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Ignacio Sànchez-Cuenca

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# The Dynamics of Nationalist Terrorism: ETA and the IRA

IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ-CUENCA

Juan March Institute, Madrid, Spain and Universidad Complutense,  
Madrid, Spain

*Nationalist terrorism aspires to independence or greater autonomy for some territory. The combination of territorial claims and armed struggle gives rise to a very definite strategy, violence intended to coerce the State. Nationalist terrorist organizations kill repeatedly with the aim of breaking the will of the State. They engage in a peculiar sort of war of attrition with the State. This paper analyzes comparatively the war of attrition strategy in two organizations, ETA and the IRA. The focus of the paper is on strategy: it examines how ETA and the IRA understood their activity in terms of war of attrition and how they developed their strategy subject to some constraints, such as the moderate preferences of their supporters. I show that popularity constraints account for the high degree of selectivity in their killings. The analysis is based on a combination of historical information, internal documents, and a large data set I have constructed of the killings of these two organizations.*

**Keywords** nationalism, target selection, terrorism, war of attrition

## Introduction

What makes nationalist terrorism different from revolutionary, fascist, or religious terrorism is the territorial claim. Nationalist terrorists ask always for independence or greater autonomy for some territory. Because of this territorial claim, they engage in a war of attrition with the State. They kill repeatedly with the aim of breaking the will of the State. The more they kill, the more likely that the State will eventually yield. In this paper, I analyze how the war of attrition strategy is carried out in the context of nationalist terrorism. I examine how the strategy is developed and implemented, trying to reconstruct the calculations that terrorists make in their decisions. I also show that the implementation of the strategy is subject to constraints, particularly public support. The level of attrition exerted by terrorists is a function of how extremist supporters are.

Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca is Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Juan March Institute (Madrid) and at Universidad Complutense (Madrid). His research interests are terrorism, theory of democracy, and electoral behaviour. He has published two books in Spanish on ETA, *ETA contra el Estado* (2001) and, with J.M.Calleja, *La derrota de ETA* (2006). He is the author of many articles both in Spanish and English published in journals such as *European Union Politics*, *Party Politics*, *European Journal of Sociology*, *Government and Opposition*. He is coeditor (with J.M.Maravall) of *Controlling Governments* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Address correspondence to Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, Juan March Institute, Castelló 77, 28003 Madrid, Spain. E-mail: pacho@ceacs.march.es

The analysis rests on a detailed, systematic comparison of two cases, the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, Basque Homeland and Freedom). The IRA and ETA are two of the oldest terrorist organizations in the world. The Provisional IRA engaged in armed struggle from its creation in December 1969 until 1998. ETA was founded in 1959, although it claimed its first fatal victim only in 1968. Although it is still active (it broke a nine-month ceasefire in December 2006, killing two people, after 43 months without killing), there is rational ground to expect a similar ending to that of the IRA.

In both cases the terrorists' behaviour can be analyzed over a considerable period of time. Moreover, the two organizations acted simultaneously, making the comparison easier. Third, they have killed so many people that it is possible to reconstruct patterns of target selection. Finally, it is worth noting that there exists very little comparative work on these two organizations.<sup>1</sup>

In order to substantiate the analysis, I rely on different pieces of information: internal documents of the terrorist organizations, activists' memoirs, my own data sets on fatalities in the Basque Country and in Northern Ireland, and survey and electoral data on popular support for these organizations.

The comparison I present between ETA and the IRA is not exhaustive. It centres on strategy (including target selection and public support), but not, for instance, on the causes that explain the emergence of these organizations. The paper is divided into four sections: section 1 explains the basic features of nationalist terrorism and provides some historical and background information on ETA and the IRA. Section 2 focuses on the war of attrition. It is divided into three minor sub-sections: the first presents the concept of war of attrition, and how it was adopted by ETA and the IRA; the second centres on the development of the war of attrition; and the third contains an econometric analysis (a Vector Autoregressive Model) that reveals the pattern of interaction between terrorist organizations and the State in the context of the war of attrition. Section 3 examines the public support constraints under which terrorists act. Finally, section 4 presents some general conclusions.

### **Nationalist Terrorism: ETA and the IRA**

I employ here the term "terrorism" in a rather stringent sense: as violence carried out with political motivations by organizations that do not control a territory. The contrast here is with guerrilla insurgencies, which control part of the State's territory, normally rural areas. Due to the absence of a territorial base, terrorist organizations are much weaker in military terms than guerrillas. Terrorist organizations are underground; they act clandestinely, within the enemy's territory. In this sense, what distinguishes terrorism from guerrilla is not the kind of violence that each exerts, but rather the different nature of the actor.<sup>2</sup>

Guerrillas are small armies. They can penetrate enemy territory and attempt to break the government's grip on it. Yet, a great deal of their violence is related to the control of the territory that they liberate from the State. In this territory, normally in the mountains or in the jungle, they act like a sort of proto-State, imposing order and extracting rents from the inhabitants (typically, peasants).

The logic of violence in terrorism is rather different. Terrorist organizations are too weak to control the population the way guerrillas do. Terrorist violence usually consists of hurting the enemy through violent attacks. These attacks are supposed either to mobilize followers or to coerce the enemy.

Mobilization is the aim pursued by revolutionary terrorism. Violence is considered a means to induce people to join the revolutionary movement (violence as “propaganda by the deed” or “armed propaganda”). Analytically, revolutionary terrorism sends a signal about the power of the underground organization and the fragility of the State. This signal is supposed to induce others to join the cause.<sup>3</sup>

Nationalist terrorist organizations are also interested in gaining followers, and they understand that the more powerful they are, the more people they attract. Yet, their ultimate goal goes beyond mobilization. Nationalist terrorists seek independence or national liberation.<sup>4</sup> They use violence to hurt the authority (the State, or the occupying forces) to such an extent that the authority withdraws from the territory under dispute, or at least makes concessions (such as greater autonomy) to the nationalist community.

The nationalist type is one of the more populated varieties of terrorism<sup>5</sup>: besides ETA and the IRA, we have the Liberation Front of Quebec in Canada, Zionist terrorism against British occupation of Palestine, Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, or Puerto Ricans in the EEUU. For reasons that I have enumerated in the introduction, the comparison between ETA and IRA is not only relevant, but also feasible given the information available on these two organizations.

ETA was founded in 1959, during the Francoist dictatorship.<sup>6</sup> It was a splinter group of the youth organization of the PNV (the Basque Nationalist Party). Although it was originally a purely nationalist organization, ETA soon developed a socialist or Marxist dimension. It killed relatively few people during the dictatorship.

