The Role of Political Parties in Civil War Peace Processes Outside Their Own Country – A New Internationalism?

A Case Study of Sinn Féin and its Involvement in Three Foreign Peace Processes

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Declaration

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Summary

This study is exploratory research and an empirical investigation into the involvement of certain foreign political parties in contemporary civil war peace processes. While there is an extensive existing literature into the role that a wide variety of third parties play in peace processes, foreign political parties have largely been excluded from these studies and their role has hitherto remained unexamined. This thesis therefore tackles this research gap by establishing that certain political parties are becoming involved in conflict resolution processes to end civil wars in other countries.

To understand this third party engagement better, this thesis also identifies why certain foreign political parties become involved in peace processes, the type of engagements they have, and the impact they can have on the peace process and local rebel movement. Theories regarding the local turn in liberal peacebuilding, spoilers, ripeness, rebel-to-party transitions, and the impact of third parties on peace processes are examined and utilised in this study to answer these research questions.

This thesis uses Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Basque, Colombian, and Sri Lankan peace processes as three case studies to examine foreign political party involvement in civil war peace processes. The diversity of the case studies – due to the nature of the conflicts, the geographical spread, and how the conflicts concluded – enhances the research findings and application of theoretical explanations for this third party engagement.

To ascertain the reasons for the emergence of foreign political party involvement in civil war peace processes, and its impact, this qualitative research uses an interpretive method of historical analysis. The research significantly focuses on interviews and other primary sources in order to get an insider view into the engagements and their significance. Twenty-two semi-structured and structured interviews were conducted with senior Sinn Féin representatives, key local actors in the three peace processes, and other international participants, to gain these insider and elite perspectives. This data was complemented by a simultaneous examination of observed behaviours and actions in each of the case studies.

The research findings show that foreign political party involvement in peace processes developed in response to the geopolitical changes that occurred after the Cold War ended and in response to the hegemonic rise of the liberal peace. It highlights that this
involvement is motivated by a new form of internationalism that seeks to strengthen rebel movements engaged in peace processes and to enable the liberal peace to go hand-in-hand with demands for self-determination and national liberation, by using peace processes to conduct rebel-to-party transitions to provide continuity for these movements.

This research also finds that foreign political party engagement is multidimensional, occurring at the three levels of Lederach’s model of conflict resolution and at the three stages of peacemaking described by Albin. However, it finds that there is a particular focus on rebel-to-party transitions, with an emphasis on internal negotiations and spoilers. This thesis also demonstrates that the engagements include attempts to assist the rebel movements with efforts to hybridise the liberal peace, to reduce the asymmetry in negotiations with the state, and to improve local ownership in peace processes.

The research findings on the impact these engagements have are mixed, with different outcomes in each of the three case studies. This study highlights that foreign political parties can use soft and moral power to assist rebel movements in peace processes, but that such power is limited and is no match for the hard power that foreign states can wield. Ultimately this research finds that the impact of foreign political party engagements is dependent on the similarity of the local context to the peace process experience of the foreign political party. Importantly, it also finds that the impact can be enhanced if there are existing historical connections between the foreign political party and the local rebel movement, and if a ‘ripeness’ for conflict resolution is present.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC – African National Congress
AUC – Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defences of Colombia)
CD – Centro Democrático (Democratic Centre)
CFA – Ceasefire Agreement (Sri Lanka)
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
DDR – Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
DMZ – Demilitarised Zone
DUP – Democratic Unionist Party
EH – Euskar Herritarrok (Basque Citizens)
EH Bildu – Euskal Herria Bildu (Basque Country Unite)
ELN – Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
ETA – Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)
ETCR – Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación (Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation)
FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FP – Federal Party
GFA – Good Friday Agreement
HB – Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity)
HD Centre – The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
IICD – Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
INPACT – Initiative for Political and Conflict Transformation
IPKF – Indian Peace Keeping Force
IRA – Irish Republican Army
ISGA – Interim Self-Governing Authority
IVC – International Verification Commission
JFC – Justice For Colombia
LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M-19 – Movimiento 19 de Abril (19th of April Movement)

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly (Northern Ireland)

MP – Member of Parliament

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NAM – Non-Aligned Movement

NP – National Party

NSAG – Non-State Armed Group

ODA – Official Development Assistance

PCC – Partido Comunista Colombiano (Colombian Communist Party)

PCCC – Partido Comunista Clandestino Colombiano (Clandestine Colombian Communist Party)

PKK – Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation

PNV – Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)

PP – Partido Popular (People’s Party)

PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party)

P-TOMS – Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure

SDLP – Social Democratic and Labour Party

TD – Teachta Dála (Deputy to the Dáil)

TNA – Tamil National Alliance

TULF – Tamil United Liberation Front

UN – United Nations

UP – Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union)

UPFA – United People Freedom Alliance

UUP – Ulster Unionist Party
Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis investigates the understudied role of foreign political parties in contemporary peace processes to end civil wars. It explores why certain foreign political parties, who have experience negotiating a peace process in their own country, are formally engaging in some foreign civil war peace processes, what they do when they become involved, and what impact their involvement has on these peace processes. This research is located in the peace studies academic discipline and the study of peace processes in particular. It builds on existing theories and models of conflict resolution, but it also establishes that there is a current research gap regarding the involvement of foreign political parties in civil war peace processes, and it examines this third party engagement.

This chapter begins by outlining the research purpose of the thesis and giving a brief contextualisation of the research. It lays out the research questions and the methodology of the thesis. It also justifies the case study selection and outlines the contribution to knowledge of the research. Lastly, the chapter structure of the thesis is listed and a short description of what is contained in each chapter is presented.

1.1 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to understand why certain foreign political parties become involved in contemporary peace processes, what role they play, and if their involvement has any impact. There is a significant research gap in this area and it is important that it is academically examined, because any third party to a peace process can substantially affect the delicate dynamics in positive or negative ways.¹

I began to identify this research gap when I worked in Dáil Éireann as a parliamentary advisor for Sinn Féin and I was carrying out personal research regarding the longevity of the Naxalite conflict in India. The research findings were subsequently published in an academic journal.² While working for Sinn Féin, I became aware that political parties who had their own experience of negotiating a peace process were becoming involved in peace

processes outside their own country. Yet when examining the peace studies literature as part of my research into the Naxalite conflict, I found very little exploration of the role of foreign political parties in this area. This was surprising because political parties that were connected to non-state armed groups (NSAGs), and who have their own personal experience of peace negotiations and conflict resolution processes, like Sinn Féin, have a particular understanding of the common pitfalls which plague fledgling peace processes, such as spoilers and continued structural violence. They are also especially aware of the sensitive process of peacebuilding after an agreement is signed and rebel-to-party transitions. The ability to speak in detail about experiences and strategies in these areas is heavily sought after by political parties and rebel groups struggling to get a handle on these complex and difficult pitfalls in their own peace process. However, analysis of these experience and advice sharing engagements is largely absent from the existing literature.

This research intends to help fill this research gap by providing empirical evidence on the involvement of foreign political parties in contemporary peace processes and generating knowledge regarding the role they play in modern conflict resolution endeavours. This thesis will do this through an exploration of how these political parties become involved in foreign peace processes, what factors motivated them to engage, and whether the engagements had any impact. The objective is to examine if these engagements are particularly important or useful for rebel movements, as they may be inexperienced in formal negotiations and complex liberal peace processes, or if it is an unhelpful attempt to prescribe a foreign solution that worked elsewhere.

1.2 Contextualisation of the Research

The significant academic focus on why peace processes succeed or fail has examined many different areas of the conflict resolution process. In this study of the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes, theories regarding the local turn in liberal peacebuilding, spoilers, ripeness, rebel-to-party transitions, and the impact of third parties are examined and utilised.

The conclusion of the Cold War engendered such a marked increase in the amount of peace agreements reached to end conflicts that Bell labelled the 1990s the “decade of the peace
agreement.” While a significant amount of these peace processes have been successful, many more have collapsed. Thus, since the 1990s there has been a huge and renewed academic focus on examining conflict resolution and peace processes. Such is the intense focus on peace processes, some believe conflict resolution as a defined specialist field “has come of age,” while others have identified what is despairingly labelled ‘a peace industry’ and a commodification of peace.

The research and literature regarding the impact of third parties on peace processes has examined in detail the role that civil society organisations (CSOs), diasporas, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foreign states, and intergovernmental organisations play in contemporary peace processes. In fact, the involvement of third parties is now seen as a normal state of affairs in contemporary peace processes. However, the existing literature has largely failed to investigate the role of foreign political parties as third parties in peace processes, how they impact the process, and what motivates them to become involved. This thesis tackles this research gap.

The local turn in peacebuilding is a contemporary development in conflict resolution. Academic focus on this topic grew after the collapse and failure of a significant amount of peace processes in the 1990s and early 2000s. This led to a growing criticism of the liberal peace for creating peace processes that were too focused on external concerns and accusations of peacebuilding by ‘blueprint’. As a consequence, a renewed concentration

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4 Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 1.
on local concerns began to take hold and there is now a growing recognition of the hybridisation of liberal peace models which have enhanced the local level. In some peace processes this is led by the rebel group and the political movement connected to them pushing back against certain aspects of the liberal peace which ignore local realities and depoliticise the process. They are not attempting to overhaul the liberal peace model in its entirety, rather they are trying to hybridise it to ensure that local concerns and participation are not completely overridden by international and elite state interests. This thesis presents research findings which illustrate foreign political party involvement in this local turn in peacebuilding and that the local turn itself has become internationalised.

The research and literature regarding the transformation of rebel movements into political parties has grown in recent years. Ishiyama and Marshall have analysed whether the transformation of armed groups into political parties actually leads to a durable peace, and what motivates image and name changes of armed rebel groups as they transform into political parties. Allison has examined in detail the transition of armed rebel groups in Central America into political parties and charted how they fared in electoral contests. Sindre has investigated the internal dynamics within these movements as they change from conflict towards democratic politics, analysing this concept in depth using Aceh and East Timor as case studies. Manning and Smith conducted a detailed quantitative examination of political party formation by rebel groups between 1990 and 2009. Others have investigated how rebel groups can function as political parties and armed actors at the same time, under what conditions rebel-to-party transitions are more likely to occur.

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16 Gyda Marås Sindre, "In Whose Interests? Former Rebel Parties and Ex-Combatant Interest Group Mobilisation in Aceh and East Timor," *Civil Wars* 18, no. 2 (2016).
17 Carrie Manning and Ian Smith, "Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War," *Democratization* 23, no. 6 (2016).
and how some victorious rebel groups can transform into authoritarian political parties.\textsuperscript{20} However, there is a gap in the current research when it comes to examining the role that political parties, who have undergone a rebel group to political party transformation, are playing in foreign peace processes, why they become involved, and the impact this is having on other rebel movements attempting to transform to political parties.

This thesis tackles these research gaps by detailing the multidimensional role that foreign political parties have played in some civil war peace processes, examining the impact they had on the process and the transformation of rebel groups, and outlining their motivations for becoming involved. This is not something any political party can undertake, rather it is done by political parties who have experience of conflict resolution and their own peace process, and who themselves have transformed from a rebel movement into a political party. The next sub-section delineates the research focus on specific political parties.

\textbf{1.2.1 The Focus of the Research}

It is important to first stipulate that this thesis concentrates on the engagement of foreign political parties in peace processes, and it does not focus on the intervention of high-profile diplomats and individual politicians in foreign peace processes. Current and former politicians who have significant political and/or conflict resolution experience often individually become involved in foreign peace processes. For example, former US Senator George Mitchell was the US government’s Special Envoy for Northern Ireland under the Bill Clinton administration and he chaired the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement (GFA).\textsuperscript{21} Lakhdar Brahimi, the former Algerian Minister for Foreign Affairs, became the United Nations’ (UN) Special Envoy to Syria from 2012 to 2014 and he worked on attempts to secure a peace process to end the civil war.\textsuperscript{22} Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari assisted the negotiations that led to a peace agreement between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement.\textsuperscript{23} Former President of East Timor

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\textsuperscript{20} Terrence Lyons, "From Victorious Rebels to Strong Authoritarian Parties: Prospects for Post-War Democratization," \textit{Democratization} 23, no. 6 (2016).

\textsuperscript{21} "Who is Senator George J. Mitchell?," Queens University Belfast, accessed 9 August 2022, https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/GRI/mitchell-institute/timeline/.


José Ramos-Horta was appointed the UN Special Representative to Guinea-Bissau in 2012 and for two years he headed up the UN’s integrated peacebuilding office there in an attempt to end ongoing military hostilities.24 These engagements are noticeably different than the engagements of political parties.

As the cases above demonstrate, these individuals are formally employed by foreign states or intergovernmental organisations to work as mediators or to chair talks between the warring parties. Their primary focus tends to be on the negotiating process between the parties to the conflict and the establishment of a formal peace agreement. Their experience and interventions are significantly different to foreign political parties. The latter are not employed or mandated by any state or intergovernmental organisation to do a specific job, they are not elite diplomats, they generally do not take part in the formal negotiation process, and significantly, they are primarily involved with the non-state side of civil war peace processes rather than the state side or both sides in equal measure.

The focus of this thesis is therefore on specific political parties who have experience as the political representatives of the rebel side in a civil war peace process and who have subsequently gone on to become significantly involved as a third party in foreign peace processes. This research has identified two political parties who meet this criterion: the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and Sinn Féin of Ireland. Both are from the broad left-wing political tradition, both were connected to a NSAG, both identify as a national liberation movement, and both have their own personal experience of a peace process.

This thesis uses Sinn Féin’s engagement in the peace processes in the Basque Country, Colombia, and Sri Lanka as case studies to examine the role of political parties in civil war peace processes outside their own country. A detailed explanation for the selection of these three peace processes is outlined in section 1.4.

1.2.2 Foreign Political Parties as Third Parties in Peace Processes

Political parties are peculiar actors to get involved in foreign peace processes. Firstly, they are not direct or indirect parties to the conflict. Secondly, they do not help facilitate

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discussions as foreign state actors often do, as they lack hard power and the necessary carrots and sticks. Thirdly, as they are inherently political actors, they lack the neutrality of third parties not directly involved in political systems. Considering that partisan international interventions are rarely facilitated in delicate conflict resolution efforts; it is intriguing that foreign political parties have become a more frequent feature in contemporary peace processes. Lastly, through their direct engagement with the rebel movements their work can appear similar to CSOs, but they are not civil society actors, and they often have access to the highest levels of the state, as this thesis will show. However, the full nature of their engagements, its impact, and their motivation has not been significantly researched and it merits further analysis.

Considering foreign political parties are such peculiar actors to get involved in peace processes, it is important to highlight what qualifies them to become third parties. As specified in the preceding section, this is not a role undertaken by all political parties. Rather, this study finds that it is broadly left-wing parties who were, or continue to be viewed as, part of a national liberation movement, who are becoming involved in foreign peace processes. This research also indicates that they need to have successfully negotiated a peace process and benefited politically from it to become engaged. It is quite a rare event in international relations to negotiate a settlement to a civil war, and even rarer for the non-state side to politically benefit from it. Thus, achieving something of this magnitude awakens the interest of other parties of a similar ideology and background seeking to successfully negotiate their own peace process in a way which benefits their own political movements.

As a result, while these foreign political parties lack the hard power of states, they have significant moral and soft power due to their conflict and peace process experiences. Sinn Féin, for example, have not only gained international stature for its role in negotiating the

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26 Almost half of all peace agreements fail to even last two years, see: Scott S. Gartner and Jacob Bercovitch, "Overcoming Obstacles to Peace: The Contribution of Mediation to Short-Lived Settlements," International Studies Quarterly 50 (2006).
GFA, but also for how it has successfully grown as a political party since 1998. It is due to this perceived success that some NSAGs and political movements engage with Sinn Féin with regards to their own peace processes. This is contrasted by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), who have also achieved significant electoral success since 1998 but who campaigned against the GFA, and as it was not connected to a NSAG, it did not undertake a rebel-to-party transition. As a right-wing political party who supported the state side in the civil war, it lacks moral and soft power when it comes to NSAGs and political movements attempting a rebel-to-party transition via a negotiated peace process, and the post-Cold War internationalism that is at the heart of these engagements. Nevertheless, the DUP’s journey into eventual power sharing with Sinn Féin can be of interest to right-wing political parties and actors who are reluctant to support a negotiated conflict resolution process with a rebel movement. This is showcased in the Colombian case study which is analysed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

1.2.3 Post-Cold War Internationalism

This research is focused on the post-Cold War period. The geopolitical shifts that took place when the Cold War ended are crucial to the analysis of what motivates the engagement of specific foreign political parties in peace processes. Throughout the Cold War rebel movements influenced each other through their actions in conflict and there was a type of internationalism that was prominent among their supporters. There was a keen interest in each other’s demands and supporters saw their domestic conflict as an extension of a wider, global conflict. In some cases, such connections even extended to collaboration and training. This was not unique to rebel movements. States also constantly shared their advice and experiences in both war and peace during the Cold War, primarily with other

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states but also with rebel groups. Such engagements led Skrede Gleditsch to points out that “it is inappropriate to treat civil war as a fully domestic phenomenon.” Therefore, during the Cold War local developments in civil wars often had global impacts and global developments often impacted localised civil wars. The same is true in the post-Cold War era but this period is also marked by the upsurge in civil war peace processes.

The immediate aftermath of the conclusion of the Cold War saw the 1990s transform into a so-called ‘decade of the peace agreement’ and this global development prompted new connections between certain political parties and rebel movements entering into peace processes. These engagements involve sharing peace process experiences and advice on how to deal with the changed political and international realities brought on by the end of the Cold War and the rise of liberal peacebuilding. Foreign political parties are entering into this type of international experience sharing, not for financial gain or geostrategic benefits, but because they are motivated by a pre-existing anti-imperialist internationalism and solidarity practices. This internationalism is described in detail in section 2.6.

The hegemonic position of liberal peacebuilding was challenged by the rise of a global securitisation agenda based on militarised state-building in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA. The declaration of a new so-called ‘Global War on Terror’ by the USA and its allies significantly impacted local conflict resolution efforts around the world and rebel-to-party transitions in particular, as states were empowered to pursue a victor’s peace over ‘terrorist’ groups via military victory rather than a negotiated peace involving a rebel-to-party transition. As a result, the new connections between certain political parties and rebel movements entering into peace processes that began in the 1990s became more significant in the 2000s.

This thesis focuses on the initial post-Cold War era to detail the beginning of this new form of internationalism between rebel movements entering liberal peace processes as evidenced in engagements between the ANC and Sinn Féin, which is the focus of Chapter 2.

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31 Bell, “Human Rights and Minority Protection”, 1
3. It then shows how the internationalism and engagements between such movements became more pronounced in the face of the burgeoning global securitisation agenda in the post-9/11 period through the three case studies that make up Chapters 4 to 6.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to address the research gap regarding the involvement of foreign political parties in civil war peace processes. Therefore, the objectives of this research are:

- To examine the role that foreign political parties are playing in contemporary peace processes.
- To understand why political parties are formally engaging in foreign peace processes.
- To investigate if the involvement of foreign political parties has any impact on peace processes.

This thesis will achieve these objectives by focusing on three central research questions in relation to the involvement of Sinn Féin in foreign peace processes. Sinn Féin as a political party have the three characteristics this research identifies as being shared by parties who receive invites to engage with foreign peace processes: it was directly involved in negotiating a peace process to end a conflict in its own country; it is of the left-wing political tradition and identifies as a national liberation movement; and it was connected to a NSAG in the conflict. The three research questions of this thesis are:

1. Why does Sinn Féin get involved in foreign peace processes?
   *(Is it a new type of post-Cold War internationalism based on anti-colonial/anti-imperialist ideology? Or is it to gain international legitimacy and recognition for its own rebel-to-party transition for domestic political ends?)*

2. What sort of engagements does it have after becoming involved?
   *(Is it different from the interventions of other third parties? Is it simply experience sharing or does it go deeper than that?)*

3. Does its involvement have any impact on the peace process and the parties to the negotiation?
1.4 Selection of Case Studies

This research into the role of foreign political parties in civil war peace processes is not concerned with a range of political parties, because it is a relatively small and exclusive type of political party that formally engages in this type of work. Therefore, this thesis examines in detail one political party and explores its involvement in specific foreign peace processes as case studies.

Case studies are commonly used in peace studies as they can provide the opportunity to examine a historical episode in detail and develop or test theoretical explanations for this episode which may be generalisable to other events. This thesis therefore uses Sinn Féin’s involvement in three peace processes as case studies to answer the research questions and to apply theoretical explanations to explain the emergence of foreign political party involvement in contemporary conflict resolution efforts. A thorough justification for the selection of Sinn Féin is contained in sub-section 1.4.1.

To deepen understanding of the role of foreign political parties and address the existing research gap of this understudied element of contemporary peace processes, this thesis uses three peace processes as case studies – the Basque Country/Spain, Colombia, and Sri Lanka. These three processes were specifically selected for four distinct reasons:

i. They offer a wide geographical spread across three separate continents, ensuring the research is not limited to one specific global region or sub-region.

ii. They are a mix of civil wars of national liberation and for ideological control of the existing state, ensuring that the research is not limited to peace processes related to one specific type of civil war.

iii. The conflicts all begun during the Cold War and conflict resolution efforts were unsuccessful in the 1990s ‘decade of the peace agreement’. The peace processes all occurred in the post-9/11 era and were shaped by geopolitical shifts of this time period. This places the research in a specific timeframe and allows a deeper analysis of the effects of these geopolitical shifts on peacemaking efforts.

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iv. As each process had a different ultimate outcome, it ensures the research can fully examine positive and negative impacts of foreign political party involvement in peace processes, and analysis how impactful or unimpactful such engagements it can be.

A detailed justification for the selection of these three peace processes as case studies and the exclusion of others is contained in sub-section 1.4.2.

1.4.1 Justification for the Selection of Sinn Féin

This study identifies two political parties that significantly engage in foreign peace processes: the ANC and Sinn Féin. While a substantial amount of rebel movements have transformed into political parties with varying degrees of success,33 and there has been several transformations of left-wing rebel groups in Central America,34 the findings of this research highlight that it is only the ANC and Sinn Féin that significantly engage in foreign peace processes. This sub-section will explain why the ANC is largely excluded from this thesis, before detailing why Sinn Féin was selected as the focus of this study.

Both Sinn Féin and the ANC have their own experience of conflict resolution, they are both from the broad left-wing tradition and identify as national liberation movements, and both were connected to a NSAG group. They are also not generally viewed as stereotypical political parties in liberal democracies, but rather as distinct political movements.35 However, this research finds that their approach to engaging in foreign peace processes differs in two areas. Firstly, the ANC has largely used state levels of diplomacy in its foreign peace processes engagements, whereas Sinn Féin’s engagements are almost exclusively on a party-to-party level. Secondly, it is primarily specific individual, high-profile ANC members who become involved in foreign peace processes, whereas with Sinn Féin it is evident in the number of representatives that become involved that the party itself formally engages. The ANC were therefore not selected as the political party focus of this thesis because it uses state-to-state levels of engagement in its involvement in foreign peace processes and

33 Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, "Rebel-to-party transformations in civil war peace processes 1975-2011."
34 Allison, "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America."
its involvement primarily involves high profile ANC representatives engaging on their own behalf rather than being directed to do so by or through the party. The rest of this subsection further clarifies these two reasons consecutively.

The ANC has been the governing party of South Africa since 1994 and as such it has access to state levels of diplomacy. When one uncovers key ANC figures assisting conflict resolution processes in Africa, and around the world, they are largely doing so as the government of South Africa, rather than as a political party. This is evident in the assistance provided to the peace processes in Burundi,36 the Ivory Coast,37 South Sudan,38 and Madagascar.39 In ANC discussion documents on international relations from its last two policy conferences (in 201240 and 201741) party officials repeatedly mention the importance of both state-to-state and party-to-party relations for what it calls ‘progressive internationalism’. There is also a significant focus in ANC policy documents on improving its relations with parties representing national liberation movements that are now leading governments in Africa, such as the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), in ongoing civil and

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36 After Mandela’s individual intervention, President Thabo Mbeki attempted to build on the progress using the power of the South African state. This included sending South African troops, to initially provide protection to the Burundian negotiators, and later as a major component of the African Union’s Mission in Burundi (AMIB). See: Kristina A. Bentley and Roger Southall, An African Peace Process: Mandela, South Africa and Burundi (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005).


38 In 2018 the South African government played an increasing role in the peace process in South Sudan, including the appointment of the Deputy President, David Mabuza, as a Special Envoy to South Sudan to help the fledging process. See: Office of the President of South Africa, "Deputy President Mabuza concludes his successful Working Visit to the Republic of South Sudan," 15 October, 2018, http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/press-statements/deputy-president-mabuza-concludes-his-successful-working-visit-republic-south-sudan.


41 The ANC’s National Executive Committee International Realitions Sub-Committee, "The ANC in an unpredicticable and uncertain world that is characterised by increased insecurity and the rise of populism" ANC’s 5th National Policy Conference, July, 2017.
political crises. Ultimately, the ANC operates a hybrid state-and-party model when it formally intervenes in conflict resolution processes abroad.

The second type of engagement involves high-profile ANC members who have taken it upon themselves to assist certain foreign peace processes. It is not an engagement led by or involving the party. This is evident in numerous interventions by Nelson Mandela, who for example personally assisted the Burundi peace process when his term as South African President ended. It can also be seen in the personal engagement of the former ANC Minister Ronnie Kasrils in relation to peace and human rights in Palestine and Israel. This is not to undermine the work these individuals have done, and it is clear that such endeavours did not go against their party’s wishes, but one cannot say that the ANC as a political party formally engaged in this work and became a third party in these peace processes through these high profile representatives.

This thesis uses Sinn Féin as the political party case study because its involvement in foreign peace processes does include the party structurally engaging as a third party, in most circumstances, and not as a government or as individuals. While Sinn Féin did enter government in Northern Ireland after the GFA, it done so as part of an enforced cross community power sharing model that was established under the terms of the GFA. Sinn Féin has also never led or been a coalition member in an Irish government. This contrasts with the ANC’s involvement in foreign peace processes via South African government channels or a hybrid state-and-party engagement. The ANC can make this type of intervention as it has governed South Africa without the need for a coalition partner since the end of the government of national unity in June 1996. Even if Sinn Féin wanted to emulate this hybrid state-and-party model when engaging in foreign peace processes it could not, due to the consociational model of power sharing that underpinned the governments it has been part of in Northern Ireland. Although this thesis will highlight Sinn

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42 Ibid.
45 Strand One of the GFA sets out how the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive would function going forward and the cross-community provisions that would underpin them. This was built on by subsequent agreements, such as the 2006 St. Andrews Agreement.
Féin’s engagements with the state level in the three peace process case studies, this was undertaken as a political party rather than the government of a state as in the case of the ANC.

The ANC’s hybrid model of intervention in foreign peace processes is not ignored in this research and relevant work it has undertaken in this regard is not discounted. The ANC’s involvement in the peace process in Northern Ireland is a good example of how the ANC can use the state level and the party-to-party level to assist a foreign peace process. However, the focus of this thesis is on the party-to-party level and therefore the ANC’s work largely falls outside of this scope. The intent of this exclusion is not to diminish the value of such hybrid assistance, rather the aim is to distinguish it from standalone party-to-party work. Consequently, considering the importance of the ANC’s assistance to the GFA process at both the state and party level, Chapter 3 which explores the peace process in Northern Ireland, examines at length the ANC’s involvement in this peace process. It explains how the ANC became involved, what engagements took place, and the impact its involvement had on Sinn Féin’s negotiation strategy and the rebel-to-party transition.

Sinn Féin’s selection as the political party focus of this thesis is due to its third party engagements in foreign peace processes as a political party. When one examines the involvement of Sinn Féin in foreign peace processes it is evident that it does not just include high profile members, but rather it includes a wide array of its political representatives, and its involvement formally occurs through the party and not on an individual basis. This is visible through the number of different representatives who have undertaken this work, the range of different peace processes it has become involved with, official statements from the party, and motions passed at its Ard Fheiseanna. This structural engagement of the party is highlighted extensively in the three case studies in this thesis.

However, Sinn Féin are not the only political actors in Northern Ireland who engage with foreign peace processes. Since the GFA was ratified, and largely due to the international perception of the peace process as a success, political parties and politicians in Northern Ireland have become involved in a variety of conflict resolution efforts around the world. While elected representatives of the DUP, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

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47 Ard Fheis is an Irish language term that means ‘high assembly’. It is a term used by a variety of Irish political parties for their annual party conferences. The plural is Ard Fheisanna.
and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) have participated in some of these endeavours, these parties have not structurally engaged in the manner that Sinn Féin has. Participants from these parties have tended to engage on a personal level rather than a party level. Some have even worked for private companies and charged fees for providing assistance to foreign peace processes.\textsuperscript{48}

Additionally, these parties have been excluded from this research because the engagements and experience sharing undertaken by these current and former political representatives is quite different from Sinn Féin representatives. The former were either non-combatants in the conflict or combatants for the state forces. As a consequence, the work they have undertaken in connection with foreign peace processes has largely been with state representatives,\textsuperscript{49} not with NSAGs and their associated political movements.\textsuperscript{50}

In comparison Sinn Féin is the only large political party that was involved in the GFA process that can offer the advice and assistance of former non-state combatants who have played a part in creating a peace process and who became political representatives. Sinn Féin representatives are also not involved in the commercial enterprises providing conflict resolution advice mentioned in the preceding paragraph, instead its representatives become involved in foreign peace processes through the political party itself. This is not to say that Sinn Féin act independently of other third parties. In some cases it is invited to participate in foreign peace process by CSOs and NGOs, in other cases it is by the warring parties of the conflict. However, Sinn Féin’s participation in this type of work is particularly

\textsuperscript{48} A number of DUP, SDLP, and Alliance Party representatives and former politicians are involved with companies that provide support for foreign peace processes. For example, Jeffrey Donaldson, DUP MP for Lagan Valley, is the Chairman of the Causeway Institute for Peace-building and Conflict Resolution (CIPCR) - and former SDLP MLA Denis Haughey is a member of the international advisory board - \url{https://www.cipcr.org/aboutcipcr/management-board/}; Lord John Alderdice, former leader of the Alliance Party is the Chairman of the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building, and Jeffrey Donaldson, DUP MP, is the Director - \url{http://democracyandpeace.org/team/}; In 2012 DUP MPs, Ian Paisley Jr. and Jeffrey Donaldson, set up QUBRIC Ltd as a company to provide “specialist advice in conflict resolution”. See: Julian O’Neill, “Ian Paisley and Jeffrey Donaldson set up peace-building company,” \emph{BBC}, 11 October, 2012, \url{https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-19909598}

\textsuperscript{49} In July 2018 it was revealed that DUP MP Ian Paisley Jr. undertook two undeclared family holidays to Sri Lanka and subsequently lobbied the British Prime Minister about British government policy toward Sri Lankan, specifically on international investigations into alleged Sri Lankan war crimes in 2009 when the peace process with the LTTE collapsed. See: “Ian Paisley lobbied Cameron on Sri Lankan without disclosing family holidays, says watchdog,” \emph{Belfast Telegraph}, 18 July, 2018, \url{https://tinyurl.com/yf52ehv}

\textsuperscript{50} In 2018 the human rights NGO Reprieve reported that CIPCR was hired by Northern Ireland Co-operation (NI-CO) to assist the Bahraini government’s National Institution for Human Rights during a time when the government was cracking down on human rights and free speech. See: Peter Geoghegan, “Human rights charity concerned at Bahrain links of NI companies,” \emph{The Irish Times}, 16 May, 2018, \url{https://tinyurl.com/3urb7www}
attractive to rebel movements engaged in civil war peace processes and this goes to the core of the post-Cold War internationalism that this research identifies.

