Between territorial accommodation and secession:
Explaining the territorial strategies of Convergència i Unió and
the Partido Nacionalista Vasco

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Abstract

As two of the most prominent parties within the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements, Convergència i Unió (CiU) and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) have long considered themselves to be historic allies in the struggle against a common enemy, the Spanish state. At the same time, however, both parties have adopted different strategies in pursuit of their territorial goals. Most recently, whilst CiU has sought to secure a referendum on Catalan independence, the PNV has stressed its commitment to increased self-government through reform of the Basque statute of autonomy. But these positions also constitute a significant departure from previous strategies that prioritised territorial accommodation in the case of CiU, and independence for the PNV. This paper analyses the territorial strategies of CiU and PNV, and identifies the drivers of changes in party strategy over time. The paper provides new insights into the complex dynamics that inform nationalist parties' attempts to re-configure centre-periphery relations in Spain and elsewhere.

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1. Introduction

Across Europe, the growth in size and influence of stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (or nationalist parties from here on) has placed unprecedented pressure on the constitutional integrity of multi-national states. Whilst scholars of territorial politics have paid increasing attention to the responses of state-wide parties to peripheral territorial challenges, much less consideration has been given to the political parties mounting these challenges.

There has been a territorial dimension to Spanish politics since the nineteenth century, and managing this "dilemma of nationalities" (Moreno, 2001: 1) continues to be a persistent challenge in Spanish politics. In particular, Basque and Catalan nationalism have been potent political forces that in the past have influenced the historical development of the Spanish state, and in recent decades have mounted a substantial challenge to the territorial distribution of power within its borders. An empirical analysis of Spain, and territorial goals and strategies of Basque and Catalan nationalist parties specifically, is thus highly appropriate in order to advance broader understandings of nationalist efforts to re-configuring centre-periphery relations.

The empirical analysis focuses on two of the most prominent parties within the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements: Convergència i Unió (CiU) and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV). In undertaking these case studies, our aims are thus two-fold. Firstly, we aim to provide new insights into territorial dynamics in Spain through an examination of the shifting territorial goals and strategies of two parties that, whilst long considering themselves to be historic allies in the struggle against the Spanish state, have also pursued very different territorial trajectories in pursuit of self-government. Secondly, by identifying the drivers of changes in these parties' territorial goals and strategies over time, we aim to contribute to the development of a new framework for understanding the role and impact of nationalist parties in driving processes of constitutional change in multi-national states. The paper thus advances understandings of the complex dynamics that inform nationalist parties' attempts to re-configure centre-periphery relations in Spain and elsewhere.
The rest of the paper is organised as follows. In the empirical section that follows, we trace the evolving territorial goals and strategies of the PNV and CiU (and its antecedents) through different historical periods, and examine the drivers of, and the conditions that affect the impact of, these parties' territorial demands. The analysis evaluates efforts at co-ordinating the nationalist struggle, and explains the diverging territorial dynamics in each case. The following section identifies commonalities and differences across the two cases, and proposes a framework of analysis for understanding nationalist parties' territorial strategies in pursuit of self-government. The paper concludes by considering the key findings both in relation to understanding Spain as a multi-national state which continues to struggle to manage its territorial dilemmas, and nationalist mobilisation more broadly in Europe's multi-national states.

2. The evolution of territorial strategies of Convergència i Unió and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco

*Basque and Catalan nationalism until 1975*

Spain is frequently considered one of the classic nation-states in Europe, unified as a result of the fusion of the Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile under the "Catholic Monarchs" Isabela and Fernando in 1469. This traditional vision, however, has been challenged by a growing number of scholars who underline the contradiction between a formally consolidated state located in a territory whose borders remained unaltered for centuries on the one hand, and the internal instability and weakness of the Spanish national project on the other.¹ This weakness provided the context for the rise of different alternative national projects on the Catalan, Basque and later also Galician periphery. Sharing the claim for the recovery of the lost freedom of their nations, these three nationalist movements became objective allies in their struggle against the Spanish state and its governments from the late 19th century onwards. The mutual solidarity of the three nationalist movements became a basic element of their political discourse, based on their common suffering as nations held in a situation of colonial dependence and oppression by the Spanish central state.

In reality, such co-ordination proved very difficult to achieve. Confining ourselves to the two oldest and most powerful movements, the Basque and the Catalan, their

¹ The most recent overview on this complex discussion, including the most important publications, is Mees (2015b). Some of the arguments had already been advanced in 1973 by the sociologist Juan Linz (Linz, 1973).
structural differences became visible from the very beginning of both movements' historical trajectory. Catalan nationalism was the first to emerge to demand the re-establishment of the self-government that had been abolished after the Catalan defeat in the War of Spanish Succession in 1714. Early efforts at mobilisation from the mid nineteenth century focused on the defence of Catalan culture and language, but by the 1880s, and in response to processes of industrialisation and centralisation, a more distinctly regionalist political agenda emerged (Anguera, 2000; Termes, 2000; Nuñez Seixas, 1999: 32-41). From the turn of the century, the Catalan nationalist movement was dominated by the Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya (LRC), a party that drew support from Catalonia's liberal middle classes and which pursued a moderate territorial strategy aimed at securing Catalan autonomy whilst simultaneously participating in state-wide politics in order to modernise Spain (Granja et al., 2001: 76). However, escalating social unrest and LRC's initial support for the military coup instigated by Primo de Rivera in 1923 shifted the balance of power within the nationalist movement in favour of the newly founded Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), an amalgamation of smaller left-wing republican, federalist and independentist groups (Nuñez Seixas, 1999: 97). In the context of new democratic institutions established during Spain's Second Republic (1931-1936) ERC positioned itself as a left-wing party committed to the creation of a Catalan state within an Iberian federal republic (Culla, 2013: 18, 25).

The situation in the Basque Country was different. The Basque institutions of self-government had only been abolished in 1876 in the aftermath of the last Carlist War. After a short period of mostly cultural nationalist activism, and in response to rapid economic growth and often violent class conflict, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) was established by Sabino Arana in 1895. Both the founder and his party were extremely traditionalist, anti-liberal and ultra-catholic, and the early PNV responded to growing immigration into the Basque Country in strongly xenophobic terms. The party espoused a clearly secessionist discourse, and Arana rejected any comparison of the Basque movement with the Catalan one. Instead, he scorned the Catalan nationalists for being atheists and pro-Spanish regionalists. This discredit was mutual, since for the Catalan nationalists Arana and his PNV were reactionary, ultramontane and traditionalist outsiders (Corcuera, 2001; Elorza, 2001; Pablo and Mees, 2005).

