up its level of political violence at this specific moment in time. Firstly, ETA deemed institutional forms of contention insufficient to pursue its objectives given that EE had only won one parliamentary seat in the 1977 elections. Secondly, I argued that an escalation served to tactically differentiate itself from the PNV and ETAp, whose discourse had become more attractive due to the opening of institutional forms of contention. Moreover, I reasoned ETA reacted to the decline in mass protest from 1978 onwards, in the sense that it aimed to substitute the 'power of numbers' with the 'power of violence' and/or to re-mobilise its constituency. Finally, ETA had the resources to step up its armed activity: it was organised clandestinely, committed to the armed struggle, reinforced by the incorporation of the special commandos of ETAp, and it could count on approval and explicit support within Basque society. Turning to Terra Lliure's escalation of political violence, I should note that Terra Lliure sharply increased its armed activity for the first time in 1984. In this year, it had overcome its initial organisational deficiencies and internal tensions about the primacy of the armed struggle. Moreover, 1984 was marked by fewer arrests by the Spanish police and the set-up of a political branch, the MDT. However, the detention of its leadership in early 1985 prevented a further intensification of its armed activity over the years 1985-86. Turning to the peak in political violence in 1987-88, I discerned different reasons for this escalation by Terra Lliure than for ETA. Here I argued that Terra Lliure stepped up its political violence first and foremost in reaction to different setbacks: the split within the MDT, the emergence of 'decaffeinated independentism', and the broad popular disapproval following ETA's Hipercor action in Barcelona. Thus, I reasoned, Terra Lliure escalated its political violence as a last resort to show the viability of 'combative independentism'. Besides, I contended that, at this moment in time, Terra Lliure could materialise on the growth of its social base over the mid-1980s. Hence, I conclude that both ETA and Terra Lliure deliberately stepped up their armed activity, but ETA explicitly did so to advance its political demands and expand its resources, while for Terra Lliure it was more of a last effort to trigger a broader independentist movement.

Neither ETA nor Terra Lliure was able to sustain its heightened level of political violence for more than a couple of years. Interestingly, these lower levels of armed activity were not preceded by strategic changes or significant advances in their demands. Therefore, I reasoned, the drop in political violence in 1981 and 1989 respectively was not a strategic choice but rather an unintended

consequence. Notably, ETA and Terra Lliure saw their operational capacity reduced as a result of a decline in popular support, police efforts to arrest its militants, and the institutionalisation of ETApM and Terra Lliure-IV Assemblea respectively. Here I should refer to the strategic dilemma of political violence as the preferred form of contention outlined in the theoretical framework: while an escalation serves to advance political objectives, it entails a reduction in popular support and other resources, which in turn complicates the sustainment on this escalation. Moreover, I point to two interesting facets that help to explain the decline in ETA's armed activity as well as the comparably smaller size of Terra Lliure. Firstly, ETA's political violence declined in 1981 as a result of the consolidation of democracy, in particular as the PNV took office in the Basque autonomous government. Here I point out the similar position of moderate Catalan nationalism: the CiU had a leading role in the Catalan autonomous government from 1980 onwards. Hence, the fact that nationalist political parties dominated the regional governments apparently complicated ETA's and Terra Lliure's ability to mobilise resources for its struggle. Secondly, to explain ETA's lower levels of political violence, I outlined a shift in the PNV's attitude. From the early 1980s onwards, the PNV started to explicitly reject and distance itself from ETA's discourse and methods. In contrast, in Catalonia, Terra Lliure did not have a political base in the form of its own parliamentary representation or an ambiguous stance of other political parties. Rather, the CiU and other Catalan political parties repeatedly denounced its armed activity. Neither ETA nor Terra Lliure was able to again step up its political violence at a later moment in time. From the 1990s onwards, these groups have only sporadically realised armed actions.