1.4.2 Justification for the Selection of the Three Peace Processes

This thesis examines the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes by analysing Sinn Féin’s engagement with three foreign peace processes. These case studies detail the motivations behind the involvement, what type of engagements occurred, and the impact it had. However, this research discovered that since the signing of the GFA, Sinn Féin have been significantly involved in six foreign peace processes: the Basque Country, Colombia, Israel-Palestine, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. This sub-section outlines why three of these peace processes were selected as case studies and three others were excluded.

The selection of the Basque, Colombian, and Sri Lankan peace processes as case studies provides a significantly in-depth examination of Sinn Féin’s involvement in foreign peace processes to end protracted civil wars. This is because they provide a considerable geographic spread, they are a mix of civil wars for independence and civil wars for ideological control of the state, and all three processes concluded differently. The Colombian process led to a negotiated peace agreement in 2016, the Sri Lankan process collapsed and conflict erupted again culminating in the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009, and the Basque peace process concluded the conflict but to date it has not led to a formal peace agreement involving the Spanish state. Therefore, using these three case studies this thesis examines Sinn Féin’s assistance as a third party to peace processes in vastly different protracted civil war conflicts across three continents, which all had contrasting outcomes.

This thesis does not focus on the peace process in the Philippines, between the state and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), because Sinn Féin’s involvement was very limited when compared to all the other cases. Unusually, it only involved the engagement of one representative. Rather than significant long-term involvement, Sinn Féin’s engagement

was uncharacteristically short, and it could not be considered as a third party to the process. Furthermore, MILF are not a left-wing rebel movement. This case is therefore an outlier compared to the others.

Sinn Féin’s involvement in the short-lived peace process (2013-2015) between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) was excluded because the engagements were not directly related to the peace process. Instead, Sinn Féin has long standing engagements with various Kurdish political organisations and has regular exchanges on a variety of political issues.\(^5\) While Sinn Féin publicly supported the peace process, and it continues to have solidarity links with Kurdish political organisations in Turkey, it did not formally engage in the peace process as a third party. Furthermore, the conflict has reignited and it would not be feasible to travel to the affected regions for field research or to remotely carry out interviews with PKK activists because of safety and security concerns.

Israel-Palestine is not included as a case study in this thesis because it is not defined as a civil war, instead it is a regional conflict and Palestine has its own internationally recognised government.\(^6\) Additionally, Sinn Féin has largely only engaged with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), and different Palestinian political parties, in solidarity with their cause and the goal of ending Israel’s occupation of Palestine.\(^7\) It has not formally become a third party in the peace process, or what is left of the peace process. Furthermore, the Oslo Peace Accords came before the GFA, and therefore Sinn Féin’s engagement does not reflect third party assistance to an emerging peace process.

\(^5\) Sinn Féin is overtly supportive of Kurdish self-determination and repeatedly states this in press statements and in motions passed at its Ard Fheisanna. In recent times it appears to have built a connection with the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), a left-wing pro-Kurdish party that was founded in 2012 but came to international prominence during the 2015 Turkish general election when it beat expectations and became the third largest party in the Parliament. Since 2015 Sinn Féin released 30 press statements on its official website relating to the HDP and all of them relate to Sinn Féin’s solidarity and support for the HDP (as of 26 September 2021).


1.5 Methodology

My research is a qualitative study of foreign political party involvement in peace processes to end civil wars. It is exploratory research focused on the impact and the underlying reasons and motivations for these third party engagements. It utilises both primary and secondary sources to ascertain the reasons behind the engagements and the impact the engagements have, through an interpretive method of historical analysis. Primary sources of data were collected through semi-structured and structured interviews, speeches, press statements, and documents created by political parties and NSAGs. Secondary sources include academic books and journal articles, biographies and other relevant books, and newspaper reports.

To explore the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes this thesis examines Sinn Féin’s involvement in three different civil war peace processes. As this is exploratory research, and a relatively new aspect in peace processes, it is a small-n case study, rather than a large-n case study. This is also because the involvement of foreign political parties is not something that is encouraged or helpful in all peace processes to end civil wars, and such international assistance is not something that every political party can take part in. The evidence collected from this research shows that the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes is a bespoke arrangement rather than a pre-packaged template focused on a pre-determined vision of success.

When examining the impact of third party involvement in peace processes it is imperative to point out that the idea of success in conflict resolution is contested and there is no universal definition for success or how to evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution measures.\(^55\) Hence, Hampson has highlighted that it is impossible to firmly conclude that a peace settlement has succeeded due to the fact that failure might just be around the corner.\(^56\) The notion of success is therefore inherently relative. Accordingly, this research is cognisant of the fluid nature of both peace and conflict. It is based on the premise that peace is a process rather than an event and it is not a commodity that can be objectified

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into a neat unit.\textsuperscript{57} It aligns with Mac Ginty’s assertion that attempting to solve civil wars is the wrong approach and energies are better spent focusing on managing or transforming the conflict away from violence.\textsuperscript{58} Similarly, it aligns with Zartman’s declaration that, “at best, internal conflicts are simply subsumed back into normal politics.”\textsuperscript{59} Therefore, this thesis does not seek to evaluate if the involvement of foreign political parties was a success or failure in conflict resolution in a binary sense, and it does not compare the three case studies in the regard. Instead, it seeks to analyse the role of Sinn Féin’s engagements in each of them, its motivations for becoming involved, and what impact such interventions had. The impact is established through an analysis of the aims of the engagement, as determined through interviews with the participants and other primary sources, against what the ultimate outcomes of the process were.

This research significantly focused on interviews and other primary sources in order to get an insider view of foreign political party involvement in peace processes and its impact. Gaining this insider view through primary sources ensured local realities were captured in the analysis of how interventions from foreign political parties impacted each process, and it is paramount to the effort of this thesis to tackle the existing research gap in the existing literature.

As part of this research, twenty-two semi-structured and structured interviews were conducted with senior Sinn Féin representatives, key local actors in the three peace processes, and other international participants. These interviews provided insider and elite views of the role Sinn Féin played in the three peace processes, why it became involved, and whether they believed this involvement had any impact. This method was chosen because interviews can reveal the perceptions, interpretations, and perspectives of key actors in conflict resolution processes, and that this can be complemented by a simultaneous examination of observed behaviours and actions.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} MacGinty, No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords, 18.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
Nine Sinn Féin representatives were interviewed in eight in-person interviews between January and March 2020. This included the president of the party, the former president, the chairperson, senior parliamentarians, and other senior members of the party. All have direct knowledge of the peace process in Northern Ireland and were directly or indirectly involved in Sinn Féin’s engagement in the three foreign peace processes selected as case studies for this thesis. All the interviews were in-depth and semi-structured, with open-ended questions. The questions were not ordered the same or phrased completely in the same way, however the same subject matter was covered in each. This semi-structured interview method facilitated the creation of a standard set of open-ended interview questions in advance. It was an ordered but not too rigid interview method and it allowed interviewees the opportunity to express their own views in full. The aim was to critically analyse why Sinn Féin is formally involved as a third party in foreign peace processes and what role they believe it plays. An example of the general questions that guided these semi-structured interviews are included in Appendix 1.

The original research plan was to then carry out in-person semi-structured interviews for each case study, for the same methodological reasons outlined above, through field visits in 2020. Initial travel arrangements were made in January 2020 and interviews were scheduled in London, Bilbao, and Bogotá between March and June, but the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic necessitated significant changes to this research plan.

For the Basque case study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone with a senior member of the Basque nationalist left, Urko Aiartza, and former Chief of Staff of the British Prime Minister, Jonathan Powell, who personally engaged in the Basque peace process. Interviews with the leader of EH Bildu, the former head of the international affairs department of Herri Batasuna (HB), and a former Socialist Party minister in the Basque government were conducted via written response to questions submitted via email. For these email exchanges the gatekeeper was Urko Aiartza. He knew the interviewees personally and he facilitated the exchange of material and the responses.

For the Colombia case study, two in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone with a former adviser to the Peace Secretariat of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and a former member of the Peace Secretariat. One interview was conducted with a member of the FARC’s Secretariat via a written response to questions.
submitted via email. The semi-structured telephone interview with Powell also included a focus on the Colombia peace process, due to his personal engagement in the process.

As the leadership of the LTTE were killed in the final stages of the conflict this is the only case study which does not include interviews with senior members of the non-state actor in the civil war peace process. As an alternative, six semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone and online video communication software with five activists who had direct knowledge of the peace process. This includes one Tamil Member of Parliament, one former worker for the LTTE Peace Secretariat, the editor of the TamilNet online newspaper, one journalist now living in exile, and a political activist now living in exile.

All the semi-structured oral interviews were carried out in English and the structured written interviews were in Spanish and later translated into English. Examples of the questions that guided the semi-structured interviews and that formed the structured interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

All interviewees were provided with a participant information document and consent form before the interview. Every semi-structured interview was recorded and transcribed. All interviewees received a copy of the transcribed interview and were allowed to edit the transcription. Every interviewee was offered the option of anonymity and one interviewee accepted this offer. She is a former Sinn Féin representative and is referred to using a pseudonym in the research notes and throughout this thesis.

Interviewing elite informants has advantages and disadvantages. It was particularly advantageous for this study because it provided the opportunity to generate information regarding the motivations and perspectives of key actors and decision makers in these engagements. Considering the significant research gap regarding the role of foreign political parties in peace processes, obtaining these particular insights was important for this research, as such information was not available elsewhere. As the first research question of this thesis focuses on understating the motivations and reasons behind Sinn Féin’s engagements in foreign peace processes, conducting interviews with the senior decision-makers within the party provided crucial primary sources of information which facilitated a detailed analysis of these motivations and considerations. Similarly, to fully answer the second research question regarding the focus of Sinn Féin’s engagements in the peace processes, obtaining the insights of those who personally participated in these
engagements, from both the Sinn Féin and local rebel movement sides, provided important knowledge and information from the participants in this under researched form of third party engagement.

Elite interviews also pose particular risks and challenges for researchers. By focusing on the key decision makers and senior leadership figures, there was a potential risk that they would produce a common face or narrative in an attempt to present their decision making in a positive light. In order to mitigate the risk that senior Sinn Féin representatives would present a single narrative regarding the party’s engagement in foreign peace processes, key local and international actors were also interviewed, and they provided their individual perspectives on these engagements. Furthermore, as previously highlighted in this section, this also included interviews with political opponents of the local rebel movements and a former senior British government official. Additionally, the knowledge that was generated from the elite interviews conducted for this study was just one primary source used in the research. The information that emerged from the interviews was complemented by a simultaneous examination of observed behaviours and actions and compared with existing information from other primary and secondary sources.

Data collected from these interviews, other primary sources, and existing secondary sources, allowed for a detailed analysis of what led to the involvement of Sinn Féin in the three peace processes, what the engagements entailed, and if it had any impact on the peace process and the negotiating parties. It therefore focused on the impacts foreign political parties can have on these areas, and not simply on a binary success or failure approach to conflict. This is of particular importance to the non-state actors in civil war peace processes because if the violence of a conflict ends with a negotiated settlement it brings new problems they had not previously faced, such as: incorporating former combatants into the political process, the release of prisoners, decommissioning, reconciliation, policing, and other sensitive post-conflict political issues.

Some of the interviews conducted were with former work colleagues and I am cognisant that my previous work with Sinn Féin can lead to accusations of bias, whether intended or unintended. This was something my supervisor and I recognised and worked on at the very outset of my research. I have been open and honest about my positionality throughout my research, and I have at all times sought to be balanced and meticulous, putting my findings
through rigorous scrutiny and reflectivity. I have at all times sought out a variety of conceptual explanations and differing perspectives on the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes and critically analysed their role through a robust methodology and theoretical framework. The variety of interviewees, the range of primary data sources collected, and the extensive use of existing theories in this thesis to analyse this concept within the peace studies academic discipline, is testament to that. I did not undertake this research in an attempt to confirm something I thought was true about foreign political party involvement in contemporary peace processes. Instead, I was aware that these engagements were taking place and there was a gap in the existing literature on civil war peace processes regarding these engagements. I believed this research gap needed to be tackled and that I was in a unique position to tackle it, due to the access I had to information and interviewees that were not readily available to other researchers.

1.6 Contribution to Knowledge

This research enhances our understanding of an understudied aspect of contemporary peace processes by helping to fill the research gap surrounding the involvement of foreign political parties. It generates knowledge and provides new primary sources regarding the motivations for and the impact of these endeavours on some of the most preeminent peace processes in the last two decades. It reveals that there is a post-Cold War internationalism fuelling these engagements and that foreign political parties are assisting the hybridisation and local turn in contemporary peacebuilding.

As the involvement of foreign political parties in civil war peace processes is understudied, this research also advances knowledge of what exactly political parties do when they become involved and what role they play. It is therefore an important addition to the existing academic understanding of contemporary civil war peace processes.

This thesis confirms there is an evolving function for political parties who have experience with conflict resolution in peace processes beyond their own country. Therefore, practically speaking, this research is also of interest to policymakers, mediators, and other third parties who are in a position to decide whether to invite relevant foreign political parties to assist future peace processes.
Lastly, considering that this thesis focuses on Sinn Féin’s involvement in three foreign peace processes, the research also helps to reveal an understudied internationalisation of the peace process in Northern Ireland, generating further knowledge regarding the international impacts of the GFA.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This chapter has outlined the purpose, case study selection, research questions, and methodology of the research. It also provided a section contextualising the research.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of the academic literature regarding conflict resolution and outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis. It focuses on the changes to the geopolitical landscape when the Cold War ended, concentrating on how that led to an increase in peace processes to end protracted civil wars, how the liberal peace paradigm came to dominate this field, and the criticisms of the liberal peace. It explores in detail the literature and theories surrounding the involvement of third parties in contemporary civil war peace processes. It scrutinises academic research to date on the hybridisation of the liberal peace. It analyses the existing literature regarding the transformation of rebel movements to solely political parties as part of peace processes. It examines the literature in relation to internationalism and showcases how this ideology can motivate certain political parties to become involved in peace processes outside their own country. It outlines the research gap that exists regarding the involvement of foreign political parties as third parties in peace processes and the local turn in peacebuilding, as well as their assistance to the transformation of rebel movements through peace processes. It then showcases how this research tackles this gap.

Chapter 3 provides a historical background to the conflict in Northern Ireland and who Sinn Féin are. It outlines the contemporary Irish republican rebel-to-party transition, and it details the central place of internationalism in Sinn Féin’s political ideology. It illustrates the impact of the ANC’s engagements with Sinn Féin on negotiation strategy and the rebel-to-party transition process. It identifies these engagements as a form of post-Cold War internationalism and highlights how the assistance Sinn Féin received from the ANC during the GFA negotiations has encouraged Sinn Féin to become involved in foreign peace
processes. The chapter incorporates the information gained from interviews with Sinn Féin representatives and other primary and secondary sources.

Chapter 4 outlines the history and the nature of the conflict between Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and the Spanish state. It provides a historical analysis of the various attempts to end the conflict, before outlining how and why Sinn Féin became involved with the contemporary conflict resolution process. It examines the impact of Sinn Féin’s engagements with the Basque nationalist left on negotiation strategy, the rebel-to-party transition process, and the enhancement of the local level in the hybrid liberal peace model. It details the advice and assistance that Sinn Féin provided to the pro-Basque independence political forces and draws parallels between ETA and Batasuna’s approaches towards ending the conflict with the approach of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Sinn Féin. The interviews with both Sinn Féin and Basque political activists inform these findings. This chapter reveals that the engagement of foreign political parties can have a significant impact on rebel movements and contemporary peace processes.

Chapter 5 begins by outlining the history and nature of the fifty-two year conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state. It details how and why Sinn Féin became involved in the contemporary peace process to end South America’s longest running war. It demonstrates the significant engagements that developed between the FARC and Sinn Féin, which involved interactions at the highest levels. Through evidence gathered via interviews with FARC and Sinn Féin representatives involved in these engagements, this chapter illustrates the limited impact Sinn Féin’s engagements had on the FARC’s negotiating strategy, the rebel-to-party transition, and the enhancement of the local level in a hybrid liberal peace model. This chapter highlights that the impact of foreign political party engagements is significantly lessened when the context is substantially different than what the foreign political party experienced domestically.

Chapter 6 outlines the nature and history of the twenty-six year conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state. Through interviews with Sinn Féin representatives and those with direct knowledge of the peace process, this chapter demonstrates how and why Sinn Féin became involved in the conflict resolution process. It analyses the limited impact of Sinn Féin’s engagement with the LTTE on its negotiation strategy, the rebel-to-party transition, and the enhancement of the local level in a hybrid liberal peace model. This chapter shows
the restricted impact and influence that foreign political parties with soft power can have in peace processes that are heavily impacted by geopolitical dynamics and the intervention of states with hard power.

Chapter 7 concludes this study. It provides a summary of the answers to the research questions from the three case studies. It also provides the main conclusions of this research and a review of the research process. Lastly, it highlights two limitations of this research and three possible avenues of future research.
Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter provides a brief history of peace studies and illustrates the dramatic changes that occurred when the Cold War ended, with a focus on the hegemonic rise of the liberal peace paradigm. It outlines the theoretical framework of the thesis before providing an in-depth analysis of the academic literature regarding third party involvement in peace processes. It highlights the research gap that exists regarding the involvement of foreign political parties as third parties in peace processes, with a focus on their role in the transformation of rebel movements to political parties and the hybridisation of the liberal peace. The chapter also contains an examination of the literature regarding internationalism and its importance as a motivating factor for political party engagement in foreign peace processes.

2.1 History of Peace Studies and Post-Cold War Changes

Conflict is an integral and inherent part of human history. As Rapoport reminds us: “conflict is a theme that has occupied the thinking of men more than any other, save only God and love.”¹ In parallel, and for as long as humans have been engaged in conflict, there has also been a search for peace. One can for example find calls and actions for alternatives to conflict in Ancient Greek texts.² However, it is in the 1600s that we begin to see significant discussions and detailed theories on ways to avoid conflict, a deliberation that has continued to the present day. While there are important scientific investigations into war and violence and the development of what has been labelled as ‘peace science’, Mac Ginty points out that much of peace studies has been “acutely political and deliberately normative.”³

The 1900s witnessed a transformation in peace and conflict resolution efforts. Kriesberg divides the 1900s into four main periods of evolution in contemporary conflict resolution:

1) 1914-1945: preliminary developments
2) 1946-1969: laying the groundwork

3) 1970-1989: expansion and institutionalisation

4) 1989-present: diffusion and differentiation.\(^4\)

In the first period, interstate wars were more prevalent and relations between states was the central topic examined in peace studies, but since 1945 civil wars have been far more common. Interstate wars still break out and they tend to be more lethal than civil wars when they occur, but civil wars are more frequent and harder to settle.\(^5\) However, theories and ideas from the first period continue to impact contemporary peace studies and conflict resolution efforts. For example, former US President Woodrow Wilson was the first statesman to articulate what is now called the liberal peace thesis.\(^6\) Although the basic principles of this thesis had been argued by prominent philosophers since the 1700s, Wilson’s promotion of the thesis during the Versailles negotiations after World War One reinvigorated it.

The second period is particularly marked by the fallout of World War Two, the creation of a new global system to regulate international relations, and wars of independence as European colonial empires began to collapse. The third period saw a huge expansion in proxy wars between the USA and the USSR, and a continuation of anti-colonial and national liberation conflicts, but it was also a period marked by extensive developments in conflict resolution theory and practices. It is in this period that Galtung defines positive and negative peace\(^7\) and coins the term peacebuilding.\(^8\) However, it is in the last period, the post-Cold War period, that we find the most significant and substantial changes in conflict resolution.

The conclusion of the Cold War resulted in a torrent of negotiated peace settlements, with more peace agreements negotiated in the decade immediately after the Cold War than during the four and half decades that the Cold War lasted for.\(^9\) Hampson, Crocker, and Aall account this rise in negotiated settlements to superpowers trying to disentangle


\(^7\) Negative peace is the absence of direct, visible violence. Positive peace is the absence of direct violence and a reduction in indirect structural and cultural violence. See: Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," Journal of Peace Research 6, no. 3 (1969)

\(^8\) Johan Galtung, Peace, War and Defence (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1976).

\(^9\) Wallensteen, Understanding Conflict Resolution, 3.
themselves from proxy wars and to normalise relations.\textsuperscript{10} The post-Cold War period is also marked by a decline in the outbreak of new conflicts. Kriesberg suggests that this is due in part to increased democratisation, the spread of NGOs and CSOs, feminism as an ongoing social revolution, new ideas and methods of conflict resolution taking hold, and the spread of philosophies and schools of thought regarding peace and human rights norms.\textsuperscript{11} However, that is not to say that new conflicts have not emerged – they have – and the dynamics of many of these new post-Cold War conflicts is quite different than their Cold War predecessors. Duffield has highlighted the incorporation of war into development discourse in the post-Cold War era and how underdevelopment in the Global South was refocused as a global security threat through conflict and ‘terrorism’.\textsuperscript{12} This was heightened after the USA launched the so-called ‘Global War on Terror’ in response to the 11 September 2001 attacks.

The new ideas and methods of conflict resolution that took hold in the immediate post-Cold War period aimed to establish a consensus around peacebuilding that was rooted in the liberal peace paradigm. During the Cold War, peace processes were generally narrowly focused instruments to simply end violent conflict. Under the dominant liberal peace paradigm that marked the post-Cold War era, conflict resolution efforts have become much broader and affect all aspects of post-war society.\textsuperscript{13} This is most clearly seen in the ‘An Agenda for Peace’ policy paper published in 1992 by the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. This seminal paper outlined four areas of conflict resolution that the UN would now operate in: conflict prevention; peacemaking; peacekeeping; and peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{14} This policy shift saw the UN pursue interventionist strategies in the 1990s to promote civil and political rights, prepare and administer elections, draft national constitutions, train police and justice officials, promote CSOs, and reduce state involvement in the economy. This myriad of new actions were all justified under the banner of promoting peace.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{10} Hampson, Crocker, and Aall, "Negotiation and International Conflict," 38.
\textsuperscript{15} Paris, At War's End - Building Peace After Civil Conflict, 19.
The rapid dominance of the liberal peace consensus was not universally welcomed. Richmond is one of the most prominent critics of the liberal peace and ‘An Agenda for Peace’, which he described as a blueprint for the liberal peace project. Richmond has strongly critiqued the liberal concept of peace for being too interventionist and for its mechanical problem-solving character. Mac Ginty, another eminent peace studies scholar and critic of the liberal peace, argues that while enormous energy and resources have been devoted under the liberal peace project to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; the type of peace that is established often leaves much to be desired. Mac Ginty contends that the type of peace created under this model “is often characterised by poverty, insecurity and a failure to deal with the structural factors underlying the causation and maintenance of violent conflict.” The frequent collapse of peace processes and the poor quality of peace in many post-conflict environments has led to an increased focus and scrutiny of the liberal peace model. Since 2008 there has been a decline in the number of successful peace processes to end conflicts and the UN is increasingly playing a reduced role in conflict resolution processes. For example, in both 2016 and 2017 there were significantly more wars than there was in 2006 and 2007. Nevertheless, the liberal peace paradigm continues to dominate approaches to conflict resolution and the rest of this chapter shows how its successes and failures have led to foreign political party involvement in peace processes to end civil wars.

2.2 Theoretical Framework and Definition of Key Terms

Considering peace studies is a broad and expanding academic field it is important at the outset of this chapter to define some key terms this thesis will use.

2.2.1 Conflict Resolution and Intractable Conflicts

Throughout this thesis the term conflict resolution is used extensively. To distinguish exactly what is meant by this term, this thesis uses a definition prescribed by Bercovitch,
Kremenyuk and Zartman: “Conflict resolution is about ideas, theories, and methods that can improve our understanding of conflict and our collective practice of reduction in violence and enhancement of political processes for harmonizing interests.”\(^{21}\) This is a contemporary understanding of conflict resolution, rather than a traditional view. Traditionally conflict resolution was solely focused on stopping violence, but it has now evolved to incorporate building conditions for peace before and after a peace agreement is signed.\(^{22}\) The core aim is therefore not about eliminating conflict completely, because this is not possible, but to create mechanisms and processes to transform a conflict away from violence.\(^{23}\) According to Bercovitch, Kremenyuk and Zartman, conflict resolution is thus “not an abstract theoretical construction but an element of both academic research and practical policy.”\(^{24}\) This research is focused on the enhancement of the political processes mentioned in the conflict resolution definition above and specifically on the practical involvement of foreign political parties in this element of conflict resolution.

Similarly, the term ‘peace process’ is extensively used in this thesis. It is distinguished in the research through the use of Sisk’s definition of a peace process as: “a series of step-by-step, reciprocal, and self-reinforcing actions that are taken to steadily move a conflict away from violence toward regularised, consensual non-violent rules of interaction.”\(^{25}\) As the research examines peace processes aimed at ending civil wars, it defines these conflicts using Gleditsch’s definition of civil war: “a violent conflict over some incompatibility between at least two organised groups, of which one is a government and one is not a state, that generates some casualties as a direct result of fighting.”\(^{26}\) However, it is important to recognise that many different types of civil wars exist. This research is primarily concerned with intractable conflicts because it is in peace processes to end these types of civil wars that we find foreign political party involvement.


\(^{25}\) Sisk, International Mediation in Civil Wars: Bargaining With Bullets, 38.

\(^{26}\) Gleditsch, ” The Spread of Civil War,” 607.
Intractable conflicts are difficult to define but Crocker, Hampson, and Aall outline the characteristics of these conflicts.27 They characterise intractable conflicts as typically: long-standing; they have been the subject of repeated conflict resolution attempts; the barriers to negotiation are higher than most other conflicts; and extremists often dictate the terms of any resolution. Therefore, intractable conflicts are not impossible to resolve, but they are stubborn and difficult to manage.28 Ending intractable conflicts requires huge leadership and risk taking from the warring parties in order to move towards peace. It is therefore widely seen as important that a broad range of outside institutions support the peacemaking process in intractable conflicts.29 In such conflicts, where peace and an alternative political future seem remote, existing peace agreements are often used as focal points or suggested templates in negotiations to end prevailing conflicts.30 Therefore, the introduction of parties who have been in a similar situation and have dealt successfully with the political risks associated with a settlement have the potential to significantly help this delicate process.31 It is through this lens that this thesis explores Sinn Féin’s engagement with peace processes to end protracted civil wars in the Basque Country, Colombia, and Sri Lanka.

2.2.2 Levels and Stages of the Conflict Resolution Process

Foreign political parties engage at many different levels and stages of the conflict resolution process. Zartman’s theory of ripeness is important to this research, as it concerns conflict resolution in intractable civil wars. Zartman contends that violent conflicts are only ready for negotiated settlement when they reach a hurting stalemate. Negotiations then enter a series of stages which can either breakdown or conclude in settlement.32 Foreign political parties do not engage with relatively new conflicts or efforts to calm conflicts at the peak of their violence. Instead they become involved with intractable conflicts that are ripe for

28 Ibid, 7-8.
31 Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, Taming Intractable Conflicts, 176.
32 Zartman, “Conflict Resolution and Negotiation.”
negotiations and resolution. This is central to understanding when foreign political parties become involved. There are broadly three stages of peacemaking according to Albin:

1) The warring parties move from conflict to dialogue (pre-negotiation)

2) Then from negotiation to agreement

3) Then to a post-agreement and post-conflict phase of securing a durable peace.\(^{33}\)

This thesis will focus on all three stages, as the engagement of foreign political parties can be found at each of these stages.

Using Lederach’s three level approach to conflict resolution,\(^ {34}\) this thesis will show that foreign political parties primarily engage at the top level – with the political leadership. Any engagements with the middle and bottom levels occur predominately with the non-state actor and at the request of the political leadership of the non-state actor. Applying the three-track model of diplomacy,\(^ {35}\) my research will be focused on both Track I and Track II as foreign political parties operate at both these levels in conflict resolution processes.\(^ {36}\)

This is important for understanding how foreign political parties engage with peace processes and where such engagements can have an impact.

\textbf{2.2.3 Political Parties}

As this thesis focuses on ‘foreign political parties’ it is imperative to specify what a political party is. This research uses Grisham’s definition of a political party as: “an organisation with a particular ideological focus that is centred on the election of individuals to legislative, executive, or judicial components of the government.”\(^ {37}\) However, as mentioned in subsection 1.4.1, the focus of this research is not about orthodox or stereotypical political parties in liberal democracies, rather it is about political parties that were connected to


\(^{34}\) John Paul Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

\(^{35}\) Track I is government and inter-government level diplomacy, Track II is unofficial mediators and third parties, and Track III is the grassroots and local level. See: Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 11-20.

\(^{36}\) While foreign political parties are not governments, they often have access to the highest levels of the state and therefore occasionally work at the Track I level.

rebel movements during a conflict and transformed into solely political parties as part of a peace process. In the cases of both Sinn Féin and the ANC, they were existing political parties associated with a NSAG and ended up transforming into the dominant organisation within the movement.

2.2.4 Rebel Movements and Terrorist Organisations

In this thesis there is a substantial focus on rebel movements as the non-state side of a civil war. It is important to outline what characterises a rebel movement and to compare them to terrorist organisations. Grisham details how both rebel movements and terrorist organisations often have similar immediate goals, primarily the use of violence to arouse fear and to intimidate or coerce people. However, when their long-term goals are examined Grisham highlights four specific differences. Firstly, rebel movements typically want to control defined geographic areas, whereas terrorist organisations rarely do. Secondly, while they both generally use the same violent means, such as kidnapping, assassinations, and bombings, rebel movements generally want to inflict fear in and/or damage on the government and its agents. These actors are ordinarily targeted, not non-combatants or civilians not associated with the government. In contrast, terrorist organisations primarily want to instil fear in the general public and their main targets are non-combatants, and they rarely directly engage government forces. Thirdly, the structures of the two are also different. Rebel movements are commonly organised into armed, military style units with hierarchical structures, whereas terrorist organisations are typically organised into cellular structures unconnected to one another. Lastly, rebel movements generally do not estrange themselves from their societies and they retain supporters and sympathisers, whereas terrorist organisations tend to be social anti-movements.

