MAKING AND UNMAKING DEMOCRATIC OPPORTUNITIES IN NATIONALIST MOBILIZATION:

The MLNV (Basque Country) and the BNG (Galicia) in Spain, a comparative analysis.

Ramón Máiz
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

This article is intended to serve a dual purpose. First, to explain the main causes of success and failure of two nationalist political forces (MLNV, BNG) questioning the same nation-state (Spain); second, to elaborate such an explanation by taking into account the analytical tools of the social movements research.

So, on the one hand we want to use an analytical framework which has given excellent results in studies of social movements, but which has rarely been applied in studies of nationalism. This analytical model is expressed through the dynamic confluence of three instruments for measuring social movements from a qualitative and quantitative perspective: political opportunity structure (Tilly 1978 and Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi, 1992; Della Porta, D. and Rucht, D. 1995, Rootes 1997), discursive frames and strategies (Goffman, 1974; Snow and Benford 1992; Gerhards 1995; Gamson and Mayer 1996); and resource mobilisation (McCarthy and Zald, 1987; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996). These are the three analytical tools most commonly used (individually or in combination) at an academic level for the conceptualisation, empirical research and comparative analysis of social movements of all types: old (workers’) movements; new movements (ecologism, pacifism, feminism etc.) and very new movements (anti-racism, Third-World solidarity, etc.).

The nationalist movement, however, has rarely been studied using these parameters. It is true that in the strictest sense of the term, nationalist movements are not social movements. The desire to occupy and thus exercise the political power of the state—which can in one form or another be seen in a section of many nationalist movements—is perceived as depriving them of the “purity”, in terms of objectives and organisational and strategic innovation, that social movements can boast. However this exclusive approach is inadequate; nationalist movements are also social movements and in practise, they act like social movements; especially where their presence in the
political institutions has little relevance in forming public policies, or this presence proves subsidiary to and dependent on processes of mobilisation carried out outside the institutional political space by that same nationalist movement.

But as McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), point out we must also seek to go beyond an exclusive and static analysis of social movements. On the one hand, social movements are just another expression of the processes of political confrontation; and these processes of political confrontation include social mobilisation, national struggles, emerging conflicts in democratic transitions, etc. At the same time all these processes of confrontation have common rules and similar mechanisms and relationships in the confluence and impetus of different processes of confrontation.

And they act dynamically: these processes of confrontation have similar inter-relations between players, resources and cultural and political opportunities. Certain mechanisms of connection of opportunities, identitary changes, competition, polarisation, intermediation, etc, connect the different dimensions (mobilizing structures, political contexts, discourses) of the life of the movements and make their action operative.

Consequently, we believe that the application of this dynamic analytical model to nationalist political movements is more than mere “loan-usage” of an external model (taken from social movements). On the contrary, we believe that it is a particularly appropriate model, because the national conflict is one of the most classic forms of political confrontation and national conflicts are characterised —very especially—by the fact that they establish dynamic and complex relations between an extensive set of variables related to the players and to the structures. For this reason, we think that the model is applicable to the two nationalist movements of which we wish to make a comparative study: the BNG [Bloque Nacionalista Galego] in Galicia (Spain) and the MLNV [Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco] in the Basque Country (Spain).

The use of this triple framework and its inter-relations may help us understand these

1 It is not easy to select an appropriate name for the totality of radical Basque nationalism. The Batasuna group expresses predominantly political options and the term MLNV (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco - Basque National Liberation Movement) is hardly used today. The most common name, which is employed to describe the network of groups making up Basque radical left, is the Izquierda Abertzale (IA – Patriotic Left). However, the term MLNV has the virtue of describing certain features of the movement which are of particular interest to this study: its clearly movementist nature; its inclusion of a varied set of organisations; and of course, the presence within the movement of the terrorist organisation ETA—a presence which, as we shall see, has been a determining factor for the movement.
nationalist social movements better. It may help us understand because, while both movements have emerged in the same state and have been affected by the same process of democratic transition and consolidation, the two have evolved very differently. The Galician movement has succeeded in advancing its demands, its relative position and its electoral support in Galician society. The MLNV, on the other hand, has not only failed to achieve these developments, but has actually lost electoral ground, becoming more and more isolated and encapsulate from the other Basque political forces, included the nationalist ones (PNV, EA).

The second point we want to address is directly connected to this previous statement. It is only possible for a social movement to achieve results, to make a self-favouring impact in the political system, if it can adequately tackle the dimensions referred to by these three analytical tools. In effect, political opportunity structure, discursive frames and resource mobilisation explain why the movements do what they do; they are analytical tools. But at the same time, for a social movement to achieve its ends, it must use these referents properly; and they are thus also regulatory tools. Thus, a social movement (nationalist in this case) achieves its goals insofar as it knows how to adapt (or create in its favour) to a certain political opportunity structure; insofar as the framing of its discourse resonates and is in tune with the predominant social discourses; and insofar as it knows how to augment and utilise different resources (including organizational ones) which will increase its capacity for pressure and influence—and, in addition, insofar as it manages to articulate these three dimensions\(^2\).

The whole concept of success—and the means of measuring it in social movements—is undoubtedly a tricky issue and one which has not been extensively studied\(^3\), but it is also true that comparative “measurements” may be established of the relevance of the impact of the movements in different spheres or networks within the system.

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\(^2\) Although we have opted for a dynamic analysis of the relations between the different analytical dimensions and frameworks of the movements, we are aware that in this work this dynamic dimension is more implicit than explicit. These processes of relationships between different players and different resources (discourses, contexts, organisations, etc) are not always described, but those relations exist and it is they that determine the success—or failure—of the movement. We will set out the relational mechanisms in greater detail in another, more extensive, comparison between these nationalist movements currently in progress.

\(^3\) Some excellent work has been carried out in this area, but it has been very largely analytical—that is to say it addresses the issues that should be taken into account when considering the results, rather than establishing what the specific results obtained have been. See Gamson\(^1\)990, Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak et al (1995), Rucht (1992), Sztompka (1995), Giugni, McAdam and Tilly (1999).
(symbolic, interactive, institutional, substantive, etc) which we shall set out in our conclusions.

1.- The Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)

The Bloque Nacionalista Galego [Galician Nationalist Bloc] (BNG) was founded in 1982 as a political front agglutinating various nationalist parties from Galicia, all of which supported radical calls for self-determination, self-government for Galicia within a confederate and sovereign perspective, as well as cultural and linguistic standardisation. These small nationalist parties, which had been formed during the last years of the Franco dictatorship, were reactivated from 1978 under the auspices of the Spanish constitution. The “Bloque” contains nationalist parties of very varied ideological orientations, from the extreme left (Inzar) to the centre right (PNG), with the middle ground held by the centre-left and social democrat Unidade Galega and Esquerda Nacionalista. The front is controlled by Unión do Pobo Galego, a hegemonic party which has completely dominated the fundamental levels of the organisation since its foundation. In 1986, the BNG first entered the Galician Parliament (where it initially held only a small number of seats), accepted the Spanish constitution and the “state of autonomies” contained therein and devised a strategy that included political mobilisation and work in political institutions, within a wider political scenario overwhelmingly dominated from 1989 on by the conservative Partido Popular de Galicia (with around 50% of the popular vote). After 1995, the BNG became the only nationalist force in Galicia, concentrating an electorate which had previously been scattered amongst various nationalist parties and successively incorporating all these groups within the plural frontist organisation.