In total, the different wings of ETA have killed more than 830 people since 1968, the year of the first fatality. Interestingly, most of the killings took place during the first years of the new democracy, particularly between 1978 and 1980 (see Figure 1). In 1978, the new Spanish democratic constitution, which provided for a significant decentralization of territorial power, was approved in a referendum (in the Basque Country, only 31 percent of the electorate voted in favour, as compared to 61 percent in the rest of Spain). A year later, the Basque Autonomy Statute was ratified in a referendum in the Basque Country with the support of 53 percent of the population. The PNV, in power in the region since 1980, assumed that devolution would encourage ETA to abandon the armed struggle, but ETA has repeatedly stated that it will only be satisfied with independence.

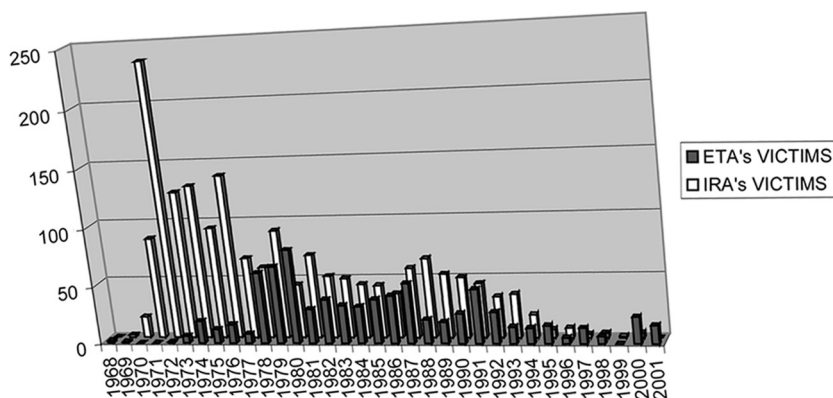


Figure 1. Fatal victims of ETA and IRA violence.

In 1974, on the eve of Franco's death, ETA split into two organizations, the so-called political-military ETA (ETApm) and military ETA (ETAm). The issue behind the rift was the strategy to be followed after the end of the dictatorship. ETApm held that armed struggle and political participation in the new democratic system would complement each other. In contrast, ETAm considered that the organization should invest all its resources in the armed struggle, subordinating its political wing to this. In a sense, ETAm was right in considering that politics and armed struggle were not compatible. ETApm, then the larger and more powerful organization, succumbed to electoral politics and renounced the use of violence in 1981. ETAm has committed 774 out of the 832 killings by all Basque nationalist terrorists, or 93 percent of the total Killings. Except when necessary, I will refer to ETAm simply as ETA.

The IRA was founded in 1919, during the formation of the Irish State. Its essential goal was the reunification of Ireland through the incorporation of the six counties of Northern Ireland, which had a Protestant majority. By the 1960s, the organization was almost dead. When the Civil Rights movement appeared in 1968 in protest against political and economic discrimination of Catholics, the IRA was unable to lead the mobilizations or to protect Catholics from police and Protestant harassment. The ethnic tensions intensified, and in August 1969 British Army troops were deployed in Northern Ireland. More nationalist members of the Republican movement, dissatisfied with the IRA's strategy, split in December 1969, creating the Provisional IRA, as opposed to the Official IRA. From here on, unless I indicate otherwise, the IRA means the Provisional IRA.<sup>7</sup>

The Provisional IRA killed around 1,640 people between 1969 and 2001, twice as many fatal victims as ETA in a similar period of time, in spite of the fact that the population of Northern Ireland amounts to some 70 percent of the Basque population.<sup>8</sup> As can be seen in Table 1, the conflict has been much more intense in Northern Ireland than in the Basque Country. The rate of injured people testifies to the higher level of violence in the former than in the latter. Whereas in Northern Ireland the injury rate was 16 per thousand people in the period 1978–2001, in the Basque Country the corresponding figure is much lower, less than one per thousand.

Likewise, repression has been greater in Northern Ireland than in the Basque Country, as revealed for instance by the rate of arrested people (see Table 1). The army was heavily involved in Northern Ireland, but it played no role in the Basque Country, where anti-terrorist policy is exclusively in the hands of the various police forces. The presence of the army is usually associated with more severe methods. Indeed, Spain has seen nothing strictly comparable to “Bloody Sunday” (30 January 1972), when British troops killed 13 unarmed civilians in Derry, fuelling a massive influx of recruits into the IRA and helping to legitimize the armed struggle for many years after. Finally, Northern Ireland saw the systematic use of various forms of torture on prisoners; in Spain the use of torture was widespread in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but, arguably, it was not as “institutionalized” as in Northern Ireland.

These differences can partly be explained by the nature of the conflict in each case. The conflict was different in two respects. First, the IRA's campaign took place in the context of an ethnic conflict between two communities divided by religion. The IRA fought against Britain, but also against loyalist paramilitary organizations. Many killings of Protestant civilians and paramilitaries were the result of retaliation and sectarian warfare.<sup>9</sup> In the Basque Country, ETA has tried to avoid sectarian killings and the conflict has not involved a clash of communities between nationalists and non-nationalists, despite the fact that the Basque Country received 468,000

**Table 1.** Some comparative data about the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country

	Northern Ireland	Basque Country
Population (1981)	1,532,196	2,134,763
Total number of deaths (1966–2003)	3,665 <sup>a</sup>	1,150 <sup>b</sup>
Deaths caused by Republican terrorist organizations and Basque nationalist terrorist organizations	1,961 <sup>a</sup>	832 <sup>c</sup>
Deaths caused by Provisional IRA and ETAm	1,644 <sup>a</sup>	773 <sup>c</sup>
Non-fatal casualties 1968–2001	45,949 <sup>d</sup>	NA
Non-fatal casualties 1978–2001	24,887 <sup>d</sup>	1,881 <sup>e</sup>
Injury rate 1978–2001, per thousand	16.24	0.88
Arrested people 1972–2001	20,206 <sup>d</sup>	8,011 <sup>f</sup>
Rate of arrested people, per thousand	13.2	3.7

Notes. <sup>a</sup>My own calculations based on a comparison of McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives* (note 12); Malcolm Sutton's dataset updated and revised at CAIN (Conflict Archive in the Internet, at [www.cain.ulst.ac.uk](http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk)); and the *Cost of the Troubles Study* dataset.

<sup>b</sup>Sabino Ormazabal, *Un Mapa (Inacabado) del Sufrimiento* (Bilbao: Fundación Manu Robles, 2003).