Building on the fourth point above, it is important to also note the historical conditions that underpin both rebel movements and terrorist organisations. The former generally emerge due to specified political demands from a definable group of people who have some level of popular support. Their development is often underpinned by historical grievances and structural violence that has created conditions which led to overt conflict with the state.

38 Ibid, 9.
39 Ibid, 10-11.
40 Ibid, 10-11.
They follow a conflict cycle pattern and have often engaged with the state in negotiations at various times of the conflict. The latter tend to lack popular support and often have vague demands from an undefined group of people. Their violent actions often do not follow a conflict cycle and they usually show no interest in negotiations with the state. Such terrorist organisations are typically seen in the post-9/11 era whereas rebel movements have much deeper historical roots. This thesis is specifically focused on rebel movements that emerged in the Cold War period and rebel-to-party transitions that are the focus of peace processes in the post-Cold War period.

Therefore, it is political parties connected to what are labelled as rebel movements, and who fit the description outlined by Grisham, that are the focus of this research. They are not labelled as terrorist organisations because of the differences outlined in the preceding two paragraphs and because there is no single legal or scholarly definition of terrorism. The literature on defining terrorism is hugely divided on how broad or narrow a legal or academic definition should be.41 At the international level the focus on terrorism generally occurs through the prism of threats to international peace and security, whereas at the national level it is a focus of the domestic criminal system.42 An agreed common classification of terrorism is difficult, if not inconceivable, because of the moral absolutes and the pejorative nature of the term and its selective use.43 Consequently, Grisham’s description and the differences he outlines regarding targeting, goals, and structures, underpin the labelling of these movements in this research. The commonly accepted NSAG term is additionally used throughout this thesis, however NSAG can customarily refer to rebel movements and/or terrorist organisations, hence the term ‘rebel movement’ is generally favoured in this thesis.

2.2.5 The Liberal Peace and the Local Turn in Peacebuilding

It is important to detail how the involvement of foreign political parties fits into the dominant liberal peace paradigm that has dominated conflict resolution in the post-Cold War era. Defining what peace is, who creates and promotes it, and who peace is

for, is a complex procedure.⁴⁴ This research uses the work of Richmond and Mitchell to argue that the liberal peace model conflates peace with “the production of secure and stable neoliberal states, defined by the presence of democratic processes, the rule of law, guaranteed human rights, a social construct guaranteed by a robust civil society, and integration into the global economy.”⁴⁵ Contemporary peacebuilding is driven by this dominant paradigm of liberal peace, which combines a mixture of theoretical constructs derived from liberal internationalism, such as the democratic peace theory, liberal institutionalism, and neoliberalism.⁴⁶ This approach to peace has dominated the post-Cold War era and therefore peace processes have transformed from quite narrowly focused instruments to end violent conflict to much broader instruments which impact all aspects of society.⁴⁷

The liberal peace model had such a dominant position in international conflict resolution processes that at times it became a blueprint recommended for all conflicts, regardless of context or local circumstances. This, Mac Ginty argues, led to pre-packaged templates that commodified peace and undermined the whole nature of peace being a process.⁴⁸ It spawned a technocratic approach to peace processes that did not engage with the politics of the conflict and depoliticised the conflict resolution process. Therefore, peace processes were often captured by elite interests and ended up contributing to the very conditions of insecurity and conflict that they sought to end.⁴⁹ Richmond points out that between 1990 and 2002 there were eighteen UN democratisation operations in peace processes and thirteen of them ended in a return to authoritarian rule.⁵⁰ While the 1990s was an era of liberal peacebuilding by blueprint, it is now broadly acknowledged that peacebuilding should proceed on a case-by-case basis.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the liberal peace paradigm still dominates.

⁴⁶ Richmond and Mitchell, "Peacebuilding and Critical Forms of Agency."
The peace processes that this thesis examines all occurred in the post-Cold War period and under the influence of the liberal peace paradigm. Consequently, democratisation and the political process were at the core of these peace processes, and it is this element that this research focuses on. One of the predominant criticisms of liberal peace interventions is that despite the commitment to local empowerment, they tend to deny self-determination and self-government, and they are significantly depoliticising.\(^{52}\) Richmond argues that the political reform and democratisation that drives the liberal peacebuilding process is often a top-down elite perspective that contends that neoliberal economic reform will deal with all socio-economic problems.\(^{53}\) This element is strongly contested by actors who want to determine their own peace agreement and the post-conflict political system. What we are witnessing in most contemporary peace processes is therefore a local turn in peacebuilding which has created a type of hybrid peace between local and international actors.\(^{54}\) Mac Ginty argues that this local turn in peacebuilding emerged after the disastrous military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq punctured the liberal peacemaking hubris.\(^{55}\)

This local turn is not inherently beneficial. Richmond has pointed out that hybrid peace is not a neat constructive package, but instead there can be both negative and positive forms of hybrid peace.\(^{56}\) The local turn in peacebuilding can simultaneously be part of neoliberal efforts to roll back the state and as a result of local resistance to liberal peacebuilding. This local resistance to enforced liberal peace models has been described by Richmond as similar to the resistance to colonialism.\(^{57}\) In some peace processes we therefore see the rebel movements push back against certain aspects of the liberal peace in order to shape a peace process more focused on local realities. This study does not find that they are overhauling the liberal peace model, rather the aim is to hybridise it to ensure that local concerns and participation are not completely overridden by international and elite state interests. Accordingly, in this thesis it is argued that in certain cases rebel groups tactically accept the democratisation initiatives of liberal peace interventions via rebel-to-party


\(^{53}\) Richmond, \textit{Peace in International Relations}, 112.

\(^{54}\) Mac Ginty, \textit{International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance - Hybrid Forms of Peace}.


\(^{56}\) Oliver P. Richmond, "The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?," \textit{Cooperation and Conflict} \textbf{50}, no. 1 (2015).

transitions. They do this because they want to continue to pursue their aims through political means in the post-conflict space, but they do so on the stated basis of giving voice to their marginalised communities and to push back against internationally imposed social and economic measures. Richmond and Mitchell argue this was evident in the case of the IRA and Sinn Féin’s approach to the peace process in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{58} We can therefore state that in some modern peace processes there have been attempts by local political actors to reclaim and reshape the liberal peace model, rather than completely overhaul the liberal peace paradigm.\textsuperscript{59} This research assists the efforts to create a deeper contextualisation of peace, one that allows for a hybridised localised and internationalised praxes of peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{60}

### 2.2.6 Internationalism Motivating Foreign Political Party Interventions

This thesis highlights that this demand by indigenous political actors for local ownership of peacebuilding measures has itself become internationalised. The findings of this research suggest that rebel movements that are attempting to transform into solely political actors through rebel-to-party transition measures in peace processes to end civil wars are looking towards similar movements who made this transition successfully. In addition, it shows that the movements that have made this transition successfully are formally engaging as a third party in foreign peace processes in order to assist this process, and they are motivated by internationalism and a desire to ensure that local political actors shape their own peace processes. This is significant because such re-politicisation of the liberal peace to include local responsiveness and concerns through political parties can create more sustainable peace processes.\textsuperscript{61} Importantly, it is the liberal peace model that makes such interventions by foreign political parties possible because it has normalised the involvement of a wide range of international actors in peacemaking and peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{62}


\textsuperscript{60} The need for this deeper contextualisation is outlined in Richmond, "A post-liberal peace: Eirenism and the everyday," 16.

\textsuperscript{61} Westendorf’s central argument in this regard is that civil wars are at their heart political processes and peace processes fail when they do not respond to this political nature. See: Westendorf, \textit{Why Peace Processes Fail: Negotiating Insecurity After Civil War}.

This research seeks to understand what motivates these political parties to become formally involved in foreign peace processes. As mentioned in sub-section 1.2.3, they do not materially benefit from these engagements and they have no direct strategic interest in the conflicts, so what drives them? This thesis puts forward the argument that they are motivated by a type of internationalism commonly found in the Global South and which has its roots in anti-imperialism.

Internationalism is a normative political notion that has gone through significant changes over the centuries. According to Anderson, internationalism has historically been a term “applied to any outlook, or practise, that tends to transcend the nation towards a wider community, of which nations continue to form the principal units.”63 Today internationalism comes in many forms. There is a liberal internationalism which is essentially a project to promote neoliberal economics and international institutions to moderate the activity of states.64 There is also a conservative internationalism that is based on the democratic peace theory and realist assumptions of international relations.65 There is the traditional Marxist internationalism that focuses on working class unity and rejects all forms of nationalism.66 And there is a reactionary right-wing internationalism that has emerged to counter this Marxist internationalism.67 None of these forms of internationalism can explain the involvement of political parties like the ANC and Sinn Féin in foreign peace processes because, respectively, their rhetoric opposes neoliberal economics, they are not conservative parties concerned only with realist international relations, they were part of movements of national liberation and so ascribe to a form of nationalism, and they are not right-wing parties opposed to Marxism. This thesis therefore contends that the type of internationalism that motivates them is an anti-imperialist internationalism common in the Global South.

Moore contends that internationalism among states in the Global South “is a perspective on international politics that encapsulates shared experiences of colonialism, contested

sovereignty, and developing economies.”68 The roots of this internationalism, which is embedded in the foreign policies of some states in the Global South, can be traced to the ideologies and convictions of pre-nation state formations, which includes political parties like the ANC in South Africa and the Indian National Congress (INC) in India.69 While a party like Sinn Féin in Ireland is obviously not from the Global South, the argument presented in this thesis is that a shared history of colonialism has attracted it to this type of internationalism. Using Evans and Newnham’s definition of imperialism as “the relationship of a hegemonic state to subordinate states, nations or peoples under its control,”70 this thesis labels this form of internationalism – ‘anti-imperialist internationalism’. It is an internationalism with its origins in a left or progressive nationalism influenced by anti-colonialism, socialism, feminism, and anti-racism.71 It rejects both the anti-nationalism of Marxism and of European social democrats, but also the reactionary, regressive nationalism of the far-right.

This anti-imperialist internationalism does not seek to impose defined systematic changes like liberal internationalism does with neoliberal economics and it is not a prescriptive dogma like Marxist internationalism is, rather the defining feature of anti-imperialist internationalism is solidarity. Anti-imperialist internationalism is underpinned by the principles that established the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War – peace and disarmament (but not pacifism), independence and self-determination, economic equality, cultural equality and universalism, and multilateralism.72 This type of internationalism still has importance in this contemporary post-Cold War era, especially in regions of the globe where movements for national liberation or demands for state transformation remain. This thesis asserts that it is anti-imperialist internationalism that motivates certain political parties to become third parties to foreign peace processes and they do so as an act of solidarity.

69 Moore, “Internationalism in the Global South: The Evolution of a Concept.”
71 Laxer, “The Movement That Dare Not Speak Its Name: The Return of Left Nationalism/Internationalism.”
2.2.7 Moral and Soft Power

Foreign political parties do not get involved to create what Galtung labelled ‘negative peace’, but rather to build the more evasive ‘positive peace’.73 This thesis not only focuses on the structural reasons for conflict, and efforts to end this structural violence, but also on the social-psychological dimensions of conflict. This is important because the needs and fears of rebel groups when they enter negotiations or sign a peace agreement are often overlooked. Exploring these needs and fears can enhance our understanding of how concessions and resolutions are arrived at.74 It is at this social-psychological level that foreign political parties who have been through their own conflict resolution process can be of particular help and assistance, by virtue of the moral and soft power that they have. This research examines the soft and moral power that foreign political parties can provide to the non-state forces in these negotiations, especially when it comes to spoilers and the internal negotiations related to the rebel-to-party transition. To identify spoilers, this research uses Stedman’s definition of spoilers as: “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.”75

2.2.8 Third Party Interventions

The involvement of third parties in peace processes is a complex and contested issue. This research recognises that the entrance of third parties can change the structure of a conflict and how the warring parties communicate with each other.76 The impact third parties have on a conflict varies greatly between those who are powerful and can alter the power balance, and that those that are powerless and instead facilitate communication.77 Foreign political parties, unlike some other third parties to conflict resolution processes, do not have the necessary carrots and sticks to wield hard power. However, it is acknowledged that NGOs with a strong international reputation can offer international recognition to NSAGs and that they can help rebel movements, not through a series of threats and

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73 Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research."
74 Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict."
76 Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 9.
77 Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 10.
rewards, but by assisting with internal relations and with external recognition. It is also accepted that rebel groups and governments can draw inspiration from other conflict resolution processes. Accordingly, this thesis highlights that foreign political parties can wield soft and moral power as third parties in peace processes due to the perceived successes and achievement they have made in their own conflict resolution processes and in the post-conflict political arena.

The post-Cold War liberal peacebuilding consensus strongly encourages the involvement of third parties in peace processes, however the paradigm tends to privilege the goals of international actors, often excluding the needs and goals of local actors. Wittingly or not, foreign third parties can often focus less on creating a sustainable peace and more on exporting their value systems and the economic and cultural models that have shaped their own development, which can have a negative effect on self-determination and agency. This thesis is cognisant of this complex and contested role. It examines whether the involvement of foreign political parties as third parties in peace processes is an unhelpful outside interference or if it assists local parties in re-politicising the process and protecting their self-determination. This thesis also explores if the emergence of foreign political party involvement in peace processes is because certain parties moved from revolutionary politics into peace deals of political compromise and are therefore trying to bring similar parties with them on this political journey – a journey that they once would have viewed as ‘selling out’. Or whether it is a kick back against the formulaic and depoliticised nature of the liberal peace model and protecting the importance of self-determination.

This research is cognisant that external third parties who get involved in peace processes do not always do so due to an unwavering commitment to global peace. Some have an interest in continuing the conflict, while others want to simply end the conflict quickly to gain accolades. Therefore, this research examines if gaining international legitimacy and

81 Richmond, "The Globalization of Responses to Conflict and the Peacebuilding Consensus," 147.
recognition is also a factor in encouraging foreign political parties to engage with peace processes outside their country. This is especially important for parties on the left in the post-Cold War era who have been accused of ‘selling out’ their revolutionary politics by signing deals of political compromise. Accordingly, this thesis explores if foreign political party involvement in peace processes is revolutionary parties gaining a neoliberal face or if it is an attempt to improve their standing in global left-wing circles.

Each rebel movement examined in this thesis was faced with internal resistance when entering into peace process negotiations and in efforts to conduct a rebel-to-party transition. All of them had been involved in decades of protracted conflict and had mobilised their supporters to continually support the war effort until military victory was reached using other conflicts as a reference. Each one had suffered splits in their movements due to previous peace process efforts and those that broke away from the movement were often vilified as traitors, and sometimes violently attacked and killed. Yet, amid huge geopolitical changes in the post-Cold War era with an increased focus on liberal peacebuilding efforts, the leadership of these movements entered into a peace process which clearly did not deliver their national liberation aspirations. Such significant tactical shifts opened up the leadership to accusations of betrayal and heightened the risk of spoilers causing a split. Therefore, this research also explores whether Sinn Féin’s involvement in foreign peace processes was motivated by a desire to bring other political movements on a similar political journey in order to dampen claims that they had betrayed revolutionary politics through its rebel-to-party transition via a peace process shaped by the liberal peace paradigm.

2.3 The Role of Third Parties in Peace Processes

While conflicts are obviously fought between the warring parties there have always been third parties who play a wide range of roles in conflicts and their resolution. A more contemporary trend is the involvement of third parties in peace processes and there has been an increased role for them since the end of the Cold War. These third parties range from states to NGOs and from intergovernmental organisations to CSOs. Historically, third parties were generally involved in mediation and their mediating role has been extensively
examined in the literature. Today there is a broad range of third parties involved in peace processes and they operate at various levels and stages of the process. The increase in the amount of third party involvement has occurred for variety of reasons.

Kriesberg suggests that because of the significant increase in the amount of peace processes being negotiated in the 1990s, states and international organisations did not have the capacity to manage the multitude of conflict resolution and post-conflict issues. Therefore, they turned to NGOs and CSOs to work on humanitarian relief, institution building, and the protection of human rights. As aid organisations and governments became increasingly willing to support NGOs working on conflict resolution issues, the number of NGOs involved in peace processes has expanded rapidly since the beginning of the 1990s and their remit has grown exponentially as a result. However, considering the support and funding that they receive from governments and international organisations, this has also led to questions regarding the autonomy and co-option of NGOs. A parallel development since 2008 is that there has been a reduction in the UN’s direct engagement with peace processes and most peacemaking efforts are now led by non-UN actors.

There is a general consensus in the literature on civil war termination that international support and resources are necessary to implement peace agreements, but there is significant disagreement about what external actors and third parties should or should not do in their interventions. The first book-length investigation into why some peace agreements succeed and others fail was published by Hampson in 1996. One of Hampson’s core arguments in the book is that peace agreements that have high levels of third party support throughout the process are more likely to succeed than those that do not. Hampson maintains that the intervention of third parties can: “change disputants’ perceptions of the costs, risks, and benefits associated with an agreement versus a no-

86 Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 37.
90 Hampson, Nuturing Peace - Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail.
agreement situation." They therefore act as an important catalyst. Importantly, Hampson states that such positive change only occurs through skilled and properly executed interventions, and clumsy and ill-thought-out interventions from third parties can negatively affect peace processes. Therefore, third party interventions are just one factor and successful conflict resolution depends on other important factors as well. Ultimately, the literature on the topic of third party interventions generally agrees that conflict resolution needs all the help it can get and any external support and knowledge that third parties can bring to the conflict resolution process is welcome and badly needed.

Lederach’s influential book ‘Building Peace’ proposed three levels of peacebuilding involving third parties: an elite top-down level which includes intermediaries and mediators supported by a state or an international organisation; a second level which involves workshops and training, carried out by NGOs and CSOs; and a third bottom-up level which involves grassroots civil society. He argues that multiple third parties should be engaged in the political, social, economic, and developmental tasks at these three levels in order to provide effective multidimensional peacebuilding support. This strong focus on NGOs and civil society in the peacebuilding process is energetically supported by advocates of the liberal peace. Bartoli argues that NGOs lack the burden and constraints of national interests and can therefore constructively engage with all actors in a given conflict resolution process. He points to the 1992 Mozambique peace agreement as a watershed moment, because it was the first agreement to be mediated by a team put together by an NGO – The Community of Sant’Egidio. However, he also points out that the lines between genuinely independent NGOs and state-sponsored ones is blurred.

The established orthodoxy of third party involvement in peace processes, and especially external intervention, has also faced criticism. Richmond argues that the rise in external third party interventions in peacebuilding operations around the world has led to two common complaints: first, that there is duplication and a lack of coordination in the work carried out, and second, that these external agents take ownership of the process.

91 Ibid, 12.
92 Ibid.
93 Zartman, "Introduction: Toward the resolution of international conflicts," 14.
94 Lederach, Building Peace.
95 Ibid
96 Bartoli, "NGOs and conflict resolution," 393
97 Ibid, 397
wrestling it away from its recipients.98 Furthermore, he argues that there is often a significant cultural gap between the interveners and the recipients. The highly interventionist and complex processes that external parties implement, as part of the liberal peace blueprint that is applied worldwide, can alienate local populations according to Richmond.99 He contends that if local actors oppose this form of external intervention and the merits of the post-Cold War peacebuilding consensus, grounded in neoliberal economics and liberal democracy, that they are often excluded economically and politically from the peace process. This simply hands over more power to external actors and turns the peacebuilding process more coercive.100 Additionally, Mac Ginty has criticised advocates of the liberal peace for using NGOs as proxy government tools and promoting civil society as some “extremely versatile, multi-tasking, cure-all remedy” for conflict.101

A wealth of research has examined the impact that states, NGOs, international organisations, and CSOs have had as third parties in a host of peace processes. Throughout the literature it is widely agreed that these third parties have a significant impact on conflict resolution efforts, with a particular focus on their ability to help nurture the conditions that lead to a negotiated settlement. Considering the impact they can have, further research into all third party engagements in conflict resolution efforts is of abiding importance to the peace studies discipline. Yet, the role of certain foreign political parties as third parties in peace processes has been largely or completely ignored in this regard. As discussed in sub-section 1.2.2, this refers to political parties from the non-state side of a civil war who have their own experience of negotiating a peace process and successfully completing a rebel-to-party transition. It is nothing new to suggest that insights from other conflicts and conflict resolution processes can be helpful to parties negotiating their own peace process.102 However, it is important to recognise that the involvement of specific foreign political parties as third parties is peculiar. Usually, third parties have no political baggage, and it is their perceived neutrality that allows them to become involved in peace processes. Instead, political parties are inherently political actors. Furthermore, these foreign political

98 Richmond, The Transformation of Peace, 111.
99 Ibid.
100 Richmond and Franks, Liberal Peace Transitions Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding, 9.
101 Mac Ginty, International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance - Hybrid Forms of Peace, 188.
parties were once the political side of an armed rebel movement in a conflict. This makes them substantially different to the NGOs and CSOs that are engaging as third parties, as they are usually oppose the use of violence and are pacifist in nature.

While a substantial part of the existing literature looks at how third parties can incentivise warring parties towards a peace agreement and conflict resolution, there is surprisingly little focus on how foreign political parties can assist in this. They are in a position to support conflict resolution processes because of the soft and moral power they have with rebel groups due to their own direct experience as the rebel side in a civil war. This creates some level of mutual understanding and respect that one cannot quantify or replicate. Additionally, rebel groups are keenly interested in understanding how other similar groups successfully made the transition from conflict to democratic politics. It is not just the transition procedure that is important for them, but specifically how it can be done successfully while also ensuring the collective backing of the membership and constituency of supporters. This is something that is largely ignored in the literature. There is a substantial focus on how third parties can incentivise warring parties to find common ground and make peace, despite the reluctance of their constituencies, but not on how rebel groups can bring their constituency with them through all stages of the rebel-to-party transition process. Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that external third parties can influence the asymmetry of negotiations and can improve the image and status of warring parties through their intervention. Yet there is little research to date exploring if foreign political parties could be influential third parties in peace processes for the rebel side and their constituency of supporters.

Some third parties in peace processes are unable to reach out and open discussions with the rebel side in a conflict because of government policy, a fear of losing donors, or negative reactions at home. This however is not a concern for the specific foreign political parties that are the focus of this thesis, and they are able to meet with groups and individuals who are off-limits to more official and constrained third parties. Critics of the liberal peace also

point out that it has become complex and difficult for local actors to maintain their connections with the multitude of international organisations now acting as third parties to peace processes, and their own priorities.\textsuperscript{106} Even supporters of increased NGO and CSO involvement in peace processes admit that international mediators and warring parties are very protective of conflict resolution processes, with NGOs and CSOs struggling to assert themselves as major influencers in most cases.\textsuperscript{107} The same cannot be said for rebel groups engaging with political parties of a similar ideology or outlook because they interact as equals, so the relationship is more horizontal than top-down or bottom-up.

This study helps to build on the existing literature regarding the complex role that third parties play in peace processes while also tackling the research gap that exists regarding the involvement of foreign political parties as third parties to peace processes.

\textbf{2.4 The Hybridisation of the Liberal Peace}

As outlined in section 2.1, the end of the Cold War saw the liberal peace model become the dominant paradigm in peace studies and conflict resolution. This liberal peace model, underpinned by democratisation, development, neoliberal economic reforms, human rights reforms, and the rule of law, reached such a hegemonic position that there was little questioning of its validity or the motivations of its proponents in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{108} During this period there was huge excitement in the literature regarding this new multi-dimensional, multi-level, and multi-track approach to peace and a belief that its successes would outstrip the limited achievements of traditional diplomatic efforts.\textsuperscript{109} According to Mac Ginty, in this period liberalism became: “a kind of magic dust that, if spread within states and economies, [it] would produce harmony and prosperity at the international level.”\textsuperscript{110} Such strong and uncritical faith in the liberal peace model increasingly motivated technocratic approaches to peace processes. Westendorf credits this development with an increased focus on depoliticising peace processes and a focus on peacemaking by blueprint.\textsuperscript{111} In

\textsuperscript{106} Richmond, "Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace," 683.
\textsuperscript{109} Gawerc, "Peace-Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives."
some quarters proponents of this approach were even accused of engaging in “aggressive social engineering.”

These peacemaking efforts were primarily carried out by external actors who largely ignored local realities and neglected to seriously engage with local concerns and needs. Mac Ginty has called this: “peace from IKEA; a flat-pack peace made from standardized components.” Technocratic liberal peacebuilding efforts had a significant effect on local domestic institutions. Belloni points out that such interventions increasingly began to create political and social institutions that were only superficially democratic, accountable and effective, and largely viewed as illegitimate and constraining by those who experienced them. This led to increased criticism of the liberal peace in the literature at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Even advocates of the liberal peace, such as Paris, began to criticise the emphasis on rapid and sweeping political and economic reforms carried out according to the liberal peace doctrine. Mac Ginty has summarised the two major pitfalls in orthodox liberal peace interventions as: the lack of ownership over the process that local inhabitants feel and that the process reflects external rather than domestic concerns.

Such criticisms have not gone unnoticed by liberal peace advocates and there has been a significant pivot to include more localised issues in peacebuilding efforts. These criticisms have contributed to a contemporary move away from an externally imposed top-down liberal peace model, to a more local and international hybrid peace model. This is a significant change. In the seminal ‘An Agenda for Peace’ UN report published in 1992, there is no mention of the word ‘local’ at all. Today the word ‘local’ features heavily in policy papers on conflict resolution produced by international organisations. For example, it is mentioned in the World Bank’s 2011 World Development Report 382 times and in the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP’s) 2011 ‘Governance for Peace’ document 197 times.

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112 Mac Ginty, ”Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace,” 394.
115 Paris, At War’s End - Building Peace After Civil Conflict, 175-6.
117 Mac Ginty, ”Where is the Local? Critical Localism and Peacebuilding,” 840.
It is this hybrid model which this research is concerned with because both foreign and domestic political parties play a significant role in opposing technocratic and depoliticised peacebuilding models, in a manner which does not completely rebel against all strands of the liberal peace. They are in fact a key element in the endeavours to hybridise the liberal peace and this is recognised in the literature. Mac Ginty has argued that the ability of local actors to resist or subvert the liberal peace to suit their own needs depends on the extent to which they can retain or gain political power during a liberal peace transition. However, what has not been explored is how foreign political parties can also assist local rebel groups transitioning to democratic political parties to retain and gain political power in liberal peace transitions. This thesis presents empirical evidence of this occurring in three case studies and it examines the impact it can have on conflict resolution efforts.

Richmond describes hybrid forms of peace as an attempt to reconstruct a mainly liberal understanding of emancipation and to recognise locally construed authority, socio-economic models, and identity. It is essentially the product of a clash between liberal peace interventions and local forms of power. Mac Ginty furthers this point in his research, and he implores us to recognise that hybridised peace processes are in constant flux, “as different actors and processes cooperate and compete on different issues and agendas.”

A hybrid peace does not mean a fifty-fifty local-international split. For example, local norms could hold sway over reconciliation issues while international mores dominate the structure of the economy. This wrangling between international and local actors creates a fundamental dilemma regarding agency.

According to Richmond, international actors in contemporary hybrid processes typically want to continue to implement a top-down orthodox liberal peace. They are sensitive to local ownership and culture, but in general they perceive local agency as a tool to legitimately implement their pre-existing objectives and methodologies. Local actors ordinarily perceive their agency in this process as a way to learn from international peacebuilding to address the root causes of their conflict, but also as a mechanism to maintain local political autonomy and create their own indigenous power structures, not

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119 Richmond, "The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive."
120 Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace," 397.
121 Richmond, "The Problem of Peace: Understanding the 'Liberal Peace'," 299-300.
122 Ibid, 299-300.
to have new and unsuitable ones imposed on them.\textsuperscript{123} In this respect, Richmond has importantly pointed out that international peacebuilders avoid mentioning the term ‘self-determination’ in relation to peacebuilding because of its association with sovereignty and national liberation movements opposing colonial rule.\textsuperscript{124} Instead the term ‘local ownership’ is used, which Richmond argues is a neoliberal concept of private ownership which avoids any link to political mobilisation.\textsuperscript{125}

While the intention of international actors in this regard may be to confine political mobilisation related to self-determination in peace efforts, the reality is different. Local actors, and especially rebel movements, constantly mention self-determination and it is a key element of their peacebuilding approaches. Richmond and Mitchell’s research shows that programmes created to focus on the liberal peace priorities of social and economic development, growing civil society, and embedding human rights are regularly contested, shaped, and hybridised by local actors.\textsuperscript{126} Strong local movements for enhanced self-determination occurred in the peace processes in Kosovo and East Timor and since then it has become customary to incorporate local actors and dimensions more closely with international liberal peacebuilding efforts.\textsuperscript{127} It is important to acknowledge two points here that feature heavily in the literature on hybrid peace: there are both negative and positive forms of hybrid peace, and one should not glorify the local.

Regarding the former, Richmond maintains that a negative hybrid peace stops the physical violence, but structural violence, inequality, and the existing historical power relations remain.\textsuperscript{128} He argues that the tenser the relationship between the international and local is, the more likely it is that a negative hybrid peace emerges. In contrast a positive hybrid peace will ensure that social justice and progressive politics are firmly connected to the peace process.\textsuperscript{129} Richmond contends that the more difference is accepted in peace processes and inequalities are addressed, the more likely a positive hybrid peace will emerge.\textsuperscript{130} Another factor in this regard is that international actors are usually more

\textsuperscript{123} Richmond, “The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?,” 53-4.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Richmond and Mitchell, “Peacebuilding and Critical Forms of Agency: From Resistance to Subsistence.”
\textsuperscript{127} Richmond, “Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace,” 683.
\textsuperscript{128} Richmond, “The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?”
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, 53
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, 53
concerned with promoting rights over needs during peace transitions. Therefore, a negative hybrid peace which denies local political empowerment and undermines efforts to engage with local realities often emerges. However, peace transitions that are rooted in accommodation, reconciliation, emancipation, social justice, and a sense of liberation, along with a form of politics that allows for a range of agencies, have the potential to create a positive hybrid peace. Accordingly, Richmond suggests that in order to create an emancipatory form of hybrid peace, local and democratic choices about rights, needs, and institutions are vital. Surprisingly the literature is silent on the role that foreign political parties who have experience of creating a positive hybrid peace can play as third parties in assisting other hybrid peace processes seeking a similar outcome. This thesis helps to tackle this research gap by detailing the impact such involvement is having, particularly on rebel-to-party transitions and the enhancement of the local level in peace processes.