Our hypothesis can be summarised as follows: 1) the BNG benefits from an opening-up in the POS, but, unlike the MLNV, it has at the same time created its own opportunities by progressively adapting to the political context, through: 2) a flexible organisational format and a clear change in strategy, from an initially anti-institutional and disruptive one, (“popular mobilisation”) to an electoral approach and active involvement in parliamentary and local institutions; and 3) a change in framework strategy, abandoning the initially exclusive discourse (built around the “nationalism v. Spanishism” frame) of the 1970s, in favour of an inclusive frame (based on the “common project” rhetorical device) by the end of the 1990s.
The BNG is a fine example of how positive interaction between opportunities and availabilities and a strategic exploitation of the space they open up can lead, through complex organisational work and clear ideological moderation, to a progressive frame alignment which has been extended through electoral alignment at the expense of its most immediate rivals (the PSdG-PSOE).

1.- A Favourable Political Opportunity Structure.

The first factor—or set of factors—that explains the electoral growth of the BNG, and how it has gone from being a residual force in the Galician sub-system of parties in the 1970s and 1980s to become the second largest party in the autonomous community, is the existence, for the first time in the history of Galician nationalism (with the sole exception of the short and frustrated parenthesis of the Second Republic), of a favourable POS (Máiz 1994).

In effect, the BNG benefited from a twin opening-up of the POS above all in terms of the institutions: a) the democratisation of the Spanish state, the passing of the 1978 Constitution and the development of the rule of law, which were to aid the organisational development of nationalism, radically reducing the costs of operating clandestinely; and b) the federalising decentralisation of the “state of autonomies” which provided institutional incentives for the reinforcement of nationalism (Beramendi & Máiz, 2003; Máiz, Beramendi and Grau 2002).

Thus, firstly, the emergence of a Galician scenario of competition: the Galician Xunta [government] and Parliament which give substance to collective “Galician” interests, providing impetus to the “Galicianisation” [galleguización] of the political forces in competition; i.e. it made structural demands for: organisational autonomy; solid leadership in Galicia as opposed to the central apparatus of the party in the case of Spain-wide parties; defence of Galician industries, etc.

Secondly, the regional public policies reinforced—or even created—Galician industries that had previously been broken up or non-existent, allowing a regional aggregation of interests in fishing, the dairy industry, education, health, infrastructures etc. In addition, this process brought into play an additional and explicitly identitary reinforcement: as the years passed—and even under the leadership of the Galician PP
—regional Galician institutions implemented a number of policies promoting Galician culture and reinforcing the collective identity. These included the language policy; education system; defence of Galician industries against the regulation or conversion policies emanating from Madrid or the EU; calls for inter-territorial solidarity and the “historical debt”; the demand for an infrastructure policy that would vertebrate the territory; the presence of public media such as TVG, with Galician-oriented programmes; the cultivation of identitary symbols and myths—fiestas, music, recovery of the “historical memory”, ancestors and precursors etc.—which all heled to create or reinforce a perception of belonging and a collective identity which had not previously existed (Máiz and Losada 1999). This underlying popular *galleguismo*, this sense of collective identity as Galicians, largely dual in character (see enclosed table), disseminated and reproduced by the media set the stage on which all political forces had to compete, forcing them to establish a specific response based on this common generalised area, in the heart of which the struggle for hegemony was waged. Those who stood within this area (the PPG from 1989—when Fraga came to Galicia—and the BNG from the outset) found it much easier to compete than others who were excluded by their lack of organisational autonomy (the so-called “branchism” [*sucursalsimo*]), credible autonomous leadership and defence of Galician interests against Spanish policy and this was certainly the case of the PSOE-PSdG during the 1980s and much of the 1990s.

In addition, there was the growing bilateralism of the “state of autonomies”. The crystallisation of a dynamic of bilateral competition between the individual autonomous regions and “Madrid” for resources and powers as the Spanish “state of autonomies” developed, reinforced and highlighted the advantage of having non-state, non *branchist* forces, free from the ties of state forces, which could defend the interests of the region unhindered. The potential for blackmail exploited by the PNV in the Basque Country and particularly CiU in Catalonia underscored for the electorate the usefulness of regional forces that would defend the interests of the community, and encouraged the development or generation of such forces. The result was the emergence of the phenomenon of an additional, institutionally induced, nationalism or regionalism (Máiz 1999).

This summary of the institutional dimension of the POS also requires a particular reference to the players, as here too there were elements which proved beneficial to
the BNG, above all, electoral dealignments. In effect, the BNG was to benefit from important electoral dealignments in Galicia: firstly in the heart of the nationalist field itself, with the successive crises and electoral collapse of all of its competitors on the nationalist ticket: Esquerda Galega, Partido Galeguista, Partido Nacionalista Galego, etc. This collapse—the result of internal disputes, schisms, leadership crises and, above all repeated electoral failure—freed up the initially small but qualitatively important electoral weight of these forces, favouring the BNG’s position first as a hegemonic force and eventually as the sole one. By gradually concentrating the vote, the Bloque managed to incorporate a previously fragmented nationalist electorate (Rivera Otero et al 1998).

But in addition, the BNG was to benefit significantly from the crisis and electoral collapse of its main rival, the PSdG-PSOE, in the 1990s (See Graph in Appendix I). In the late 1980s, the Galician PSOE went into a period of progressive decline as the result of a range of different circumstances: lack of stable regional leadership, multiple internal conflicts (between “Guerrists” and renovators⁴), an endemic organic crisis and the multiplication of localist tensions, in addition to the patent strategic desgalleguización [de-Galicianisation] of the party and its support for policies dictated by the PSOE in Madrid (in government since 1982), such as the restructuring of heavy industry and ship-building and the dairy quota, which harmed Galician interests and had a severe impact on the region’s weak industrial base. In addition, the party gradually abandoned its role in the world of Galician culture and the media, where it was replaced by both the PPG and the BNG. Thus the BNG, with its increasingly moderate platform, was in a position to partially attract voters who abandoned the PSOE in the 1990s (while others swelled the abstention figures).

The BNG, nonetheless, came up against a barrier to the number of available votes it could appropriate, in the form of the Galician PP’s electoral strength of leadership, its clientelist organisational structure, and, no less important, the “Galicianisation” [galleguización] of its image and discourse. From the outset, the party performed a volte-face, espousing regionalism (“Galego coma ti” [Galician like you]), gradually appropriating myths, symbols, precursors etc. of Galleguismo and implementing “Galicianised” cultural policies (“No one can play at being more “galleguista” than us”). This formula of organisational clientelism combined with its regionalist

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⁴ Supporters of the opposing visions of Alfonso Guerra and Felipe González, deputy leader and leader respectively of the PSOE.
galleguismo in symbols and in the media was to prove highly effective under the strong charismatic leadership of Manuel Fraga, who managed to keep the local and provincial networks of the party united. Its electoral effectiveness was unequivocal: the Galician PP managed to gain 52% of the vote, turning it into the region’s dominant party.

In addition to the political opportunity offered it by electoral disalignment in adjacent voter groups, the BNG has also benefited—albeit to a lesser extent—by the availability of allies. The party benefited from the successive availability of circumstantial allies, who explicitly or implicitly strengthened its image in public opinion, to the detriment of other forces. In the early 1980s, for example the PSOE backed the BNG—or at least did not compete openly with it—against the successful centrist nationalism of Coalición Galega, which led a surprising emergence in local and regional elections, attracting electoral support from the defunct UCD. Finally democratic centred nationalist parties from Catalonia and Basque Country, CiU and PNV, in a series of meetings in the late 1990s, centring on the “Barcelona Declaration” etc., afforded the BNG increased visibility with an important political presence statewide and—very importantly in view of the BNG’s initial left-wing platform—an image of moderation on the left-right axis.