A final point I would like to make here is that, interestingly, those Catalan parties that hindered Terra Lliure's strategy of political violence are currently the ones advocating independence and transgressing institutional cadres. Notably, the CDC left the coalition CiU and continued under the name Catalan European Democratic Party (*Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català*; PDeCAT) from 2010 onwards. Together with the ERC, PDeCAT formed the coalition Together for Yes (*Junts pel Sí*; JxSí) in the run up to the 2015 regional elections and subsequently took office in the *Generalitat*. Thereupon this coalition moved forward with its ambition to organise a popular consultation on independence, culminating in the 2017 referendum ruled illegal by the Spanish Constitutional Court. Besides, the PDeCAT and ERC realised this referendum with passive support from the Popular Unity Candidacy (*Candidatura d'Unitat Popular*; CUP), in which members of Terra Lliure's political branch MDT entered in 1987.

Here I consider it important to reflect on the theoretical lenses and sources used this thesis. Firstly, the social movement approach allowed me to study political violence as one possible form of contention within a broader repertoire of collective action rather than as an isolated phenomenon. The macro-lens of political opportunity structures enabled me to position political violence in the broader political context of the Spanish transition to democracy. This lens was not only helpful to look at the effect of the democratisation process on Basque and Catalan nationalisms as such, but also to understand the interaction between radical nationalists and democratic, institutionalised politics as well as the integration of (branches of) ETA and Terra Lliure into conventional political parties.

Furthermore, the meso-lens of resource mobilisation theory added a second analytical level to this thesis. In particular, this viewpoint allowed me to look at the significance of resources, especially organisational structure and popular support, in the escalation of political violence. Besides being a motivation for ETA and Terra Lliure to step up their armed activity, I also argued that the availability of resources is an important explanation for these organisations' ability to, in practice, realise such an escalation. Moreover, by adding of a constructivist perspective, I was able to look at ETA's and Terra Lliure's perceptions and frames that played a role in their justification of political violence. Finally, the selected array of sources enabled me to bring forward a wide range of explanations, i.e. to demonstrate how the dynamic of democratisation and political violence was at play for ETA and Terra Lliure.

Nonetheless, I should add a critical note on the conclusions and methods presented in this thesis. While the selection of particular theoretical lenses and sources gave direction to my analysis, this inherently entailed a limitation of the range of explanations that are presented. Other theoretical approaches, an economic one for instance, can bring forward additional explanations for the heightened level of political violence by ETA and Terra Lliure in the late 1970s/1980s. Moreover, the fact that I approached ETA and Terra Lliure as rational actors entails the risk of interpreting certain dynamics as deliberate intentions or strategies, while in practice these were a result of opportunities that presented itself. Nonetheless, I aimed to reduce this risk by explaining peaks rather than isolated events as well as by studying documentation written by ETA and Terra Lliure that outlined their strategy. Furthermore, I remark that the explanations presented in this thesis are not isolated facets, but are likely to interact with each other. In that regard, I argue it is hardly possible to determine the precise effect of single dynamics or how these are linked. Finally, my Dutch nationality and upbringing allowed me to approach this study with a certain distance and neutrality, but Spanish and Catalan are not my native languages. Although I am sufficiently fluent in these languages to have analysed the sources for this thesis, it would be interesting if a native speaker would repeat the study.

To conclude, I present additional recommendations for further research. Firstly, though I pointed to Terra Lliure's observation of a changed European context in the late 1980s, this thesis focused on the Spanish political climate in particular. Additional research could examine to what extent the European integration process and other international events impacted Basque and Catalan nationalisms. Furthermore, since both nationalisms include parts of France in their territorial boundaries, it would be interesting to analyse manifestations of Basque and Catalan nationalisms in France. This would provide additional insight into the motivations of these nationalisms to opt for political violence as the preferred form of contention. Finally, further research could extend the comparison to also include Galician nationalism. Interestingly, although smaller than ETA and Terra Lliure, the Guerrilla Army of the Free Galician People (*Exército Guerrilheiro do Povo Galego Ceive*; EGPGC) realised a series of armed actions in pursuit of independence and socialism in Galicia over the years 1986-91. By including this organisation into the analysis, future research could outline similarities and differences in the process of radicalisation within Spain's three main peripheral nationalisms.

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