<sup>c</sup>My own data-set. See Calleja and Sánchez-Cuenca, *La derrota de ETA* (note 12).

<sup>d</sup>Data from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (former RUC), at [www.psn.police.uk](http://www.psn.police.uk). Only available since 1972.

<sup>e</sup>Data from [www.covite.org](http://www.covite.org). Only available since 1978.

<sup>f</sup>Data from the Spanish Civil Guard ([www.guardiacivil.org](http://www.guardiacivil.org)).

immigrants from the rest of Spain during the industrialization period 1950–1975 (the population in 1950 was just 1,061,100). This changed significantly in the 1990s, as I show below, but at that time, ETA was simply too weak to provoke a sectarian conflict. Generally speaking, terrorists have mainly acted against a single enemy, the Spanish State.

Second, the political and economic situation of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland and Basques in the Basque Country has been very different. In Northern Ireland, Catholics have constituted a permanent minority in a system dominated by Protestants and characterized by elements of political discrimination (gerrymandering, disenfranchisement). Moreover, there was certainly discrimination against Catholics, for example in access to civil service jobs or public housing. The socioeconomic inequalities in the province meant that Catholics suffered from higher unemployment and greater deprivation.<sup>10</sup> In Spain, if we focus on the democratic period, that is, the period in which ETA launched its major offensive against the State, it is impossible to speak in terms of political or economic discrimination against the Basque Country or any sub-population within it. It is true that the Basque language was repressed under Franco, but the Basque Country has long been a wealthy region, with a per capita income well above the average of Spain as a whole.

Surprisingly, despite the different nature of the conflict in each case, the patterns of target selection are almost identical, as can be seen in Table 2. The existence of a sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland is a strong reason to expect a greater percentage of civilian victims. However, the percentages of civilian deaths are almost indistinguishable: 42.6 percent in the PIRA and 40.7 percent in ETAm. On the other

**Table 2.** Patterns of target selection in ETAm and the PIRA

	ETAm	PIRA
Civilians	40.7% (315)	42.6% (701)
Police forces	47.2% (315)	17.2% (283)
Military	12.1% (94)	40.1% (660)
Total	774 (100%)	1644 (100%)

*Source:* For ETA, Calleja and Sánchez-Cuenca, *La derrota de ETA* (note 12); for IRA, De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, “The Production of Terrorist Violence” (note 12), based on the *Cost of the Troubles Study*; McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives* (note 12); and Malcom Sutton’s dataset updated and revised at CAIN (*Conflict Archive in the Internet*, at [www.cain.ulst.ac.uk](http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk)).

hand, due to the involvement of the British army in anti-terrorism struggle, it is only logical that the PIRA has focused on the military (40.1 percent), whereas ETAm has done it to police forces (47.2 percent). The distribution of killings between military and police forces are almost inverted in the two places. But beyond this difference, due to the involvement of the British army in Northern Ireland, there emerges a surprisingly similar pattern in the two cases.<sup>11</sup>

## The Dynamics of Terrorist War of Attrition

### *Strategy*

Unlike revolutionary terrorists, who want to suppress the State, or to create a new one from the ashes of the old social order, nationalist terrorists want the State to do something specific, namely to surrender control of a particular territory. Simplifying a bit, each side has two options, to resist or to exit. If both parties resist, the conflict is prolonged. If either party exits, the conflict comes to an end.

In revolutionary terrorism the State does not have an exit option. The idea of the State announcing, under the pressure of terrorist violence, its own disappearance or the end of capitalism is simply absurd. Precisely because there is an exit option in the case of nationalist terrorism (to grant autonomy or to abandon the territory), terrorists can formulate concrete demands referring to the territory under dispute that, if met by the State, would lead to the end of violence. The IRA issued a five-point plan in September 1971, followed by another three-point statement in March 1972, specifying what it understood by the State’s exit. Similarly, ETA adopted a five-point plan, the so-called KAS Alternative, in 1978. Non-nationalist terrorists such as the Red Brigades, the Red Army Faction, or anarchist terrorism, never put this type of demand to the State.

In order to force the State to make concessions, nationalist terrorists use violence, trying to reach the resistance threshold of the State, the point beyond which the State is better off making concessions rather than resisting. This type of violent conflict can be understood in terms of a war of attrition.

In the military field, the concept of war of attrition is applied to describe cases such as the Egypt-Israel hostilities in the aftermath of the Six Day War, the Western Front in the First World War, or the Vietnam War.<sup>12</sup> It refers to a protracted conflict involving limited violence in which the party with the greater resources to continue the fight wins. Staying reduces the military strength of the parties due to the losses brought about by constant battle. The party with the greater capacity to resist

wins. This logic of attrition is also observed in civil wars, in which the insurgencies try to exhaust the capacity of the State. They attempt to extend the area of liberated territory, curtailing the effective rule of the State.

The conflict resulting from nationalist terrorism is not exactly the same as that of the military war of attrition. Resistance does not depend mainly on weaponry or military personnel. The exhaustion produced by terrorist violence is not physical, but rather economic, political, and ultimately psychological. Terrorism certainly entails some economic cost to the State. According to some estimates, the economic cost of violence in the Basque Country amounts to some 10 percent of the region's GDP.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, however, terrorists appreciate that their more powerful pressure is political and psychological rather than economic. Most people are revolted by violence and consider that terrorism is unacceptable as a political tactic. Given this feeling of revulsion, nationalist terrorists seek to break the enemy's will to resist. Violence is intended to instil feelings of desperation and defeat.

Of course, the war of attrition launched by nationalist terrorists is not a one-way phenomenon. On the one hand, the nationalist terrorist organization hurts the State by killing people, by intimidating businessmen, and by destroying infrastructure and buildings. Its aim is to make the situation so unbearable that the State will opt to abandon the territory rather than stay in it. On the other hand, the State combats the terrorist organization, trying to capture (and sometimes to kill) as many terrorists as possible. The two parties, therefore, inflict pain on each other, so that the persistence of terrorism is costly for both. The party that resists longer under these circumstances wins the prize (control of the territory). Each party has a private exit rule and each fights in the hope of having a longer exit rule than its rival.

There is plenty of evidence to confirm that terrorists saw themselves as engaged in a war of attrition with the State. They thought that this strategy made sense given the impossibility of destroying militarily the State.