2. Making new opportunities: discourse, organizational work and mobilization

The existence of a favourable POS does not in itself guarantee the success of nationalist mobilisation; suitable political organisational work is required to activate and exploit this situation. The BNG developed a formula of supra-partisan organisation in the form of a “front”, which gradually incorporated different parties, groups and independents, closely coordinated with a wider multi-organisational field.

Thus the BNG crystallised a spectacularly effective organisational format: a flexible, very politically heterogeneous, frontist structure, ranging from left-wing formations such as Inzar (the remains of Maoist and Trotskyite parties), through Esquerda Galega and Esquerda Nacionalista (social democrats) to the conservative neo-liberal PNG. But this catch-all nationalist amalgam is structured and rigorously controlled using mechanisms of democratic centralism and a sophisticated territorial structure, by the UPG (the party with most members), which has the greatest weight in the real leadership of the party, despite the charismatic and media-friendly figure of Xosé
Manuel Beiras (EN). This structure was to grow reticulately through penetration, with the progressive incorporation of the BNG’s old rivals with their original names—the PG, the PNG, EG, Inzar (MCG+LCR) etc.—under the undisputed leadership of the UPG “colonels” who adopted increasingly pragmatic positions, without at any point revising the party’s statutes or its original platform.

The BNG’s large and highly active membership achieved not only far-reaching mobilisation through a varied repertoire of protest, but also generated a broad “area of uncertainty”, an extensive multi-organisational field of varied presence in civil society: cultural associations, the Catholic church, education, environmental movements, and above all a powerful trade union movement (CIGA) encompassing industrial workers, farm labourers, and seafarers, which openly competed for membership with the state-wide unions, UGT and Comisiones Obreras.

In addition, the BNG enjoyed the stable charismatic leadership of Xosé Manuel Beiras, who had a strong parliamentary and media capacity and cultivated an effective oratory radical but of calculated ambiguity and a plurality of tailor-made discourses for each sector, thus projecting a powerful public image of defence of Galician interests and of belonging firmly to the galleguista tradition. Moreover, the BNG was quite successful in changing (2000) this historical leftist leader from the eighties for a new one more moderate and cantered more appropriate with the new pragmatic turn (Anxo Quintana), facilitating in this way the negotiations and trade-offs with the socialist party in Galicia and Madrid.

The organisational effectiveness of the BNG was therefore reinforced with the progressive abandonment of its maximalist “super-offer” strategy of the 1970s and early 1980s, expressed through popular mobilisation and a disdain for local and regional institutional work, and a gradual integration into institutional parliamentary and municipal work, thus presenting itself as an increasingly moderate government alternative for Galicia in the different decision-making areas of the autonomous community, as well as in the forums of the Spanish and European parliaments.

BNG: change in framing strategies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem: internal colonialism, imperialism</th>
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| **Causes:** Spanish State / Metropolis  
“State of Autonomies”  
Galician Government and Parliament  
Spanish political parties  
“Spanishist” forces in Galicia  
Pseudo-nationalist forces  
Europe of the States |
| **Solution:** authentic Galician nationalism |
| **Alternative system:** Self-determination  
Full sovereignty  
Confederations of nation-states  
Europe of the peoples |
| **Ideological contextualization:** Marxism-Leninism  
Marxism  
Anti third-world colonialism  
Portuguisism [Lusismo] |

| Problem: Economic and political marginalisation of Galicia  
comparative grievance |
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| **Causes:** Spanish state  
Cut-back in the “State of Autonomies”  
Galician Government  
Spanish centralist parties  
PP (PSOE)  
Europe of the States |
| **Solution:** Galician nationalism |
| **Alternative system:** “Sovereignty”  
“federation or confederation”  
“extended autonomy”  
Europe of the peoples |
| **Ideological contextualization:** Social democracy  
Democracy, pluralism  
“common project”  
“centre the country”  
“the country in positive” |
The favourable POS was also extended not only by the strategic change and the organisational effectiveness we have seen above, but also by a radical change in framing strategy. In effect, in the 1970s the “nationalism v. Spanishism” frame proved to be sectarian and exclusive, preoccupied as it was with distinguishing “true nationalists” from “closet Spanishists”, with an extreme-left Marxist-Leninist or Maoist and anti-colonialist ideology. This radicalism on the left/right axis was complemented with radicalism on the nationalist axis through an unequivocal lexicon: pro-sovereignty, confederation, even occasional rhetorical pro-independence, anti-Spanishism, self-determination, explicit sympathy for HB, Sinn Féin, etc.

In the mid 1990s, though, the framework changed radically with moderation on both the left-right axis—there was talk of social democracy, of “the party of the workers and middle
class” of Galicia, of “centring” the country, “defence of the Galician industries” etc.—and on the nationalist axis—the “state of autonomies” was accepted as being “capable of improvement”; sovereignty and self-determination were abandoned in the public and electoral discourse (remaining exclusively for internal consumption); all trace of separatism disappeared and the centralism of the Galician parliament as representing the interests of the country was accepted; bilingual messages were issued (“because we are interested in this country”), etc.

Let us take a closer look at this process, examining the framing strategies, i.e. the use of labels, interpretative schemas and the basic dichotomies through which the political discourse is implemented. It is important to remember that frames seek to establish a nexus of communication between transmitter and receiver, between party and public opinion, linking knowledge and recognition, echoing the preferences of the audience, and tuning in to their needs and interests. If this frame alignment is achieved, broad sectors will feel themselves to be in tune with the party’s analysis and its solutions to the problems. Success depends on the existence of a benevolent circle from a certain point in which the proposed framework is viewed as generally-held common sense, an analysis shared by broad sectors as evidence (master frame) that facilitates narrative fidelity, i.e. the immediate connection between the party’s discourse and the predisposition of public opinion to accept its message. If it fails (frame dealignment), an insurmountable gap develops between the party’s discourse and proposals and the perception and common sense of the electorate, and the latter tends to wash its hands of the project. In this particular case, we shall see how initially, a purist nationalist discourse of exclusion, centring on drawing the distinction between “us” and “them”, and to an even greater extent between “authentic” nationalists and “pseudo-nationalists”, generated a spiral of purge and schism, which ignored the moderate and dual identitary perception that Galicians have of themselves. The subsequent abandonment of this radicalism favoured a rapprochement and ultimately a connection with broad sectors of the electorate, and even a relative hegemony in setting the terms of the debate, so that even voters of other parties came to understand that the BNG represented the best defence of Galician interests.

We will examine the three basic tasks fulfilled by the interpretative frames used by the BNG’s discourse in the 1970s/80s and in the 1990s: diagnosis (the identification of an event or situation as a problem, a suggestion of its causes and the element responsible for these causes—the protagonists), prognosis (the suggestion of an alternative, a solution to the
problem); and motivation (repertoire of stimuli to mobilisation through the dramatisation of antagonism, the “us and them”, the possibilities of success, the protagonists of change and the repertoire of suitable contention, etc.) (Snow and Benford 1992; Hunt, Benford and Snow 1993).

a) The first stage: radical and exclusive nationalism

- In terms of diagnosis, the problem of Galicia was postulated by the BNG of the 1970s to 1990s in terms of internal colonialism and imperialism: the problem was rooted in the colonial nature of Galicia (“an internal colony”) and the blame lay with the “Spanish imperialist state”, responsible for the cultural oppression and economic exploitation and for draining human and material resources away from Galicia. The structural cause was the Spanish state itself, which, even when it was reformulated as a “state of autonomies” (“grotesque”, “opium of the stateless nations”) was still viewed as a centralist and oppressive metropolis. The EU was viewed in similar terms, as the Europe of the States, oppressors of nationalities. And the list of actors included the Spanish political parties, the Spanishist and branchist forces in Galicia and, even the “ostensibly nationalist” parties—i.e. other moderate nationalist forces (such as Esquerda Galega), guilty of erroneous analyses and policies which contributed to a perpetuation of the Galician national problem.