This antagonism did not preclude attempts at co-operation between Basque and Catalan nationalists. Sabino Arana's death in 1903 prompted a moderation in the PNV's territorial rhetoric (facilitated by the incorporation of members from the new
urban middle classes and even minority sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie). The party demanded the restoration of the *fueros* (medieval rules and institutions for self-government that had been abolished during the nineteenth century), an ambiguous political aim that did not specify whether this meant independence or autonomy. Such a position allowed the party to accommodate both supporters of secession and regional autonomy within the party, a duality that continues to be evident (Pablo and Mees, 2005: 70; Mees, 2003: 13, 38). In 1923 the party signed a formal alliance with radical nationalist parties from Catalonia and Galicia\(^2\) - the so-called *Triple Alianza* - which committed the signatories to "joint action and mutual support" in the struggle for "national freedom" (Pacto de la Triple Alianza, reproduced in Granja et al., 2001: 411). Nothing substantial came from this agreement, but ten years later, the alliance was resurrected under a new name (*Galeuzca*) and with new partners\(^3\) with the aim of enhancing nationalist co-operation and pushing for (or, in Catalonia where a Statute of Autonomy had been approved in 1931, consolidating) self-government. Like its predecessor, this initiative also remained completely inoperative because of the ideological heterogeneity of the member parties and the clashes between them. For example, whilst most of the Catalan nationalist parties were republican and in favor of cooperation with the new center-left Spanish government, the conservative PNV still opposed the new Republic due to the central government's anti-clerical policy. Moreover, whilst Catalan parties demanded the creation of a federal Spanish state, the PNV demanded regional autonomy as a first step towards independence (although further moderation in this position facilitated the negotiation of a Basque Statute of Autonomy in October 1936 (Estévez, 1991; Granja, 2007; Mees, 2008). The Francoist victory in the Spanish Civil War and the abolition of both Catalan and Basque autonomy gave a new impulse to the idea of cooperation between both nationalist movements, now headed by their multi-party governments in exile under the control of ERC and the PNV respectively. However, despite several attempts at resuscitating *Galeuzca* during almost four decades of dictatorship, none produced any remarkable political success. In particular, insurmountable internal divisions within the Catalan government made co-operation difficult, in spite of Aguirre's mediation and financial support provided by the Basque government. The PNV's increasing exasperation at this failure of the nationalist political strategy prompted the Catalan nationalists to cancel the pact of co-operation and co-ordination signed with the PNV in 1947 (the Pact of Montpellier) (Mees et al., 2014: 541-554).

\(^2\) details of parties  
\(^3\) support of the majority nationalist parties in the three regions - note their names.
From the 1950s onwards, the Basque and Catalan nationalist movements evolved in different ways, with the result that they faced the transition to democracy after Franco's death in 1975 from very different positions. In the Catalan case, ERC struggled to survive as a political party in exile, and in a context of renewed efforts at co-ordinating Catalan opposition to the dictatorship during the 1960s and 1970s the party had little appeal to a new generation of anti-Franco activists (Culla, 2013: 51-107). Instead, this period saw protagonism shift to two organisations that would eventually come to occupy a hegemonic position in post-Franco Catalan politics. Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (UDC) and CDC represented a tradition within the Catalan nationalist movement committed both to the defence of Catholic values and Catalonia as a distinctive national entity (Barrio, 2007: 65, 77). UDC had been re-established in 1931, although its electoral impact during this period was minimal, and the party's membership was considerably weakened through the exile or death of many of its members during the Civil War. Nevertheless, party re-organisation allowed it to sustain a programme of cultural initiatives in defence of Catalan culture and language from the 1940s onwards, and in 1974 the party contributed to the creation of CDC (Barberà, 2001: 287; Barrio, 2007: 91, 96).

In the Basque case, the lack of impact of various initiatives aimed at toppling the Franco regime contributed to a profound crisis within the PNV. Growing frustration among a younger generation of activists with the perceived passivity and ineffectiveness of the Basque government in exile led to a split from the party in 1959, and the creation of Euskadi ‘ta Askatasuna (ETA) (Nuñez Seixas, 1999: 120; Mees, 2003: 24). ETA resurrected Sabino Arana’s separatist ambitions, and complemented this territorial goal with a radical left-wing ideology inspired by anti-colonial struggles in the third world (Mees, 2003: 25-26). From the 1960s onwards ETA utilised political violence in pursuit of its goals. In spite of ETA's appearance and consolidation, and against the predictions of many political observers, the PNV as a political organisation survived the Franco regime. However, the party's territorial strategy from this point onwards would have to respond to the pressure exercised by this new radical and violent competitor in the Basque nationalist political space.
As a result of the different trajectories of evolution of Basque and Catalan nationalist movements during the Franco dictatorship, the uneven partners entered the new period of Transition and democracy with the same sort of relationship as the one they had displayed since 1923/33: a partnership and mutual solidarity that, due to the deep political, ideological and strategic differences, was much more rhetoric and symbolic than politically operative. During the following decades, CiU on the one hand, and the PNV on the other, maintained this friendly, but distant relationship whilst sticking to distinctive strategy in pursuit of their respective territorial goals. The transition to, and consolidation of, democratic politics in Spain until the mid 1990s would continue to contrast the "Spanish vocation of Catalan nationalism" (Barrio, 2013: 320) - as expressed through the pursuit of Catalan autonomy in negotiation with the Spanish state - with the more isolationist, defensive, region-centred and - at least in theory - pro-independence approach of the PNV.

i. Basque and Catalan nationalism during Spain’s transition to democracy

CDC in its initial form did not survive the transition to democracy. Pujol's desire to transform CDC into a formal political party prompted UDC to abandon the alliance, out of fear of losing its strategic autonomy within the Catalan political space (Barberà, 2011). CDC and UDC thus competed separately, as part of different electoral alliances, in the first democratic elections in 1977 (Barrio and Barberà, 2011: 77). In spite of their similar moderate territorial demands (CDC's call for a restoration of the 1932 Catalan statute of autonomy, and UDC's call for Catalan autonomy within a federal Spanish state) the parties fared very differently. CDC put in a strong performance: as Catalonia's third largest political party, its 5 seats in the Spanish Cortes secured the party representation on the Constitutional Commission tasked with preparing a draft of a new constitution for the country. However, this was an insufficient level of support to establish the party as the principle mouthpiece for the Catalan nationalist movement (Marcet, 1984: 61). In contrast, UDC's poor showing threatened its survival as a political organisation (Barberà, 2011: 71).