At the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975, ETA realized that the aim of creating a revolutionary movement based on the masses was no longer realistic: if revolution had not broken out under the dictatorship, still less was it going to happen under democracy. Without a popular uprising against the regime, the destruction of the State was simply impossible. The alternative for ETA was a war of attrition. The first internal documents about the war of attrition were produced by ETApM at its VI Assembly in 1975,<sup>14</sup> but it was still assumed that the war of attrition would only be a passing phase of a revolutionary war. The pure war of attrition strategy was developed by ETAm, the organization that deliberately decided to end all formal involvement in political action, in 1978:

The function of the armed struggle is not to destroy the enemy, for that is utopian, but it is indeed to force him, through a prolonged war of psychological and physical attrition, to abandon our territory due to exhaustion and isolation.<sup>15</sup>

This strategy remained in place for the next twenty years. For instance, in 1988 an ETA spokesperson said in an interview that the organization had "opted for a prolonged war of attrition, the aim of which is to outlast the enemy. We know that ETA cannot destroy the Spanish State, and that is not our aim . . . . But the Spanish State cannot destroy us either."<sup>16</sup>

In the case of the IRA, the war of attrition came not as the result of a failed revolutionary strategy,<sup>17</sup> but rather as the natural consequence of the transition from ethnic conflict with Protestants in 1970–1971 to a more offensive strategy intended to force the withdrawal of British troops as a necessary step on the road towards a united Ireland. As Tim Pat Coogan notes, “the ultimate object of the campaign that began to get off the ground was not to gain an outright victory over the British army, which was clearly impossible, but to render the existing state inoperable so that the army would have to withdraw.”<sup>18</sup> Terence Clark, an IRA activist in those early days, recalled in crude terms the essence of the strategy: “I hadn’t a political thought in my head other than I knew what we were doing was right because it was to get the ‘Brits’ out of Ireland. The more you hurt them, I thought, the more fed up they’ll get and want to get out.”<sup>19</sup> The IRA’s discourse had not changed much in 1989. In an interview published in the Republican newspaper *An Phoblacht*, an IRA spokesman said that “the IRA strategy is very clear. At some point in the future, due to the pressure of the continuing and sustained armed struggle, the will of the British government to remain in this country will be broken.”<sup>20</sup>

A more reflective view of the war of attrition appeared in the IRA’s famous *Green Book*, a detailed internal document that new recruits had to study before becoming active members of the organization. This explicitly stated that killing people, damaging financial interests, and rendering the territory ungovernable, all formed part of the same underlying strategy, namely to make the British presence in Northern Ireland unsustainable.<sup>21</sup>

In the literature on the IRA this issue is often distorted. It has been suggested, for example, that the war of attrition, also called “the long war,” only began after the end of the long truce that lasted from 9 February 1975 to 23 January 1976.<sup>22</sup> In the *Staff Report* seized by the police in 1977, the IRA recognized that victory was a long way off and that the Republicans should be prepared for a “long-term armed struggle” complemented by greater political activity.<sup>23</sup> This statement, however, does not indicate a change in strategy; rather, and more simply, it can be read as a rational updating of the IRA’s initial beliefs about the British exit rule. At the beginning of the war of attrition, the IRA had wrongly believed that a relatively small number of deaths would be sufficient to force the British out. Maria McGuire, then involved in the IRA, gives us a good sense of the leadership’s naiveté in this respect:

The Army Council’s first target was to kill thirty-six British soldiers—the same number who died in Aden. The target was reached in early November 1971. But this, the Army Council felt, was not enough: I remember, Dave [O’Connell], amongst others, saying: ‘We’ve got to get eighty.’ Once eighty had been killed, Dave felt, the pressure on the British to negotiate would be immense.<sup>24</sup>

Yet even after the IRA killed 235 people in 1972 alone, the British did not withdraw. Up until the 1975 truce, each year the IRA enthusiastically declared the next year would see the expected Republican victory.<sup>25</sup> The “long war” doctrine corrected these mistaken expectations, leading to deep organizational changes, but it did not transform the nature of the war of attrition against the British.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Evolution of the Strategy*

If we look at the evolution of the war of attrition in both countries, we observe a similar trend. There was first an initial phase in which the number of mortal victims

caused by the organization rose very quickly, reaching a peak which was then followed by a sudden decrease (see Figure 1). At the beginning the State does not have much intelligence about the terrorist organization and can do little to prevent the rising death toll. However, since attacks reveal information about the terrorists, the number of arrests will begin to rise, until eventually the police forces are able to halt the trend. Thus, ETA reached its peak in 1980, when it killed 98 people, but that provoked a dramatic increase of arrests of ETA members in 1981, producing in turn the sharp fall in fatalities that can be seen in Figure 1. Likewise, the spectacular increase in deaths caused by the IRA in 1972 was halted by the British through "Operation Motorman," when thousands of troops were dispatched to Northern Ireland: the period 1972–1973 saw the largest number of arrests in the whole history of the Troubles. After these episodes, the number of killings more or less stabilized. In both cases, these peaks were followed by a prolonged period of stability with a slightly downward tendency. In the case of ETA this period lasted from 1981 to 1992, the year in which the leadership of the organization was arrested, leading to a long period of decline. In the case of the IRA, this period lasted from 1976 to around 1990, when the idea of a more politically oriented strategy started to gain support within the IRA ranks. In this long period of stability, the rate of killings was compatible with the rate of arrests made by the State. That is, the rate of arrests was more or less compensated with the rate of new recruits, satisfying what Gordon McCormick calls the "security constraint" of a terrorist organization.<sup>27</sup>

The trends reflected in Figure 1 reveal that at some point (1992 for ETA, 1990 for the IRA) these organizations could not sustain any longer the war of attrition strategy. For whatever reasons (enhanced efficiency of police forces, lesser support for the terrorists), the rate of arrests was higher than the rate of new recruits: consequently, the offensive capacity of these organizations started to diminish. Both organizations felt they were defeated in the war of attrition and had to shift their strategy.

After the failure of the war of attrition, they thought that their only hope of achieving the goal of secession lay in forming a coalition with other non-violent forces, creating a broad nationalist front.<sup>28</sup> The nationalist front was a political project, and therefore required a political approach that was scarcely compatible with the logic of an armed struggle.