As hybrid peace models become more common there is a growing tendency in contemporary peace processes to romanticise the local, which has negative consequences. Richmond argues such romanticising can often lead to top-down illiberal approaches as the locals are viewed as exotic and unknowledgeable or lacking capacity and helpless. More recently Mac Ginty and Richmond have criticised growing attempts to build hybridity by blueprint and with a scant understanding of local agency. In a recent article they push back against efforts to create hybridity “in a laboratory” and to roll it “out in a neat factory packaging.” Caution is needed when dealing with political transitions in peace processes that even contemporary hybrid peace processes do not fully account for. Belloni argues that in contemporary hybrid processes the focus increasingly turns to the traditional and local without realising that these structures often preserve an unequal and problematic social order and hierarchy. Additionally, Mac Ginty and Richmond point out that artificially created and locally unsuitable hybrid versions can lead to sham processes of democratisation and liberation. Consequently, Mac Ginty argues that there needs to be an awareness that some local resistance to liberal peace measures can be grounded in

131 Ibid, 58
132 Ibid, 60
133 Richmond, “Beyond Local Ownership in the Architecture of International Peacebuilding,” 355-6
134 Richmond, Peace in International Relations, 113-4.
136 Belloni, “Hybrid peace governance: its emergence and significance.”
137 Mac Ginty and Richmond, “The Fallacy of Constructing Hybrid Political Orders.”
sectarianism or motivated by self-interest, but in other cases it can lead to a better and more emancipatory form of peace that is more acceptable to the communities that have to live in that peace.\textsuperscript{138}

Throughout this thesis the local is not romanticised when examining hybrid peace processes or the involvement of foreign political parties. In the case studies it is accepted that progressive local actors generally do not want a peace process based on the needs of external actors or a negative hybrid peace, they want to end structural violence and the conditions that created the conflict by creating a positive hybrid peace. It puts forward the argument that one of the important local actors in the attempt to hybridise peacebuilding efforts to create this positive hybrid peace are local rebel movements attempting to transition to solely democratic political parties. This does not take away from the fact that such groups also have spoilers and others who want to disrupt efforts at creating a positive hybrid peace. Instead, it is a statement that if such groups work towards creating a peace process, they do not aim for a liberal peace blueprint, but rather an \textit{ad hoc} hybrid positive peace based on local realities. However, their needs and fears have been largely ignored in the existing research regarding hybrid peace detailed in this section.

It is through this lens that this thesis documents and examines how foreign political parties are assisting local rebel movements to create positive hybrid peace models and how the demands of indigenous political actors for local ownership of peacebuilding measures has itself become internationalised.

\textbf{2.5 Rebel-To-Party Transitions}

Another significant element of contemporary peace processes is the transition of rebel groups to political parties. This is a delicate and extremely important aspect of post-Cold War peace processes. The political transformation of groups away from a violent armed campaign and towards a democratic political campaign via a peace process is central to understanding contemporary conflict resolution, and there is a growing literature examining the evolution of armed groups into political parties.\textsuperscript{139} The academic literature

\textsuperscript{138} Mac Ginty, \textit{International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance - Hybrid Forms of Peace}, 212.

shows that such transitions are often protracted, complicated, and there is a high risk of failure. In his seminal book on rebel-to-party transitions, de Zeeuw noted that transforming a rebel movement into a political party is “arguably one of the hardest peace-building challenges.”\textsuperscript{140} Foreign political parties are increasingly playing a role in this area, but the literature has yet to fully examine their involvement and there is a significant research gap.

One core element of the liberal peace paradigm is a focus on democratisation and attempting to replace violent conflict with democratic political competition. To reach this goal a political system with political parties committed to democratic rules needs to be in place. The transition of armed rebel groups into political parties that will pursue their political goals through democratic means is therefore a critical component of contemporary peace processes.\textsuperscript{141} It is widely acknowledged in the literature that peace duration depends heavily on how former rebel groups decide to engage with the political arena in the negotiating and post-conflict stage of a peace process. This is because political parties can provide former combatants and supporters of the rebel movement with channels for both interest articulation and political system engagement, which can contribute to sustainable peace, stability, and democracy. By providing this political route for former rebels and supporters, rebel-to-party transitions are also assisting the hybridisation of the liberal peace by strengthening the local level and focus of a peace process, as discussed in the preceding section. Additionally, transitioned political parties who achieve significant success at the ballot box through the electoral access they gained as a result of a peace process are more likely to support the post-conflict peace settlement. While there is broad agreement on the importance of such transformations, the process is a complicated and vexed one that continues to plague fledging peace processes, especially if the conflict is a protracted one.

Rebel-to-party transitions through peace processes are very much a post-Cold War occurrence. In an examination of 196 peace agreements between 1975 and 2011 Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz found no peace agreements with rebel-to-party provisions before 1991.\textsuperscript{142} Further research by Manning and Smith, who created a cross-nation

\textsuperscript{140} Jeroen de Zeeuw, \textit{From Soldiers to Politicians: Transforming Rebel Movements after Civil Wars} (Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 1.

\textsuperscript{141} Whiting, "Mainstream Revolutionaries? Sinn Féin as a "normal" political party?,” 542.

\textsuperscript{142} Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, "Rebel-to-party transformations in civil war peace processes 1975-2011."
longitudinal dataset that tracked the incorporation of armed rebel organisations into
democratic political parties from 1990 to 2009, found that such transitions happened 54.8 percent of the time in civil war conflict resolutions during this period.\textsuperscript{143} Despite the importance of rebel-to-party transitions and their prevalence in post-Cold War peace processes, the literature is not as advanced as it should be. One factor for this shortfall, according to Lyons, is that until recently scholars of political parties largely ignored research into cases involving civil wars and peace studies scholars generally played down the significant role political parties play in post-conflict peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{144} However, there is now a growing focus on rebel-to-party transitions and a burgeoning literature on the subject. It primarily examines three main levels of the transition process: the macro level looks at the importance of political institutions and systems; the meso level examines the influence of internal organisational dynamics; and the micro level explores the role of individuals.

In the literature examining the post-conflict process, there has been a significant focus on the macro level and the importance of the type of political system and institutions that are put in place. Such analysis features heavily in research on rebel-to-party transitions as well. Reilly has outlined the different ways in which such systems are engineered in an attempt to moderate societal cleavages and to channel transforming rebel groups towards political participation.\textsuperscript{145} He also points out that international democracy promotion organisations are the most ambitious actors in this area and they have proliferated since the late 1990s. By contrast, Allison’s pioneering research into rebel-to-party transitions in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua suggests that electoral rules and political systems provide little help in explaining the electoral performance of transitioned opposition movements in these countries.\textsuperscript{146} Instead, Allison contends that in these cases organisational size and the level of popular support of the rebel groups are better indicators of future political party success. Furthermore, Marshall and Ishiyama claim that there is little evidence that proportional representation systems are more or less likely to affect conflict resumption.\textsuperscript{147} They also argue that there is no statistical and substantive

\textsuperscript{143} Manning and Smith, "Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War."
\textsuperscript{144} Lyons, "From Victorious Rebels to Strong Authoritarian Parties: Prospects for Post-War Democratization," 1027.
\textsuperscript{146} Allison, "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America."
\textsuperscript{147} Ishiyama and Marshall, "Does Political Inclusion of Rebel Parties Promote Peace After Civil Conflict?."
relationship between power sharing institutions and peace duration, and that the most important factor for peace durability is not the type of political system, but that no major party is excluded from the political process.\textsuperscript{148}

At the micro level, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process is a fundamental element of rebel-to-party transitions. The DDR process has been extensively researched throughout the peace studies academic discipline. However, despite the literature on DDR and rebel-to-party transitions both focusing on the transformation of rebel groups after conflicts end, they have largely developed in isolation of each other. The literature on DDR is primarily focused on supply side challenges, such as design and implementation. Berdal and Ucko’s prominent book took a different angle and examined the politics of DDR and the nature of the armed groups on the receiving end of the process in eight cases.\textsuperscript{149} They argue that there should not be a rush to transform rebel groups to political parties as this can lead to a deepening of sectarian divisions, as seen in Iraq. Instead, Berdal and Ucko maintain that there needs to be a move beyond simple formalisations of political parties and that demobilisation can lead to other positives, such as former combatants actively participating in policy making and public debate through civil society organisations and the media.\textsuperscript{150}

On the other hand, Sindre points out that far from being removed from politics, many rank-and-file members of rebel groups remain politically involved after a peace agreement has been signed, but the focus on the interaction between these members and political parties is an under-explored topic in the academic literature.\textsuperscript{151} She contends that the political reintegration of ex-combatants influences how former rebel parties strategize, mobilise, and organise as political parties. This is because ex-combatants are often committed members in the political parties of former rebel groups and the leaders of such political parties are often dependent on the continued loyalty of ex-combatants.\textsuperscript{152} Therefore, rather than focusing on demobilising ex-combatants away from party politics, it is important to examine how they can assist the rebel-to-party transition, a crucial aspect of

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{149} Mats Berdal and David H. Ucko, eds., \textit{Reintegrating Armed Groups After Conflict} (Oxford: Routledge, 2009).
    \item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid
    \item \textsuperscript{151} Sindre, “In Whose Interests?”
    \item \textsuperscript{152} Ibid
\end{itemize}
peace durability. This thesis builds on Sindre’s research in this area by highlighting and examining engagements between foreign political party activists – often ex-combatants themselves – with current and former combatants to assist rebel-to-party transitions in peace processes.

There are also significant internal organisational factors at play in rebel-to-party transitions and there is a growing literature exploring this meso level influence. It is important to reiterate that not all transitions involve creating new political parties. Sometimes a political party is connected to a rebel group throughout the conflict and when a rebel group demobilises, it pledges support to the existing political party. In other cases, a whole new political party is created. Political parties that are born through a rebel-to-party transition face the same organisational challenges all new parties face. However, political parties with roots in or connections to rebel movements are not new organisations, they have histories and organisational legacies. The literature in this area is substantive. Allison’s in-depth research into the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) details just how important a rebel group’s history is to the process of transitioning into a political party and its electoral success. De Zeeuw argues that due to the legacy of prolonged conflict, rebel groups that transform to political parties tend to have a high degree of centralisation. Sindre also points out that former rebel groups transitioning to political parties have to adjust to both the rules of multi-party competition and to democratise their own structures, but wartime organisational structures usually continue to dominate post-war party mobilisation.

Ishiyama and Batta claim that there can be significant internal tension between those who seek ideational benefits (benefit seekers) and those who seek career benefits (office seekers). Whereas Manning’s examination of party building by former rebel groups in Bosnia, El Salvador, Kosovo and Mozambique, reveals three important variables in the internal organisational process: the nature and strength of pre-existing internal divisions; the degree of institutionalisation or personalisation of decision-making structures at the

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153 Whiting, "Mainstream Revolutionaries? Sinn Féin as a "normal" political party?," 547-8.
155 de Zeeuw, From Soldiers to Politicians, 14.
157 Ishiyama and Batta, "Swords into Plowshares."
onset of transition; and the type and intensity of pressure exerted by external actors on the party leadership during the transition.\textsuperscript{158}

Ishiyama and Widmeier suggest rebel groups that controlled territory and created a ‘counter-state’ have greater organisational and administrative skills that can help build a political party in the post-conflict period. \textsuperscript{159} Research by Ishiyama and Marshall that examined what factors led to rebel name changes after transitions concluded that internal factors such as the inclusiveness of the leadership selection process, the origins of the rebel group, and the age of the rebel group all significantly impacted on this important identity adaptation.\textsuperscript{160} Lastly, Ishiyama and Widmeier argue that parties that gain greater political access due to success in elections will be more likely to commit to the post-war political settlement.\textsuperscript{161} Ultimately their research suggests that areas that experience higher levels of violence produce higher levels of electoral support for rebel parties.\textsuperscript{162}

While most of the research into rebel-to-party transitions are small-n case studies, there have been significant quantitative studies. As mentioned previously in this section, Manning and Smith tracked the incorporation of armed rebel organisations into democratic political parties after civil wars in fifty countries from 1990 to 2009 in a large-n comparative study.\textsuperscript{163} They found that rebel-to-party transitions happened in 54.8 percent of cases, but they also uncovered that rebel groups with political and electoral experience prior to the conflict are significantly more likely to form political parties and that ending a conflict through a peace agreement makes rebel-to-party transitions more probable. Lyons’ research reinforces the importance of peace agreements to such transitions by pointing out that militarily victorious rebel groups are more likely to derive legitimacy from defeating the old order which can lead to authoritarian rule, whereas rebel groups who

\textsuperscript{160} Ishiyama and Marshall, "What Explains Former Rebel Party Name Changes After A Civil Conflict Ends?.”
\textsuperscript{161} Ishiyama and Widmeier, "Territorial control, levels of violence, and the electoral performance of former rebel political parties after civil wars.”
\textsuperscript{162} ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Manning and Smith, "Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War."
fight to a stalemate and accept a negotiated peace have a more ambivalent and contingent claim to power based on forcing a transition.\textsuperscript{164}

Smith and Manning’s quantitative systematic exploration of rebel-to-party transitions also uncovered that such transitions were significantly more likely in conflicts that began during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{165} They propose that this is because these conflicts involved combatants that were more ideologically focused and organised, with a stronger degree of external support, all of which provides a stronger foundation to build a party. The case studies in this thesis are conflicts that began in the Cold War and peace processes that emerged in the post-Cold War era. Smith and Manning’s research also points out that peace processes in which external guarantors were present had a much higher likelihood of involving rebel-to-party transitions.\textsuperscript{166} Their findings also suggest that the degree of political openness did not affect the chance of rebel-to-party transitions and they contend that these transitions have little to do with a party’s expectations of electoral success.\textsuperscript{167}

Further quantitative and large-n research on rebel-to-party transitions was carried out by Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz who examined 196 peace agreements between 1975 and 2011 to better understand what conditions lead to transitions.\textsuperscript{168} They found that peace agreements which contained specific provisions regarding rebel-to-party transitions are exclusive to the post-Cold War era. Their research also uncovered that peace agreements which contained provisions regarding transitions were particularly prevalent in Africa and that such provisions were usually contained in agreements to end civil wars for ideological control of the state, rather than conflicts over self-determination.\textsuperscript{169} It is worth noting that research by Tull and Melhler has highlighted that the practise of power sharing for the sake of peace has become institutionalised and is the preferred international instrument of peacemaking in Africa.\textsuperscript{170} While Tull and Melhler’s research is focused on how this incentivises political violence, it can also somewhat explain the findings of Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, that rebel-to-party transitions are particularly prevalent in Africa.

\textsuperscript{164} Lyons, ”From Victorious Rebels to Strong Authoritarian Parties: Prospects for Post-War Democratization.”

\textsuperscript{165} Manning and Smith, ”Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War.”

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{168} Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, ”Rebel-to-party transformations in civil war peace processes 1975-2011.”

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, 998.

\textsuperscript{170} Tull and Melhler, ”The Hidden Costs of Power-Sharing: Reproducing Insurgent Violence in Africa.”
According to Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz’s criteria almost one-third of all rebel groups that signed agreements with provisions regarding transitions successfully completed the transition.\(^{171}\) However, there is an important limitation with their dataset. They excluded rebel groups that already had a connection to a political party, for example Sinn Féin and the IRA, from their dataset. They only examined rebel groups that went on to establish their own new party. This study does not exclude such rebel-to-party transitions. It is focused on all rebel groups that disarm and transition to supporting a political party, whether the party already existed or is newly established. Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz’s also point out that their research does not cover rebel-to-party transitions that happen in cases where specific provisions on transitions were not included in peace agreements.\(^{172}\) This limitation is also not present in this research, as such specific provisions in peace agreements are not essential prerequisites for rebel-to-party transitions to occur via a peace process.

Interestingly, both Manning and Smith’s\(^{173}\) and Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz’s\(^{174}\) quantitative research found that the overwhelming majority of peace agreements with rebel-to-party transitions had third party involvement. They point out that while it is clear the involvement of third parties is important in rebel-to-party transitions, such involvement is a regular feature of most contemporary peace processes anyway. This was highlighted by the author in section 2.3 of this chapter. Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz’s also specifically point out that more research is needed to uncover what role third parties play in the rebel-to-party transition process and what are the potential learning effects from one process to another.\(^{175}\) This thesis tackles this identified research gap and the case studies provide significant research into both these elements of rebel-to-party transitions.

The path of rebel-to-party transitions is not a simple one step transformation. One of the most dangerous times for peace processes is in the immediate period after a peace agreement is signed. Despite the celebrations that usually take place to mark the signing of such agreements, the period immediately afterwards has been labelled by Gartner and

\(^{172}\) Ibid, 1002-3
\(^{173}\) Manning and Smith, “Political Party Formation by Former Armed Opposition Groups after Civil War.”
\(^{174}\) Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz, “Rebel-to-party transformations in civil war peace processes 1975-2011.”
\(^{175}\) Ibid, 1004.
Melin as the “treacherous transition period.”¹⁷⁶ This is particularly because of the difficult transition period for rebel movements and the threat of spoilers. Grisham argues that what he calls violent political movements can first move from militancy to a form of joint militancy and politics, and after that step then move to just politics.¹⁷⁷ As an example of this joint militancy and politics step, Grisham points out that there are political parties like Hamas and Hezbollah that continue to have militant components. This work is built on by Berti and Gutiérrez who use Hamas as a case study to examine how rebel movements can balance a ‘ballots and bullets’ strategy.¹⁷⁸ Grisham also points out that not all rebel groups transition to political parties when a conflict has ended, some transition into criminal organisations instead.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, we must consider that not all transitions lead to political parties that are committed to democratic politics. Lyons points out that in a small number of cases, rebel groups that were victorious in civil wars transformed into powerful authoritarian political parties.¹⁸⁰

It is also acknowledged in the literature that support must exist for decision makers who take the necessary risks to pursue peace with their enemies.¹⁸¹ Negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry, the government party is stronger with a wide arrange of resources and experience at its disposal, whereas the rebel side is weaker with limited resources and negotiation experience.¹⁸² To this end rebel groups often need training in negotiation before formal talks with state officials begin. However, negotiations do not just take place between the two warring parties and negotiations do not end when a peace agreement is signed. Often what is lost in this process is an understanding that rebel groups must also negotiate with their home constituency to bring them along this path to peace.¹⁸³ In order to reduce the asymmetry in negotiations with the government party and to improve their negotiations with their home constituencies rebel movements

¹⁷⁷ Grisham, Transforming Violent Political Movements - Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?
¹⁷⁸ Berti and Gutiérrez, " Rebel-to-Political and Back?"
¹⁷⁹ Grisham, Transforming Violent Political Movements - Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?
¹⁸⁰ Lyons, "From Victorious Rebels to Strong Authoritarian Parties: Prospects for Post-War Democratization."
can borrow power from third parties.\textsuperscript{184} This is critically important because although a rebel movement may recognise that it is to its advantage to find a negotiated settlement to its conflict and to transform to a political party, it can often be afraid to go to the negotiating table, to make the necessary concessions for a deal, and it can lack the tools to ensure the negotiated settlement delivers for its supporters and home constituency.\textsuperscript{185}

In summary, the growing trend of rebel-to-party transitions, coupled with a recognition that such transformations are one of the best guarantees for post-conflict political stability and establishing a durable peace, has led to an increased focus on rebel-to-party transitions in the literature.\textsuperscript{186} This has generated increased knowledge of the causes and dynamics of rebel-to-party transitions, but significant research gaps remain. While there is general agreement in the existing literature that third parties are important actors in contemporary peace processes and specifically in rebel-to-party transitions, there is little focus on how third parties impact on rebel-to-party transitions. Despite the acknowledgement that external support can assist the rebel-to-party transition process and international democracy promoting NGOs have become involved in some processes, there is little to no focus on political parties who have successfully went through this transition process becoming third parties in foreign peace processes and assisting other rebel groups with their transition. The link between rebel-to-party transitions and the hybridisation of the liberal peace by enhancing the local level, also does not feature in the existing literature.

This thesis therefore aims to build on the existing literature on rebel-to-party transitions but also to tackle this significant gap in the literature regarding foreign political party involvement by detailing how this third party engagement impacts the process and how it is connected to the hybridisation of the liberal peace. Such involvement is important because it can involve experience sharing on a level that no other type of third party can do. Such involvements routinely include ex-combatants talking to one another and this can assist the transitions at both the meso and micro level, as previously described in this section. Furthermore, despite the growing research focus on rebel-to-party transitions there is still a high degree of failure. Rebel groups that have undergone such transformations and succeed politically afterwards are quite rare. Those that have achieved

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict," 196.
\textsuperscript{186} Ishiyama and Marshall, "What Explains Former Rebel Party Name Changes After A Civil Conflict Ends?."
this have significant soft power that they can wield in their engagements with rebel groups currently undergoing the transition process. Their involvement is also a recognition that the process of rebel-to-party transitions is deeply political and that it is not simply a technical process that can be solved by DDR programmes.

2.6 Anti-Imperialist Internationalism

This research into the involvement of political parties in foreign peace processes is not only concerned with the impact that their involvement has, but why they are becoming involved. To understand what motivates political parties who have gone through a rebel-to-party transition to assist foreign peace processes as a third party one needs to first understand the concept of internationalism, its changing historical dynamics, and how it is connected to the liberal peace.

Internationalism comes in many manifestations and the literature on internationalism is ample. As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.6, internationalism has historically been a term “applied to any outlook, or practise, that tends to transcend the nation towards a wider community, of which nations continue to form the principal units.” Sub-section 2.2.6 also pointed out that internationalism today comes in many forms and the variety that can be found across the political spectrum was described.

Internationalism is not something solely practised by states. Social movements and political parties have also been influenced by internationalism at key historical periods. For example, there is the labour internationalism of the late nineteenth century, the anti-colonial internationalism popularised in the second half of the twentieth century, the growing NGO and humanitarian ‘no-borderism’ of the 1990s, and now a growing environmental internationalism in the twenty-first century.

As outlined in sub-section 2.2.6, this thesis puts forward the argument that political parties have become involved in foreign peace processes as a form of solidarity and due to a commitment to anti-imperialist internationalism. Solidarity is something that is hard to quantify and examine. Political solidarity has its roots in the traditions of Marxism and

socialism. Olesen argues that it is built on a left internationalism that promoted global consciousness in the belief that the working classes across the globe faced similar struggles.¹⁸⁹ As Featherstone points out, despite it being a central practice of the political left it is rarely studied, theorised, or investigated.¹⁹⁰ He defines solidarity as: “a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression.”¹⁹¹ This thesis adopts this definition in its examination of solidarity between rebel movements.

It is common to find anti-imperialist internationalism in the Global South. For instance, what is now commonly called South-South co-operation is a form of solidarity based on a shared historical experience of colonialism and a perspective of marginalisation in international affairs.¹⁹² According to Moore, “solidarity has been a defining feature of the foreign policies of developing states since the early years of [their] independence.”¹⁹³ This connection can seem puzzling at first. Independence movements by their very nature should be solely concerned with domestic issues rather than international ones. Prashad claims, in his landmark political history of the Global South in the twentieth century, that there is an ‘internationalist nationalism’ that was formed through anti-colonial struggle.¹⁹⁴ Skrede Gleditsch points out that in the history of anti-colonial movements there is a wealth of evidence that shows how these movements collaborated and learnt from one another’s experience.¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, just as conflict can be contagious and tactics shared among rebel groups, then peace can similarly be contagious and strategies relating to peace processes can be dispensed among these groups. Therefore, this thesis argues that as rebel-to-party transitions became a feature of peace processes in the post-Cold War, existing channels of solidarity and collaboration based on anti-imperialist internationalism has led to foreign political party engagements in peace processes as a third party to assist rebel movements with these transitions.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to Global Solidarity?,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004).
¹⁹¹ Ibid, 5.
¹⁹² Moore, "Internationalism in the Global South: The Evolution of a Concept."
¹⁹³ Ibid, 857.
It is important to remember that contemporary peace processes are complex and contentious political procedures. The literature contains both those extolling the virtues of the liberal peace model and those criticising it. Of particular importance to my research is the argument that the liberal peace has neo-colonial overtones. While proponents of the liberal peace would argue in favour of its potential to establish a positive peace, critics such as Mac Ginty and Richmond believe it generally excludes local interests and imposes Western economic standards in an attempt for little more than pacification. Richmond has argued that the liberal peace represents an attempt to continue Western hegemony and the domination of Western economic and political norms over others. This view of the liberal peace as being externally imposed on states and denying local actors the space to shape their peace, reinvigorates feelings of colonial subjugation. Mac Ginty contends that the governance measures in the liberal peace models are often a one-way knowledge transfer of Western norms and that they “reek of neo-colonialism.” Richmond also points out that contemporary peacebuilding contains structural engagements between the West and the Global South similar to that of colonialism. While many aspects of the liberal peace have the potential to be universally welcomed, the rigid imposition of it on communities with a history and memory of anti-colonial conflict means it can often be resisted.

We should not be surprised that rebel groups who have been engaged in protracted conflicts over deep grievances would resist externally imposed conditionalities which their communities do not support. As outlined in section 2.4, this resistance is often not outright hostility towards the liberal peace. Rather it has led to attempts to create a hybrid peace which enhances the local level and reflects local realities. Considering sovereignty is at the core of solidarity and internationalism in the Global South, resistance by rebel groups can often be accompanied by solidarity from others.

There is no textbook or instruction manual for rebel groups to read when it comes to attempting to make peace under the liberal peace paradigm and to successfully conclude

196 Richmond and Mac Ginty, "Where Now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace?"
197 Richmond, The Transformation of Peace, 75.
198 Richmond and Mac Ginty, "Where Now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace?", 177.
199 Mac Ginty, International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance - Hybrid Forms of Peace, 163.
200 Richmond, "The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?,” 51.
a rebel-to-party transition. This thesis reveals that they often examine other peace processes and seek out the assistance of foreign political parties who have successfully negotiated a peace agreement and a rebel-to-party transition. It is a belief in anti-imperialist internationalism and solidarity that then leads to foreign political parties formally engaging in these peace processes as third parties to assist rebel movements and share lessons learned.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has showcased the history of peace studies and the massive evolution in peace and conflict resolution efforts through four specific stages in the 1900s. It showed how the conclusion of the Cold War ushered in a massive increase in peace agreements and the rise of the liberal peace paradigm. It also presented the theoretical framework of this research, the existing literature, and defined key terms that are used in this thesis to explore the role of political parties in civil war peace processes outside their own country.

The remaining chapters of this thesis demonstrate how first Sinn Féin was a recipient of foreign political party engagement in a peace process and secondly how it engaged in three foreign peace processes. It has a specific historical focus. All the conflicts examined in this research began in the Cold War and the peace processes examined here all occurred in the post-Cold War era. However, it is important to note the GFA, which forms the basis of the peace process in Northern Ireland, was signed in 1998, whereas the three peace processes used as case studies were all negotiated in the changed geopolitical landscape that occurred after the 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda attacks in the USA.

This thesis highlights how the role of political parties in civil war peace processes outside their own country has its roots in anti-imperialist internationalism commonly found during the Cold War. It also demonstrates how this internationalism has been shaped by the major geopolitical changes that occurred in the post-Cold War era, specifically the rise of the liberal peace paradigm and the beginning of the so-called ‘War on Terror’. Using the evidence found in the three case studies, this thesis argues that this internationalism, in the face of these geopolitical changes, has been reshaped to now include certain political parties supporting rebel-to-party transitions in peace processes influenced by the liberal peace.
The findings point out that the foreign political party engagement can be considered as a third party intervention in a peace process and these parties have soft power that can impact the process, although the impact is limited especially in the face of hard power wielded by foreign states. The findings generate knowledge to tackle research gaps in the literature regarding the involvement of third parties in rebel-to-party transitions and the experience sharing that is occurring across different peace processes on this issue. The subsequent chapters also highlight how foreign political party involvement is connected to efforts to hybridise the liberal peace by enhancing the local level and how the endeavours of indigenous political actors for local ownership of conflict resolution measures has itself become internationalised.

The next chapter provides an examination of the political party focus of this study – Sinn Féin.
Chapter 3 – Sinn Féin, the GFA and the ANC

In order to analyse the involvement of political parties in peace processes outside their own country, and to answer the research questions regarding Sinn Féin’s involvement in foreign peace processes through the three case studies, it is imperative that this thesis first details who Sinn Féin are and examines the peace process in Northern Ireland. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a better understanding of Sinn Féin’s ideology, how the party was recrafted during the rebel-to-party transition and in the face of changing geopolitical dynamics in the post-Cold War era, and to analyse what motivates Sinn Féin to structurally engage in foreign peace processes. It also examines the role and impact of the ANC’s involvement in the peace process in Northern Ireland and its engagements with Sinn Féin, highlighting this as the beginning of political party involvement in peace processes outside their own country and a new form of post-Cold War internationalism.

This chapter first provides a historical background to the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Sinn Féin party. It details the political role of Sinn Féin during the conflict, its involvement in the GFA negotiations, and how it has approached the post-conflict phase of the peace process. It explains the importance of internationalism to Sinn Féin’s political ideology and showcases how this internationalism, and the assistance it received from the ANC during the peace process in Northern Ireland, has encouraged Sinn Féin to become involved in foreign peace processes.

3.1 Background to the Conflict and the Peace Process in Northern Ireland

The violent conflict that began in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s¹ and ended with the ratification of the GFA in 1998, materialised and concluded amid differing domestic and international historical conditions. The conflict emerged at the height of the Cold War, when Cold War rivalries and anti-colonial politics were influencing an abundance of conflicts in every region of the globe. However, the ratification of the GFA came at the pinnacle of the liberal peace era, which greatly influenced the negotiations and the

¹ This conflict is sometimes called The Troubles. Here I will refer to it as the Northern Ireland conflict or the conflict in Northern Ireland. However, it is important to note that military actions and deaths as a result of conflict occurred throughout the island of Ireland and in England, as well as in Gibraltar and Germany.
agreement. The post-conflict peacebuilding process was then largely embedded during the changed geopolitical environment that emerged after the 9/11 attacks in the USA.