The decision by both these parties to create CiU in 1978 responded to the electoral context in which the two participating parties found themselves after the 1977 Spanish general election; the formation of CiU was thus an alliance of convenience for both partners. The new federation minimised the distinctive left-right profiles of the alliance's partners, and focused instead on the goal of securing Catalan self-government within, and through negotiation with, Spain. Supported the Constitution
and Catalan statute of autonomy, which CDC in particular had a major part in negotiating (Marcet, 1984: 84-85). Established key feature of CiU's territorial strategy for the next three decades: accommodation of Catalan distinctiveness within Spain, territorial empowerment through negotiation with central state.

The PNV quickly recuperated its position of strength in Basque politics during the transition to democracy, with the party polling 28.8% of the vote (in the three provinces excluding Navarre) in the first democratic elections held in June 1977. In discussions on Spain's new democratic institutions, the PNV demanded the restoration of the Basque *fueros*, a position that remained unchanged since it was first adopted in 1906 (Mees, 2003: 37). Now, as then, this vague position sought to accommodate both moderates and separatists within the party. However, and in spite of having been excluded from the parliamentary commission that drafted the new Constitution of 1978 which defined Spain as one single and indissoluble nation, the PNV opted for a more pragmatic strategy in the referendum to approve the new document, not daring to vote "no" and instead campaigning for abstention. This was possible and logical because the Constitution included a mention of the "historical rights of the Basques", guaranteed for the first time the particular fiscal autonomy of the Basque provinces (the so-called "Concierto Económico" established in 1878 and eliminated after Franco's victory in the Civil War⁴). The Constitution also provided a normative framework for the future recovery of Basque self-government.

This conciliatory strategy put the party under permanent pressure from ETA (whose violent activity escalated during the years of transition) and its political wing who accused the PNV of treason and collaboration with the nation's oppressor. Yet, as it did during the Second Republic, the PNV's shift from confrontation to cooperation and pragmatism resulted in a major success: In 1979, Basque autonomy was reestablished by the Spanish Parliament and supported by a huge majority of voters in a referendum. It is therefore a myth to describe the PNV of the transition as a party that, in contrast to CiU, "disdained the Catalan party's consensual attitudes and concern with material goals", and that focused instead on "essentially ideological issues and encouraged popular perceptions of politics as Basque-Spanish conflict (Ross, 1996: 492). Instead, the PNV articulated a highly ideological discourse at the

⁴ In Álava, the Concierto continued in force during Francoism, since, unlike Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia, the province had supported the Francoist uprising. The restoration of the Concierto was implemented by law after complicated negotiations in 1981. For the importance of the Conciercos for the Basque economy and politics see Gray (2015).
same time as practicing a realpolitik of compromise and consensus in day-to-day politics (Pérez Nievas, 2002; Arrieta, 2012; Mees, 2013).

ii. 1980 to mid 1990s: The consolidation of Spain's 'state of autonomies'

During the 1980s, CiU established itself as a hegemonic political party in the Catalan parliamentary institutions. (see Figure 2 below). As a party of regional government until 2003, the party pursued a moderate territorial strategy committed to the accommodation of the Catalan nation within the Spanish state. The party focused on consolidating and expanding the powers of the Catalan government within the framework of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy approved by referendum in October 1979. The key narrative during this period was that of fer pais (building a nation) (Pujol, 2009; Lo Cascio, 2008). Policy initiatives aimed at safeguarding and promoting the nation's institutions, language and culture, as well as economic growth, were consistently framed in national terms as specific solutions designed for Catalonia in Catalonia. Such an agenda drew support from voters across the left-right ideological spectrum.

[Insert here - graph of CiU electoral performance in Catalan elections]

During the 1980s and 1990s, several factors contributed to CiU's success in meeting these territorial goals. Firstly, during the late 1970s and 1980s, the party convinced Catalan voters that it alone could stand up for Catalonia's interests. For example, strong criticism of the PSOE's efforts to re-centralise political authority in central government after 1982 delivered new electoral support, and allowed CiU to secure and retain an absolute governing majority within the Catalan parliament from 1984 to 1995 (Baras and Matas Dalmases 1998a). CiU thus established strong credibility in the Catalan political arena as the Caalanist party par excellence (Elias, 2015). Nevertheless, CiU was also pragmatic in the implementation of its territorial strategy, and demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with state-wide parties if this meant securing further policy transfers to the Catalan government. CiU's presence in the Spanish parliament was particularly instrumental in this respect, with the party's legislative support for minority central governments in the early 1980s and again in the mid 1990s lauded as evidence of the party's efficacy as Catalonia's voice in Madrid (for example, CiU, 2000: 30).

That the CiU was so successful in party competition is due to a second factor, namely the strong and charismatic leadership of Jordi Pujol at the helm of the Generalitat. This was facilitated by an evolving party organisational model that
managed power relations within CiU effectively. Pujol's own party, CDC, dominated the alliance as a result of its superior electoral weight at the time of CiU's creation in 1978; this secured CDC majority control of positions within the Catalan government as well as posts in a rapidly growing Catalan public administration (Barberà 2001; Barrio and Barberà, 2006). Pujol's central position within the Catalan political system thus "allowed him to consolidate his position above inter-party disputes, the alliance, and even the government" (Barrio and Barberà, 2011: 85). Such an internal distribution of power frequently provoked criticism from UDC as the smaller party in the alliance. This resulted in a shift of political authority within the party, away from the collegial leadership structure that had existed since the party's establishment to the concentration of power in the hands of the party leader, Josep Duran i Lleida (Barberà, 2011). Tensions between CDC and UDC also favoured the centralisation of decision-making authority in the hands of the leadership of participating parties. This model proved remarkably successful at mediating internal tensions, and resulted in a remarkably stable and united party alliance with Pujol as its undisputed leader.

The PNV's territorial strategy during the transition democracy allowed it to appeal to a wider spectrum of voters, and consolidate its position as the Basque Country's primary political force (Pérez Nievas, 2011: 105). This was confirmed in the first autonomous elections held in 1980, when the party won 38.1% of the vote and became a governing party in the Basque government (an office it retained until XX) - see Figure 1 below. From this position, the PNV (like CiU) focused on implementing the provisions of regional autonomy until the mid 1990s, even though more radical territorial goals were never excluded explicitly.