For the IRA, the Nationalist Front would include the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party), the Dublin Government, and, in a secondary role, the Irish lobby in the United States. The first truce, declared on 31 August 1994, broke down after 17 months. The second, which came into effect on 20 July 1997, culminated in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998, when the IRA renounced its most basic demand, British withdrawal from the island. This amounted to a defeat in the war of attrition. In fact, this was admitted in a famous document written by the IRA in August 1994, called TUAS ("Tactical Use of Armed Struggle"), in which the new nationalist front policy was justified in these terms: "The strategic objectives come from prolonged debate but are based on a straightforward logic: that republicans at this time and *on their own* do not have the strength to achieve the end goal" (my italics).<sup>29</sup>

In the case of ETA, a coalition with the moderate nationalist parties was attempted in August 1998. One month later, ETA declared an indefinite truce, the idea being that the nationalist front would transform the Basque parliament into a sort of Constituent Assembly which would unilaterally declare independence. However, the non-violent nationalists were not ready to go as far as ETA in this political

challenge, and ETA broke the truce in November 1999. But after the peace expectations raised by the truce, ETA found itself much weaker, and the new violent campaign started in 2000, mainly directed against politicians, was soon halted by police forces. The campaign was over in May 2003. In fact, the longest period without killings since the death of Franco has taken place between May 2003 and December 2006.

In both cases, the strategic shift was accompanied by a change in target selection: there was a significant reduction in the 1990s of fatalities of the police forces and the army. Thus, in ETAm this group represents 57 percent of all fatalities in the period 1968–1992 and only 37 percent in the period 1993–2003. In the PIRA, the percentage goes down from 62 in the period 1970–1989 to 42 percent in the period 1990–2003. In both cases there is a highly significant reduction of twenty percentage points.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The previous reconstruction of the terrorist war of attrition in the Basque Country and in Northern Ireland is based on the assumption that the lethal capacity of ETA and the IRA is subject to the “security constraint,” according to which the rate of arrests has to be compensated with the rate of new recruits if the organization is to survive. Although there is no data on recruits, we can test the hypothesis in an indirect way by examining how police arrests reduce the killing capacity of the terrorist organizations. As I show in this sub-section, the relationship between killings and arrests is rather complex.

More attacks disclose more information and should lead to more arrests. On the other hand, more arrests should weaken the terrorist organization and therefore reduce the number of killings. Therefore, terrorist organizations should adapt to the State’s reaction, that is, they should identify a rate of killing that is compatible with the rate of arrests made by the State. The long period of stability in the number of killings by both ETA and the IRA can be understood in terms of this balance between killings and arrests.

The data consists of annual numbers of killings and arrests for the IRA and ETA. Variables are measured in logs. A number of caveats should be mentioned. First, arrests are not measured in relative terms, taking into account the size of the organizations, for it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable estimates about the number of people belonging to these organizations. Second, we have no information about how many of these arrests were “indiscriminate” or ended up in convictions. It seems logical to assume that as intelligence improves, the number of indiscriminate or random arrests should decline over time. Finally, figures about arrests in Northern Ireland do not refer exclusively to the IRA, but to all kinds of terrorism, whether Republican or Loyalist.

I have estimated Vector Autoregressive (VAR) models and carried out Granger causality tests in order to test whether killings and arrests can be considered exogenous. According to the theoretical argument, both variables should be endogenous. In the analysis the variables are taken in first differences, as augmented Dickey-Fuller tests produced no evidence of stationarity. I have controlled for truce periods in which the terrorist organization opted to refrain from violence. ETA declared truces in 1989 and again in 1998–1999. The IRA did so in 1975, in 1994–1995 and from

1997 to the present. The truce variable is simply a dummy variable with value 1 for periods of truce.

Results are shown in Table 3. Despite measurement error in the arrests variable and the small number of observations, this data does partially confirm the argument made above about endogeneity. In the case of the IRA (model 1), it is clear that a greater number of arrests lowers the number of killings; however, more killings do not seem to lead to more arrests. A Granger causality test shows that the number of arrests is an exogenous variable. In the case of ETA (model 2), the pattern is the opposite. More killings lead to more arrests but it does not seem to be the case that more arrests lead to fewer killings. The Granger causality test shows that the number of killings is now the exogenous variable. In both models, the dummy for the truce has the expected sign and is significant when the dependent variable is the number of killings.

**Table 3.** VAR models of arrests and killings

	IRA (1)	ETA (2)	ETA (3)
<i>Equation 1. Var. dep. Killings</i> (Actions in (3))			
Killings (t - 1) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 1) in (3)	-.621*** (.189)	-.277 (.233)	-.206 (.180)
Killings (t - 2) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 2) in (3)	-.191 (.271)	-.233 (.279)	-.251 (.218)
Killings (t - 3) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 3) in (3)	.053 (.262)	.061 (.337)	-.267 (.282)
Arrests (t - 1)	-.962** (.397)	-.181 (.464)	-1.014*** (.361)
Arrests (t - 2)	.256 (.404)	.053 (.445)	.295 (.411)
Arrests (t - 3)	-.601 (.411)	-.312 (.379)	-.148 (.348)
Truce	-.528** (.229)	-1.222** (.589)	-1.909*** (.541)
Constant	-.212** (.118)	.259 (.185)	.321* (.172)
R <sup>2</sup>	.730	.281	.564
<i>Equation 2. Var. dep. Arrests</i>			
Killings (t - 1) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 1) in (3)	-.143 (.113)	.284** (.111)	.064 (.094)
Killings (t - 2) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 2) in (3)	.025 (.162)	.387*** (.133)	.057 (.114)
Killings (t - 3) in (1-2)/ Actions (t - 3) in (3)	.050 (.156)	.214 (.160)	.436*** (.147)
Arrests (t - 1)	-.308 (.238)	-.775*** (.221)	-.374* (.188)
Arrests (t - 2)	-.349 (.241)	-.471** (.211)	-.426* (.215)
Arrests (t - 3)	-.256 (.246)	-.129 (.180)	-.004 (.182)
Truce	.019 (.137)	-.472 (.280)	-.478 (.282)
Constant	-.118 (.070)	0.150 (0.088)	.120 (.090)
R <sup>2</sup>	.300	0.441	.428
N	26	30	30

\*\*\*Significant at 1%; \*\*significant at 5%; \*significant at 10%.  
Standard errors in parentheses.

While these results are to some extent reassuring, they fail to show that the activity of both the terrorist organization and the State are endogenous given their strategic interaction in the context of war of attrition. Moreover, it is hard to explain why the exogenous variable is different in each case. This could simply be due to the poor quality of the data. However, at least in the case of ETA we can go a step further. Since the number of fatalities might not be a good proxy of terrorist activity, in model (3) I have replaced the number of killings for the total number of actions (including robberies, sabotage, destruction of infrastructure, kidnappings, killings, etc.) carried out by ETA (as measured by the Spanish Ministry of Interior). Unfortunately, I have not been able to collect comparable data for Northern Ireland. In model (3) both variables—actions and arrests—influence each other. Arrests reduce the number of actions, while actions lead to more arrests. The Granger causality test confirms the endogeneity of the two variables, as the theoretical model of war of attrition would expect. Hence the hypothesis seems to be borne out when the quality of the data improves.