- In terms of the frame of prognosis, the solution proposed was certainly “nationalism”, but only “authentic nationalism”, and not that of the “pseudo-nationalist forces”. It was understood, too, that the expression of the Galician nation (“Una” [One]) must lie with a single nationalist political force, representing the various interests and sectors not involved in the colonial exploitation of Galicia, in a broad front (BNG)—in other words, with that political force which, once the correct diagnosis—internal colonialism—had been made and the decisive antagonists (the Spanish state/ Spanishist forces and pseudo-nationalists) had been determined, postulated the appropriate alternative model: self-determination, full sovereignty, confederations of nation-states, Europe of the peoples... as compared to the Spanish constitution, the “state of autonomies”, and the European Union. All this in an ideological contextualization marked by Marxism, or Marxism-Leninism, against third-world colonialism, in addition—in certain sectors at least—to “Lusismo”, i.e. cartographic reintegrationism favouring linguistic unification with Portuguese.

- Finally in reference to the BNG’s frame of motivation and repertoire of contention in the 1970s and 1980s, we have already seen how the protagonists are the authentic nationalists,
through an antagonism between Galicia and Spain (the Spanish state) and a fundamental political dialectic between Nationalists and Spanishists, including “closet Spanishists”. The reference point of opposition, the “them”, thus reinforces the “us”—Galicia as a homogenous ethnic and cultural community, not culturally and linguistically plural but uniform. The subsequent repertoire of mobilisation is one of confrontation, of national vanguard, and for that reason it is overtly anti-institutional (using terms like “parlamentino” [derogatory diminutive of parlamento], “institution occupied by Spanish political forces” etc.). The organisational format was the anti-colonial and radical nationalist front, which attracted allies and references from radical Irish nationalism (Sinn Fein and the IRA) and, in the Basque Country, Herri Batasuna.

b) Recent years: increasing moderation and inclusiveness.

However, since the late 1980s, following successive electoral and organisational disasters (a result of increased sectarianism and schisms) this framing strategy, following in the steps of the plural reformulation of the Front (albeit ultimately against it), and the growing returns derived from moderation and ambiguity, began slowly but irreversibly to change. Moving away from its exclusive nationalism, articulated in the “nationalism / Spanishism” confrontation, the BNG now began to postulate an inclusive nationalism through a framing strategy of a “common project” for all Galicians, with or without nationalist credentials. This new discourse involved a radical moderation of the previous one, on both axes (nationalism and the left/right dimension).

- Firstly, the frame of diagnosis was drastically reformulated to exclude the anti-colonialist vocabulary. The problem was now assessed more in terms of the economic and political marginalisation of Galicia, the crisis in its industries (heavy industry, shipbuilding, farming, fishing), and its comparative grievances with other nationalities and regions. Nonetheless, the essential cause remained the same—the Spanish state—although there was an emphasis on the PP’s attempts to trim down the “state of autonomies” from 1993 on. In addition, blame was also laid on the Galician Xunta, and its clientelist policy—which was seen as squandering resources—and on the EU, in terms of the Europe of the States, which institutionally marginalised the interests of regions. In terms of the players—the protagonists responsible for the problem—once again we see the Spanish political parties, but increasingly limited; above all the PP, while the PSOE occupied a progressively more
ambiguous position, although there were plenty of criticisms of its federalist and autonomist stance.

- In terms of the prognosis, the solution was once again seen to be Galician nationalism, although in a less exigent form, since there was no longer any mention of the pedigree of authentic nationalism, as opposed to pseudo-nationalism, but rather a broad diffuse *Galleguismo*, intended to incorporate even those who were not nationalists, did not speak Galician, and did not have a “national awareness”. The proposed alternative, although it retained the vocabulary of sovereignty and confederation, was less radical and more toned-down, and however much it alluded to confederation, in electoral circumstances, it pragmatically adapted to building on autonomy and the Statute of Autonomy, now viewed as a useful form of political decentralisation for advancing self-government. It continued, however, to postulate a Europe of the Peoples as against a Europe of the States. There was a patent reformulation of the ideological context, with the disappearance of Marxism, not to mention Marxism Leninism, and opposition to third-world colonialism, which were replaced by the more ambiguous language of “defence of Galician industries”, the need to “centre the country”, postulating a more modulated vision: “the country in positive”. Finally, at the beginning of the 2000s, the dimension of internal pluralism emerged; a national project for “a plural country”.

- Lastly, the frame of motivation, postulated by the plural nationalist front of the BNG, has abandoned the nationalism /Spanishism antagonism with a view to attracting new sections of the electorate, not only from the PSOE but even from the Partido Popular. It still, however, retains the idea of a culturally homogenous Galicia, and promotes policies of linguistic standardisation and espouses monolinguisism. In the repertoire of mobilisation, the extra-parliamentary “popular mobilisation” was definitively replaced by “electoral mobilisation” and institutional work both at local and regional level, and in the Spanish and European Parliament, in a patent effort to present the BNG as a “government alternative”. The organisational format continued to be that of a front, although tensions began to emerge between the UPG and other parties and even with the trade union, CIGA, with accusations of manipulation and control levelled against the UPG. The abandon of traditional militant assemblies in favour of representative criteria in its functioning (2004) is a case in point in the evolving increasingly party-like structure of the BNG. All this was reflected in a radical change in allies, with the abandonment not just of contacts with, but also references to Sinn Féin and HB, and the emergence of new agreements with centre-right nationalist parties—the PNV and CiU.
In short, the fact that the BNG went from being a marginal force to become a regional force in Galicia with the 20% of voting average, and a party in public office from 2005 onwards, was due both to a POS which was favourable for nationalist parties in the institutional context of the “state of autonomies” and to the collapse of its immediate rival, the PSdG. But it was also due to its capacity for organisation and leadership, together with the adaptation and moderation of the nationalist discourse, which allowed it to connect with the superimposed and dual identity conscience of broad sections of the Galician electorate.

2.- The Basque National Liberation Movement (MLNV)

We will divide the analysis of this movement into two broad stages. One, the most important, to which we will dedicate nearly all of our account, refers to the period 1970 – 2002. Over the course of this long period, the MLNV gave shape to its basic discourse, its national and identitarian conceptions, its strategies and alliances. However, the most recent years, from 2003 to 2008, demand special and differentiated treatment as the circumstances have been exceptional. Starting in 2002 nearly all of the organisations of this movement have been outlawed. This has brought a significant adjustment, the scope of which we shall see, in the movement’s discourse and strategy.
The MLNV\textsuperscript{5} is a family of movements, a set of groups which over time have changed name or in which one name has been more common than another. The origin of this conglomerate can be found in the late 1970s when Herri Batasuna (HB) was created as an electoral platform. Over the last twenty years HB has participated in all electoral processes. The radical Basque nationalism represented by the MLNV has always been much more than just HB. It is a conglomerate in which different social groups participate, all of which are very active in a wide range of different actions; prisoners’ support groups; a trade union, environmental and feminist groups, a youth organisation involved in ongoing street-based confrontation, etc. This movement / network also has a very special partner: ETA, the terrorist organisation, which, amongst other violent actions, has killed over 550 people in the last 35 years. The organic relationship between ETA and the rest of the MLNV is not clear; but ETA really continues to be a basic reference point in the strategy of the whole.