While the conflict in Northern Ireland and the subsequent peace process occurred over the course of the last fifty years, the history of conflict involving the islands of Ireland and Britain is much longer. Since the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169 there have been numerous rebellions, conflicts, and prolonged periods of violence – in fact the conflict in Northern Ireland\(^2\) was the seventh time in three centuries that Irish independence was asserted by force of arms.\(^3\) The expansion of British agrarian and capitalist interests to Ireland via settler colonialism and through the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth century had significant political and social implications that influenced the emergence of the conflict and that can still be felt today. Irish republicanism, an ideology advocating the independence of Ireland from British rule, traces its history back to the Society of United Irishmen, the teachings of Theobald Wolfe Tone, and the 1798 Rebellion.\(^4\) Unionist or loyalist ideology and institutions, advocating for a continued political union of Ireland and Britain, can also be traced to the 1790s.\(^5\)

When Northern Ireland was established in 1922 it was structured in a manner to try ensure maximum political control for the majority unionist and largely Protestant population, and to limit the political power of the minority nationalist and largely Catholic population. This was summed up by James Craig, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, who described Stormont as a “Protestant Parliament” and Northern Ireland as a “Protestant State,”\(^6\) and that he led “a Protestant Government for a Protestant people.”\(^7\) Northern Ireland thus

\(^2\) Northern Ireland was created as a political entity by the British government through the Government of Ireland Act 1920 and the Parliament of Northern Ireland was inaugurated in 1921. The partition of Ireland into the Free State (later the Republic of Ireland) and Northern Ireland was formally established in 1922 when the Anglo-Irish Treaty came into effect. The Treaty ended the three-year Irish War of Independence but led to a civil war in the Free State and the political status of Northern Ireland has remained contested ever since.


\(^4\) Irish republicanism was greatly influenced by the French and the American Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. The radical ideas of equality of all men and consent of the governed were promoted as universal values, and they were quickly adopted by the Society of United Irishmen. This form of internationalism was an important ideological and political aspect of the French Revolution, pre-dating the socialist internationalism of the mid to late nineteenth century. The influence of international political events and evolving ideologies on the creation of Irish republicanism reveals the innate pertinence of internationalism to Irish republicanism.


suffered from a weakness in political legitimacy, systematic discrimination of its minority population, and the complete absence of any social contract between the population and the state. When a civil rights movement grew in strength through the 1960s and police repression intensified as a response, the uneasy peace that had existed in Northern Ireland since 1922 faded and by the late 1960s Northern Ireland essentially “blew up.”

While in hindsight it may appear straightforward to see the underlying domestic and international historical conditions that led to the eruption of conflict, Martin Mansergh claims that both the British and Irish governments were completely caught off guard “by the suddenness and ferocity of the upsurge of long pent-up anger at second class citizenship.” The consequence was thirty years of conflict, over 3,700 deaths, and tens of thousands injured.

It was not however thirty years of uninterrupted war. There were significant attempts to create a peace agreement before the success of the GFA in 1998. A peace process is often compared to climbing a mountain, or scaling a mountain range, when all previous expeditions have failed and there is no obvious route to the peak. This is evident in the case of Northern Ireland. The first attempt at establishing a peace process was the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973. It attempted to end nationalist alienation from power structures by creating a voluntary power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive and to improve North-South ties by creating a cross-border Council of Ireland to play a limited consultative role in specific areas of the governing of Northern Ireland. However, the Agreement had limited nationalist and unionist support and it was opposed by republicans.

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10 Martin Mansergh played a leading role in shaping Fianna Fáil policy on Northern Ireland. He served as a Special Advisor to three Taoisigh and played a significant role in the Irish government’s involvement in the GFA and peace process.
and loyalists. Under the weight of loyalist opposition and deep divisions in the UUP, the Agreement collapsed three months later in March 1974.

After the collapse of the Sunningdale Agreement, the rest of the 1970s and early 1980s were marked by increased violence and sporadic peace talks that achieved little. There was a prolonged IRA ceasefire in 1975 but it did not lead to any significant peace process developments, with the IRA instead moving to a ‘Long War’ strategy and reorganising accordingly. Internment, criminalisation, and ‘Ulsterisation’ ensured that the conflict maintained what was once described by Reginald Maudling, when he was the British Home Secretary, as “an acceptable level of violence.”

Other developments also had a substantive impact on the trajectory of the conflict and conflict resolution efforts, such as the 1981 hunger strike by Irish republican prisoners. The death of ten prisoners on hunger strike, including Bobby Sands who was elected as an MP and Kieran Doherty who was elected as a TD, not only had a tremendous impact on all sides in the conflict but also on the international perceptions of the conflict. Most significantly, republicans began to view electoral politics as a viable strategy to achieve their political aims. This strategic shift is examined in more detail in the next section which focuses on the contemporary Irish republican rebel-to-party transition.

The serious entrance of Sinn Féin into the democratic political process and a surge in support for the party in the 1983 Westminster elections, directly led to the New Ireland Forum and ultimately the Anglo-Irish Agreement. These initiatives were an attempt by both the Irish and British governments to slow Sinn Féin’s rise in popularity and to create conditions where a political settlement between moderate nationalists and unionists could be found. These exclusionary attempts at creating a peace process were unsuccessful at resolving the conflict and by the late 1980s a growing realisation that the war was

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16 Ibid.
17 In a surprise result Gerry Adams unseated the incumbent Gerry Fitt and was elected as the MP for West Belfast. He became the first Sinn Féin MP since 1955.
18 Martin Mansergh explicitly details that this was strategy of the governments. See: Mansergh, "Mountain-Climbing Irish-Style,” 110.
unwinnable and unlosable by both sides began to emerge, leading to more inclusive attempts at conflict resolution.19

This new approach reflected a ‘ripeness’ for a political resolution to the conflict among the parties. As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.2, Zartman’s theory of ripeness contends that violent conflicts are only ready for negotiated settlement when they reach a hurting stalemate. In their examination of the levels of ‘ripeness’ in the case of Northern Ireland, Connolly and Doyle found that there were high levels of ‘ripeness’ exhibited by both governments and by republicans, but the low levels of ‘ripeness’ exhibited by unionist parties meant they were reluctant participants.20

All attempts to create a peace process until this point were based on an exclusivist approach that excluded republicans and loyalists from the process. The aim of this approach was to create a political settlement between moderate forces first and peace could gradually be achieved at a later date.21 A change in this approach and the origins of the GFA and subsequent peace process essentially began in 1988 with the John Hume-Gerry Adams talks.22 According to sources close to Hume, the origins of these talks was a Hot Press interview that Adams gave in 1987 in which he stated that there was no “military solution” to the conflict and there could only be a “political solution”, remarks that encouraged Hume to begin discussions and move to a position of more inclusive negotiations.23 By the early 1990s both the Irish and British governments had broken with orthodoxy and were in secret talks with Sinn Féin.24 Goodall points out that the Downing Street Declaration of December 1993 was a clear statement from both governments that instead of previous exclusivist approaches aimed at a political solution to discredit Sinn Féin and erode support for the IRA, that this new attempt would focus on establishing peace first and building a political process that included Sinn Féin.25

19 Hayes, "Neither Orange March nor Irish Jig," 97.
23 Ibid, 39.
24 Mansergh, "Mountain-Climbing Irish-Style."
25 Goodall, "Hillsborough to Belfast: Is it the Final Lap?,” 124.
The 1994 IRA ceasefire was a seminal event in the conflict, and it initially created immense optimism that a peace process was possible. Such optimism was fuelled by international events, as the Cold War had ended and the ‘decade of peace agreement’ was taking off. However, the IRA ceasefire collapsed in 1996 after republican claims that the British government had backtracked on its promises in the Downing Street Declaration and John Major’s demands for IRA decommissioning before substantial negotiations could begin.\(^{26}\)

The prospects for a resolution of the conflict looked bleak until general elections in Ireland and Britain returned both a new Taoiseach and a new Prime Minister, and fresh initiatives were undertaken. These initiatives included a focus on a rebel-to-party transition for republicans and an acceptance, for the first time, of international third party involvement via the USA’s role as a mediator.

Both Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern made it clear after taking office that they wanted Sinn Féin in the multi-party talks. Hennessy contends that the feeling of both premiers was that without Sinn Féin’s involvement the talks would simply be another political process, whereas with Sinn Féin’s involvement it was a peace process.\(^{27}\) Blair and Ahern’s preference for incorporating Sinn Féin and loyalist groups in an inclusivist model of conflict resolution contrasted sharply with the previous exclusivist models because it was an attempt to establish a peace agreement among all parties first and to work on the political process over time. It was the first attempt to create a rebel-to-party transition pathway for Sinn Féin through a peace process and this was evidently influenced by the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm of the late 1990s. As part of this process, just five months after Blair became Prime Minister, he met Gerry Adams in Belfast. This was the first meeting between a British Prime Minister and the Sinn Féin leadership since Llyod George met Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins for the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations in 1921.\(^{28}\)

After months of detailed all-party negotiations moderated by the US Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, George Mitchell, the GFA was signed on 10 April 1998. Much of what was agreed in 1998 was similar to what was proposed in 1973, namely a power-sharing executive, the need for a North-South dimension, and no change in the constitutional


\(^{28}\) Ibid, 112.
status of Northern Ireland without majority consent. However, it would be incorrect to conclude that the GFA and Sunningdale were the same agreement. The key difference was the greater level of inclusiveness in the negotiating process of the GFA and in the articles of the finalised agreement, when compared with the Sunningdale Agreement. The former British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Mandelson, has pointed out that although Sunningdale and the GFA have similarities, the GFA is a much “broader, deeper, fairer Agreement.”

It created a Northern Ireland Assembly based on consociational principles, a mandatory power-sharing executive, and voting mechanisms that require cross-community consent. It also established an accelerated programme for the release of prisoners. All of these issues were absent from the Sunningdale Agreement.

Furthermore, and most importantly for this research, international third party mediation and mechanisms that facilitated a rebel-to-party transition were completely absent from the Sunningdale negotiations. Both agreements were products of their era and the GFA was heavily influenced by the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm of the period, but it was not a technocratic liberal peace blueprint imposed by elite or international actors, as had been seen elsewhere. Instead, it was heavily influenced by the local level and can be described as a hybridisation of the liberal peace that empowers local political actors.

It is important to note there was no major ‘Road to Damascus’ conversion among the leaders of the political parties in Northern Ireland and similarly there was no massive outbreak of moderation that led to the signing of the GFA. Rather, it was a long and arduous process, and when peace came it stunned nearly everyone and the immediate concern after the signing of the GFA was that it might not be implemented. Initially the apprehension was that Sinn Féin would have trouble selling the Agreement and the rebel-to-party transition pathway to its grassroots. In the end it was strongly supported by its membership and the real battle for support took place in the unionist community, particularly regarding IRA prisoner releases and Sinn Féin’s participation in the new

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Executive. 71 percent of voters in Northern Ireland and 94 percent of voters in the Republic of Ireland voted ‘Yes’ to the GFA in concurrent referenda on 22 May 1998. It had the overwhelming support of the nationalist community but the unionist community in Northern Ireland split nearly fifty-fifty in their vote. This reiterates the findings of Connolly and Doyle outlined previously in this section, that there were low levels of ‘ripeness’ exhibited by unionist parties, and they were reluctant participants in the initial stages of the peace process.

A wide range of subsequent agreements have been negotiated to keep the peace process on track. Significantly on 28 July 2005 the IRA released a statement formally announcing an end to its armed campaign and by 26 September 2005 the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) announced that the process of IRA decommissioning was complete. The violent conflict in Northern Ireland had ended and the peace process is today globally regarded as an example of a highly successful peace process. However, the peace remains very fragile and delicate in Northern Ireland. On three separate occasions since 1998 the Northern Ireland Executive has collapsed and the Assembly has been suspended for significant periods. While the majority of residents still celebrate the hard-won peace and its achievements, there are others, often in the communities that suffered the most in the conflict and in the most deprived areas, who maintain that the process has not delivered for them and they are outspoken in their criticisms of the process.

This section has provided a background to the conflict in Northern Ireland, conflict resolution attempts, and the successful peace process that emerged after the ratification of the GFA. It has highlighted the domestic and international historical conditions that influenced the emergence of the conflict and its resolution. It has demonstrated how the liberal peace paradigm encouraged new aspects of peacemaking that were absent in previous peacemaking efforts – such as rebel-to-party transitions and the involvement of international third party actors.

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32 Hennessy, The Northern Ireland Peace Process - Ending the Troubles?, 188.
33 Hayes, "Neither Orange March nor Irish Jig," 102.
34 Connolly and Doyle, "Ripe Moments for Exiting Political Violence."
This chapter will now turn to examine the Irish republican rebel-to-party transition that occurred via the peace process, in order to explain why Sinn Féin have become involved in foreign peace processes.

3.2 The Contemporary Irish Republican Rebel-to-Party Transition

To understand the motivations behind Sinn Féin’s engagements in foreign peace processes this section will briefly outline the history of Sinn Féin, its underlying ideology and how it responded to major international geopolitical shifts at the end of the Cold War. It also details how the party’s rebel-to-party transition that was facilitated by the peace process in Northern Ireland sculpted the party into the contemporary form one sees today.

The Sinn Féin party was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith and it is the oldest political party in Ireland. After over 116 years of political developments and numerous splits along the way, the present-day Sinn Féin party is completely unrecognisable from its original form. Significant splits in 1922 and 1926 weakened the party and led to the establishment of Cumman na nGaedheal (later Fine Gael) and Fianna Fáil respectively. The next major split occurred in 1970 and it resulted in the establishment of Provisional Sinn Féin, now simply Sinn Féin, and Official Sinn Féin, which is now The Workers’ Party. All of these splits occurred due to divisions over the continuation of the IRA’s armed campaign and the participation of Sinn Féin in the democratic political process. The history of Sinn Féin and the IRA are completely intertwined, and it is this connection that makes Sinn Féin a unique party in the modern Irish political landscape.

For most of its history Sinn Féin has never been just a political party. In his book to mark Sinn Féin’s centenary, Feeney describes the party as being part “of [a] double-sided movement for Irish self-determination, in which the political and military strands jockeyed for control.” Both these political and military wings made up what followers called the republican movement. Frampton, who has chronicled the political strategy of Sinn Féin since 1981, says that you cannot erase the IRA from discussions about Sinn Féin, but that the party should also be seen as an entity in its own right. In contrast, arch-critics of the

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party have simply labelled Sinn Féin as the “mouthpiece of the IRA.” Throughout the 1970s the main focus of the republican movement was on the armed campaign and according to Bean most republicans saw Sinn Féin as merely a support group to the IRA, a view that was shared by the Irish and British governments, moderate nationalists, and unionists. In essence Sinn Féin in this period was, as Hennessy suggests, the IRA’s second cousin.

The modern Sinn Féin party is the result of a rebel-to-party transition which saw the gradual ascendancy of Sinn Féin within the republican movement, culminating in the disbandment of the IRA in 2005. This transition began before the GFA negotiations commenced, but it was ultimately facilitated through the GFA and the subsequent peace process. In the intervening years Sinn Féin has grown from being what Frampton calls “a pariah party on the fringe of the political spectrum” to its present-day position as a party of political force on both sides of the border.

As illustrated in section 2.5, rebel-to-party transitions are protracted and complicated processes. The beginning of the contemporary rebel-to-party transition in Irish republicanism and the formation of the modern Sinn Féin party, can be traced to the so-called ‘Armalite and Ballot Box’ strategy. This plan was launched in 1982, in the aftermath of republican electoral successes during the 1981 hunger strike, and it led to the election of Gerry Adams as the President of the party a year later. The strategy – to use both the military and political wings of the republican movement in a more synchronised manner – shifted the sole focus on militancy to a hybrid militancy and political model. This form of rebel group transition, with a dual focus on militancy and politics, is the focus of research done by Grisham and it was highlighted in section 2.5 of this thesis.

Irish republicanism has historically viewed prisons as an important site of struggle in its battle for independence. Prisons were viewed as a tool that could be used to demonstrate their status as victims of colonial oppression and as a means to exert their legitimacy as

38 Stephen Collins, “McElwain tribute shows SF is no ordinary political party,” The Irish Times, 30 April, 2021, https://tinyurl.com/4anfsw4r
42 Grisham, Transforming Violent Political Movements - Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?
In the Northern Ireland conflict this came to the fore when the British government established internment in 1971, but particularly after the policy of criminalisation was introduced and the Special Category status of prisoners was removed in 1976. Arthur argues that the British government’s Northern Ireland Office did not realise just how deeply this criminalisation policy struck at the heart of the republican psyche. It was this policy that led to the blanket and no wash protests, and ultimately the 1981 hunger strike. It is hard to overestimate just how much of an impact the deaths of the ten hunger strikers had on the republican movement, wider nationalism, and international opinion. Hennessy maintains that the deaths of the hunger strikers produced a similar reaction as the executions of the 1916 Easter Rising leaders. The election of Bobby Sands as an MP and Kieran Doherty as a TD directly influenced Sinn Féin’s contemporary foray into electoral politics, through the ‘Armalite and Ballot Box’ strategy.

As discussed in the preceding section, the electoral surge for Sinn Féin in the 1982 Northern Ireland Assembly elections and the 1983 Westminster elections, which saw Gerry Adams elected as the MP for West Belfast, alarmed London and Dublin. The Anglo-Irish Agreement signed by the governments in 1985 aimed to strengthen the SDLP in order to see off this challenge from Sinn Féin. However, the electoral route was not plain sailing for Sinn Féin. In the 1987 Westminster elections Sinn Féin’s vote dropped from 13.4 percent to 11.4 percent and then to 10 percent in the 1992 elections, resulting in the loss of Adams’ seat. At the same time Sinn Féin were only attracting about 1 percent of the vote share in elections south of the border. Its hybrid militancy and political model was clearly struggling to attract voters, with the tactics of warfare and the pursuit of electoral victory appearing incompatible. If Sinn Féin wanted to achieve electoral success a full rebel-to-party transition was necessary, but for this to occur a peace process was needed. Such a transition also comes at a heightened risk of spoilers, as defined by Stedman in sub-section 2.2.7, who could split the movement and derail the transition.

46 Hayes, "Neither Orange March nor Irish Jig," 98.
Tensions over whether to end its Dáil abstentionist policy, a key obstacle in the pathway to a full rebel-to-party transition, caused another split in Sinn Féin in 1986. However, unlike all the previous splits, the political leadership advocating enhanced involvement in electoral politics retained the support of the IRA. ⁴⁸ Therefore, while it is largely called a split, the Adams-McGuinness leadership went to extraordinary lengths to avoid a damaging division of the movement as seen in previous decades, and it ended up as more of a splinter. Feeney argues that this is because, despite the palpable tensions, the military command of the IRA trusted Sinn Féin’s political strategy.⁴⁹ Notably the absence of a major split shows that there was a ripeness within the movement for a rebel-to-party transition, while the focus on avoiding a split shows that the leadership were concentrated on extinguishing the threat of spoilers.

Sinn Féin launched its first peace strategy in 1987 with the release of a document entitled ‘A Scenario for Peace.’ According to Frampton, this document was the start of Sinn Féin’s move away from simple ‘Brits Out’ slogans to a more nuanced focus on self-determination.⁵⁰ It was also the beginning of Sinn Féin’s attempts to draw a distinction between the party and the IRA, and reflects the commencement of a new strategy to reposition the party as a political movement that actively wanted to create peace.⁵¹ These major adjustments in policy and strategy later facilitated the party taking its seat at the negotiating table which created the GFA and its commitment to the subsequent peace process, which all remarkably happened without a major split in the party or the IRA.

The absence of spoilers, as defined in sub-section 2.2.7, in this regard is noteworthy. Adams himself says that changing the nature of the republican movement in this way “was all very high risk,”⁵² but ultimately the spoiler issue never grew large enough to derail the peace strategy. According to Frampton it was the persuasion of the grassroots in favour of the strategy and the avoidance of a major split over the GFA that is one of the most significant achievements of the Adams-McGuinness leadership.⁵³ That is not to say that there were not republican critics. Various splinter groups opposed to the process were formed by what

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⁴⁸ Feeney, Sinn Féin - A Hundred Turbulent Years, 44.
⁴⁹ Feeney, Sinn Féin - A Hundred Turbulent Years, 14.
⁵¹ Ibid.
⁵² Gerry Adams, Hope and History – Making Peace in Ireland (Kerry: Brandon, 2003), 371.
have been termed dissident republicans. They lay claim to the IRA title and they continue to carry out violent attacks.\(^{54}\) Other republican critics of Sinn Féin argue that the party has sold out working class republican communities in order to achieve power and that only middle-class nationalist communities have benefited from the peace process.\(^{55}\)

Since the ratification of the GFA and the culmination of the rebel-to-party transition, Sinn Féin has experienced significant electoral gains. In the 1992 Westminster elections the SDLP vote share was 13.5 percent higher than Sinn Féin’s, but by the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly elections Sinn Féin led the SDLP by over 11 percent.\(^{56}\) In the May 2022 Assembly election it had increase that gap to 20 percent and it won the largest amount of seats in the Assembly, the first time any nationalist or republican party achieved this. South of the border the party went from one TD in 1997 and 2.5 percent of the vote to winning the highest vote share of any party in the 2020 general election with 24.5 percent of the vote, becoming the joint largest party in the Dáil with thirty-seven seats.

During this period there has also been significant shifts in Sinn Féin’s ideology and party policies. Bean has pointed out that Sinn Féin has drastically changed from a focus on Britain’s imperial domination of Ireland and Third World Marxism to a post-colonial interpretation that still opposes British rule in Ireland but is focused more on the language of identity, civic republican themes of equality and citizenship, and the language of transition.\(^{57}\) While this is a significant shift and Sinn Féin in its modern form is unrecognisable from the party of the 1970s and 1980s, the leadership of the party has not presented it as such a fundamental change. Instead, it has been presented to party activists as a new and different phase in the centuries long campaign for Irish national independence.\(^{58}\) This is a tactic which eased internal fears of the rebel-to-party transition and is discussed in more detail in section 3.6.

One of the major pillars of Sinn Féin’s political ideology since the Adams-McGuinness leadership takeover has been internationalism. While internationalism was always prevalent in Sinn Féin, and the IRA presented the conflict as one of the myriad of anti-


\(^{55}\) Bean, “Defining Republicanism,” 129.


\(^{57}\) Bean, “Defining Republicanism,” 133.

\(^{58}\) Ibid, 136.
colonial wars, after Adams and McGuinness took command Sinn Féin focused more extensively on international affairs. The next section reveals why that occurred, how the end of the Cold War and geopolitical changes impacted this process, and how this led to deep engagement with the ANC in the 1990s.

3.3 Sinn Féin and Internationalism

There has always been an international dimension to Irish republicanism. The French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century heavily influenced the founders of Irish republicanism and their ideology. As the British Empire expanded its reach, Irish republicans gained inspiration from rebellions against British forces elsewhere, such as the Anglo-Boer wars in South Africa. Similarly revolts in Ireland, for example the 1916 Easter Rising and the Irish War of Independence, inspired other nationalist insurgencies around the world.  

In the 1960s, with the heightened influence of the Cold War, divisions emerged in Irish republicanism between those who had a more Marxist and internationalist focus and those who largely viewed the republican campaign through an indigenous Irish lens. These divisions were manifest in the 1970 split. The former largely sided with Official Sinn Féin and the latter with Provisional Sinn Féin. In the 1970s Sinn Féin was therefore almost exclusively focused on the domestic Irish historical context in its framing of the conflict, its leadership was avowedly anti-Marxist after the split, and little attempt was made to create solidarity links abroad or to focus on an international dimension. This anti-Marxist position began to dissolve in the 1980s as younger members more sympathetic to left-wing ideology began to rise to prominence. They did not view the conflict in Northern Ireland as a purely Irish-British issue, instead they found similarities with other conflicts around the world, and they were attracted to the anti-imperialist internationalism detailed in section 2.6 of the previous chapter.

The internationalism of this new leadership ensured there was a concerted effort to establish the republican movement as a national liberation movement within the global

60 Feeney, Sinn Féin - A Hundred Turbulent Years.
anti-imperialist continuum. Prominent Sinn Féin TD, Eoin Ó Broin, maintains that the Adams-McGuinness leadership team drew inspiration from not just Irish republican icons such as James Connolly and Liam Mellows, but also from contemporary left-wing national liberation movements in Palestine, South Africa, and Nicaragua. Frampton argues that this new internationalism being promoted by Sinn Féin was “qualitatively different from that which proceeded it” and that it was “profoundly influenced” by the new leadership’s engagement with revolutionary ideas in prison. Most of this new northern leadership had spent time in prison in the early 1970s, before Special Category Status was removed, and the books that republican prisoners had in Long Kesh were heavily slanted towards left-wing revolutionary writings from around the world. In fact many were so influenced by what they learned during their time in Long Kesh in this period that it has been referred to as a “University of Revolution”.

They were also being influenced by what they saw on TV and in international conferences that they had begun attending. Jim Gibney described watching with delight the defeat of US forces in Vietnam at the hands of a small insurgency force and how republicans began to draw strength from other national liberation campaigns around the world at this time, engaging with them at international conferences. This burgeoning internationalism was reflected in new murals on the streets of Belfast. In 1982 a mural showing a PLO and an IRA member jointly holding a rocket launcher aloft with the slogan ‘One Struggle’ underneath appeared, and in 1983 a mural celebrating female members of the PLO, South Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO), and Cumann na mBan was painted. Cox points out that the failure of the IRA to achieve a quick victory and the emergence of a long war

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66 George Legg, "Redeveloping the Long Kesh/Maze prison: profiting from the hunger strikes?,” The Irish Times, 5 May, 2016, https://tinyurl.com/2y957ffm.
67 Jim Gibney was interned in Long Kesh and he played a prominent leadership role in Sinn Féin under the new northern leadership in the 1980s,
68 Jim Gibney, interview by author, 14 January 2020.
necessitated a change in international strategy, with the new northern leadership focused on the strategic and propaganda benefits of extending republican contacts abroad.⁷⁰

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s there was a concerted effort by the leadership of Sinn Féin to develop the party’s international image. Frampton maintains that the aim was to establish Sinn Féin “as a party of national liberation, in line with other radical, anti-imperialist movements across the globe”.⁷¹ However there was another aspect to Sinn Féin’s international activities focused on the significant Irish diaspora in the USA that Sinn Féin was eager to win over. Sinn Féin was eager to ensure that Irish republican supporters among the diaspora backed the rebel-to-party transition advocated by the party’s leadership, but it also wanted the Irish diaspora and Irish Americans to pressure the US government into explicitly supporting an inclusive peace process model in Northern Ireland. This encouragement of greater US involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process by Sinn Féin starkly contrasts with the Colombian and Sri Lankan cases explored in this research, where the FARC and LTTE decried increased US involvement in the peace process.

It was also a complicating factor for Sinn Féin in developing these new international connections as it was releasing anti-imperialist statements full of left-wing solidarity, while also trying to win support among the conservative political establishment in the USA.⁷² Sinn Féin’s international strategy in this regard and international involvement in the peace process is dealt with in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

This internationalism and focus on the international level resulted in Sinn Féin developing an international persona that is unequalled in Irish politics. Frampton suggests that: “no other party, be they north or south of the border, can match Sinn Féin’s extensive foreign links or profile beyond the shores of Ireland. That this should be so gives the lie to the notion that foreign policy is the exclusive preserve of governments.”⁷³

The extensive focus by the new leadership on international affairs permeated through the party. By 1994 the party’s seminal document, ‘Towards a Lasting Peace’, had a section on

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⁷² Frampton, “‘Squaring the Circle’,” 44.
⁷³ Ibid.
the conflict in Northern Ireland that began with: “This section traces the history of the last 20 years and places armed struggle in the context of national liberation and colonial struggles worldwide.”74 Such an opening line would have been unthinkable in a Sinn Féin document in the 1970s.

This internationalist lens is an integral element of the party’s contemporary ideology. According to Adams “the fundamental principle of republican political conduct is internationalism.”75 The present-day President of Sinn Féin, Mary Lou McDonald, informed the author that it is “unthinkable for us [Sinn Féin] to argue our case without an international context” and internationalism is “very much embedded in the DNA of Irish republicanism.”76 While the Chairperson of Sinn Féin, Declan Kearney, maintains that “internationalism is a central element of Irish republican politics” and he pointed out that Sinn Féin’s international relationships are regularly platformed at the party’s annual Ard Fheisanna.77 The latter is an indication that the membership is supportive of and engaged with the party’s internationalism.

This study contends that it is this internationalism within Sinn Féin, which positions the party as a national liberation movement with fraternal links to other national liberation movements, that led the party to deeply engage with the ANC in the 1990s on the burgeoning peace process in Northern Ireland. As this engagement occurred in the wake of the significant geopolitical shifts that marked the end of the Cold War, there is also a significant geopolitical element to this engagement as national liberation movements reacted to the changed global political environment. The next section will highlight how this engagement allowed Sinn Féin to strategically learn from the ANC’s rebel-to-party transition and its peace process experience. This had a significant effect on Sinn Féin’s strategy and approach to the peace process in Northern Ireland, both before and after the signing of the GFA. It will also outline the international involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process, to contextualise the ANC’s engagement with Sinn Féin, and position it within the new geopolitical setting that emerged with the ending of the Cold War.

76 Mary Lou McDonald, interview by author, 27 February 2020.
77 Declan Kearney, interview by author, 3 March 2020.
3.4 International Involvement in the Peace Process in Northern Ireland

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 and the subsequent ending of the Cold War fundamentally changed political dynamics right across the globe. As section 2.1 illustrated, it resulted in invigorated conflict resolution efforts worldwide and a multitude of violent conflicts were concluded in the 1990s. Although the conflict in Northern Ireland was not significantly connected to the capitalist and communist rivalry that underpinned the Cold War, and the IRA were never closely aligned to the USSR, its ending did have a significant impact on conflict resolution efforts in Northern Ireland. Cox maintains that while substantial internal factors can be used to explain the signing of the GFA and the subsequent peace process, we cannot isolate the peace process from the pivotal international changes that took place when the Cold War concluded, as these changes made the ending of the conflict more likely.\(^7\)\(^8\) Additionally, Guelke argues that the ending of the Cold War created a zeitgeist of peace processes that the parties in Northern Ireland could not ignore and this indirectly influenced its peace process.\(^7\)\(^9\)

Republicans largely agree with this sentiment. Adams has stated that peace processes elsewhere established an international climate that made creating a peace process in Ireland more likely.\(^8\)\(^0\) Gibney recalls giving the main address to Sinn Féin’s 1992 Bodenstown Wolfe Tone commemoration event\(^8\)\(^1\) and talking about “the winds of change blowing across the world and hoping that they would land in Ireland; and they did.”\(^8\)\(^2\)

The transformative international changes and the hegemonic rise of the liberal peace paradigm in the early 1990s created a domestic and international climate that was more favourable for a peace process on all sides, but it also necessitated strategic changes. The following two sub-sections outline how these international events resulted in a new Sinn Féin strategy of seeking international third party engagement in the peace process from the US government and from the ANC, with a specific focus on the latter as the beginning


\(^7\)\(^9\) Guelke, "'Comparatively Peaceful': South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland."

\(^8\)\(^0\) Gerry Adams, \textit{Selected Writings} (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1997).