### Popular Support

Both ETA and the IRA are rather selective in their attacks. In the Basque Country, there have been 595 lethal attacks, producing 832 fatalities. The mean number of deaths by attack is just 1.4. In Northern Ireland it is even lower, 1.3: the PIRA has carried out 1,234 lethal attacks, producing 1,644 deaths. Why are these organizations so selective? If the goal is to maximize the pain on the enemy, Irish or Basque terrorists could, rather than shooting people, plant bombs in public places and buildings. If they do not do it systematically, it is because indiscriminate bombings kill too many “non-legitimate” targets.

Eamon Collins, a former member of the IRA (who was subsequently killed by the organization), wrote that the IRA “fought with one hand tied behind its back: in general it did not carry out the indiscriminate campaign of all-out war which it would have been capable of fighting.”<sup>30</sup> And on the few occasions it did, it tended to deny responsibility for the massacre. Two significant instances of this pattern are the bombs that went off in two pubs in Birmingham on 21 November 1974, killing 19 people and injuring 182, and the bomb that exploded in Enniskillen on 8 November 1987, killing 11 Protestant civilians. In both cases the IRA denied responsibility. Likewise, ETA did not claim responsibility for the bomb that exploded in a restaurant in 1974 killing 13 and injuring over 70 people.

The origins of this self-restraint, and the reason for these denials when it is violated, lie in public support.<sup>31</sup> Terrorist organizations can survive as long as they do not completely alienate their existing and potential supporters. If they do not resort to more radical tactics, it is because they are very concerned about the consequences their actions may have in terms of popular support. The need terrorists feel to justify civilian casualties clearly reveals their dependence on public support. Sean MacStiofain, the Provisional IRA’s first Chief of Staff, openly admitted as much: “No resistance movement in history has ever succeeded in fighting a struggle for national freedom without some accidental casualties, but the Republican interest in retaining popular support clearly lay in causing as few as possible.”<sup>32</sup>

Here, it is necessary to distinguish between different forms of support. Drawing up a modified version of Roger Petersen’s scale of rebellious behaviour, we can define three degrees of support for terrorism<sup>33</sup>: (1) those who disagree with the

armed struggle and the killing of innocent victims but vaguely sympathise with the organization's goals; (2) those who vote for the party associated with the terrorist organization or participate in the social movements that develop around the organization; and (3) those who help the organization in various ways (by providing information, housing, money, etc.) or engage in lesser acts of violence.

Group (3) is probably the least sensitive to the number and kind of victims of the armed struggle. The support of group (3) is essential for the maintenance and reproduction of the organization. The problem facing many terrorist organizations is that they also need the support of group (2) and, ultimately, at least the non-rejection of group (1), in whose name the terrorist organization kills. Otherwise, terrorists cannot claim any sort of legitimacy for the ends they fight for and soon become a marginal group out of touch with political reality.

The crucial point I want to make here is that when groups (1) and (2) are, for whatever reasons, more moderate than the terrorists, there is some kind of trade-off between the organization's offensive capacity and popular support.<sup>34</sup> In order to gain the support of groups (1) and (2) they have to limit their potential offensive capacity and, accordingly, their tactics in the war of attrition will not be as violent as they could be. Under such circumstances, the more indiscriminate the attacks, the greater the pressure on the State, but also the smaller their popular support. And the more isolated the terrorist organization, the less threatening the armed struggle is for the State.

There is very fragmentary evidence on public support for ETA and the IRA. Moreover, it is hardly comparable. Perhaps the most direct comparison is between a 1979 survey in the Basque Country and a 1978 survey in Northern Ireland. In the Basque Country, 50 percent of all respondents said that ETA were patriots or idealists (as opposed to 42 percent that chose brainwashed, mad, or criminals).<sup>35</sup> In Northern Ireland, with a different wording of the question, 46 percent of Catholics agreed with the statement that the IRA are basically patriots and idealists.<sup>36</sup> However, this is a very dubious indicator of support (35 percent of Protestants also agree with the same statement about the IRA, but it would be absurd to conclude that they support the IRA). Based on more direct indicators, we can estimate that general support for ETA and the IRA (groups 2 and 3) is between 20 and 30 percent of the population at most.<sup>37</sup>

Given the paucity of data, it is extremely hard to show empirically the trade-off ETA and the IRA faced with respect to group (2). Yet, it is not altogether impossible if we combine survey and electoral data. In the Basque Country, surveys have been carried out at various times since 1981. I have calculated a mean value of support for every available survey.<sup>38</sup> As can be seen in Figure 2, there was some significant support in the early 1980s, which reached a local peak in 1987. Consistent with survey data, it was in that year that HB (*Herri Batasuna*), ETA's political wing, achieved its electoral peak, winning almost 20 percent of the vote in the Basque Country. Just a few weeks after these elections, a car bomb killed 21 civilians in Barcelona. As Figure 2 reveals, a steady decline set in then and lasted until 1997. It is reasonable to impute part of this decline to ETA's use of car bombs in the mid-1980s and the ensuing indiscriminate killings. ETA had to limit the use of this weapon, as it was constrained by public opinion and particularly by group (2).

The decline in public support for ETA was only stemmed in 1998, when ETA announced a truce. The peak in popular support for ETA in 1999 corresponds precisely to the year in which ETA did not kill anyone, just as the decline after 1999 came in the wake of the end of the truce. In electoral terms, it is worth noting that HB had won 12.9 percent of the vote before the truce. In the 1998 Basque regional