The MLNV asserts itself as a left-wing nationalist movement. Its aim is to gain the independence of the Basque Country and also to establish in this new national Basque state a social system in which the public sector and a participative democracy would have a particular importance. However some more should be said about the nationalist project of the MLNV and its strategic consequences and its adaptation or rejection of existing political, cultural and material resources. Our examination of this group will be somewhat different to that of the BNG, because the MLNV, almost without exception, has disdained any use of these resources. For this reason our description will pay less attention to the interactive relationship between organisation and context and devote more space to analysing the MLNV’s rigid and non-negotiable set of convictions.

1.- Nationalism and exclusion.

The MLNV has opted for an exclusive form of nationalism. It proposes a nation whose defining national borders are clear, firm and timeless; the Basque nation is what it is; and it always has been thus. One of its political documents—“Bateginez”—contains the following

\textsuperscript{5} The bibliography on the MLNV as a whole is scant and imprecise (although this is not true of ETA in particular). The following references, although they represent incomplete analyses, may help to understand this movement: Arregi, 2000; Gomez Uranga \textit{et al} (1999); Letamendia, (1994); Llera, (1994, 1999); Mata (1995); Onaindia (2000); Villanueva, (2000); Zallo, (1998); Ibarra (2005)
propositions: the Basque people has certain permanent signs of identity—linguistic, cultural and historical. These are the signs that constitute it as a people. This people has been, is, and must be a nation; a community which by reason of its signs of collective and differentiated identity forms a collective political subject; a subject which as such asserts that for its survival as a differentiated community, for the survival of those identitary features, it needs self-government, non-dependency and political sovereignty.

At the same time the establishment of full self-government, of independence, expresses the achievement of national fulfilment from two perspectives: a) as a guarantee that the constituent and differentiating features of the national community will not be lost; b) as the culmination of one of those same features. In this definition of the Basque community / nation, the feature of not wanting to be dependent on other peoples or other nations / states is another defining feature of the community. Claiming to be Basque and to be a member of the Basque nation involves sharing with the other members of that nation a language and a culture which are distinct to those of other peoples / nations (whether or not those other peoples have their own states); and also involves sharing the desire and the will not to depend as a people / nation on those other peoples / nations.

This means that the historical Basque territory (that which the MLNV has decided is the historical territory) is the space where those perennial signs of national identity occur, where that ethnic community has lived and continues to live; a community which has transcended its ethnicity in favour of a consciousness of being a nation and the corresponding demand for sovereignty. Thus the Basque territory is the territory defined in a specific and delimited fashion because it belongs to a specific and delimited ethnic community… and that particular ethnic community is defined as being differentiated insofar as it is resides in a specific and delimited territory. Consequently, if other people exist in that territory who does not share the MLNV’s signs of national identity—the signs of identity by which the territory is differentiated as a unique and unrepeatable space and the signs of identity of those who claim the ethnic ownership of the territory—then those people are only occupying that space. It is not their territory.

Let us look then from, this conception, at the MLNV’s strategic national options; those which are functional to its purpose and for which it appears to have opted. We should start by stressing that in these options the treatment designated for those others who—as the MLNV sees it—only occupy the territory plays a central role.
The first proposal could be that of building a common identity; one which makes these “occupants” participants in a national identity superimposed on their other identities and compatible with them. Such strategies are complex and make it necessary to strike difficult and unstable balances between different identities. In any case the MLNV does not seem to have considered this strategy: the proposed electoral process in the nineties for its “Constituent National Assembly”\(^6\) appears to confirm this renunciation, not so much because it is quite clear that the “occupants” will be excluded from this electoral process, but above all because the MLNV knows that neither the occupants nor many Basque nationalists (other Basque nationalists) will join that electoral process, since the project is associated with the project and definition of a country and its identify features held by a specific group: the MLNV.

In this sense, this constituent project, is not formulated as a inclusive project, intended to build a national identity and a corresponding common nation, complementary to other identities, involving all sectors—or at least all political forces—in its design and practical application. Rather it is presented as the project of a few, of a few who moreover seem quite content (or at least they do not state otherwise) that their youth wings and military allies threaten or murder those “occupants”. We said that the MLNV already knows that those occupants are not going to participate, because it would be madness to participate in a project protagonised by someone who seeks your disappearance. But perhaps it would be more exact to say that they are not at all interested in their participating.

This situation implies that, from the beginning, the MLNV has decided not to devise an integrating nationalist project. That means that they are not concerned that the nationalist option involves the exclusion of other “belongings” or identities. And thus their objective is not to incorporate, within a common project, peoples, many of whom already have certain identitary options (and very deep-rooted ones in many cases) or to make them see that such options can be compatible with certain nationalist options (and mutually enriching). Nor of course do they believe that their national definition must be made more flexible (reduced or moderated), by presenting a project of the national Us consisting of certain but in no way excessive—and much less rigid—signs of identitary conformation.

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\(^6\) In synthesis, this would be an assembly elected by those who have previously stated themselves to be Basque nationals. Its mission is to call a referendum on the sovereignty of the country and then to draw up a constitution for this new sovereign nation (it is presumed that the referendum will give complete backing for the sovereignty proposal).
The MLNV has chosen to maintain the integrity of its features of national identity, and continues to do so, thus preventing the development of any pact that would favour a more flexible nationalism. Insofar as the MLNV has renounced the possibility of having a functional nationalist proposal, a national proposal / definition of very generic and integrating features, it might be considered to be interested in reinforcing its national option. Consequently what its particular electoral process towards the Constituent Assembly is intended to do is to give political consistency to a national community within another community. What it seeks is to award itself a series of institutions and thus to reinforce its signs of identity.

The third option might involve functional success but would result in a serious attack on democracy. It consists of trying to impose “its” nation on the Nation; of taking a leap forward from that, “particular”, Constituent Assembly... or at least seeking to do so; from being a space for the recognition and political reflection of the nationalist left to imposing itself as an authentic political power; as an authority that imposes its rules throughout the territory. It seems very unlikely that the MLNV has the strength it would need to impose “its” nation as the Basque nation or state. In any case if this did occur, the democratic breakdown would be so great that the result would be no less than a fascist state.


There are many reasons why the MLNV in principle has not opted for the first and integrating strategic path. I will only examine one here, which I shall come back later: the role of ETA. In this regard, it would be mistaken to take an instrumentalist view of ETA in its relationship with the other groups in the MLNV; to consider that the latter have their philosophy, their discourse, their way of seeing things and of deciding the world in general and the Basque nation in particular, and that they use ETA (or are backed by it) as an instrument for getting that discourse, that national conception, underway. This is not the case. The national conception of the MLNV is derived from the fact that it is (to the extent that it is) linked to ETA. Because this patrimonialist conception—exclusivist and anti pluralist in national terms—of the Basque nation, is formed by the swansong discourse of ETA.

This is the discursive master frame at stake: ETA kills because its country—its eternal and “objective” country—is dying. In the same way, the MLNV—insofar as it accepts ETA’s moribund view of the world and its lethal consequences—cannot negotiate its country. One
cannot negotiate with death and one cannot negotiate something that has vocation for eternity. There is no compromise about the homeland. And with this aim in mind, anything goes: from disdain for the impure occupants of the country.... to killing them.