\(^8\)\(^1\) Sinn Féin’s annual commemoration event for Wolfe Tone at his grave in Bodenstown cemetery, Co. Kildare is one of its main annual political events

\(^8\)\(^2\) Gibney, interview by author.
of foreign political parties engaging in peace process as part of a new post-Cold War internationalism.

3.4.1 The USA and ‘Irish America’

As highlighted in section 3.3, Sinn Féin had two pillars to its international relations. One was its connections to national liberation groups worldwide via anti-imperialist political networks and the other was with the Irish diaspora in the USA and Irish Americans. A briefing paper circulated by the republican leadership in the summer of 1994, and subsequently leaked into the media, spoke of a new strategy called TUAS. The aim of this new strategy was to construct a consensus among Irish nationalists on the principles of a peace process that would be underpinned by international support. For this international support Sinn Féin did not look to national liberation movements, the UN or other international organisations, but to the USA. This contrasts sharply with the three case studies in this thesis and it is important to examine further why this occurred in this case.

In the early discussions on a possible peace process in Northern Ireland, a stage that Albin has identified as the ‘pre-negotiation stage’ of a peace process and referred to in subsection 2.2.2, republicans were adamant that there needed to be international involvement. This was due to a fundamental lack of trust. Republicans felt that the British government could not be trusted to keep its word and their experience of the mid-1970s peace talks was that the British government used the negotiations as cover to implement a counterinsurgency programme to damage the republican campaign. This fear of counterinsurgency and the need for an external guarantor highlights the needs and fears of rebel movements in peace processes and reveals the social-psychological level of peacemaking that was described in sub-section 2.2.7. In order to allay these fears republicans needed an international third party actor to be a guarantor of the process and to, in their eyes, ensure British compliance. One of the only international actors that had the capacity and capability to play such a role was the USA and the ending of the Cold War created an opening for its involvement.

83 The acronym has never been fully explained. It is believed to stand for either Totally UnArmed Strategy or Tactical Use of Armed Struggle
In the aftermath of World War Two the USA and Britain developed what is termed the ‘Special Relationship’. It is an unparalleled military, trade, and political relationship between two world powers. Throughout the Cold War it was inconceivable that the US government would take any action in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland that appeared to undermine the British government. However, with the ending of the Cold War and the election of President Clinton, a new dynamic and possibilities emerged. The IRA leadership specifically invoked these new opportunities in Washington as part of the argument in favour of calling a ceasefire in August 1994.\(^{87}\) The TUAS strategy called for efforts “to double the pressure on the British” and the involvement of the USA was key to that.\(^{88}\) Therefore, unlike in the three case studies in this thesis, and specifically Colombia and Sri Lanka, in the peace process in Northern Ireland the rebel movement were strategically focused on encouraging the involvement of the USA as a third party in the process.

As indicated in section 3.2, in developing its new international approach Sinn Féin had to balance its anti-imperialist left-wing rhetoric with its attempts to influence the political establishment in the USA. It was in a delicate and somewhat unique position. In other peace processes, including the Colombian and Sri Lankan processes that are analysed in subsequent chapters, the non-state actors decried US involvement in the peace settlement and sought to minimize its influence. Sinn Féin on the other hand was actively lobbying for US involvement, opening up the party to criticism from others on the left domestically and internationally. This is demonstrated in sub-section 6.4.5 of Chapter 6, which highlights that the information Tamil political activists had in advance of Sinn Féin’s engagement with the Sri Lankan peace process was that Sinn Féin had become an ‘establishment tool’. The manner of the USA’s intervention also reveals the different geopolitical setting of the conflict in Northern Ireland compared to conflicts in the Global South. While Sinn Féin may subscribe to anti-imperialist ideology common in the Global South, the geopolitical realities it faced in Ireland and with the peace process were very different.


\(^{88}\) “The ‘TUAS’ Document (1994)”, Ulster University - Conflict Archive on the Internet, accessed on 10 August 2022, [https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/othelem/organ/ira/tuas94.htm](https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/othelem/organ/ira/tuas94.htm).
The central role the US played in the peace process has been well documented by Irish American activists such as Niall O’Dowd, Irish government officials like Martin Mansergh, and British political figures such as Lord David Owen. It is not the author’s intention to review or examine the thoroughly researched third party involvement of the USA in the peace process, suffice to say that it was crucial to the negotiation process and in reaching an agreement on the GFA. This thesis is instead concerned with the under researched third party involvement of another international actor in the peace process – the ANC. The next section outlines how the ANC’s engagements with Sinn Féin assisted the leadership in the rebel-to-party transition and convinced republicans of the merits of a peace process, thus helping to reduce the threat of spoilers.

3.4.2 South Africa and the ANC

There were significant differences between the conflicts in South Africa and Northern Ireland, but for decades researchers have drawn comparisons between the two cases and their subsequent peace processes. However, the connection between the two countries goes much deeper than the last forty years. For example, Irish republicans took inspiration from the Afrikaner fight for independence in the Second Anglo-Boer War at the end of the nineteenth century. While South Africa’s foremost leader of the first half of the twentieth century, General Jan Christian Smuts, was profoundly interested in Irish independence and acted as an unofficial intermediary between the British government and Irish nationalist leaders in 1921. Nevertheless, the sympathy that Irish republicans had for the Afrikaner cause evaporated as the twentieth century progressed. The outbreak of the civil rights campaign in Northern Ireland in the 1960s saw new comparisons being drawn between Irish nationalists and black and coloured South Africans living under apartheid.
As the conflict deepened in both countries so did the comparisons, particularly regarding the domination of one community over another and the siege mentality of the dominant community. Republicans began to identify deeply with the campaigns of the ANC and uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and the comparison with South Africa exercised a powerful influence on political discourse on Northern Ireland. There was even a direct crossover of the conflicts: Kader Asmal, an ANC Minister in the first post-apartheid government and the founder of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, claimed in his posthumously published memoirs that he assisted the ANC’s efforts to get IRA members to travel to South Africa to help MK carry out the Sasol Plant attack in 1980. There is also substantial evidence that loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland were supplied with South African weapons by the apartheid government in the 1980s.

Considering these connections and comparisons, it was not surprising that Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, the peace process in South Africa, and the first democratic elections had an influence on the narrative surrounding the conflict in Northern Ireland. Jim Gibney states that people were “buoyed up” by the developments in South Africa and the sentiment was “if it could be done there, it could be done here.” Just five months after his release from prison Mandela visited Ireland and gave a historic address to Dáil Éireann, a privilege rarely extended to foreign visitors. The international profile of the ANC and its success in defeating the apartheid regime had a significant impact on republicans in particular. Martin McGuinness stated that it “challenged us to think about our own situation.” A cartoon in the Irish Times on 6 January 1994, that was reproduced from Le Monde, showed the British Prime Minister John Major entering a café arm in arm with an IRA member and inside Mandela and de Klerk were celebrating.


97 Kader Asmal and Adrian Hadland, Politics in my Blood - A Memoir (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2011).
99 Gibney, interview by author.
102 Guelke, "Comparatively Peaceful: South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland," 227.
As illustrated in section 3.2, Irish republicanism had positioned itself as part of a global assortment of national liberation movements, and one of the most prominent of these groups was the ANC. Considering the significant domestic and international support the ANC enjoyed and the complete lack of international legitimacy that the apartheid regime had, it is not incomprehensible that Irish republicans would attempt to compare the situation in Northern Ireland to South Africa and to try equate themselves with the ANC. Guelke has wrote extensively on this subject and maintains that republicans were trying to transfer the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime onto British rule in Ireland. However, there was also geopolitical and strategic elements to the fledging relationship.

With the collapse of the USSR and the ending of the Cold War, the narrative from the ANC in the early 1990s changed from revolution to dialogue and from insurrection to peace. At the same time the Sinn Féin leadership were attempting to build a peace strategy of its own and the liberal peace paradigm was at its zenith. The ANC’s example of a national liberation movement changing strategy to achieve its national liberation aims via a peace process with a rebel-to-party transition became important for the Sinn Féin leadership. The comparison with the ANC was pushed extensively by Sinn Féin’s spokespeople in these years and the South African example soon occupied a special place in republican circles and thinking. For example, Gerry Adams’ Presidential address at the 1994 Ard Fheis was almost entirely focused on the emerging peace process in Northern Ireland and it referenced the South African example extensively. Just as Sinn Féin and the IRA had looked to the ANC and MK as engaged in fraternal armed struggle, at this moment it began to talk of a new phase of joint struggle. This new phase was focused on successfully navigating a liberal peace process model that was dominating post-Cold War conflict resolution efforts, while conducting a rebel-to-party transition and maintaining a focus on national liberation. This is clear in Gerry Adams’ very public visit to South Africa in June 1995 at the invitation of the ANC and his meeting with President Mandela. Adams dedicated a chapter to South Africa in his 2003 book on the peace process and he titled it: My Hero – Nelson Mandela. In the chapter Adams states that the purpose of this 1995 trip was to learn the lessons of South Africa’s approach to conflict resolution and that it was an emotional experience for him.

103 Ibid, 225.
104 Ó Broin, Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism, 269.
106 Adams, Hope and History - Making Peace in Ireland.
It is important to note that it was not just republicans looking to South Africa for inspiration. The South African peace process and the dismantling of apartheid was one of the most important global stories at the time and all swathes of political opinion in Ireland were being influenced by its success. For example, the Irish government invited F.W. de Klerk to address its Forum on Peace and Reconciliation in Dublin in November 1995 and in May 1997, and the South African government invited all parties in the negotiations to South Africa in 1997 for a weekend seminar on the lessons of the South African experience.\textsuperscript{107} South Africa therefore acted as an exemplar for Northern Ireland and assisted the peacemaking process. Jonathan Powell, the British government’s chief negotiator on Northern Ireland during Tony Blair’s premiership, believes these multi-party visits to South Africa to see examples of how the parties achieved peace there “were of great importance” to the process in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{108} He maintains that these visits gave the parties hope and travelling abroad together opened up spaces for individuals across the political divide to talk to each other in a way that they could not back in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{109} Furthermore in a 2018 article celebrating Mandela’s legacy the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, from the centre-right Fine Gael party, stated that Ireland owes a debt to Mandela and the South African government for the assistance they provided both governments and the parties in Northern Ireland at critical junctures of the peace process.\textsuperscript{110} In the early phase of the development of policies for victims of the conflict and reconciliation in Northern Ireland there was also a concerted focus on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; although the Northern Ireland reconciliation process ultimately did not follow a similar path.\textsuperscript{111} These examples typify the dual engagement of the ANC in foreign peace processes, at the state level via government structures and at party level via ANC structures, as highlighted in sub-section 1.4.1.

The example of South Africa thus impacted the rhetoric of the parties in Northern Ireland and South African assistance was broadly welcomed. However, in addition to this involvement, there were specific and deep bilateral engagements between the ANC and Sinn Féin which remains under researched in the literature. The next two sections of this

\textsuperscript{107} Guelke, “‘Comparatively Peaceful’: South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland,” 288.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Smyth and Hamilton, “The Human Costs of the Troubles,” 16.
chapter outline how the ANC’s third party involvement in the peace process via substantive engagement with Sinn Féin affected three elements of Sinn Féin’s approach to the peace process: its negotiating strategy towards measures influenced by the liberal peace paradigm; maintaining support among its base to avoid spoilers, as defined in sub-section 2.2.7; and its strategic approach to the new post-conflict political space as the rebel-to-party transition progressed. These engagements had an impact on the rebel-to-party transition that was key to Irish republican support for the peace process and IRA decommissioning. As was pointed out in section 2.5, the transition of armed rebel groups into political parties is a critical component of contemporary peace processes and a uniquely post-Cold War occurrence. Section 3.7 then puts forward the argument that the assistance highlighted in sections 3.5 and 3.6 was part of a new post-Cold War internationalism.

3.5 The Impact of the ANC’s Engagements on Sinn Féin’s External Negotiations

The engagements between the ANC and Sinn Féin had a profound impact on the strategic approach republicans took to the peace process and the post-conflict political space. This section focuses on the impact it had on Sinn Féin’s external negotiation strategy.

Significant research into how existing peace processes can act as a template for others, and how certain initiatives can be borrowed across peace processes, has been conducted and this was illustrated in sub-section 2.2.1. There is however a significant gap in the literature when it comes to foreign political parties engaging with rebel movements on strategy and lessons learned in peace processes influenced by the liberal peace paradigm. Sub-section 2.2.5 of this thesis highlighted the arguments that liberal peace models can be depoliticising and the political reform and democratisation that drives a liberal peacebuilding process can often be a top-down elite endeavour. Furthermore, section 2.5 pointed out the asymmetry that exists in negotiations to end civil wars, between state officials well versed in negotiation strategy and the non-state adversaries with little training or experience in formal negotiations. When sitting at the table to negotiate a complex liberal peace process to end decades of conflict the parties are not equal, and often the needs and fears of the rebel group are overlooked.
Sinn Féin appear to have recognised the need for external support early on in the peace process. Adams admits that when the Sinn Féin leadership first began its efforts to get international support it “didn’t understand how to lobby this opinion in a strategic way,” and it was concerned with how Sinn Féin could compete with the British government who obviously had the resources of its Foreign Office and Embassies. In the end Sinn Féin strategically used the powerful Irish-American lobby to pressure the British and Irish governments to include Sinn Féin in the peace talks, but that only helped establish inclusive negotiations. It is evident that Sinn Féin felt it also needed international assistance with negotiation strategy because in February 1995, months before Gerry Adams’ landmark visit to South Africa, this research has uncovered that Sinn Féin quietly sent Aidan McAteer and Gerry Kelly to South Africa for training on negotiations. McAteer and Kelly were both ex-prisoners and influential figures in Sinn Féin’s leadership during the peace process.

McAteer informed the author that the trip was arranged after Sinn Féin requested the ANC’s assistance. He reveals that Sinn Féin were keen to learn from the ANC’s negotiating experience and that he spent over two weeks in South Africa with Kelly talking to high-ranking ANC members, including its senior negotiating team. This desire to learn from the ANC’s negotiating experience was also acknowledged by Sinn Féin’s Chairperson, Declan Kearney. He maintains that such engagements took place because Sinn Féin were keen to learn from the ANC’s experience in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) I and II negotiations, and its “very long-standing fraternal relationship” opened up that possibility. So while the parties in Northern Ireland engaged with ANC and former National Party (NP) figures at different times, according to Kearney, Sinn Féin’s “unique and special relationship with the ANC” gave the party the singular opportunity to “engage bilaterally with the ANC, travel separately, and to engage with the ANC on negotiation strategy and negotiation process.” This disclosure illustrates how national liberation movements that were once engaged in conflict-related solidarity influenced by anti-

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113 Ibid, 153.
114 Aidan McAteer, interview by author, 3 March 2020.
115 Kelly is one of Sinn Féin’s most prominent MLAs and McAteer remains a key official in Sinn Féin’s team of advisers in Stormont. See: Frampton, *The Long March: The Political Strategy of Sinn Féin, 1981-2007*.
116 McAteer, interview by author.
117 Kearney, interview by author.
118 Ibid.
imperialist internationalism, were now, in the changed post-Cold War setting, engaged in exchanges focused on strategic negotiation approaches to liberal peace processes.

The research findings indicate that Sinn Féin gained knowledge from these engagements with the ANC and it influenced its approach to the Northern Ireland peace process. McAteer declares that one of the biggest strategic lessons he took away from the engagements was the need to keep focused on your ultimate objective, but in order to achieve it, keep an open mind to any tactical manoeuvres that are necessary.¹¹⁹ He pointed out that the ANC agreed to a power sharing model after the first democratic election, a key component of liberal peace models, despite the initial internal difficulties this caused for the ANC because its stated goal was majority rule. However, the ANC accepted the measure as a strategic step to reassure the white population and the ANC achieved its ultimate objective of majority rule with the subsequent government formation, while avoiding a civil war or militant resistance from white South Africans immediately after the end of the apartheid regime.¹²⁰

Issues surrounding making tactical compromises are important lessons to learn for any party engaged in peace negotiations, but for Sinn Féin to be learning this directly from a political movement that it saw as a fraternal and fellow revolutionary movement appears to have had a profound impact. This is acknowledged by Ó Broin who states that Sinn Féin drew heavily from its knowledge of the ANC’s negotiating experience in developing its strategy to deal with the multi-party negotiations in the mid to late 1990s.¹²¹ It indicates that the ANC could wield soft and moral power, as highlighted in section 2.2.7, due to its own conflict and peace process experience. McAteer is clear that the ANC did not have all the answers and Sinn Féin did not simply copy a blueprint the ANC offered. Instead, he maintains that through these engagements it became evident to the Sinn Féin leadership that it was facing similar issues to what the ANC had already had to deal with in its own negotiations.¹²² Therefore, McAteer contends that Sinn Féin used the ANC’s experience “to at least inform us [Sinn Féin] of how we should approach things.”¹²³ This affirms the argument put forward in section 1.5, that the involvement of foreign political parties in

¹¹⁹ McAteer, interview by author.
¹²⁰ Ibid.
¹²¹ Ó Broin, Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism, 269.
¹²² McAteer, interview by author.
¹²³ Ibid.
peace processes is a bespoke arrangement rather than a pre-packaged template focused on a pre-determined vision of success.

It was not just strategic approaches to negotiating with the British government that Sinn Féin was focused on when engaging with the ANC, it also informed its negotiating strategy with unionists. Gibney reveals that through these engagements Sinn Féin was able to learn from the ANC’s approach to dealing with hostile political opponents in the white community and Sinn Féin borrowed the ANC’s tactics in order to advance strategies aimed at reassuring unionists.124 Sinn Féin was increasing its focus on how to accommodate unionists as it became aware that the peace settlement was never going to lead to a united Ireland without some measure of consent being triggered. Whereas once Sinn Féin were adamant that the IRA armed campaign would lead to victory and Irish reunification, it now accepted a peace settlement that had a democratic vote as the deciding mechanism in any constitutional change for Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin was accepting one of the core liberal peace mechanisms of democratisation in the peace process and seeking advice and support from the ANC who had done likewise. Engagement with the ANC, Gibney maintains, had a lasting impact on Sinn Féin’s changing attitudes to unionism, particularly its focus on accommodating unionists and its decision to take its seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.125 Regarding his own trip to South Africa in 1995, Adams wrote that the encounters he had with apartheid regime figures “was a revelation to us”.126 It appears that the ANC’s experience in reaching out to hostile political opponents in a peace process also assisted Sinn Féin’s development of policies and strategy in this regard.

According to O’Dowd, Sinn Féin were also influenced by the ANC’s so-called ‘bush strategy’.127 This is a strategy to remove negotiators from their normal surroundings to encourage negotiation breakthroughs. In the South African talks this involved ANC and NP negotiators going into the bush for fishing trips and discussions, hence the name ‘bush strategy’.128 O’Dowd says Sinn Féin used this thinking and strategy during private talks in

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124 Gibney, interview by author.
125 Ibid.
128 Guelke, “Comparatively Peaceful’: South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland,” 233.
the US Ambassador’s residence in London, with the assistance of George Mitchell, to make breakthroughs and to convince unionists of its commitment to the peace process.\textsuperscript{129}

In the interviews carried out with Sinn Féin’s past and present leadership as part of this research, and from Adams’ own writings, it is evident that Sinn Féin deeply valued the ANC’s experience and advice. This is not to say that engagements with the ANC directly led to specific actions or that a blueprint was followed, but the findings of this research reveal that these engagements did influence Sinn Féin’s negotiation strategy towards the peace process influenced by the liberal peace paradigm and its approach to reaching out to and negotiating with unionists. However, this research finds that the biggest influence these party-to-party engagements had was on Sinn Féin’s negotiation with its own base and in maintaining support for the process among rank-and-file members. This is a core element in the successful contemporary rebel-to-party transition in Irish republicanism, that was described in section 3.2. The ANC’s engagement on this is issue is examined in the next section.

3.6 The Impact of the ANC’s Engagements on Sinn Féin’s Internal Negotiations and the Rebel-to-Party Transition

The impact of spoilers on peace processes is well researched and the threat they pose has been significantly explored in the literature.\textsuperscript{130} As outlined in section 2.5 of the previous chapter, spoilers not only have the potential to damage fledgling peace processes, but they can also derail the political movement that is being built by the rebel side during rebel-to-party transitions by causing splits. Therefore, one of the core concerns of movements engaged in a rebel-to-party transition is to reduce the potential for spoilers emerging and the prospects of splits. Sinn Féin’s leadership was acutely aware of the history of splits in the republican movement and was focused on avoiding such a scenario. As stated in sub-section 2.2.7, this thesis explores if foreign political parties can provide soft or moral power to the non-state forces in negotiations with its base, to reduce the potential for spoilers to undermine this transition. The findings of this research reveal that the ANC did provide substantial moral support and soft power to the Sinn Féin leadership in this regard.

\textsuperscript{129} O’Dowd, “Obsession with decommissioning misses historical breakthrough.”
\textsuperscript{130} As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7 of Chapter 2, this research uses Stedman’s definition of spoilers. See: Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," 5.
According to McAteer it was the ANC that first told Sinn Féin that the most important negotiation in a peace process is not the negotiation with adversaries, but rather the negotiation with the supporter base.\textsuperscript{131} While acknowledging that Sinn Féin would have already been aware of the importance of this factor, he said it learned a lot from the ANC in this regard.\textsuperscript{132} Adams also makes the point that he was particularly influenced by a meeting he had with Dr. Niel Barnard\textsuperscript{133} when he visited South Africa in 1995.\textsuperscript{134} Adams maintains that Dr. Barnard informed him that the apartheid government entered negotiations with the ANC hoping it could drag the talks out for years and decades, and that the ANC would fragment and weaken. It did not enter the negotiations to end apartheid but that is what ultimately happened. For this reason, Adams maintains that: “The South African experience had all sorts of lessons for [Sinn Féin].”\textsuperscript{135} Through the ANC’s experience in South Africa, Sinn Féin were learning not only about how to keep its base united behind a strategy towards the peace process but also the strategic importance of this for achieving a successful rebel-to-party transition.

The current President of Sinn Féin, Mary Lou McDonald, was not part of the leadership at the time of the negotiations but contends that one of the most important lessons Sinn Féin learned from the ANC was that “your first negotiation and your last negotiation is with your own people and with your own base.”\textsuperscript{136} She maintains that this was embedded into Sinn Féin’s collective thinking by the ANC and that it was handed down to her “like a heirloom,”\textsuperscript{137} thus revealing that the ANC’s advice on internal negotiations permeated into the thinking of the Sinn Féin leadership. Furthermore, this research also brings to light that the Sinn Féin leadership did not just absorb the ANC’s advice in this regard, it actively used ANC personalities to convince all aspects of the republican base to follow Sinn Féin’s leadership into the peace process, a rebel-to-party transition, and to mitigate the threat of spoilers emerging.

\textsuperscript{131} McAteer, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Dr. Niel Barnard was the head of the South African National Intelligence Service during the first negotiations with the ANC.
\textsuperscript{134} Adams, \textit{Hope and History - Making Peace in Ireland}.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 216.
\textsuperscript{136} McDonald, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
When the GFA was signed both governments were initially concerned about the ability of the Sinn Féin leadership to get a majority of its members to support it, due to the difficult compromises the agreement contained for republicans. On 18 April 1998, just eight days after the GFA was signed, Sinn Féin held its annual Ard Fheis in Dublin to debate the Agreement. The membership would then reconvene one month later, on 10 May 1998, at a special Ard Fheis to vote on whether to support the Agreement. Due to internal party rules, the vote needed to pass by a two-thirds majority rather a simple majority. The Sinn Féin leadership went to great lengths to gain the necessary support and avoid a split. In line with the ANC’s advice, it had been working on building support within all levels of its base throughout the negotiation process to keep them updated and informed every step of the way. This would be put to the test in a one-off secret ballot. To ensure it passed the Sinn Féin leadership enlisted the support of the ANC.

The ANC’s Deputy General Secretary, Thenjiwe Mtintso, was invited to give a keynote address at the April 1998 Ard Fheis. According to Adams she arrived with a prepared speech, but after listening to the debate for a few hours she discarded the notes when it was her turn to speak, and her speech was “one of the highlights” of the historic Ard Fheis.138 The choice of Mtintso as a speaker is revealing. She was a former MK commander that was in charge of over 10,000 militants when the ANC decided to move towards negotiation, ending the armed insurrection.139 She told the Ard Fheis how she originally thought the ANC leadership had sold out, how she was gradually persuaded this was not the case, and how they adapted their military training to their new arena of struggle – negotiations and politics.140 Adams believes her “powerful contribution... caught the mood of the moment and touched on many of the fears evident among republicans.”141 This engagement illustrates the direct use of the ANC’s soft and moral power at the social-psychological level, concepts described in sub-section 2.2.7, to address the needs and fears of republicans regarding the peace process and the rebel-to-party transition that would replace the military campaign with a strategy focused on electoral political competition.

139 Ó Broin, Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism, 276.
140 Ibid.
141 Adams, Hope and History – Making Peace in Ireland, 370.
Such direct interventions appear to have had the desired effect on the republican base that the leadership wanted, because arising from Mtintso’s contribution the Sinn Féin leadership asked Nelson Mandela to send another ANC contingent to Ireland in advance of the special Ard Fheis and key vote on 10 May. Mandela accepted the request and sent a high-profile delegation which included: Cyril Ramaphosa; Mac Maharaj; Mathews Phosa; and Valli Moosa. Sinn Féin wanted this ANC delegation to speak to republicans across the island about the ANC’s process of negotiations, its management of the changing nature of its movement, and the challenges it faced, before the Ard Fheis took place. According to Adams, the leadership believed that if republicans could question those who had been through a similar peace process and discuss their experience with them, then what the Sinn Féin leadership were trying to do “wouldn’t be such a leap into the unknown.”

As outlined in section 2.5, there has been a significant research focus on the macro level and political systems when it comes to rebel-to-party transitions and often what is missing in the analysis is the process of negotiations that occurs with the base to bring them along this path. The significant engagement by the ANC with Sinn Féin at this level, illustrated by this research, suggests that in order to advance this process and reduce the risk of spoilers, soft power can be borrowed from foreign political parties who have successfully made the transition. The comments from Adams acknowledge that Sinn Féin was evidently trying to borrow soft power from the ANC and its example in the attempts to persuade republicans of the merit of the peace process and a transition to solely democratic electoral politics.

The ANC delegation spoke at several Sinn Féin meetings across the island and they met with republican prisoners. One of the prisoners who met this ANC delegation was

142 Details of the specific request and the delegation make-up come from: Gerry Adams, interview by author, 19 February 2020.
143 The current President of South Africa and President of the ANC. He was the ANC’s Chief Negotiator during the transition from apartheid to democracy while serving as the ANC’s General-Secretary.
144 Former Robben Island prisoner, former member of the ANC’s National Executive Committee, and Minister for Transport (1994-1999) in the first post-Apartheid government
145 ANC negotiator and the then Premier of the Eastern Transvaal (1994-1999)
146 ANC Executive member and Minister for Provincial and Constitutional Affairs (1996-1999)
147 Adams, interview with author.
149 Republican prisoners were a critical constituency for the Sinn Féin leadership and their opinions had significant influence among Sinn Féin members. The Sinn Féin leadership regularly visited the prisoners during the negotiations and briefed them on the process.
Martina Anderson.\textsuperscript{150} She recalled that the ANC visit was historic even before the delegation walked in because it was the first and only time in the history of the conflict that all the republican prisoners in Northern Ireland, male and female, were in the one place at the same time.\textsuperscript{151} That the British authorities allowed the female prisoners to be transferred from Maghaberry to Long Kesh, and for all the prisoners to meet this ANC delegation, reveals that they were also aware how critical this meeting was. According to another prisoner at the time, Seána Walsh,\textsuperscript{152} the prisoners felt that allowing a meeting of this nature to go ahead was a signal that the British government was serious about a political resolution and eventual prisoner releases.\textsuperscript{153}

During the meeting the delegation informed the prisoners of the ANC’s approach to the negotiations with the NP, its negotiation strategy, how the ANC encouraged the base to support the process, how it achieved its objectives, and how the release of prisoners was essential to the process.\textsuperscript{154} They told those present of the importance of Nelson Mandela’s release and that each one of them was a Nelson Mandela, every one of them being fundamental to achieving a successful peace process.\textsuperscript{155} Anderson maintains that she and the other female prisoners were not concerned about getting released unless they were sure of social and political change, as they did not want to go back to the same society that they had rebelled against.\textsuperscript{156} What she and others were looking for was fundamental political change and that was their focus during this period.\textsuperscript{157} The ANC delegation addressed this and talked to the prisoners about the importance of the post-release and post-conflict period. They also expressed the importance of the implementation of the peace agreement and the seriousness of establishing a political movement that was grounded in their communities.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{150} Martina Anderson was one of the most high-profile female IRA prisoners at the time. In 1994 she was transferred from Durham prison in England to Maghaberry, Co. Antrim. She was released under the terms of the GFA in 1998 and has been elected as an MLA and MEP for Sinn Féin.
\textsuperscript{151} Martina Anderson, interview by author, 3 March 2020.
\textsuperscript{152} Séanna Walsh participated in the blanket and no wash protests in Long Kesh. After the 1981 Hunger Strike he became the Officer-Commanding (OC) of the IRA prisoners. At the time of the ANC visit in 1998 he was 12 years into a 22-year sentence and was again in a leadership position among the IRA prisoners in Long Kesh. He is now a Sinn Féin member of Belfast City Council.
\textsuperscript{153} Walsh, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{154} Anderson, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
Walsh remembers that after the delegation spoke they handed over the floor to the prisoners who questioned and interrogated them, “in terms of where they were coming from, where they were going, how they saw the future developing, and so on.”\textsuperscript{159} Anderson recalls feeling that she was at “an Ard Fheis for prisoners” and the questioning and debate was no holds barred, “all concerns were aired, warts and all.”\textsuperscript{160} It had a significant impact.

Walsh reveals that after the discussions with the ANC delegation he “realised that this was the endgame as far as the military conflict was concerned” and he had “a step change in how to view the peace process.”\textsuperscript{161} In fact he describes the visit as having “one of the biggest impacts on me as a prisoner.”\textsuperscript{162} Anderson says that talking with these “ANC comrades” about “a shared experience and a shared struggle, and a shared pathway to improve the conditions of the lives of the people in the country that we came from,” had a big influence on her and others.\textsuperscript{163} This meeting, and the others they had across the island, ostensibly had the effect on the republican base that the Sinn Féin leadership were aiming for: at the special Ard Fheis two weeks later the motion to support the GFA passed by 331 votes to 29.\textsuperscript{164}

It would be erroneous to say the ANC delegation single-handedly determined that vote. The vote was part of a long and deep process within republicanism related to the transition from violent conflict to democratic politics, and the focus of voting delegates was undeniably on domestic factors. However, it would be improper to ignore the significant engagement of the ANC at this crucial time in the rebel-to-party transition process and imprecise to argue these prominent engagements did not have an impact. This research provides personal testimony as empirical evidence that this engagement had a persuasive influence on senior Irish republicans, and that the ANC’s own experience of conflict and a peace process, granted it a soft and moral power to influence Irish republicans.