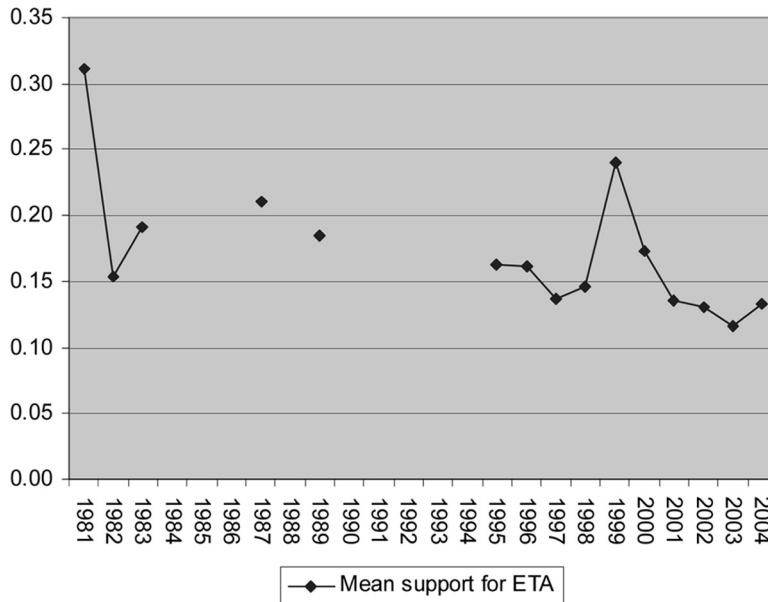


Figure 2. Popular support for ETA in the Basque Country.

elections, held during the truce, the party's share of the vote rose to 17.7 percent (the biggest increase in the history of the party), before dipping to a mere 10 percent in the regional elections of 2001, after the truce was called off.

The same effects of the cessation of violence can be seen with respect to Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA. After the hunger strike of 1981, Sinn Fein decided to play the political game, maintaining the abstentionist policy of refusing to take the seats won.<sup>39</sup> During the 1980s, Sinn Fein obtained around 10 percent of the vote, with a slightly declining trend that was halted in the 1990s thanks to the hopes created by the peace process. Confining ourselves to the elections to the Westminster parliament, Sinn Fein's vote went up from 9.9 percent in 1992 (before the 1994 truce) to 16.1 percent in 1997, and then, after the Good Friday Agreement, to 21.7 percent in 2001 and 24.3 percent in 2005.<sup>40</sup> Of course, the cessation of violence by itself was not the only explanatory factor of this increase in vote share. Sinn Fein was certainly legitimized in the eyes of the Catholic community both internationally and domestically and played a crucial role in the peace negotiations.

This common pattern regarding the political branches of ETA and the IRA shows that during periods without violence, some people from group (1) shift to group (2). But this means that the size of group (2) is constrained by the moderate preferences of the population. These changes in the size of group (2) reveal the constraints faced by terrorist organizations whose supporters are more moderate than the organizations themselves.

## Conclusions

Nationalist terrorism is different from other forms of terrorism because of the territorial claim. Its violence is clearly strategic: it aims to break the resistance threshold

of the State. Unlike revolutionary or religious terrorism, it does not aspire to change society or civilization. Its goal is rather concrete: to force the State to withdraw from the territory under dispute. This gives rise to a very definite strategy: war of attrition. Unlike conventional warfare, the attrition in the case of terrorism is ultimately psychological: the resources of the State are not exhausted in the long campaign of attrition, but the terrorists expect that at a certain level of hurting, the State will prefer to yield than to resist.

I have argued that despite the different nature of the nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, the IRA and ETA are remarkably similar in terms of strategy, target selection, and popular support. Both organizations were involved in a war of attrition with the State. The level of attrition was higher in the case of the IRA, but this was a difference of degree, not of kind. After a long period of armed struggle, both organizations assumed their defeat in the war of attrition and shifted their strategy towards the creation of a broad nationalist front. And both organizations were constrained by the moderate preferences of the voters who supported the political branch of the terrorist organizations. This constraint explains the selective nature of their killings. They could have hurt the State with more indiscriminate attacks, but that would have meant a loss of supporters.

To make these points, I have combined some analytical sophistication with detailed empirical analysis, trying to overcome the divide in the literature on terrorism between formal models with little empirical evidence and case studies lacking a theoretical perspective.

The comparison between ETA and the IRA generates some hypotheses that could be tested in a larger comparative investigation. For instance, it follows from the argument on public opinion that in those places where supporters are as radical as activists themselves, terrorist organizations will be less constrained in terms of target selection (i.e., they will kill more civilians) and type of violence (less selective, more indiscriminate attacks). This seems to be borne out in the case of Palestine.

On the one hand, we observe very little self-restraint by terrorist organizations: if we focus on the “Second *Intifada*” in the period 2000–2003, we find that civilians account for almost 70 percent of the mortal victims of Palestinian terrorist organizations, as opposed to around 40 percent in the case of both ETA and the IRA.<sup>41</sup> Besides, war of attrition is pushed to its very limits by the launching of suicide missions against civilian targets. On the other hand, in Palestine around 90% of respondents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip approve of armed attacks against soldiers and settlers in the occupied territories and more than 50% support the killing of civilians inside Israel, much higher figures than those of ETA and the IRA.<sup>42</sup>

The next step towards confirming and refining the general argument would therefore involve collecting data about patterns of victim selection by, and popular support for, different nationalist terrorist organizations, trying to explain variations within war of attrition terrorism. What we ultimately need is a theory about the different strategies and constraints of terrorist organizations that can account for the variation we find in levels of violence and in the patterns of target selection.

## Notes

1. The most systematic comparison is that of Peter Waldmann, *Radicalismo Ético* (Madrid: Akal, 1997). Cynthia L. Irvin, in her book *Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), has studied the political branches of both terrorist organizations. Finally,

Rogelio Alonso, "Pathways Out of Terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country: The Misrepresentation of the Irish Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16 (2004): 695–713, has analyzed the influence of Republican nationalism on Basque radical nationalism.

2. This does not mean that the kind of violence in guerrilla and in terrorism is the same. For instance, terrorist organizations, being weaker than guerrillas, tend to avoid open combat with the State.

3. Gordon H. McCormick and Guillermo Owen, "Revolutionary Origins and Conditional Mobilization," *European Journal of Political Economy* 12 (1996): 377–402.

4. Fernando Reinares, "National Separatism and Terrorism in Comparative Perspective," in Tore Bjørge, ed., *Root Causes of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 119–130.

5. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), Ch. 2.

6. Key studies on ETA include Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents: ETA, 1952–1980* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Florencio Domínguez, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa y Actuaciones: 1978–1992* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1998) and *De la Negociación a la Tregua. ¿El Final de ETA?* (Madrid: Taurus, 1998); David Laitin, "National revivals and violence," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 36 (1995): 3–43; Francisco Letamendía, *Historia del Nacionalismo Vasco y de ETA* (San Sebastián: R & B Editores, 1994); Fernando, Reinares, *Patriotas de la muerte: Quiénes han militado en ETA y por qué* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001); Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, *ETA contra el Estado: Las estrategias del terrorismo* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2001); Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Llera, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain," in Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 410–469.