3.- Unmaking political opportunities and discursive closing.

The MLNV has articulated its discursive frame, its use of the POS and the way it has mobilised resources to achieve its objectives. As we can see in the enclosed table, with certain qualifications (noted below), the MLNV has not varied its discourse; it has not entered political institutions or formal alliances, and it has maintained very non-inclusive organisational structures. We must now fit these clearly immobilist options within the three hypotheses (inclusion, isolation, imposition) we have formulated for the nationalist strategies of the MLNV.

At first sight it would appear that these options fall under the second or third options (isolation or imposition), but the situation is not entirely clear. We might consider the possibility of a fourth strategy. The MLNV basically opts for isolation, through the reinforcement of its national signs of identity, but at the same time it believes that the testimony of such firm—and therefore such militant—convictions will eventually convince other political forces (and particularly the other nationalist groups) and society in general, of the rightness and fairness of its proposals. This option, which we could call testimonial isolation, remains apparently constant over the entire period. In effect, statements from the different groups in the MLNV (including ETA) systematically include calls to nationalist groups and parties to embrace its cause, moved by the purity of its nationalism and the dedication of its militants, and between all of them (radical nationalists and moderate nationalists) to begin a process, somewhat more inclusive, of national construction and sovereignty.

Nevertheless we have to note some brief juncture deviations of this dominant strategy and discourse:

- The most important came in September 1998, beginning with the Lizarra Agreement and the ETA ceasefire, when there was a real turn-around towards a process of opening up. The MLNV changed its discourse, changed its use of the political context and changed its alliances. And all this was made possible by the fact that ETA had ceased to operate, meaning that the change occurred because one of the signs of identity—the legitimacy of violence—which formed the MLNV, had disappeared. During this brief 15-month period
(which ended when ETA began killing again in January 2000), the strategy of testimonial isolation incorporated some more inclusive options.

The second deviation, and that which is still operative, makes the third strategy, that of imposition, seem more likely. The MLNV no longer seeks to convince from a stance of isolation (the predominant trend) or to open up from that position (the trend of the ceasefire and the Lizarra pact) but to impose its position from that stance. The MLNV appears finally to have understood that so long as ETA continues to be active, it will be unable to convince anyone of anything; that the continued existence of ETA and the MLNV’s connection with it has not only prevented it from developing an inclusive strategy, opening up its discourse, entering the political context and making use of the opportunities it offers, but that it has also disqualified it for the testimonial strategy.

Insofar as the MLNV in general and Batasuna, its political wing, in particular, does not appear willing to distance itself from the violence of ETA, we could consider that it has opted for the strategy of imposition. According to its most recent proposals, it no longer seeks to convince others that it is necessary to exercise the right to self-determination in which all are supposed to participate. The MLNV is now committed to its Constituent Assembly, an Assembly elected by its people, which will be presented as the Constituent Assembly of the Basque Country. Clearly the MLNV cannot believe that it has sufficient strength to impose the decisions of its Assembly on all citizens in practice, but it may believe that through the unbearable violence of ETA and the “street violence”, the other nationalist and non-nationalist political forces, may come to an agreement with them and accept that Assembly created (if it ever is created) by a few as a representative organ of all. This is another possible scenario which we shall analyse in greater detail.

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7 It is debatable whether Lizarra marked a strategic change, or simply a tactical one, for the MLNV as a whole or for ETA. The only certainty is that even if it was just a tactical option, any long period of time with ETA inactive would have transformed it, in practice, into a strategic decision. In any case, the short length of time the ceasefire lasted made any such transformation unfeasible.
## Development of the MLNV discourse till 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1970-80s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem:</strong> The Spanish state/nation’s oppression of the Basque Country</td>
<td><strong>Problem:</strong> identical; Spanish <em>cultural</em> oppression is stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causes / guilty parties:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Causes / guilty parties:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish State / Constitution</td>
<td>Identical (the Basque nationalist parties are somewhat less guilty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statute of Autonomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other parties (including Basque nationalists)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solution: Basque state / nation</td>
<td>Solution: Basque state / nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process: Recognition and</td>
<td>Process: Election of</td>
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<td>exercise of right to self-</td>
<td>sovereign assembly which</td>
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<tr>
<td>determination as path towards</td>
<td>will draft a Basque</td>
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<tr>
<td>independence.</td>
<td>“constitution” and submit it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>to referendum</td>
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**Ideological contextualization:**
- Marxism
- Third world nationalism

**Ideological contextualization:**
- Nationalism
Protagonists: the MLNV, the fighting nationalists

Identity.
Strong, omnicomprehensive, exclusive (exception: the early appearance of EH in 1999)

Antagonists,
Spanish state / Basque Country
Spanish / Basques

Repetoire of mobilisation
Anti-institutional
Extra-parliamentary
Popular mobilisation

Organisation
Network/front structure, which includes political, social, cultural, trade union organisations, etc., with more organic than symbolic leadership from ETA / KAS.

Political allies: None in the Basque Country; some radical nationalist groups or extreme left-wing groups elsewhere in the Spanish state.
Social: some new social movements.

Protagonists: the MLNV, the fighting nationalists

Identity.
strong, omnicomprehensive, exclusive (exception: the early appearance of EH in 1999)

Antagonists,
Spanish state / Basque Country
Spanish / Basques (this antagonism is more accentuated)

Repetoire of mobilisation
Anti-institutional
Extra-parliamentary
Popular mobilisation

Organisation
Network/front structure, which includes political, social, cultural, trade union organisations, etc with more symbolic than organic leadership from ETA / EKIN.

Political allies: None, either in the Basque Country or in Spain.
Social: None, either in the Basque Country or elsewhere in the Spanish state.
3. Testimonial isolation: history of a repeated political failure

The table clearly shows what we have said above: there has been practically no evolution at all. This means that the period change is different to that of the BNG. In effect, only for a few short months (1998/2000) did any sign of a change in direction appear in the MLNV\(^8\)—as a result of the ETA ceasefire and the subsequent pact of Lizarra. But very quickly, the initial change is halted, and replaced by more reactionary positions of even greater isolation.

If we succinctly assess some of the items in the table, we might consider the following:

- **Diagnosis framing**: the scenario of Evil and its actors (good and evil) remains similar. The interesting thing to note in this supposition is that very recently there has been an attempt to extend the category of the “Us”, to include the other nationalists (PNV and EA) amongst the “good patriots”. The scenario is not so much one of HB against the rest of the world (including all of Basque society; and including therefore Basque nationalist traitors) but Basque nationalists against Basque non-nationalists. The purpose was to try to frame the message in a (nationalistically speaking) broader system of beliefs, but the attempt failed; and it failed because of ETA. The violence of ETA realigned the game of friends and enemies back to the original positions, and once again led HB/ EH into isolation.

- **Prognosis framing**: In this field we can see more attempts to create a less Manichaeian discourse (independence or bust). Proposals have been developed which are more acceptable to the nationalist world at large. But once again it is ETA that prevents the development of an effective frame; ETA’s radicalism makes the discourse of the MLNV as a whole seem radical (“the friends or protectors of the radicals must have a radical discourse”).

- **Motivation framing**: The old motivating signs, those which symbolise both the strong signs of identity and the dominant motivating message, persist: “it makes sense to continue fighting because those who are fighting will win. In this regard the world of the ETA prisoners plays a central role.