**Figure 1**  Elections to the Basque Parliament (% of the vote)

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5 Data source:
http://www.euskadi.net/q93TodoWar/eleccionesJSP/q93Contenedor.jsp?idioma=c&menu=li_2_1_3&opcion=menu (accessed: 20.7.2015). The graph only reproduces the results of the most important parties. EA (Eusko Alkartasuna) is a party that resulted from a split of the PNV in 1986. In 2001 and 2005 it ran the elections in coalition with the PNV, and in 2012 it entered the radical nationalist coalition Euskal Herria-Bildu. The Partido Popular substituted in 1990 the party's predecessor Alianza Popular (AP) as the main representative of the Spanish right. The "Patriotic Left" close to ETA adopted different denominations changing over time its original name of "Herri Batasuna" (HB). In 2009, the party was not allowed to participate in the elections because it had been declared illegal.
However, this strategy was frustrated by the slow implementation of autonomy provisions which, in the Basque Country in particular, were delayed due to the complexities of the *concierto economico* (Adelantado et al., 2002). Internal tensions also escalated by the mid 1980s, as a result of internal power struggles between key leadership figures, different ideas about the territorial distribution of power within the Basque Country, and the PNV's strategy in Navarre. The result was a split from the PNV in 1986, and the creation of Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) as a social democratic and secessionist party. EA drew substantial support from the PNV in the early autonomous elections called in 1986 (see figure 1), and forced the latter to seek new coalition partners in order to preserve its governing position. The result was a new period of cooperation between the PNV and the Basque Socialists between 1987 and 1998. This two-party\(^6\) coalition continued the work started by the PNV to implement the provisions of the Basque Statute of Autonomy. Whilst disagreements over the extent of autonomy that should be pursued could not be completely avoided, the alliance nevertheless had the result of consolidating the PNV's moderate territorial strategy and preserved its position as hegemonic party in the Basque political system. It also provided the basis for the PNV to support the minority PSOE government in Madrid between 1993-1996, which (as in the Catalan case) facilitated further transfers of competencies to the Basque regional institutions.

The stability of the PNV's moderate territorial strategy until the mid 1990s was also the result of its strategy in response to the escalation of ETA violence, persecution

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\(^6\) This became a three-party government in 1994 when EA was incorporated into the coalition.
and extortion during this time (Mees, 2003: XX). This trend, combined with the attacks of extremist right-wing groups and state-led reprisals, made the fight against terrorism a priority issue for the PNV in regional government. With ETA and its political representatives positioning themselves as Basque nationalist exercising their right to defend the rights of the Basque people, the PNV was under constant pressure to distance itself from both the political goals and violent strategy of this organisation. The PNV’s response was to establish a common democratic front against terrorism, a core element of the coalition agreement reached with the Basque Socialists in 1987. The resultant Pact of Ajuria Enea (1988), drafted in response to particularly violent ETA attacks⁷, was supported by all Basque parties (nationalist and non-nationalist) with the exception of Herri Batasuna (HB), ETA’s political wing. It provided an unequivocal condemnation of all acts of political violence, and committed the signatories to find a negotiated solution to ending terrorism and move towards a scenario of political normalization in Euskadi. This approach to the problem of ETA had several advantages for the PNV: i) it served to build confidence among the new coalition partners in Basque government; ii) it placed the party at the center of the fight against terrorism in an electoral context in which ETA and their political fronts were permanently losing popular support; and iii) it allowed the PNV to counteract critics who blamed it for forgetting about the victims of violence and for sharing ETA’s political goals.

The stability of the PNV’s moderate territorial strategy in Basque government until the mid 1990s also owes a great deal to internal party structures that mediate tensions between moderate vs. radical positions on territorial re-structuring that continued to characterise the PNV membership. This enduring duality (see above) has been sustained through a broad network of formal and informal political, cultural and social organizations and initiatives that have been characteristic of the PNV from its very beginnings, and which serves to transmit political traditions and loyalties over the time from one generation to the next (Mees, 2003: 14; Pérez Nievas, 2011: 101). That the PNV’s moderate territorial strategy did not provoke the ire of its pro-secessionist supporters can be attributed to a long-standing and strict separation of roles between the party’s President on the one hand (leader of the party in central office), and the President of regional government (leader of the party in public office) on the other (see Katz and Mair, 1994). Such an organisational model has allowed

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⁷ In the months preceding the signing of the Pact, ETA committed two of the bloodiest bombings in its history: a supermarket bomb in Barcelona, killing 21 people, and a car-bomb placed near the Guardia Civil barracks in Zaragoza killing 11 people (including 5 children) and injuring nearly 100 more.
the PNV to develop an effective division of labour between more political (even radical) party leaders and more moderate institutional office holders. This dualism can be observed every year in September, when the party celebrates the *Alderdi Eguna* (Day of the Party). Key speeches reflect the clearly-defined but contrasting roles of the PNV leadership: whilst the President of the government uses a more institutional tone in his speech, the President of the party is freer to refer to use a more emotional nationalist language and articulate political goals beyond those pursued through day-to-day institutional Realpolitik. The PNV is thus able to act simultaneously as government in defense of a certain policy, and as opposition demanding more far-reaching and ambitious steps. This constitutes a crucial mechanism for maintaining the equilibrium between the party's two sectors.

iii. Mid 1990s-present: Between territorial accommodation and secession

From the late 1990s onwards, however, the territorial positions of both the PNV and CiU shifted. This happened first in the Basque case. A radicalisation of the party's territorial position was suggested by the signing of the *Declaration of Barcelona* with CiU and the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG); the document was clearly pro-sovereigntist in tone, and demanded a new recognition of "our nationalist realities" within a plurinational Spain (Granja et al., 2001: 414-15; Guibernau, 2000: 63-66). However, and like all earlier efforts at co-ordinating nationalist strategies against the central state (see above), this proved to be little more than a symbolic gesture with little substantive co-operation and action as a result. In the PNV's case, its territorial radicalisation was more a response to changes in the Basque political context than a serious desire to embark on new co-operation with its Catalan and Galician counterparts. One indicator of this change was the secret negotiations held between the PNV and ETA and its political front on bringing an end to political violence from the mid 1990s, as a result of which the Basque Socialists withdrew from regional government in protest in 1998. Later that year, the PNV signed the *Pacto de Lizarra* with other Basque nationalist organisations including the political wing of ETA, HB. The pact asserted the right of the Basque nation to self-determination, and called for political negotiations to secure Basque territorial unity and sovereignty (Mees, 2015a). In the Basque elections that soon followed, the PNV confirmed its shift in alliances by securing the legislative support of Euskal Herritarrok (EH), a party close to ETA, for the minority Basque government. But this alliance was short-lived: the ETA ceasefire declared after the signing of the *Pacto de Lizarra* was broken in

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8 This would see the Basque Country composed of all seven Basque territories (four in Spain and three in France).