There was considerable international focus and attention on South Africa at the time and the ANC commanded international prestige. According to Kearney, the ANC leaders had become household names in Ireland and for republicans to have the opportunity to engage

\textsuperscript{159} Walsh, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{160} Anderson, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{161} Walsh, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Anderson, interview by author.
directly with these individuals and draw directly from their experiences was “a very significant confidence building measure for Irish republicans.”\textsuperscript{165} McAteer says that due to the militant background and prison time of some of the ANC delegation “they came with an authority” and “they were able to explain that the simple black and white view that anything short of total victory was a sell-out, was overly simplistic and ultimately self-defeating.”\textsuperscript{166} McAteer further told the author, that the delegation’s focus on the need to make “ongoing strategic and tactical decisions, and at times compromises” had “an enormously influential impact on all sorts of people, including some people who would have been very sceptical about the overall process.”\textsuperscript{167} This affirms that the Sinn Féin leadership were borrowing the ANC’s soft and moral power to win over republicans who were hesitant to support the peace process and the rebel-to-transition process, also helping to reduce the potential of spoilers.

Gibney remembers that throughout the early 1990s and the negotiation process there was always uncertainty among republicans about whether it was the right thing to do, because "we had fought a long struggle and it was a difficult struggle" and the peace strategy “was [a] high risk strategy.”\textsuperscript{168} Therefore he believes that the visit from such high profile ANC and former MK representatives telling republicans that “they were ‘doing the right thing’ and ‘this is the way ahead’, [was] a huge boost to the morale of republicans.”\textsuperscript{169} This is something echoed by another high-profile member of the Sinn Féin leadership at the time, Bairbre de Brún. She maintains that throughout the peace process negotiations republicans “were quite nervous and were in uncharted territory” but that they “took succour and comfort from ANC activists, from the negotiating process in South Africa and from encouraging statements from Nelson Mandela.”\textsuperscript{170} Adams suggests that no one was expecting “these experienced revolutionaries to come to Ireland to tell us what to do next. There were differences as well as similarities in our struggles. We had to make our own choices. But their contribution was pivotal.”\textsuperscript{171} This reinforces the argument put forth in this study that foreign political party involvement in a peace process is not based on a

\textsuperscript{165} Kearney, interview by author.  
\textsuperscript{166} McAteer, interview by author.  
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{168} Gibney, interview by author.  
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{170} Bairbre de Brún, “The Road to Peace in Ireland,” Berghof Transitions Series, no. 6 (2008), accessed on 10 August 2022, \url{https://tinyurl.com/5f8jdc5f}, 14.  
\textsuperscript{171} Adams, Hope and History - Making Peace in Ireland, 372.
blueprint and a pre-packaged template, an approach some international third parties take via the liberal peace model and was addressed in sub-section 2.2.5. Instead, it is a bespoke engagement focused at the social-psychological level of conflict and peacemaking, as described in sub-section 2.2.7, that addresses the needs and fears of members of rebel movements as they negotiate and enter into liberal peace processes which entail a rebel-to-party transition.

Adams’ comments suggest that Sinn Féin maintained local ownership over the process and that the engagements with the ANC involved experience sharing and advice based on lessons learned. The ANC’s influence was persuasive and encouraging in nature rather than prescriptive and demanding. The engagements were horizontal rather than the more common top-down or bottom-up interventions we see from international third parties in liberal peace processes, as highlighted in section 2.3. The engagements initially took place at the top level of Lederach’s three level pyramid of peacebuilding, through engagements with the political leadership on negotiation strategy and how to successfully complete a rebel-to-party transition. Later engagements took place at middle and lower levels of the republican movement at the request of the Sinn Féin leadership. This was not a domineering relationship and the ANC was not advocating a South African model or a specific one-size-fits-all strategy. As illustrated in sub-section 2.2.6, the findings of this research demonstrate that certain political parties are becoming involved in foreign peace processes due to a commitment to anti-imperialist internationalism and as a form of solidarity, not to advocate a particular peace process model or blueprint. This internationalism and solidarity motivated the ANC’s engagement, and this is discussed in greater detail in the following section. Its engagements were never focused on advocating a certain model or on reducing local ownership, rather it augmented Sinn Féin’s own peace strategy and involved the use of soft power to aid the rebel-to-party transition process.

Engagements by the ANC in relation to negotiation strategy and maintaining support among the base for the peace process did not end with the signing of the GFA in 1998. Sinn Féin has repeatedly called on the ANC for assistance at different phases of the post-conflict process. The first major post-GFA hurdle it faced was decommissioning. According to de Brún: “of all the issues that republicans had to compromise over, the issue of the IRA’s
weapons was the most difficult. It is revealing that at this problematic and delicate time for the peace process Sinn Féin again turned to the ANC. Mac Maharaj returned to Ireland once more in early 2000 to have a secret meeting with IRA representatives in Belfast to push them towards a compromise on putting arms beyond use, and this led to the first inspection of IRA arms dumps. Such an outcome did not look plausible at the outset, but Maharaj’s engagement appears to have had an influential impact.

Maharaj was one of the last ANC leaders to agree to the peace strategy and to give up on the armed conflict. His intervention is believed to have had a particular impact on the IRA strategist Brian Keenan and to have played a significant role in convincing the IRA to make some statement to let the unionists know the war is over. By late 2000 Maharaj’s ANC comrade Cyril Ramaphosa also returned to Ireland, this time with the Finnish ex-President Martti Ahtisaari, to inspect IRA weapon dumps for the IICD. This was the first time in Irish history that republicans had allowed inspectors or any outside agency to view IRA arms and put them beyond use. One of the inspectors had to be neutral in order to verify the process, but for republicans to choose Ramaphosa as the other inspector reiterates how eminent ANC representatives had become in the process, not just for the Sinn Féin leadership, but for the IRA as well. The successful decommissioning process, with the ANC’s assistance, was of paramount importance to the successful conclusion of the rebel-to-party transition in Irish republicanism.

The issue of policing became another major peace process roadblock in the mid-2000s, and the findings of this research divulge that Sinn Féin once again turned to the ANC for assistance. Kearny disclosed that between 2005 and 2008 Sinn Féin had detailed engagements with the ANC regarding how it came to terms with the institutions of government, and in particular the transformation of security, policing, and justice in post-apartheid South Africa. According to Kearney the engagements were: “very helpful, influential, and of great use to us as we managed the transition through the negotiation

172 de Brún, “The Road to Peace in Ireland,” 16.
173 English, Armed struggle: The history of the IRA.
176 Merikallio and Ruokanen, The Mediator.
178 Kearney, interview with author.
period of that time and through the great debate around policing and justice in the North, and in the eventual decision by Sinn Féin to engage with policing and justice.”^{179}

This section has demonstrated the research findings that the ANC’s engagement with Sinn Féin had significant impact on the internal negotiation process and the rebel-to-party transition, particularly at the social-psychological level. It also illustrated that the research established that Sinn Féin harnessed the soft and moral power of the ANC to reduce the threat of spoilers. The next section will critically analyse the ANC’s holistic involvement in the peace process, determining it as a form of post-Cold War internationalism related to the liberal peace.

3.7 The ANC-Sinn Féin Engagement as a Post-Cold War Internationalism

The ANC’s engagement with the peace process in Northern Ireland is two-fold. On the one hand there was significant government involvement, including hosting the all-party delegation to South Africa in 1997 and its discussions with both the Irish and British governments. Parallel to this there was a separate and much deeper engagement between the ANC and Sinn Féin, significantly highlighted in the previous two sections. The ANC’s engagement with Sinn Féin took place during all three stages of the peacemaking process, stages that have been identified by Albin and described in sub-section 2.2.2. As detailed in section 3.4, Sinn Féin had a concerted focus on internationalising the peace process believing that international pressure was needed to ensure the British government committed to an authentic peace process. South Africa was unable to provide Sinn Féin with this element as it lacked the necessary hard power. For this element Sinn Féin focused on bringing the US government and ‘Irish-America’ into the process.

What the ANC did provide was soft and moral power through its own experience. It presented a successful model of rebel-to-party transition, one where former combatants could enter the political arena and even become President. This example of inclusion, and the positivity surrounding South Africa in the mid-1990s during the so-called decade of the peace agreement, helped to establish a narrative that something similar was possible in

^{179} Ibid.
^{180} They are: (1) The warring parties move from conflict to dialogue (pre-negotiation); (2) Then from negotiation to agreement; (3) Then to a post-agreement and post-conflict phase of securing a durable peace. See: Albin, “Peace Vs. Justice,” 581.
Northern Ireland. The liberal peace paradigm was in a predominant position in this immediate post-Cold War period and the engagements between the ANC and Sinn Féin at this time reveal that national liberation movements were keen to learn from one another’s peace process and rebel-to-party transition experience.

Sinn Féin harnessed its existing relationship with the ANC to first improve its knowledge of negotiation strategy, as detailed in section 3.5. Sinn Féin then subsequently harnessed the soft and moral power of ANC representatives to secure support among the republican base for the peace process strategy, including a rebel-to-party transition. With the ANC, Sinn Féin had a readymade positive example to show its activists, many of whom were concerned about the high-risk peace strategy. The needs and fears of rebel movements negotiating a peace process and entering into a rebel-to-party transition are often overlooked, as highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7. This chapter has highlighted that in the ANC’s third party engagement in the Northern Ireland peace process, we see a concerted focus on the social-psychological level to address these needs and fears. The ANC precedent helped bolster the argument that a peace deal and successful rebel-to-party transition could lead to political success for Sinn Féin. Such examples are very rare, and as detailed in section 3.6, Sinn Féin was dependent on the ANC’s example and engagements throughout its internal discussions and negotiations on a peace process strategy.

The pragmatic example from the ANC, who made short-term compromises but achieved its ultimate goal, was also an optimal fit for the Sinn Féin leadership who wanted to stress to members that the GFA was not flawless, it had shortcomings and compromises, but it was a transitional step to a united Ireland.¹⁸¹ In order to justify the peace process and rebel-to-party transition strategy to republicans the Sinn Féin leadership could not rely on Irish history for positive examples, as it is ladened with repeated fractures among the republican movement when strategic changes were made. Therefore, it focused on the international. As outlined in section 3.3, this was made easier under the Adams-McGuinness leadership. The ANC was ostensibly happy to play its part, as evidenced by the number of engagements that took place and the high-level status of the participants. This was primarily due to the ANC’s own internationalism and the historical connections that existed with Irish republicanism, which was illustrated in sub-section 3.4.2. Nevertheless, the ANC being held

¹⁸¹ Guelke, "'Comparatively peaceful': South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland," 231.
up as a model for national liberation movements to follow was beneficial to the ANC as well, allowing it to counter the narrative that it had betrayed its revolutionary roots by entering into the peace process and agreeing to negotiated compromises.\textsuperscript{182}

The engagements thus reflect a new post-Cold War internationalism between movements of national liberation. As outlined in sub-section 1.2.3, throughout the Cold War these movements had influenced each other through their actions in conflict. They viewed their domestic conflicts as an extension of a wider, global anti-imperialist conflict. In the post-Cold War period, and with the surge of peace agreements in the 1990s influenced by the liberal peace, this chapter highlights the research findings that new engagements between these rebel movements focused on liberal peace processes began to develop. These movements were no longer assisting one another on military issues and discussing armed revolution, instead they were learning negotiating tactics, debating strategy on compromises, sharing lessons learned on rebel-to-party transitions, and talking to one another’s rank-and-file about how best to achieve political goals through peace processes that were being negotiated under the liberal peace paradigm.

In section 2.5 of the preceding chapter, it was highlighted that the involvement of foreign political parties can be viewed as an attempt to hybridise the liberal peace and to empower local actors to ensure significant local ownership. Due to the dominant position of the liberal peace paradigm, national liberation movements attempting to negotiate a peace agreement and establish a peace process are influenced by the liberal peace. However, they face many dilemmas. Is it feasible for the liberal peace to go hand-in-hand with their national liberation goals? Can they achieve their political goals under the conditions of the liberal peace? These concerns are heightened due to the tendency of the liberal peace paradigm, as illustrated in sub-section 2.2.5 and section 2.4, to ignore the needs and fears of rebel movements, to deny self-determination, and to reflect the needs of external actors at the expense of local ownership.

The findings of this research demonstrate that the involvement of foreign political parties in post-Cold War peace processes, such as the ANC’s engagements with Sinn Féin detailed in this chapter, are an attempt by national liberation movements to reshape the liberal peace rather than overhaul it. By sharing advice and assistance throughout the rebel-to-

\textsuperscript{182} Guelke, “Ireland and South Africa: A Very Special Relationship,” 138.
part transition, and aiding efforts to reduce the threat of spoilers, certain foreign political parties can assist rebel movements to conclude a difficult rebel-to-party transition required under a liberal peace process and enter the post-conflict political space in a strong position. This allows them to use a liberal peace model to move their national liberation campaign from a violent conflict into the democratic political space. Foreign political parties providing advice, assistance, and support, based on their own experience navigating complex peace processes designed under the liberal peace paradigm, in order to assist other rebel movements to do likewise, is therefore a form of post-Cold War solidarity and internationalism.

It is important not to overstate the importance of the ANC’s engagements with Sinn Féin on the GFA negotiations and the peace process in Northern Ireland. There were a multitude of different domestic factors that created the space to begin peace talks and that ultimately led to the signing of the GFA. All parties had difficult choices to make and there was no magic formula injected from the outside. It took years of long and difficult negotiations. However, this research demonstrates that the example of South Africa had an impact on the narrative of the peace process and the ANC’s engagement had a significant supportive impact on Sinn Féin’s rebel-to-party transition. While Sinn Féin developed its own strategy to suit its own needs, the findings detailed in this chapter demonstrate that the ANC’s influence and impact was evident.

The next section will detail how this experience encouraged Sinn Féin to engage with foreign peace processes.

3.8 Sinn Féin’s Engagement with Foreign Peace Processes

The GFA and the peace process in Northern Ireland have been a relative success. It ended the direct violence of the conflict and the large-scale violence characteristic of the pre-GFA decades has not reoccurred, although small-scale violent attacks still occur and some armed groups remain mobilised. It has established consociational political structures that have led to republican and unionist coalition governments, however the power sharing process remains challenged and the political structures have repeatedly collapsed for lengthy periods of time. Despite these challenges, the peace process is lauded internationally and it has received significant global attention; John Hume and David
Trimble won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 for their contributions. The peace process has been significantly researched and examined, and it continues to attract the focus of many peace scholars around the world.

The peace process has also led to international initiatives. The contemporary Irish government stresses that it is ready and willing to assist foreign peace processes with the lessons learned from its own experience. Jonathan Powell, the British government’s chief negotiator in Northern Ireland, has worked on numerous other conflict resolution processes through Inter-Mediate, a charity for negotiation and mediation that he co-founded. He believes it is incumbent on him and others to share the lessons learned from the peace process in Northern Ireland, in so far as other people want to listen, and according to Powell they generally do, because successful peace processes are “a fairly limited universe.” George Mitchell has spoken publicly about the fact that there is no magic formula to conflict resolution that can be simply shared, but due to his experience in Northern Ireland he believes there are certain principles that should be adopted in conflict resolution processes. One can confidently state that there has been a significant internationalisation of the peace process in Northern Ireland. There is however a distinct lack of research and investigation into an aspect of this internationalisation – the subsequent involvement of Sinn Féin in foreign peace processes. It is imperative to first outline why Sinn Féin has engaged so extensively in foreign peace processes.

Section 3.3 of this chapter illustrated the internationalist ideology that began to permeate the party in the 1980s and this is one motivating reason. McAteer argues that Sinn Féin structurally engage with other peace processes because “it’s part of our international solidarity obligations and responsibilities as internationalists.” Anderson talks of Sinn Féin giving “hope” to others that are stuck in conflict. Adams informed the author that he believes there is a “moral imperative” for Sinn Féin to assist others with peace processes and that Sinn Féin were very conscious of the image portrayed when figures such as Martin McGuinness travelled to engage with foreign peace processes. Due to his role as the

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183 Coveney, "Mandela and 'the unbreakable bonds of friendship and solidarity' with Ireland."
184 Powell, interview with author.
186 McAteer, interview by author.
187 Anderson, interview by author.
188 Adams, interview by author.
Joint First Minister and as a former combatant, according to Adams, “[Martin McGuinness] was a living manifestation that someone can move from combatant and political prisoner to being elected as the most senior Minister in the government.”189

A second motivating factor is the appreciation of the assistance Sinn Féin received from the ANC. McAteer contends that Sinn Féin’s engagements with foreign peace processes are focused on ensuring “people have a way of developing alternatives to conflict and they can do that with the same benefit of our experiences, just as we had from the experiences of the ANC.”190 Walsh contends that if “the ANC were able to do it for us, then we have a responsibility to pass on the lessons that we learned.”191

Similar to its own experience with the ANC, Sinn Féin representatives are keen to stress the point that they do not view the peace process in Northern Ireland as some sort of blueprint or model. According to Gibney, Sinn Féin’s assistance is based on detailing its own experience and passing on what worked and what did not work in its process, “but not telling anyone else what to do, they’ve got to make their own strategic decisions.”192 McDonald says that Sinn Féin “bring method. We never ever pretend to bring answers. We have no magic wand... We do not bring readymade solutions.”193 This illustrates a desire not to impose an outside model, akin to a technocratic liberal peace blueprint to follow, but to experience share and provide advice in order to enhance local ownership, a key element in the hybridisation of the liberal peace.

The research findings also affirm that this is not part of a pacifist mission to simply end all conflicts, with the leadership of Sinn Féin examining requests before the party agrees to engage in a foreign peace process. Adams informed the author of his awareness of “a peace process industry globally” and this is something Sinn Féin and Adams “have always stayed away from.”194 According to Adams there are people currently travelling the world extolling the virtues of the Northern Ireland peace process and their experience, despite either opposing it at the time or playing a very limited role in the process itself.195 Kearney sets

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189 Ibid.
190 McAteer, interview by author.
191 Walsh, interview by author.
192 Gibney, interview by author.
193 McDonald, interview by author.
194 Adams, interview by author.
195 Ibid.
out that the party’s engagement with what he calls “the significant conflict resolution sector” is done on the basis of Sinn Féin’s “ideological and internationalist perspective.”

He states that sometimes Sinn Féin are contacted by agencies looking for assistance with a certain peace process, sometimes it is foreign governments acting as a third-party moderator, and occasionally governments in conflict also contact Sinn Féin. Its engagements with rebel movements engaged in a peace process does not focus on simply ending the violent conflict. McDonald informed the author that Sinn Féin want to assist “the ending of conflict and the beginning of peace” in other places, but also the “need to end injustice and establish justice.” This is a recognition of the need for positive peace, as opposed to negative peace, terms defined in section 2.1.

Sinn Féin’s engagements, like the ANC’s involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process, are not the actions of a neutral third party, as highlighted in sub-section 2.2.8. They are clearly part of efforts to improve and strengthen the rebel movement vis-à-vis the government side in the peace process. Anderson says that Sinn Féin representatives “share our experiences, our tactics, our strategy, our national strategic objectives, things that perhaps other struggles might need help with.” Kearney argues that national liberation movements that move to the point of ceasefires and negotiations need to “influence the content, the direction, and the outcome of negotiations to advance progressive, strategic, and political objectives” and Sinn Féin has extensive experience to share in this regard.

Experience that is applicable and transferable to others, he believes, with “political strategy and the primacy of politics at its core.” Kearney points out that Sinn Féin’s negotiation experience did not end with the GFA and there have been numerous subsequent agreements in the peace process in Northern Ireland. These statements reveal that Sinn Féin believes it can strategically assist other national liberation movements in liberal peace processes using its own experience and soft power. It also highlights a belief that it can pass on negotiation experience and assist the rebel-to-party transition demanded under liberal

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196 Kearney, interview by author.
197 Ibid.
198 McDonald, interview by author.
199 Anderson, interview by author.
200 Kearney, interview by author.
201 Ibid.
202 The interview with the author took place several weeks after a new negotiated agreement to restore the Northern Ireland Executive was reached, three years after it was dissolved.
peace mechanisms by empowering the rebel movement to ensure greater ownership in a more hybrid peace model.

Sinn Féin is ostensibly eager to protect the credibility of its own decision to negotiate a liberal peace process and undertake a rebel-to-party transition, as well as its international image and standing as a national liberation movement. Frampton argues that once Sinn Féin became aware of how popular the GFA was Adams moved immediately to claim ownership of the Agreement for the republican movement.203 This was instantly displayed in its international activity. As pointed out by Arthur, the IRA’s ability to stage high profile attacks in Britain elevated the status of the IRA among militant groups and their supporters worldwide.204 The Irish campaign for independence therefore became a reference point for other national liberation movements and by entering into a liberal peace structure republicans were opening themselves up to claims that they had betrayed their revolution to collaborate with the imperialist forces they long fought against.205 Sinn Féin moved quickly to promote its narrative of the GFA and to share what it believed where the lessons of the peace process with other self-proclaimed national liberation movements. In the same way as the ANC was happy to assist Sinn Féin to protect its own credentials and to refute the narrative that it ‘sold-out’, Sinn Féin appear eager to do the same.

As outlined in sub-section 2.2.6, internationalism has changed and evolved over time. The internationalism of national liberation movements during the Cold War was focused on supporting each other in conflict. In section 1.2, which contextualised this research, it was highlighted that the ending of the Cold War resulted in an extensive increase in the amount of peace agreements reached to end conflicts, with the 1990s being labelled the ‘decade of the peace agreement’.206 Consequently, the internationalism among national liberation movements has evolved from conflict related support to support in navigating liberal peace processes and rebel-to-party transitions. Sinn Féin’s international solidarity has therefore changed from extending solidarity to those in conflict to an emphasis on negotiations and the lessons of the peace process of Northern Ireland.207 This is further explored through the three case studies in the next three chapters.

204 Arthur, “‘Reading’ Violence: Ireland,” 269.
Sinn Féin did not renounce its international allies and its sympathies for various national liberation causes are still on display, however today it extols the virtues of the negotiated peace in Northern Ireland rather than armed insurrection. For Adams the ability “to move from armed struggle or support for armed struggle into what we now have [is a] huge achievement for everybody that was involved in it. Our hope in our engagement with foreign peace processes is that we can help in this.” This is undoubtedly the image of the peace process that Sinn Féin wants to promote internationally, rather than allow an image of republican defeat or surrender to gain a foothold. According to Kearney, Sinn Féin “still remain in the national liberation phase of the Irish struggle for national democracy” and that, “notwithstanding the advances of the Irish peace process and the huge transformational changes that have been brought about to the benefit of all citizens in the north of Ireland, and I think setting an agenda for change in the 26 counties, recognise that this is still a national liberational struggle.”

Sinn Féin evidently wants to ensure that it is still thought of as a movement for national liberation and its engagement in foreign peace processes assists this. Becoming a third party to foreign peace processes and assisting rebel-to-party transitions gives Sinn Féin the space to steadfastly reiterate that it has not given up on its national liberation goal, that it can be pursued through the peace process, and that the party will assist others to do likewise. Kearney hopes that Sinn Féin can be “influential and helpful” to other movements because Sinn Féin representatives can “talk about transition, change, transformation, and also what still needs to be done to complete the national liberation phase of the struggle for change here in Ireland.” Whether consciously or unconsciously, it is sending out a message that it is feasible for the liberal peace to go hand-in-hand with national liberation campaigns.

3.9 Concluding Remarks

This chapter gave a background to the conflict in Northern Ireland and an introduction to Sinn Féin through an exploration of the Irish republican rebel-to-party transition. It detailed
how important internationalism is to Sinn Féin’s ideology and how it actively sought international involvement in the peace process in Northern Ireland. It subsequently detailed how Sinn Féin initially turned to the ANC to learn from its negotiating process and how this began a process of deep engagement between the two parties. These engagements had an impact on Sinn Féin’s negotiating strategy and the rebel-to-party transition in Irish republicanism.

Chapter 2 of this thesis outlined the theoretical framework and how certain foreign political parties can act as important third parties in peace processes, that they can impact rebel-to-party transitions, that they can empower local actors to hybridise the liberal peace, and they are motivated by solidarity and anti-imperialist internationalism. This chapter has shown that the ANC’s engagements in the peace process in Northern Ireland are an example of this.

The ANC’s engagement as a third party in the peace process in Northern Ireland was unconventional. It engaged with all parties, shared the lessons of the South African process alongside the NP, and used its position in government to extend governmental support to the process when necessary. However, the ANC was clearly not a neutral third party and its exclusive bilateral engagements with Sinn Féin were more substantive, focusing on tactics and strategy to navigate the liberal peace process. It was not simply about ensuring a peace process took root in Northern Ireland, but that Sinn Féin would come through the process evading a damaging split caused by spoilers and in a political position to advance its political and national liberation goals.

Sinn Féin was also keen to harness the ANC’s soft and moral power. As outlined in section 3.6, this research finds that borrowing power from the ANC in this regard positively impacted the ultimately successful rebel-to-party transition that took place in Irish republicanism, particularly in avoiding a major split due to spoilers. The research findings of comprehensive ANC engagements over an extended period of time helped to bolster the ability of Sinn Féin’s leadership to deal with these internal concerns and secure sufficient internal unity. Borrowing soft power from ANC representatives enhanced Sinn Féin’s ability to ensure there was local ownership of the peace process in Northern Ireland, an ownership that has been sustained by subsequent agreements that have kept the peace process
moving forward. This local ownership was key to establishing a hybridisation of the liberal peace in Northern Ireland.

While the peace process in Northern Ireland has significant elements taken from the liberal peace, such as democratisation, human rights reforms, and the rule of law, it was not a technocratic approach. The peacemaking process was not primarily carried out by external actors who largely ignored local realities and neglected to seriously engage with local concerns and needs. Instead, there was sufficient local ownership to delineate it as a hybrid approach as defined by Richmond and discussed in section 2.4. Specifically, local actors were able to subvert the model to suit their own needs. The ANC’s assistance to Sinn Féin provided the party with additional soft power to avoid a spoiler problem and maintain local ownership of the process, which influenced the hybrid liberal peace model in Northern Ireland.

During the Cold War there was a form of internationalism that created links between national liberation movements that focused on support for their respective campaigns. This chapter has highlighted the findings of this research that there is a new form of internationalism between these movements, focused on liberal peace processes, that has developed in the post-Cold War period. The goals of national liberation remain the same, but the tactics and support given has changed dramatically as the external and geopolitical landscape transformed with the conclusion of the Cold War. This is an internationalism focused on assisting a political movement to achieve a favourable path out of conflict through a successful rebel-to-party transition via a peace process. This new internationalism is an effort to make national liberation feasible under the liberal peace.

This chapter verifies the involvement of foreign political parties in contemporary civil war peace processes by showing the ANC’s significant involvement with the GFA and peace process in Northern Ireland, particularly through its engagements with Sinn Féin. This chapter has also begun to address the research questions posed in section 1.3 and they are more comprehensively addressed via the three case studies in the next three chapters. Firstly, this chapter shows that there is a new type of post-Cold War internationalism between national liberation movements and it is focused on hybrid liberal peace processes. Secondly, this chapter reveals that foreign political parties become involved when the conflict is ripe for a resolution and that the assistance is focused on maintaining
organisational unity in rebel-to-party transitions and making the liberal peace feasible with national liberation goals. The foreign political party engagements are different from other third parties because they are not neutral and they do not push a specific model of conflict resolution, rather they provide soft and moral power through experience sharing and persuasive support to the leadership attempting a rebel-to-party transition. Thirdly, this chapter shows that the engagements do have an impact. Key Sinn Féin figures all agree that its engagements with the ANC were decisive, that the support proved particularly helpful in negotiations with the republican base to enable the peace process strategy and the rebel-to-party transition, and that it has encouraged Sinn Féin to become involved in foreign peace processes.

The next three chapters will focus on the three case studies of Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Basque, Colombian, and Sri Lankan peace processes. These case studies will further and comprehensively answer the three research questions of this thesis.
Chapter 4 – Sinn Féin’s Involvement in the Basque Peace Process

This chapter is the first of the three case studies in this thesis. As outlined in section 1.4, case studies are commonly used in peace studies to develop or test theoretical explanations for historical episodes which may be generalisable to other events. This case study further demonstrates the involvement of political parties in foreign peace processes by outlining Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Basque peace process and answering the three research questions listed in section 1.3. After first providing a historical background to the conflict and the conflict resolution efforts, this chapter examines the impact and results of Sinn Féin’s engagement in the Basque peace process, focusing on its role as a third party, the rebel-to-party transition, internal and external negotiations, and the hybrid approach to the liberal peace. The concluding section critically analyses Sinn Féin’s involvement in the peace process.

The term peace process is used here but there was no formal peace agreement between the state and ETA to end the conflict, instead ETA and the Basque nationalist left\(^1\) undertook a series of unilateral steps that concluded with ETA disbanding and the conclusion of the violent conflict. As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.1, a peace process is defined by Sisk as: “a series of step-by-step, reciprocal, and self-reinforcing actions that are taken to steadily move a conflict away from violence toward regularised, consensual non-violent rules of interaction.”\(^2\) The Basque case is unusual as a peace process because direct reciprocal actions from the state are missing. However, the Basque nationalist left, using a unilateral strategy that is analysed in section 4.6, replaced the state with other local and international interlocutors to create a similar reciprocal momentum of actions to steadily conclude the violent conflict and move the political issues which underpinned the violent conflict into the democratic political space. Therefore, the Basque case can still be considered a peace process under Sisk’s definition.

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\(^1\) Known as Ezker abertzalea in Basque. The term represents a wide grouping of left-wing Basque nationalist political parties, trade unions, civil society, and militant groups that have the common aims of Basque independence and socialism. This term is used in this study going forward to collectively refer to ETA, Batasuna/Herri Batasuna/EH Bildu, and their supporters. Much like the term ‘Irish republicans’ is used to collectively refer to the IRA, Sinn Féin, and their supporters.