From the perspective of the POS the ETA factor has had similar consequences on occasional attempts to exploit the different political contexts: a) HB’s institutional input in the Basque

\(^{8}\) As the table shows, certain other specific contents of the MLNV’s discourse and resources are presented as being different at different points; this does not, however, imply a change in trend, but merely a development or deepening of the previous strategic options.
Parliament (when it came close to sharing governmental tasks) was frustrated by ETA's return to violence; b) The breakdown in the system of elites, mainly between the PNV and PSOE, which worked in EH’s favour at the time of the Lizarra Pact, is now of little benefit to EH, given its break with the PNV as a result of ETA's return to violence. Thus HB, because of ETA, has once again lost the few potential allies it had gained during the ceasefire; allies on the left and nationalist allies. Despite all the more recent changes in discourse and attempts at tactical or strategic change in the MLNV, ETA has brought the process back to the original—identitary and political—positions and continues to do so. In synthesis, if we assume the dominant strategic trend to have been one of testimonial isolation, then this strategy has been a complete failure, because their nationalist project is defended ever less by them, as election results show and because it is defended ever less by the others.

In addressing this last scenario, we are referring to a situation in which the isolation of the civilian part of the MLNV is accompanied by an especial intensification in unconventional mobilisations of civil groups and groups involved in violence—the violence of ETA and that of the direct street-action groups. As we said before, this strategy of radical confrontation could be considered to be intended to generate a situation of unbearable pressure and subsequent non-governability which would oblige governments and parties either to negotiate with ETA—or with the MLNV as a whole—on the introduction of the Constituent Assembly or a similar body. Certain situations of non-governability caused in some way by ETA (political agenda exclusively dedicated to the subject of violence, systematically and inevitably unstable political alliances, overt social confrontation, etc.) may be considered as favouring the designs of ETA. If they are to work, there must exist or have existed a situation in which the only possible solution, the only “salvation” that will break the deadlock in such a dramatic situation, is to negotiate directly and politically with ETA or to negotiate ETA’s demands with its civilian champions (the leaders of the MLNV) but with ETA remaining active. We believe that such a situation has neither existed nor does it exist now; not because difficulties in governability generated by ETA's actions do not exist, but because they do not involve a crisis of governability of such magnitude as to require a process of negotiation of this kind.

9 The decline in the MLNV’s vote was only halted in 1998, precisely when it had adjusted its strategy by disassociating itself from the violence of ETA; and was made patently clear again in the elections of 2001.
At the same time, though, more recent events and practices are generating other reactions. Over recent years there has been a spectacular rise in violent attacks—the *kale borroka* [street struggle]—against Basque non-nationalist politicians and other individuals. In addition, and especially in recent years, ETA has extended its killings to politicians, journalists and intellectuals who are not linked to Basque nationalism. This situation has heightened the general fear among society and in practise, it has specifically depleted the possibilities of exercising certain political freedoms, while at the same time introducing a fascist practice and culture; the culture of claiming the right to liquidate or intimidate the political opponent. Until more or less the mid 1990s, ETA’s victims were members (of greater or lesser relevance) of the state security forces, or were chosen because of the relative weight of the victim (leading politicians) or number of victims (massacres with car bombs) in forcing the state to negotiate. Without abandoning this strategy, ETA has now also situated its enemies within Basque society. It seeks not only to attack the state, forcing it to negotiate, but to eliminate non-nationalist political or cultural proposals within Basque society; not, evidently, through the elimination of *all* the bearers of that political culture, but by intimidating them and forcing their silence by threatening or killing significant individuals from that ambit.

It is very improbable that ETA can force Basque society to be governed by fascist principles; in other words that it can constitute (impose) a society in which political projects or identitary conceptions other than those of ETA or those “permitted” by ETA do not exist, because they cannot be expressed. However we must consider that in the face of these impositional practices, contrary responses may arise—and indeed do arise; responses of categorical rejection... of confrontation. Thus, from this other perspective and in the short term, this culture led by ETA and supported or tolerated by organisations, groups or people in the MLNV may create processes of social fragmentation in Basque society, with corresponding confrontations. Whether these confrontations can generate a climate and a real situation of permanent and accepted social confrontation and whether the MLNV in general and ETA in particular can benefit from this situation are still premature hypotheses.

Since 2002, a weighty new circumstance has further exacerbated the MNLV’s failure. The Spanish government has initiated judicial proceedings with the purpose of outlawing Batasuna, the MLNV’s political organisation, on charges of being at the service of ETA. From that year up until now (2008), the Courts have systematically banned all of the social
and political groups of the MLNV considered to be close to ETA. This has happened to Batasuna, (the central political organisation of the movement), to Segi (the organisation), to Askatasuna (the support organisation for the ETA prisoners) and to the political organisations ANV (Acción Nacionalista Vasca – Basque Nationalist Action) and PCTV (Partido Comunista de las Tierras Vascas – Communist Party of the Basque Lands). The latter two organisations were also banned because the Courts considered them to be continuations of Batasuna. That decision, to some extent, must be considered to be a consequence of the link between ETA and the other sections of the MLNV, including Batasuna. While it is probable that any such link has been neither organic nor logistical, in the public opinion, all organisations within the MLNV, including ETA, appear to form part of the same single social and political movement. Thus, although the outlawing process has been - obviously- an unwelcome result for the MLNV, it was also a foreseeable outcome of the misguided strategy of unlimited confrontation and self-isolation designed by the movement itself.

This new situation has obliged the MLNV to change its discourse and strategy. More precisely, this has not been so much a change as a reduction. In recent years, the discourse of the MLNV (today only known as the Izquierda Abertzale/IA as we have said) has been hardly more than a discourse of survival, a discourse of resistance facing its dramatic situation. To be sure, at a political rally in the year 2004 (the meeting in Anoeta in November 2004), Batasuna began a certain process of de-linking itself from ETA, with the affirmation that only the political forces (and therefore not ETA) should negotiate the political future of the Basque Country amongst themselves. However Batasuna was unable to take this process of separation to its final consequences. Indeed, during the year 2006 ETA declared a truce. This lasted until December that same year, when the terrorist organisation restarted its actions, “arguing” that its political demands in the negotiations with the Spanish government had not been heeded. Batasuna and the rest of the organizations of the MLNV/IA (and amongst them ANV and PCTV, the new “substitute” political organisations of Batasuna) not only did not reject ETA’s demand to play a leading political role in the negotiation of institutional changes for the Basque Country, but also accepted the continued violence of ETA as something understandable. This subjection to ETA accelerated the process of outlawing practically all of the organisations of the MLNV/IA.

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10 At present a large number of the leaders of the illegal Batasuna organisation are in prison.
As a result, the discourse has been substantially reduced in recent years. It is a discourse and a political practice of resistance, of struggle against the omnipresent repression. Perhaps the identitarian and political proposals appear to be less exclusive, more plural and flexible. However, we could also say that what has happened in reality is that the underlying political discourse, the more ideological proposals, has disappeared. All that survive are practical, concrete, urgent slogans. Hence the rising demands for self-determination, and the calls to struggle against the political and judicial repression. The following table defines these strategic-discursive positions. But it must be stated that some of these are no more than interpretations given the silence of the leaders of the MLNV.  