In spite of the failure of the PNV’s new strategy of alliances to bring an end to political violence or advance negotiations on Basque self-government, the party received its highest ever level of electoral support in those elections. The PNV won the support of voters disillusioned with the Nationalist Left for breaking the ceasefire, and those objecting to unrelenting and aggressive criticism of the PNV for making concessions to terrorism from Spanish state-wide parties and media (Mees, 2015a). From such a position of strength, the PNV (along with its nationalist coalition partners, EA and EB) presented, and secured parliamentary approval for, a "post-sovereignist" proposal for changing the Basque Country's relationship with Spain (Keating and Bray, 2006: 348). What became known as the 'Plan Ibarretxe', after the PNV President of the regional government, Juan José Ibarretxe, proposed the creation of a Basque state 'freely associated' with Spain, starting with the three provinces of the Autonomous Basque Community of Euskadi but with provision for Navarre and the three Basque provinces in French territory to come in by their own decision. Even though several of its provisions were in open contradiction to the Spanish constitution, the plan was not a claim for Basque independence; rather, it was an attempted "'third way' proposal stopping short of secession and retaining the Spanish state framework for a number of crucial issues" (Keating and Bray, 2006: 354).

Several factors account for the radical shift in the PNV's territorial position, from pragmatic accommodation to sovereignty-association (Mees 2008; Mees 2015a). Firstly, it was a response to a growing conviction within the party that a new strategy was needed to bring an end to political violence in the Basque Country. The Pact of Ajuria Enea had done little to prevent ETA from continuing with their armed activity, which increased and broadened in scope during the 1990s. The persistence of political violence provided an easy target for political rivals keen to hold the PNV-led Basque government responsible for this failure, and the Partido Popular's demand for a tougher anti-terrorist policy was translating into growing electoral support in the Basque Country. The continuity of ETA also risked the PNV's democratic credibility in the eyes of voters increasingly opposed to its military strategy (Mees, 2015a), through being associated with ETA's particular radical version of Basque nationalism and the shared commitment to Basque sovereignty. The conclusion of the PNV's analysis was thus a growing conviction that negotiation with the paramilitaries, and the creation of a powerful new nationalist alliance to demand Basque sovereignty through democratic means, could persuade the paramilitaries to lay down their arms.
Secondly, the evolution of the Irish peace process during the 1990s was particularly important in encouraging both the PNV and ETA to explore alternative peaceful ways of advancing the struggle for Basque self-government (Mees, 2003: 119). Thirdly, radicalisation was a way of recuperating the emotional appeal of the PNV’s nationalist discourse, which had been eroded by successive years of institutional politics. An indicator of the stagnation, even decay, of Basque nationalism was the fact that between 1990 and 1994, the vote share of nationalist parties in the Basque parliament had declined from 66% to 55%. The PNV’s sovereigntist turn thus sought to re-connect with voters through a revitalised nationalist proposition on Basque self-government (Mees, 2015a).

The PNV’s shift towards a more radical territorial strategy, and its collaboration with radical Basque nationalists, provoked a deep crisis within the party. Such an orientation alienated moderate sectors within the party, whilst Ibarretxe was also perceived to have violated the strict separation of roles between leaders of the voluntary party and the party in public office. Due to his charisma and his success in the elections, he took on the role of designing, explaining and implementing the PNV’s territorial strategy leaving little scope for action for the party President.

The election of Josu Jon Imaz in 2004, representing moderate voices within the PNV, provided a counter-point to Ibarretxe’s leadership and sought to restore the internal balance of power within the party. The eventual defeat of the Plan Ibarretxe in the Spanish parliament in February 2005, and the PNV’s electoral losses in Basque elections a few months later, provided the conditions for the party to initiate a process of strategic reframing, moving back to a more moderate territorial position. In October 2005, Imaz thus secured party approval for a proposal that restricted the “right to decide” to a broad multiparty consensus. Nevertheless, Ibarretxe, persisted with plans to hold a referendum to assess popular support for i) re-starting dialogue with ETA; and ii) a process to agree Basque citizens' "right to decide" on their nation’s future relationship with Spain. Faced with the risk of a new split over these conflicting positions, Imaz resigned from the party’s Presidency. His successor, Iñigo Urkullu, shared his predecessor’s conviction that the PNV’s radicalisation was a failed strategy, but worked with Ibarretxe and his supporters to overcome internal divisions.

9 Elkarbizitzarako bake-bideak. Ante el final dialogado de la violencia y la normalizaciónpolítica, EBB, 10.10.2005 (document published by the party).
The re-framing of the party's territorial strategy was confirmed after the 2009 Basque elections, when the party secured a majority of votes but was unable to negotiate a coalition government. As a consequence, the PNV became a party of opposition in the Basque parliament for the first time since 1980. This defeat consolidated support for a more moderate territorial position, whereby Ibarretxe's proposal was presented as a heroic step towards Basque sovereignty that was aborted by the Spanish enemy but which now had to be adapted to the new circumstances. In a bid to recapture the PNV's historical dominance of the political centre ground in Basque politics, and in a response to a growing economic crisis, the PNV shifted its focus onto economic issues; 'nationality' issues, when they were discussed, were consistently subordinated to the economy and social issues, whilst self-government was framed as the most effective tool in the fight against the recession and the protection of the welfare state. This re-focused strategy enabled the PNV to re-enter government in 2012 under the new leadership of Urkullu (Gómez and Cabeza, 2013).

This return to the PNV's historic equilibrium was also facilitated by the decline of ETA activity in the Basque Country. The group's decision, in October 2011, to end the armed struggle facilitated a re-balancing of the issues on the Basque political agenda, with the decline of ETA's radical identity-based activism facilitating the PNV's strategic re-framing of its territorial politics. But this development has changed the Basque political landscape in a different way, with ETA's permanent ceasefire permitting the legalisation, and entry into party competition, of the parties and coalitions compromising the Patriotic Left. This constitutes a new dimension of competition within the Basque nationalist arena. But the PNV has also learnt its lesson from the Ibarretxe experience: a rapprochement to the nationalist left had always been to the detriment of the PNV. The PNV's strategy of playing down identity-based politics has served the purpose of neutralising the electoral appeal of these parties.

The PNV's long-term territorial goal remains ambiguous, with the possible options ranging from further autonomy, a federal or confederal state, or a bilateral relation with the state through an updating of the “historical rights” granted by the Spanish Constitution (Mees, 2015a: 60). As in previous periods, such ambiguity is calculated in order to accommodate the long-standing dialectic within the party, between radical identity claims and moderate day-by-day policy management focused predominantly on economic and social issues. In a clear distancing from the procedure of Ibarretxe,
the party has delegated the drafting of a new political status for Euskadi to a commission in the Basque Parliament with the intention of passing only a proposal that has been able to gain the support of a broad majority beyond the political cleavages of nationalists and non-nationalists. This commission started to work in March 2014 and is supposed to present the first conclusions at the end of 2015.\textsuperscript{10}

Whilst the PNV's territorial radicalisation proved short-lived, a similar shift undertaken by CiU in recent years has also divided the party over Catalonia's future relationship with Spain. Unlike the Basque case, CiU's signing up to the Declaration of Barcelona did not constitute a change of position; the language used was vague enough to accommodate the party's long-standing commitment to pursuing Catalan autonomy within, and through negotiation with, the Spanish state. Indeed, CiU explicitly ruled out reform of Catalonia's statute of autonomy as part of its agreement with the Partido Popular in the Catalan parliament between 1999 and 2003.