7. Among the abundant literature on the IRA and the troubles, I include here some of the most useful references: Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA* (London: HarperCollins, 2000); Richard English, *Armed Struggle: A History of the IRA* (London: Macmillan, 2003); David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles* (London: Penguin, 2001); Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (New York: Norton, 2002); Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999); M. R. L. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995); Peter Taylor, *Provos: The IRA & Sinn Féin* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997); and Jonathan Tonge, *Northern Ireland* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

8. This figure is somewhat lower than others that are mentioned in the literature. For the sake of comparison with ETA, I have excluded from the counting all cases of PIRA activists that were killed by their own explosives. Strictly speaking, they are not victims of terrorist activity.

9. On sectarianism, see Robert W. White, "The Irish Republican Army: An Assessment of Sectarianism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 1 (1997): 20–55; Steve Bruce, "Victim Selection in Ethnic Conflict: Motives and Attitudes in Irish Republicanism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 (1997): 56–71.

10. Note that I am not suggesting that discrimination was the cause of violence: rather, discrimination can help to understand levels of violence.

11. On target selection in ETA and the IRA, see José María Calleja and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, *La derrota de ETA: De la primera a la última víctima* (Madrid: Adhara, 2006); Luis De la Calle e Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "La selección de víctimas en ETA," *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 10 (2004): 53–79; Luis de la Calle e Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "The Production of Terrorist Violence: Analyzing Target Selection Within the IRA and ETA," *Estudios/Working Papers* (2006), Instituto Juan March (Madrid); Marie-Therese Fey, Mike Morrissey, and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland's Troubles: The Human Costs* (London: Pluto, 1999); Michael McKeown, *Two Seven Six Three* (Lucan: Murlough Press, 1989); David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, and Chris Thornton, *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women and Children Who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2001); and Author, 2004.

12. Avi Kober, "Attrition in Modern and Post-Modern War," in Bradford A. Lee and Karl F. Walling, eds., *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 74–98.

13. Alberto Abadie and J. Gardeazabal, "The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country," *American Economic Review* 93 (2003): 113–131.

14. ETA, *Documentos Y* (San Sebastián: Lur, 1981), Vol. 17, 353.
15. Quoted in Francisco Letamendia, *Historia del Nacionalismo Vasco y de ETA* (San Sebastián: R & B Editores, 1994), Vol. II, 114.
16. Quoted in Patxo Unzueta, *Los Nietos de la Ira. Nacionalismo y Violencia en el País Vasco* (Madrid: El País-Aguilar, 1988), 251.
17. The IRA had aspired to trigger a revolution by guerrilla warfare in the 1950s. See Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* (see note 7 above), 67.
18. Coogan, *The IRA* (see note 7 above), 375.
19. Quoted in Taylor, *Provos* (see note 7 above), 104.
20. Quoted in Henry Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion: A Political History of the IRA* (London: Serif, 1997), 217.
21. The *Green Book* is secret, but Coogan, *The IRA* (see note 7 above), Ch. 33–34 provides an exhaustive description with long quotations.
22. See for instance White (see note 9 above), 40 and 45. Although Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* (see note 7 above), 156–157, provides a very subtle strategic analysis of the IRA, he is somewhat ambiguous about the significance of the shift to the “long war” strategy.
23. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* (see note 7 above), Ch. 6; Taylor, *Provos* (see note 7 above), Ch. 15; John Horgan and Max Taylor, “The Provisional Irish Republican Army: Command and Functional Structure,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 1 (1997): 1–32.
24. Quoted in Maria McGuire, *To Take Arms: A Year in the Provisional IRA* (London: MacMillan, 1973), 74–75.
25. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* (see note 7 above), 135; Moloney, *A Secret History* (see note 7 above), 150.
26. Charles Drake, “The Provisional IRA: Reorganisation and the Long War,” in Alan O’Day, ed., *Terrorism’s Laboratory: The Case of Northern Ireland* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995), 87–114.
27. Gordon H. McCormick, “Terrorist Decision Making,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 473–507.
28. For a detailed account of the nationalist front strategy, see Sánchez-Cuenca, *ETA contra el Estado* (see note 6 above), Ch. 6, and Moloney, *A Secret History* (see note 7 above) on the IRA.
29. The TUAS document is reproduced in Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, eds., *A Farewell to Arms? From “Long War” to Long Peace in Northern Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), Appendix 6.
30. Eamon Collins, *Killing Rage* (London: Granta, 1997), 8.
31. Christopher Hewitt, “Terrorism and Public Opinion: A Five Country Comparison,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2 (1990): 145–170, analyzes fragmentary evidence on five countries (Uruguay, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Northern Ireland) and does not find evidence of a trade-off between type of violence and public support. However, he seems to conflate sometimes levels of violence (number of fatalities) and type of violence (targeting civilians in indiscriminate attacks).
32. Sean MacStiofain, *Revolutionary in Ireland* (Edinburgh: Gordon Cremonesi, 1975), 214.
33. Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
34. Stathis Kalyvas and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, “Killing Without Dying: The Absence of Suicide Missions,” in Diego Gambetta, ed. *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 209–232.
35. Juan Linz et al., *Conflicto en Euskadi* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985).
36. Bernadette C. Hayes and Ian McAllister, “Sowing Dragon’s Teeth: Public Support for Political Violence and Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland,” *Political Studies* 49 (2001): 901–922.
37. On ETA, see below. On the IRA, Hayes and McAllister (see note 36 above) tables 7–8 report that in 1973, 25 percent of Catholics and 16 percent of Protestants thought violence was legitimate; in 1998, 28 percent of Catholics still had sympathy with the reasons for violence of Republican paramilitaries.
38. Based on the *Euskobarometro* (at [www.ehu.es/cpvweb](http://www.ehu.es/cpvweb)), I have calculated the mean as follows: full support, value 1; critical support, value 0.66; indirect support (those who agree

with the ends but not the means and those who think that the armed struggle was justified in the past but not in the present), value 0.33; full rejection, value 0. Other minor answers and no answers have been eliminated. The rate of no answer is over 40 percent in 1981 and 1982 and then drops quickly.

39. Adrian Guelke and Jim Smyth, “The Ballot Bomb: Terrorism and the Electoral Process in Northern Ireland,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4, no. 2 (1992): 103–124.

40. The same trend is observed for other type of elections: see Ian McAllister, “The Armalite and the ballot box’: Sinn Fein’s electoral strategy in Northern Ireland,” *Electoral Studies* 23 (2004): 123–142.

41. See the data provided by the Israel Defence Forces at [www.idf.il](http://www.idf.il).

42. Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleková., “Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (2003): 119–144.