<table>
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<th>2002-2008</th>
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**Problem:** Spanish legal and political oppression is stressed

**Causes / guilty parties:**
All the parties, including the Basque nationalist parties, are guilty

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11 As we mentioned above, many of the leaders of the MLNV/IA are in prison. The new leaders are either very young, lack legitimacy, or are unsure about what should be said and proposed.
### Solution: Basque state / nation

**Process:** exercise of the right to self-determination

**Ideological contextualization**

Nationalism

### Protagonists: the MLNV, the militant nationalists

**Identity.**

Diffuse

**Antagonists.**

Spanish Government / Basque Country

**Repertoire**

Popular mobilisation

**Organisation/mobilización**

Very weak, there have not even been any massive collective responses to the process of outlawing the organisations.

### Political allies: None, either in the Basque Country or in Spain

### 3.- Conclusions
We will conclude by describing the achievements of the different political options. In principle, this description does not seem to hold many nuances. One group, the BNG, has triumphed, becoming a party -with more than 20% of voting- in public office and reaching the autonomous government in coalition with the socialist party; and the other, the MLNV, has failed becoming more and more isolated from voters and other Basque nationalist forces. There are, however, nuances to the issue, deriving both from the fact that on occasions there are differences between positive results and successes, and from the fact that a social movement is not guided only by strategic or political interests. Thus with regard to the relationship between results and successes and failures, it may be the case that the movement achieves the results it intended in certain public policies, but that these same results and the means that it has had to use to achieve them have led to a profound crisis and a weakening of the identity of the movement; a crisis which in the medium term prevents it from mobilising for new political objectives.

A social movement is something more than a group organised to obtain certain collective advantages or benefits from political power; we must not forget the identitary dimension of the movements. Social movements are distinguished from interest groups in that their members share a specific culture, they build and experience a certain view of the world. Clearly social movements are not born to build an identity; they are born because they seek to achieve certain objectives. But they do not seek to obtain these collective interests by any means whatsoever. Nor is this the only thing they seek. They also strive to assert themselves as a group which describes, interprets and relates to (and in) reality in a different way; to reality / the world in general and to that part of the world in particular which they wish to change. Social movements build that identity in the struggle to achieve and in the process of achieving those common interests. And that identity thus comprises the form (and also the force) by means of which those objectives are achieved. For all of these reasons, a social movement can, as we have said, achieve results that undermine or dissolve its identity and also, evidently, can fail politically and nonetheless preserve or even reinforce its collective identity. The BNG has used the three dimensions (POS; discourse, resources) of mobilisation appropriately and dynamically, open new opportunities through a self transformation process, and that the MLNV has systematically waste them (if indeed it has really sought to use them), closing the available opportunity windows:

1. The political results of the nationalist mobilization are sharply divergent. The BNG has managed to achieve a high level of political protagonism - through, inter alia, a self
transformation process of initial strategies, discourses, organizational formats and ledaership- the development of an inclusive process of political alliances and increasing its coalition potential. It has generated changes in the structure of political representation and in the systems of alliances in its own favour. Likewise, and as a consequence, it has also achieved substantial changes in certain government policies, first at the local level, than at regional level from the Galicia autonomous government.

In the case of the MLNV the result is clearly the opposite; its civilian front (Batasuna) has ever less political protagonism and today does not even have a legal status. The reinforcement and encapsulation within it of sectarian and exclusive features has increased its political isolation. Its electoral results have gone from bad to worse. And as a result, its political pretensions appear ever more distant. This distancing might be considered not to be excessive, given that other Basque nationalist parties have accepted the political demands of the MLNV and have therefore brought them closer, making them more possible. It is probably true that this scenario occurred during the Lizarra phase, but we should also remember that during this stage it was the MLNV which changed one of its constitutive features of mobilisation (and identity): the violence of ETA was halted. In other words there was an alignment of pretensions because the MLNV had also changed. In any case, today that process of replacement no longer exists. Indeed, the opposite is true: the Basque nationalist parties do not accept neither the use of violence nor the aims of the MLNV, precisely because of the strategy of the MLNV itself; because of its continued support for violence.

2. From a *symbolic* perspective too, we could make the same assessment. Effectively it appears that the BNG has managed to extend galleguista identitary references in Galicia: not so much a political culture expressed in terms of an orthodox nationalism but as a sense of belonging to a community that feels itself to be different, and which demands greater recognition and defence of its collective interests.

In the Basque Country, the MLNV has achieved the opposite. Undoubtedly the nationalist demand, derived from a certain national identity, remains, but it has lost the profiles of a radical demand for independence. The MLNV, through the identification that many groups within the Basque population have made between violence and radical nationalism, has managed to moderate that nationalist demand from a qualitative perspective.... a complete failure given that what it sought was exactly the opposite.

3. Let us conclude with a brief regard on the success or failure of the *identitary* dimension, especially in terms of an essential defining feature of that identity: the nationalist feature.
Discursive or tactical/contextual positions or re-adjustments not only enable or prevent changes in the political status of the player (changes in its position in governance); they also—deliberately or not—affect its identity; its national identity in this case. At the outset of the process both formations defined their identity in terms of resistance / conflict; in the Basque case this meant: “a Basque is someone who fights to achieve the independence of the Basque nation; being Basque means opposing (resisting) by all means those who seek to destroy the Basque community and its desire (and historical destiny) to be independent”. This means that only those that belong to that community of resistance fighters are Basques. And this also implies that the concept of the Basque nation, of the nation that must be “revived”, reflects that feature. The Basque nation—now and in the future—is also a community characterised by struggle; it is a community of inward and outward tensions. The real Basque nation is a national community in which conflict and collective mobilisation will be permanent constituent national features... inwardly and outwardly. In the case of the MLNV, that original identity does not appear to have been changed to any great extent, given that the discourses and tactics used have sought to preserve it. On the contrary, the discursive and strategic resources used by the BNG seem to have modified its identity, which was originally close to that of the MLNV, in its projection of what the Galician nation is (and is not), and of what they themselves are in relation to that nation. This modification has been targeted at more inclusive and more pluralistic features, which are less demanding in terms of political incorporation (“nationalism of proximity”).

Changing and unchanging stances can have different consequences. Thus we could postulate divergent—and in this case inverse—results for each political / social formation. The adaptability of the BNG’s discourse and action could weaken its identity. And on the contrary the rigidity of the MLNV’s discourse and action could helped to maintain a strong and united identity. But if we examine the issue in greater depth, and above all if we consider that the search for interests and identity are two overlapping and interdependent strategies, we might conclude that it reproduces the original watershed between success and failure. The BNG offers an identity which is not “weak” but open and inclusive, and which in turn allows it to continue increasing the impetus for its political progress. The MLNV has reinforced its closed and sectarian marginal identity, increasingly leading it away from its political goals.

4. Finally to sum up, we seek to demonstrate that an inadequate use of the political dimensions of mobilization described cannot be replaced, for the purposes of achieving positive results, by a strategy of unconditional confrontation, i.e. by a strategy that
deliberately dispenses with the democratic use of those strategic instruments. A social movement has, in principle, the option of two large strategies. One involves entering into governance—with greater or less intensity and greater or less stability; either from the solitude of the movement or by forming critical networks with other movements, mobilising in order to be in the policy networks\textsuperscript{12}. And the other involves remaining (and deliberately remaining) outside that governance by relating to it only through confrontation. We believe that the option of remaining radically outside, of not using the three instruments we have cited functionally, and above all of not knowing—or not wanting to know—how to combine them effectively leads, at least in terms of the nationalist social movements, to failure.

\textsuperscript{12}For a social movement the network should ideally be shaped as an issue network, in order to be able to participate operatively in it (Marsh 1998)—an open and flexible network.
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