By the 2003 Catalan election, however, the party formally committed to statute reform as a means of renewing Catalonia's relationship with Spain. The party's proposals envisaged full symbolic and legal recognition of Catalan nationhood, enhanced bilateral relationships between the Catalan and Spanish governments, and crucially a revised funding system along the lines of the Basque concierto económico (CiU, 2003: 102). This first shift away from the party's moderate accommodationist strategy was first and foremost a response to the territorial re-positioning of other Catalan parties to demand reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy by the early 2000s (Roller and Van Houten, 2003; Elias, 2015). Such demands tapped into growing popular discontent with the functioning of the Spanish "state of autonomies". It was a discourse that threatened to further undermine the electoral appeal of CiU; the party had been in electoral decline since the mid 1990s as a result of allegations of corruption in public office, an unpopular alliance with the Partido Popular (PP) in Madrid and in the Catalan parliament, and internal party tensions over Pujol's succession as party leader (Elias, 2015; Barrio and Barberà, 2011). However, CiU's shifting position on the territorial dimension was unable to stave off further decline in the 2003 Catalan elections, and the party returned to the opposition in the Catalan parliament for the first time since 1980.

\footnote{More information about the work of this commission can be found in the website of the Basque Parliament \url{http://www.parlamento.euskadi.net/c_ponencia_autogobierno.html} (accessed 21.7.2015).}
From this new position, CiU's priority became to regain government office (Barrio and Barberà, 2011: 92). The party launched a new territorial strategy inspired by Pujol's approach in the 1980s, consisting of imposing the national dimension onto the left-right agendas of its rivals in the Catalan political space and arguing that only CiU could be trusted to put Catalonia first. In practice, this strategy consisted of two elements. On the one hand, the party demonstrated flexibility in its territorial position during discussions of a revised Catalan statute of autonomy. It pushed for changes that implied revisions of the Spanish constitution during discussions in the Catalan parliament, but negotiated a less ambitious statute in the Spanish parliament with the governing PSOE that allowed it to claim a central role in delivering more self-government (Barrio and Barberà, 2011: 93). On the other hand, a re-branding exercise (pushed mainly by CDC) presented the party as the natural home of political Catalanismo, and which could accommodate Catalans from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. The exercise re-connected CiU to large swathes of the Catalan electorate, and delivered renewed electoral support that allowed CiU to re-enter Catalan government in 2010.

From 2010 onwards, the party radicalised its territorial demands, first to demand fiscal sovereignty for Catalonia, and by the 2012 Catalan election to call for "our own state". Such a shift responded to external developments that blocked the incremental evolution of Catalan self-government up until that point. In 2010, the Spanish Constitutional Court's decision to annul large parts of Catalonia's revised statute of autonomy prompted mass mobilisations in favour of Catalan independence. This outcome confirmed that "the constitutional pact established during the transition to democracy has reached its limits" and that "we need to change the politics we have pursued until now" (CiU, 2010: 6). The PP's subsequent refusal to negotiate on enhanced fiscal powers left CiU little option but to radicalise its territorial demands if it was to remain credible in the eyes of voters increasingly supportive of radical constitutional change (Argelaguet, 2014). The consolidation of new pro-independence movements and parties within the Catalan political space (Crameri, 2015) placed added pressure on CiU to claim ownership of the goal of independence. This change of position was facilitated by CDC's re-branding, which had brought new members into the party who supported Catalan independence.

CiU went ahead with an unofficial referendum on independence on 9 November 2014. But the process of securing Catalan independence in the face of an intransigent Spanish government has proved extremely challenging. Firstly, defining what "our own state" meant in practice became increasingly difficult. Irreconcilable
divisions within CiU between advocates of independence (mainly CDC) and defenders of extensive autonomy within a confederal Spain (mainly UDC) led the party to break apart in June 2015. This has cleared the way for CDC to consolidate a pro-independence alliance ahead of the Catalan elections in September 2015, but asserting strong independentist credibility in this context has proved difficult given that other parties and movements have a clearer and longer standing commitment to this constitutional end-goal. In contrast, UDC has positioned itself as the defender of the traditional values of political Catalanism and CiU: moderation, dialogue and agreement in order to advance Catalan sovereignty. After three decades of successful co-operation, therefore, the parties that once collaborated as CiU are now competing to articulate rival visions of what Catalonia should be in future, and how it should get there.

There is little indication that CiU's shift in its territorial position from territorial accommodation to secession will prompt the PNV to reverse its move in the opposite direction and return to earlier demands for full Basque sovereignty. Whilst PNV leaders have acknowledged the shared historical roots of Basque and Catalan nationalist mobilisation and given their support to the principle of the Catalan people's "right to decide" on their constitutional future, they have also stressed that the Basque way towards self-determination is different. Territorial dynamics in both places will thus continue to take different directions for several reasons.

Firstly, the experience of the failed 'Plan Ibarretxe' demonstrated that there was little popular support for radical constitutional change. On the contrary, the PNV's strong election performance in the local and provincial elections held in May 2015 confirmed the popular appeal of the party's moderate territorial strategy. For the first time since 1980s, an agreement with the Basque Socialists allowed the party to secure governing majorities in the major Basque democratic institutions (regional and provincial governments of all three Basque provinces. There is thus little electoral incentive to change a territorial strategy that has allowed the PNV to regain its dominant status within Basque politics. This electoral experience seems to corroborate Eve Hepburn's thesis that "parties that take up a moderate position on the left-right dimension, and moderate autonomy goals, are more electorally successful than parties that are situated at the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum" (Hepburn, 2009: 486). Furthermore, this dominant position will also make the party an important player in Spanish politics, if general elections scheduled for November 2015 fail to produce an overall majority for the PP or PSOE. Secondly, the failure of independence referendums in Catalonia (as well as in Scotland in
September 2014) has highlighted the difficulties of securing radical constitutional change. In particular, the protracted and polarizing Catalan process and the subsequent discussions about the necessity for a reform of the 1978 Spanish Constitution have prompted some state-wide political parties to argue that any changes to the Spanish constitution should include the elimination of key references to the historical foundations of Basque self-government (such as the "historical rights" of the Basque nation, the Concierto Económico\textsuperscript{11}, and the provision for the incorporation of the region of Navarre into Euskadi, which is a historical demand of Basque nationalism since the PNV was founded in 1895). The risk of losing these key constitutional provisions is a further strong incentive to desist from demanding full Basque sovereignty.

3. Explaining the territorial strategies of CiU and PNV.

The discussion thus far has outlined the shifting territorial positions and strategies of CiU and the PNV since their establishment. CiU's goal of territorial accommodation has given way in more recent years to a commitment to Catalan sovereignty and, for one of its component parties (CDC) a demand for Catalan independence. The territorial position of the PNV has always been more complex: since its creation, the party has accommodated supporters of secession and accommodation under the banner of Basque sovereignty. This equilibrium gave way to more radical demands for sovereignty association in the 2000s, but has since been re-balanced in a territorial discourse that combines a long-term demand for Basque self-government with a more pragmatic approach to day-to-day politics that subsumes territorial goals to socio-economic priorities. This section identifies the key factors shaping the evolution of these two parties' territorial goals and strategies. Several of these are common across the two cases, but the way in which they have played out helps to explain the different trajectory of nationalist contestation in each place, and the difficulties of mounting a common nationalist challenge to the central Spanish state.

Structure of the state

\textsuperscript{11} Since the recession began in 2008, different Spanish politicians have criticized what they consider a Basque pre-constitutional privilege that infringes the equality of all Spanish citizens. The new party Ciudadanos, that registered a surprising success in the local and provincial elections of May 2015, has incorporated the demand of eliminating the Basque Concierto Económico into the party program. Also the new PP president of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Cristina Cifuentes, rejected in public the Conciertos as "discriminatory, unequal and unjust".
As noted at the outset of the empirical discussion above, the mobilisation of Basque and Catalan nationalism must be understood in the context of successive failed attempts at building a unitary and homogenous Spanish nation-state up until the 19th century. Subsequent developments in Spain's state framework informed nationalist parties' evolving territorial goals and strategies. Motivated by a shared grievance against the state and a common desire to defend territorial differentiation, at various points, Basque and Catalan nationalists (along with their less electorally successful Galician counterparts) have sought to co-operate to influence the territorial structure of the state. But these initiatives - in the 1920s and 1930s, during the Franco dictatorship and again in the 1990s - have never been more than symbolic; they resulted in little substantive co-operation between nationalist movements, and have made minimal impact on the territorial organisation of power within Spain. The failure of such collaborations can be attributed to the different ideological and strategic priorities of individual parties on the one hand, and the different political and electoral contexts within which each nationalist party operates on the other. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the party and contextual specificities that inform nationalist parties' territorial goals, and condition their abilities to achieve these. These differences are examined in further detail below, and are crucial for understanding the different territorial trajectories of the CiU and PNV over time.

Nevertheless, it remains the case that, whilst nationalist parties seek to reform the structure of the state, they must do so within the state structure that already exists (Deschouwer, ref). The importance of this structural context is illustrated clearly in the Spanish case, and it is worth considering in more detail the way in which the modern structure of the Spanish state, as set out in the 1978 Constitution, has provided a framework within which nationalist parties must work in order to advance their territorial ambitions. For both CiU and the PNV, since the late 1970s moderate territorial strategies focused on implementing the provisions for self-government underpinning Spain's "state of autonomies" (Aja, 2014: 14). Such strategies were credible and (to a large degree) effective given that the broad territorial principles set out in the Constitution allowed for flexibility in the actual implementation of Spain's territorial model, and policy transfers could be achieved through bilateral negotiations with the central state. However, such negotiations have always been subject to political and legal interpretation, and this has provided scope for state-wide political parties and the Constitutional Court to shape dynamics not just of de-centralisation, but also re-centralization (Colino, 2009; Maiz et al, 2010; Muro, 2015). At times, this process has allowed PNV and CiU to extract further powers for their respective regional institutions through providing legislative support for minority PSOE and PP
governments in Madrid between 1993-96 and 1996-2000 respectively in exchange for enhanced decision-making autonomy. However, periodic pacts between the main state-wide parties (PSOE and PP) also introduced greater symmetry into Spain's territorial model, and competential equivalence between autonomous communities was formally achieved in the mid 1990s (Aja, 2014: 56-61). An acceleration in this dynamic by the mid 1990s, and growing nationalist dissatisfaction with the perceived unwillingness of the state to fully implemented autonomy provisions, was one consideration in nationalist parties' conviction that new territorial goals and strategies were required. In the PNV's case, this was overshadowed by the bigger issue of bringing an end to political violence, but for CiU the growing conviction that the "state of autonomies" was no longer an effective way of managing territorial relations within Spain was a key driver of the party's territorial radicalisation.

**Party competition**

In multi-national systems, dynamics of party competition are particularly complex, and the case studies presented here bear this out. In Catalonia and the Basque Country, party competition in pursuit of votes takes place within the nationalist movement, as well as with state-wide parties at different territorial levels (regional and state). But the analysis also points to a common aspect which is crucial in determining the territorial goals that nationalist parties espouse, and the strategies they adopt to try to achieve them: electoral credibility. Scholars of party politics have long argued that a party's issue credibility plays a key role in issue-based voting (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996; Meguid, 2008). Credibility can be defined as the 'judgments made by a perceiver (e.g. a message recipient) concerning the believability of a communicator' (O'Keefe, 1990). In an electoral context, the implication is that a political party has to "convince voters both that it is committed to a given policy stance and that it is the best able to implement such a policy" (Meguid, 2008: 26).

The case studies presented above provide ample examples of how CiU and the PNV have attempted to accumulate credibility through the articulation and pursuit of their territorial goals. They demonstrate that credibility is crucial in territorial politics, as a key quality that impacts the ability of nationalist parties to put the issue of territorial re-structuring on the political agenda. The extent to which both parties have achieved credibility in party competition varies between the two cases, and reflects the different political contexts within which each party has operated over time. In competition with state-wide parties, for example, CiU during the 1980s was able to
assert its own Catalanist credentials in the Catalan political arena through associating the PSC with the centralising drive of the PSOE in central government. In the Basque Country, such an adversarial strategy was less attractive for the PNV who, from the mid 1980s onwards, needed the support of the Basque socialists in coalition government. As noted above, such a coalition was advantageous to the PNV because it allowed the party to build a reputation as a moderate political party in contrast to the radical nationalism of ETA and its political fronts, and to implement the autonomy provisions provided for in the Basque Statute of Autonomy. But at other times, these parties' credibility has been undermined by the competitive strategies of state-wide parties. In Catalonia, for example, the strategic re-positioning of the PSC in the late 1990s undermined CiU's claim to be the only party able to enhance Catalan self-government. In the Basque Country, the PP's aggressive attacks on the PNV's failure to bring an end to ETA violence sought to undermine the latter's credentials as a party that could be trusted to bring an end to terrorism, and was a crucial factor in driving the party's territorial radicalisation from the mid 1990s onwards.

Credibility has been just as important a consideration in party competition within the nationalist movement. For most of CiU's lifetime, the key competitor has been ERC, and their electoral rivalry has revolved around the issue of which party is best positioned to deliver Catalan self-government. Whilst CiU won this argument during the 1980s and 1990s, ERC's strategic re-positioning - first to support reform of the Catalan statute of autonomy, and more recently to demand Catalan independence - has placed pressure on CiU to re-define its own territorial position. The Catalan case thus provides evidence of how competition between nationalist parties may lead to "a race towards more radical positioning on the centre-periphery dimension" (Massetti, 2009: 515). However, such a dynamic has not been unproblematic: CiU has struggled to convince voters that have long thought of it as a moderate and responsible party, that its support for Catalan sovereignty is genuine and that it is the best party to deliver this goal. For the PNV, the challenge has been to differentiate its own democratic nationalism from the military strategy preferred by ETA in pursuit of Basque sovereignty. This concern informed Ibarretxe strategy of dialogue with the paramilitaries during the 1990s and 2000s, but the PNV also experienced the negative electoral consequences of being seen to be collaborating too closely with its radical competitors. The PNV's re-positioning as a moderate nationalist party aimed to re-establish trust with voters who had looked to the party as a responsible party of government; this long-established party identity has thus served as a constraint on a
process of radicalisation whereby nationalist parties seek to outbid each other on the territorial dimension.

**Political violence in the Basque Country**

The discussion above makes clear that a principal difference between the two cases considered here is the use of political violence as a strategy for achieving Basque sovereignty from the 1950s until the 2010s. This feature of Basque politics - and the PNV's efforts to bring an end to ETA activity - has arguably trumped all other factors in terms of influencing the PNV's territorial goals and strategies. On the one hand, ETA's activities has placed pressure on the PNV to show its effectiveness in enhancing Basque self-government. This was the case, for example, during the transition to democracy. On the other hand, the PNV has struggled to maintain a distinctive profile within the Basque nationalist movement. Concerns that this profile was being compromised was a key consideration in the party's re-consideration of its strategy of alliances in the late 1990s, but strategic re-orientation also came at a cost as the party's democratic credentials were tarnished as a result of being seen to negotiate with terrorists.

ETA's permanent ceasefire in 2011 was thus a significant development in Basque politics and, as noted above, has fundamentally altered the party competitive context within which the PNV now operates. As a result of the normalization of Basque politics, the PNV has been able to focus not just on the politics of territory and identity that are key concerns for all actors within the nationalist movement, but also socio-economic issues that affect a broader spectrum of Basque voters.

**Intra-party factors: Party ideology and party organization**

If the external factors considered above constitute the operating environment within which SNRPs operate, it is necessary to look inside the parties themselves to get a full understanding why parties respond strategically to their environment in the way they do, and what the consequences of these responses are for electoral credibility (Kitschelt, 1994). On the one hand, ideological traditions shape the internal discourses within parties, and arguably condition the strategic options parties consider to be open to them. Moreover, these are enduring over time, and underpin enduring party identities that both voters and party members recognise and trust. The crucial role of party ideology can be seen on both the case studies considered here. The PNV's duality on the territorial dimension - balancing both secessionist and accommodationist positions within the party membership - has been a long-standing
feature, and reflects the social conditions within which the party was created and evolved in its earliest years. Maintaining this equilibrium between the two contrasting positions has been crucial to the party's unity and stability over time; when the equilibrium has been lost, such as during the PNV's pursuit of the Ibarretxe Plan in the 2000s, internal tensions have multiplied and voters have abandoned the party. Sustaining a discourse that combines both a long-term commitment to Basque sovereignty, and a more pragmatic approach to day-to-day politics, is thus crucial to the PNV's hegemony in the Basque political system. In CiU's case, a similar tension is evident, between the party's moderate and accommodationist reputation (nurtured during the leadership of Jordi Pujol) and the party's more recent shift towards Catalan sovereignty. This ideological dissonance has already seen internal tensions spell the end of CiU as a party organisation, and forthcoming Catalan elections will reveal whether or not it also translate into electoral losses for either of CiU's component parties, CDC and UDC.

On the other hand, political parties are rarely homogenous entities. More typically, they are made up of coalitions of actors with different ideas that compete to dictate the party's overall ideological profile as well as its strategy. What becomes important, then, is the extent to which different groups are able to impose their preferences on the party as a whole. Party organisation thus becomes an independent variable that impacts upon the strategic choices that a party makes. The parties considered here have very different organizational models (reflecting the conditions in which they were created), but in different ways they have played a crucial role in shaping parties' territorial priorities and strategies. As mentioned above, factionalism has always been a fact of life within the PNV, but organizational mechanisms - such as the division of labour between the party President and President of the regional government - have been highly successful in managing different sectors within the party. When Ibarretxe violated this principle, internal tensions multiplied and threatened the unity of the party; the shift back to a more moderate territorial position was a response to this internal threat. In CiU's case, highly unequal power relations within the party have been managed through increasingly centralised party leaderships, and allowed CDC (and Pujol as its leader) to develop an electorally highly successful narrative around the idea of 'constructing Catalonia'. Ideological and organizational differences between CiU's component parties were contained as long as the party's hegemony in the Catalan political space was guaranteed. But since the 2000s, these differences have come to the fore, as the party has sought to respond to changes in its operating environment as outlined above. External pressures to radicalise its territorial position and strategy ultimately led to the death of CiU.
**Conclusion**

This paper constitutes a first attempt at analysing the shifting territorial goals and strategies of CiU and PNV, two of the most electoral successful and politically significant nationalist parties in Spain. Over time, these parties have sought to influence, and have responded to, the shifting territorial balance of power within the Spanish state over time. However, whilst both parties have long considered themselves to be historic allies in the struggle against a common enemy, the Spanish state, efforts at co-ordinating nationalist mobilisation have consistently failed to result in new activity that has made a meaningful impact on the constitutional framework of the state. Instead, both parties have pursued different strategies to pursue territorial goals that have varied over time and across parties. In the Basque case, ETA's political violence has constituted a predominant influence over PNV politics, through which the impact of other factors has been mediated. Nevertheless, we also argue here that several factors influencing shifts in territorial goals and strategies are common across the two cases: the structure of the state, dynamics of party competition, and internal ideological and organizational pressures. These suggest a framework for explaining nationalist parties' strategies in multi-national contexts beyond the Spanish case. The paper thus provides a starting point for an enhanced understanding of nationalist mobilisation in many states across Europe where the constitutional integrity of states is under unprecedented pressure.

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