4.1 Background to the Basque Conflict

The Basque conflict between ETA and the Spanish state over the sovereignty of the Basque Country began with ETA’s formation in 1959 and ended with ETA’s declaration of a permanent cessation of hostilities in 2011, before the dissolution of the armed group in 2018. The precise death toll of the fifty-two year conflict remains a contentious issue due to the many unresolved cases and arguments of who should be counted as a victim of the conflict, but it is widely acknowledged that it is over 1,000 people with thousands more injured and wounded.\(^3\) Similar to the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Basque conflict emerged at the height of the Cold War, when Cold War rivalries and anti-colonial politics were influencing conflicts across the globe. Unlike the Northern Ireland case, the Basque conflict was not resolved in the immediate post-Cold War period through a formal peace agreement like so many other conflicts during the 1990s so-called ‘decade of the peace agreement’. Instead, the conclusion of the conflict and its transformation into the democratic political arena occurred in an *ad hoc* manner in the changed geopolitical environment that emerged after the 9/11 attacks in the USA. While these significant international aspects greatly influenced the contemporary conflict and conflict resolution efforts, before examining them in more depth it is important to first detail the history of the Basque people and their homeland, placing the contemporary conflict within the historical framework of Basque nationhood.

The Basques are an ethno-linguistic group with a long and ancient history in the south-west of Europe. The Basque language is claimed as the most ancient in Europe and the origin of the Basque people, as a distinct ethnic group, is still debated among scholars.\(^4\) The Basque Country, or *Euskal Herria* in the Basque language, refers to the historical home of the Basque people. Geographically this region is located in the western Pyrenees, along the coast of the Bay of Biscay, and today it is spread across south-western France and northern Spain. The northern Basque Country is located entirely in France and makes up approximately 15 percent of the territory. The southern Basque Country, which makes up the remaining 85 percent, is contained within Spain.

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\(^3\) Reuters, "Spain, France arrest leaders of Basque separatist militants ETA," 22 September, 2015, [https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-spain-arrests-eta-idUKKCN0RM1ZW20150922](https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-spain-arrests-eta-idUKKCN0RM1ZW20150922).

The Basque people are closely tied to the history of the French and Spanish kingdoms, empires, and republics, and although a sovereign Basque state has never existed in the Westphalian concept of a state, there is a deep feeling among the Basque people of Basque nationhood. This nationhood, based on the Basque language and culture, is today expressed in various forms of Basque nationalism that advocate differing levels of self-determination for the Basque Country. This section will not concern itself with the antiquated and complex history of Basque nationhood, but rather focus on modern Basque nationalism and the contemporary armed conflict over the sovereignty of the Basque Country.

Modern Basque nationalism was born in the late nineteenth century and in the aftermath of the Third Carlist War. This conflict ended in defeat for the Carlists and the abolition of the Basque fureos – the historic charters which created an extensive system of political and financial self-government. The abolition of the fureos created discontent and the defeated Carlist movement evolved into different political factions, Basque nationalism being one of them. Sabino Arana Goiri is regarded as the father of modern Basque nationalism. In 1892 he launched the first political articulation of Basque nationalism through a pamphlet entitled ‘Bizkaia for its Independence’. While it is considered the founding text of Basque nationalism, it is also laced with racial attacks on Spaniards and Arana’s writings are generally viewed as racist by contemporary Basque nationalists.

Within a few short years Sabino, and his brother Luis, had founded the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), undertaken a revival of the Basque language, designed the red, white and green Basque nationalist flag, composed a Basque nationalist anthem, and invented the term Euskadi to refer to the Basque nation. The emergence of this Basque nationalism did not happen in isolation, it coincided with a period of great economic, political, social and

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8 The Basque Nationalist Party is known as Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea (EAJ) in Basque and Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) in Spanish. It is more generally referred to by its Spanish acronym PNV and this will be used throughout my thesis. Founded in 1895 it is the second oldest political party in Spain. It is the biggest Basque nationalist party and has had a major influence on Basque politics.
cultural change in Europe, which included the rise of other nationalist movements. Such movements were connected to and influenced by one another. The formation of connections between Irish and Basque nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century has been documented by Mees. These international connections are discussed in more detail in section 4.3.

Arana and his followers succeeded in establishing a modern popular democratic political party, but this was just one element of a much broader network of organisations that were established to promote Basque nationalism, culture, and language. Being nationalist became more than just a PNV voter, it became a way-of-life and an identity symbolised by the flag, anthem, language, and cultural festivities. Since Arana’s death in 1903 Basque nationalism has swung between radical separatism and autonomist moderation.

The defeat of the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War and the resulting Franco military dictatorship had a significant impact on Basque nationalism. Under Franco the speaking and teaching of the Basque language was banned and those who broke the law faced severe penalties. This period of repression when “Basques were stigmatised as Basques” is regarded as an era of “collective trauma” and “national suffering” in Basque nationalism. In the early Cold War period, while the USA and European allies were thawing their relations with the Franco regime to build an anti-communist alliance in Europe, PNV support among Basque nationalists weakened and a new more radical form of nationalism emerged. This nationalism was committed to socialism and sympathetic to third world anti-colonialism, and it distanced itself from the more conservative nationalism outlined in Arana’s writings. These developments ultimately led to the creation of ETA in 1959 by students frustrated with the conservative nationalism of the PNV. ETA did not

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12 Ibid, 804-5.
15 Zabalo Bilbao and Odriozola Irizar, "The Importance of Historical Context,” 140.
16 ETA is an acronym of *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*. In English this translates as Basque Homeland and Liberty or Basque Country and Freedom.
carry out its first military attack until 1961 and it spent most of the 1960s defining its ideology and strategy in fractious internal debates.\textsuperscript{18}

From the outset the young leaders of ETA strived to place the conflict as part of the global de-colonisation movement and Cold War dynamics of the time. The leadership group were deeply influenced by the Algerian, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions, and by revolutionary texts like Frantz Fanon’s acclaimed analysis of the dehumanising effects of colonialism: \textit{Les Damnés de la Terre}.\textsuperscript{19} They rejected the racial arguments that made up Arana’s Basque nationalism and instead favoured a revolutionary-war model of third-world national liberation movements that was tailored to the Basque reality. As such, a central importance was still placed on the Basque language and culture.\textsuperscript{20} This is significantly different from case of Sinn Féin and the IRA that was detailed in the preceding chapter. The 1970 split that occurred at the beginning of the conflict in Northern Ireland was partially due to divisions between those who had a more Marxist and internationalist focus, similar to the founders of ETA, and those who largely viewed the republican campaign through an indigenous Irish lens. It was the latter group that emerged stronger, ensuring that at the outset of the conflict Sinn Féin and the IRA, unlike ETA, were almost exclusively focused on the domestic historical context in its framing of the conflict with an avowedly anti-Marxist leadership and a scant focus on international dimensions.

By the 1970s ETA had grown to become the core of what is termed the Basque nationalist left – a broad network of political, social and cultural organisations, that have the common aims of Basque independence and socialism.\textsuperscript{21} In the early 1970s, despite intense ideological disagreements and the occurrence of many splits, this period was marked by intense ETA military activity, unlike anything experienced before. It culminated in ETA’s assassination of Carrero Blanco, the Spanish Prime Minister and heir to Franco, in December 1973.\textsuperscript{22} The final and most definitive split in ETA’s history took place in October 1974 when two groups emerged: ETA (\textit{Militar}) and ETA (\textit{Politico-Militar}). The latter

\textsuperscript{18} Cynthia L. Irvin, \textit{Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 68.
\textsuperscript{19} Aiartza and Zabalo, "The Basque Country: The Long Walk to a Democratic Scenario," 13.
\textsuperscript{20} Zabalo Bilbao and Odriozola Irizar, "The Importance of Historical Context"
\textsuperscript{21} Mees, "Between Votes and Bullets. Conflicting Ethnic Identities in the Basque Country," 807.
\textsuperscript{22} Irvin, \textit{Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country}, 76.
emerged as the stronger faction and proceeded to restructure the organisation, establishing a new political-military framework.\textsuperscript{23}

The death of Franco, the crumbling of the authoritarian regime, and the beginning of the Spanish transition to democracy meant all swathes of Basque nationalism needed to strategically decide how they would respond. In April and May of 1977 all Basque nationalist groupings from ETA to the PNV met in Txiberta in the northern Basque Country in an attempt to develop a common nationalist position towards negotiation with the Spanish state, but the meeting failed to achieve a consensus and it left the moderate and radical blocs of Basque nationalism deeply divided.\textsuperscript{24} After the failure to reach a consensus, HB was formed as a left-wing pro-independence party to rival the moderate, conservative PNV. HB was viewed as ETA’s political surrogate by moderate nationalists and those outside the Basque Country.\textsuperscript{25} It was the creation of a Basque form of joint militancy and politics, a model often followed by rebel movements that has been identify by Grisham and described in section 2.5. This new model meant there were now three separate political blocs in the Basque Country: a moderate nationalist bloc represented by the PNV; a nationalist left bloc represented by HB and ETA; and a pro-Spanish unionist bloc represented by the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) and the People’s Party (PP).\textsuperscript{26}

The 1978 Spanish constitutional referendum was a deeply contentious issue in the Basque Country. In most regions of Spain support for the constitution was above 90 percent with a turnout of over 70 percent. In the Basque Country the constitution was supported by 74.6 percent of voters with a turnout of only 44.65 percent, therefore only 30.86 percent of eligible voters in the Basque Country voted in favour of the constitution in the referendum.\textsuperscript{27} The constitutional referendum was followed by a referendum on the Basque Statute of Autonomy in 1979. The statute was supported by 94.6 percent of voters with a turnout of 58.86 percent.\textsuperscript{28} The constitution and the statute granted the Basque Country considerable autonomy but created extensive divisions within Basque nationalism.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 77-78.
\item\textsuperscript{24} Whitfield, \textit{Endgame for ETA: Elusive Peace in the Basque Country}, 48.
\item\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 65.
\item\textsuperscript{26} Letamendia and Loughlin, ”Peace in the Basque Country and Corsica?.” 236.
\item\textsuperscript{27} ”Election results - December 1978 Referendum,” Info Electoral, accessed 10 August 2022, \url{https://infoelectoral.interior.gob.es/opencms/en/elecciones-celebradas/resultados-electorales/}.
\item\textsuperscript{28} ”1979 Statute of Autonomy Referendum Results,” Euskadi, accessed 10 August 2022, \url{https://www.euskadi.eus/ab12aAREWar/resultado/maint}.
\end{itemize}
over three main issues. First, it partitioned the historic Basque territory of Navarre from the rest of the Basque Country. Second, it gave the Spanish language superiority over the Basque language. Third, the right to self-determination was effectively outlawed in the new constitution.29

While moderate nationalists accepted the partial devolution of the historic rights of Basque self-government to enter into the new Spanish constitutional consensus, the nationalist left argued that the high rates of abstentionism and ‘No’ votes meant that there was no majority and therefore no democratic mandate for the new Spanish constitution in the Basque Country.30 As the divisions deepened so did the conflict between the Spanish state and ETA. The 1980s not only saw continued ETA attacks and a rising death toll, but also the use of illegal paramilitary death squads, known as ‘Antiterrorist Liberation Groups’ (GAL), by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior.31

While ETA viewed the constitutional process as illegitimate, it could not ignore the new political reality and Basque elections. In the form of joint militancy and politics of the Basque nationalist left, ETA was clearly the leading group, but HB contested elections while promising not to take its seats if elected. This abstentionist policy and joint militancy and politics model was strikingly similar to Sinn Féin’s in the 1970s and early 1980s.32 Support for HB regularly teetered between 15 and 20 percent, peaking in the late 1980s with over 220,000 people voting for the party that directly challenged the legitimacy of the Spanish state and aligned itself with ETA.33 As the conflict claimed more and more victims the first significant attempts at brokering a peace settlement began in the late 1980s, when a ripeness for political resolution to the conflict emerged among the warring parties. As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.2, Zartman’s theory of ripeness contends that violent conflicts are only ready for negotiated settlement when they reach a hurting stalemate. The next section analyses these conflict resolution efforts and the ripeness for conflict resolution.

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29 Ó Broin, Matxinada - Basque Nationalism and Radical Basque Youth Movements, 78.
4.2 Attempted Peace Processes and the End of the Violent Conflict

By the late 1980s HB had become a major political force in the Basque Country and it was now jostling with the PNV to become the largest party in Basque nationalism. This directly led to the 1988 Pacto de Ajuria-Enea – a pact with political commitments to undercut support for HB and to eradicate ETA that was signed by the PNV, PP, and PSOE. Those who signed the Pacto agreed not to work with any elected representatives who were not signatories and as a result HB representatives were excluded from all municipal government committees and commissions. It was an attempt to unite parties in the Basque Country against the nationalist left and an effort at peacebuilding through a policy of exclusion. This is comparable to the exclusionary approach that underpinned the early peacebuilding efforts in Northern Ireland that were also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the Spanish government opened secret communication channels with ETA at the same time and peace talks discreetly commenced.

In 1989 the Spanish government agreed to enter structured peace talks with ETA. In line with Zartman’s theory of ripeness, as discussed in sub-section 2.2.2, many observers believed that both sides had at this point reached a mutually hurting stalemate and the conflict was ripe for a negotiated settlement. This was because thirty years after ETA’s creation neither side in the conflict was close to military victory or had a clear pathway to military victory. The continued conflict was damaging to the new democratic face that Spain was presenting to the world and in the Basque Country there was a war weariness as other regions in Spain enjoyed the dividends of the new democratic order. However, neither side was on the cusp of defeat or under compelling political pressure to make a deal. The talks were therefore the fruit of a military stalemate rather than a mutually hurting stalemate.

The lack of ripeness for a negotiated settlement emerged quickly in the talks that took place in Algiers. The Spanish government made clear it was only prepared to discuss disarmament, prisoners, and technical issues, whereas ETA wanted to negotiate constitutional issues. The talks promptly collapsed with both sides remaining entrenched.

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in their positions. The breakdown in negotiations led to a renewed effort by the Spanish government for military victory over ETA. The early 1990s were marked by increased cooperation and collaboration between the Spanish and French governments against ETA, with the notable arrest of the entire ETA leadership in the northern Basque Country in 1992. When Spain was under Franco’s authoritarian rule, France was reluctant to take joint action against ETA. This new cooperation was part of closer relations between the two states in the post-Cold War period as Spain transitioned to a democratic country and joined NATO. It was also the result of the deepening process of European integration via the EU after the Maastricht Treaty.

The political isolation of HB and the successful Franco-Spanish security operations against ETA meant that the Basque nationalist left was severely weakened by the mid-1990s. In 1995 ETA published a document entitled ‘Democratic Alternative’ in which it advocated dialogue with the Spanish state to end the conflict and resolve the constitutional issue – it was essentially a peace proposal. In the 1996 Spanish general election HB only received 12 percent of the vote in the Basque Country, its lowest percentage ever, and the PP’s José María Aznar became Spain’s new Prime Minister. Aznar, who survived an ETA assassination attempt in 1995, took a hard-line stance against ETA and HB. In 1997 the entire leadership of HB were jailed for seven years each, the first time that political activists had been imprisoned for political activity since Franco’s regime. In 1998, ten years on from the Pacto de Ajuria-Enea, the Spanish government continued to favour an exclusionary process of conflict resolution with criminalisation and isolation at the core. This was popular among the Spanish electorate outside the Basque Country and it was leading to significant military successes. However, within the Basque Country support for an inclusive peace process was growing amid the global focus on conflict resolution efforts during the 1990s decade of the peace agreement and particularly due to the developing peace process in Northern Ireland.

37 Ibid.
38 Letamendia and Loughlin, "Peace in the Basque Country and Corsica?", 238.
39 Ó Broin, Matxinada - Basque Nationalism and Radical Basque Youth Movements, 106.
40 Ibid, 112.
In 1998 the PNV Lehendakari, José Antonio Ardanza, decided to embark on a new, more expansive conflict resolution attempt. His sixteen-page proposal, which was quickly leaked to the media, focused on ending ETA’s violent campaign by bringing HB into the mainstream political process and building a broader political consensus in the Basque Country. Ardanza admitted that this proposal was influenced by the inclusive peace process taking shape in Northern Ireland and that PNV advisers had been in contact with the actors involved in that process. The extent of the influence was made explicitly clear when HB organised the so-called ‘Irish Forum’, a forum were all parties and labour unions within the Basque Country were invited to analyse the peace process in Northern Ireland and what lessons could be learned.

On 12 September 1998 the participants in the Irish Forum announced the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement. The Agreement, which was signed by all the Basque nationalist parties, stated the conflict had a political nature related to unsolved questions of self-determination, decision-making, and sovereignty. It called for initial negotiations without pre-conditions followed by phased negotiations on solving the causes of the conflict, but only after a complete and permanent cessation of violence. This was the first time in modern Basque history that nationalists in the Basque Country put aside their differences to offer the Spanish state a clear and defined route out of the conflict. This marked the beginning of a broad campaign in support of an inclusive peace process that was popular in the Basque Country but faced stiff resistance in Madrid.

Four days after the Agreement was signed ETA declared a unilateral and indefinite ceasefire, its first ceasefire not aimed at enabling direct negotiations with the Spanish government, but instead targeted at producing a joint strategy among Basque nationalists. Divergent approaches to conflict resolution began to take hold. Among Basque nationalists there was a recognition of the grievances that underpinned the violent

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41 Lehendakari is the Basque word for President and is used to refer to the President of the Basque Government, elected by the Basque Parliament.
43 Ibid.
45 Letamendia and Loughlin, "Peace in the Basque Country and Corsica?," 239.
46 Ó Broin, Matxinada - Basque Nationalism and Radical Basque Youth Movements, 117.
47 Murua, "No More Bullets for ETA,”95.
conflict, even though a majority did not support ETA’s actions, and an awareness of the need for an inclusive process to bring the conflict to an end through a negotiated peace. In contrast the PP led Spanish government and the PSOE opposition staunchly opposed the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement. They remained committed to an exclusivist process without the Basque nationalist left or a military victory. They refused to recognise the grievances underpinning the conflict and instead focused on the unconditional surrender of ETA and bringing the conflict to an end via a victor’s peace rather than a negotiated peace.

The ceasefire and the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement appeared to have popular localised support as parties that supported the Agreement won 61 percent of the vote in the Basque parliamentary election that took place one month later. The Anzar government in Madrid maintained that it was determined to militarily defeat ETA and would not enter dialogue with ETA under any circumstances. It rejected the significant developments among Basque nationalists as an ETA inspired strategy to undermine the integrity of the Spanish state and placed pressure on the PNV to break its new links with ‘terrorism’. There was one meeting between ETA and the Spanish government in Switzerland in May 1999, but it led to nothing and ETA ended its ceasefire in November 1999 due to a lack of progress in negotiations with the Spanish government. Letamendia and Loughlin draw a parallel between the intransigent position of the Spanish government leading to the breakdown of ETA’s ceasefire in 1999 and the attitude of the John Major government in London that led to the breakdown of the first IRA ceasefire in 1996.

The electorate in the Basque Country who had overwhelming supported the Basque nationalist parties that signed the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement in 1998, punished HB for ETA’s return to violence. It lost seven of its fourteen seats in the May 2001 Basque parliament elections, while PNV gained six seats and was returned to power. This reveals that the Basque nationalist left’s hybrid militancy and political model was struggling to gain support among the electorate, with the tactics of armed warfare and the seeking of electoral victory appearing incompatible. This is a similar position to what Sinn Féin faced in the early 1990s and particularly after the 1992 Westminster election which saw Gerry Adams lose his West

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Belfast MP seat. If the Basque nationalist left wanted to achieve electoral political success a full rebel-to-party transition, similar to the Irish republican transition, was necessary. However, for this transition to occur a negotiated peace process with the Spanish state was necessary, but there was no ripeness in Madrid to concede to a peace process as it was not in a hurting stalemate. Additionally, international geopolitical development soon turned to the PP’s advantage in its determination for a military solution to the conflict.

The 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington D.C. and the subsequent US ‘War on Terror’ changed the global political landscape. The liberal peacebuilding model that dominated the 1990s was now challenged by a US-led securitisation agenda based on realism and military intervention. In his memoir, Aznar recalls that this proved advantageous because it brought greater international legitimacy to his government’s determination to militarily defeat ETA rather than settle for a negotiated settlement. Aznar quickly aligned the Spanish government with the US led securitisation agenda, becoming one of the few European countries who supported the US and British led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The global shift to portray greed-based terrorism as the cause of conflicts impacted the conflict resolution process in the Basque Country. The Spanish government had been pushing fellow EU states since it joined the bloc to back its fight against ETA and to declare the armed group a terrorist organisation. In December 2001, just three months after the 9/11 attacks, it succeeded.

While the Spanish government gained international support for its militarised approach to conflict resolution in this changed geopolitical landscape, the Basque nationalist left focused on internal divisions and devised a new peace strategy. HB, which had formed the Euskal Herritarrok (EH) party for elections between 1998 and 2001, rebranded again after the disastrous May 2001 election as Batasuna. In January 2002 Batasuna released a document outlining what it viewed as the causes of the conflict and how it could be resolved through dialogue and a peace process. Notably, it called the document ‘A Scenario for Peace’ after the landmark 1987 Sinn Féin document of the same name, and Sinn Féin

MLA and negotiator Alex Maskey attended the launch. A significant indication that engagements and experience sharing was taking place between the two parties.

The document and developments within the Basque nationalist left did not lead to a shift in the Spanish government’s policy of using police means against ETA and the nationalist left in its quest for a military victory. In June 2002 the Spanish Parliament passed the Political Parties Law which allowed the Supreme Court to declare political parties illegal if it deemed them as supporters of terrorism or if they worked to undermine the Spanish constitution. It was aimed at Batasuna in particular and in May 2003 the Supreme Court banned Batasuna for its failure to condemn ETA. It deemed Batasuna’s political strategy as ETA’s political strategy. It was the first time a political party was outlawed in Spain since the transition to democracy. Batasuna attempted to reorganise under a plethora of new names, but all these manifestations were themselves banned for having ties to Batasuna. The Spanish government’s hard-line stance at this time was enabled by the burgeoning ‘Global War on Terror’ and the growing securitisation discourse focused on military interventions.

Despite the banning of Batasuna, secret channels of contact it had with the Basque branch of PSOE, and specifically its President Jesús Egiguren, were kept open in an attempt to establish some form of a negotiated end to the conflict. The PSOE surprisingly emerged victorious in the March 2004 general election and it was due in no small part to PP’s support for the militarised securitisation agenda at home and abroad. In the run up to polling day PP had a 5 percent point lead in the polls and it was expected to be returned to power. Three days before voters cast their ballots, Islamist militants bombed commuter trains in Madrid killing 193 civilians. In the immediate aftermath the PP government rushed to blame ETA for the attack and refused to backdown despite mounting evidence that it was carried out by al-Qaeda affiliated militants. The rush to blame ETA appears to have been politically motivated, as widespread opinion was that such a devastating attack on civilians in Madrid would have created overwhelming support for PP’s uncompromising militarised

55 Ó Broin, Matxinada - Basque Nationalism and Radical Basque Youth Movements, 134.
56 Ibid, 136.
approach to defeat ETA.\textsuperscript{59} As evidence grew that it was not an ETA attack, despite the
government’s pronouncements, public opinion instead shifted. The attack was widely
perceived as a result of Aznar’s support for the invasion of Iraq, something that was already
unpopular among Spanish voters. With suggestions that PP were deliberately concealing
the truth behind the attack for political reasons, PSOE emerged victorious and after the
election Spain’s new Prime Minister, José Zapatero, followed through on his campaign
pledge to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq.

PSOE’s victory raised hopes of greater Spanish government involvement in negotiations
and conflict resolution attempts in the Basque Country. In 2006 secret peace talks between
ETA and the Spanish government took place in Geneva and Oslo facilitated by the Centre
for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre).\textsuperscript{60} This was the first time that talks between the
sides were facilitated by an international third party, a key element of liberal peace
approaches to conflict resolution that was discussed in section 2.3 of this thesis. The parties
met four times between June and December, but they never reached the point of beginning
substantiative talks on a peace process.\textsuperscript{61} To facilitate the negotiations ETA had announced
a ceasefire in March 2006. It was a unilateral ceasefire because the talks were secret. When
the talks broke down and efforts to revive them were unsuccessful, ETA ended its ceasefire
with the bombing of a car park in Madrid airport that killed two workers.

The bombing elicited retaliatory measures from the Spanish government who publicly
declared the end of any possibility of peace talks and ETA’s actions received an
overwhelmingly negative reaction in the Basque Country. Nine days after the bombing the
leadership of the banned Batasuna party made a direct appeal to ETA – the first in its history
– to respect commitments it had entered into with regard to the ceasefire and to declare
that future dialogue could take place in the absence of any violence.\textsuperscript{62} The collapse of the
talks and ETA’s return to its armed campaign ushered in a difficult period for the nationalist
left. According to sources within the movement, the nationalist left suffered from
disorientation in this period as there were competing interpretations regarding the reasons

\textsuperscript{59}Miguel-Anxo Murado, "Madrid bombing, 10 years on: the lack of a backlash has the power of a new
\textsuperscript{60}Aiartza, "Strategic Thinking and Conflict Transformation: A Reflection on and from the Basque Country,"
11.
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid, 180.
for the collapse of the peace talks and what to do next.\textsuperscript{63} This reveals the movement was at risk of a split due to internal concerns over the peace process and rebel-to-party transition. Such fears related to the peace process could create spoilers, as defined by Stedman and highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7. Furthermore, the Spanish government followed through on its threats during the negotiations, that if ETA returned to violence hundreds of nationalist left activists would be prosecuted.\textsuperscript{64} Arnaldo Otegi and other Batasuna leadership figures were detained throughout 2007. The PSOE government was embracing a securitisation agenda in the aftermath of the collapse of the negotiations, that were influenced by the liberal peace, and the end of ETA’s ceasefire.

Despite the continued arrest and imprisonment of nationalist left figures and sustained police successes against ETA as part of the PSOE’s new militarised approach to the conflict, efforts to find a negotiated resolution to the conflict continued within the Basque Country. In January 2011 ETA announced another ceasefire and in February the Basque nationalist left launched a new party called Sortu, which was seen as a replacement for the banned Batasuna party. Sortu formed a political coalition with other nationalist left parties, called Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu), in advance of the May 2011 Basque elections. EH Bildu surpassed all pre-election predictions and achieved 25.5 percent of the vote, the best result ever achieved by the nationalist left in Basque elections.

The surprising electoral success was followed by the landmark October 2011 ‘International Conference to Promote the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque Country’ in Donostia-San Sebastián.\textsuperscript{65} The conference brought together major international personalities, known for their work in politics and conflict resolution, and the leaders of the Basque political parties. The international guests included Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Pierre Joxe, Bertie Ahern, Jonathan Powell, and Gerry Adams. This was the most extensive international involvement in conflict resolution efforts in the Basque Country to date and illustrated a deepening engagement between Basque and international actors regarding a peace process. As the Madrid government was unwilling to reopen peace talks and was determinedly focused on a securitisation approach to the conflict, the Basque nationalist

\textsuperscript{63} Aiartza, “Strategic Thinking and Conflict Transformation: A Reflection on and from the Basque Country,” 13.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, 13.
\textsuperscript{65} It is more widely referred to as the Donostia-San Sebastián International Peace Conference.
left looked internationally for interlocuters to support efforts to establish a negotiated political settlement. It is noteworthy that half of the international guests at the conference were directly connected to the Northern Ireland peace process.

The conference resulted in a declaration that called on ETA to make a public announcement declaring an end to its activities and to request talks with the Spanish and French governments. The declaration called on both governments to enter talks with ETA if these twin steps take place. Three days after the conference ETA announced a “definitive cessation of its armed activity” and that “a new political age is opening” in the Basque Country.66 Urko Aiartza, a former Senator and key activist in the Basque nationalist left’s peace process efforts, stated that the Peace Conference allowed ETA to make this first step because the call for a cessation of activities was coming from international figures and not the Spanish state.67 He states that this was a new departure, because it was a unilateral step on behalf of ETA based on its own reflections and as a positive response to international demands; it was not reliant on a quid pro quo from the Spanish state.68 It was also a reversal in the international dynamics of the conflict. The Spanish government had used the rise of the securitisation agenda as part of the ‘Global War on Terror’ to gain international support for its militarised approach to the conflict in the 2000s, but with the securitisation agenda coming under increased scrutiny in the 2010s after the failures of the militarised interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Basque nationalist left moved to harness international support for its goal of a negotiated peace process that would enable it to undertake a successful rebel-to-party transition.

The Spanish government had three options it could take in response to this initiative: it could grasp the opportunity and engage with ETA in new negotiations; it could directly oppose the new initiative and take clear steps to dismantle the nascent process; or it could refuse to engage in the process, leaving it to Basque nationalists to take it forward unilaterally. It took the final option, not taking firm steps to reverse the process, but rejecting any type of engagement.69 When ETA conducted a process of disarmament and

68 Ibid, 25.
69 Ibid, 27.
demobilisation, quite contrary to other experiences around the world, the Madrid government firmly rejected any form of contact or engagement in the process from beginning to end. One of the main characteristics of the Basque disarmament case is therefore the complete lack of central government involvement, except for throwing up obstacles and impediments. The process was locally owned, in contrast to other peace processes established under the liberal peace paradigm, which tend to deny local ownership.

On 1 March 2014 ETA issued a communique saying that it was putting all its arms beyond use and on 3 May 2018 it released its final statement declaring it was disbanding and dismantling its structures. This all happened outside any formal peace agreement with the central government. ETA voluntarily laid down its arms without achieving its goal of Basque independence or the recognition of the right to self-determination, yet despite this the Basque nationalist left push a narrative of relative success through a rebel-to-party transition without spoilers causing a major split in the movement.

Many arguments have been put forward for why this violent conflict finally concluded. They have focused on the increasing military weakness of ETA, the success of Spanish-French security cooperation, and the positive influence of Basque civil society. While these arguments provide important narratives to help us understand why the violent conflict ended, they cannot sufficiently explain why ETA took unilateral steps to voluntarily disband outside a formal peace agreement with the Spanish state, and why the rebel-to-party transition was devoid of major spoilers and has resulted in political success for the nationalist left. To understand this peculiarity in liberal peacebuilding, it is important to analyse the assistance the Basque nationalist left received from international third parties, including Sinn Féin.

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71 Mac Ginty, "Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace.”
72 Aiartza, "Strategic Thinking and Conflict Transformation: A Reflection on and from the Basque Country,” 37.
75 Christopher C. Harmon, "Spain's ETA Terrorist Group is Dying," Orbis 56, no. 4 (2012).
76 Basque Permanent Social Forum, “ETA's disarmament in the context of international DDR guidelines.”
4.3 International Involvement and the Role of Sinn Féin

The emergence of the peace process in Northern Ireland in 1998 had an immediate impact on conflict resolution efforts in the Basque Country. The inclusive peace process in Northern Ireland initially provided an impetus to efforts to find a similar negotiated end to the violent conflict, transferring grievances to the democratic political space. This mimics the similar way that the South African process influenced peace efforts in Northern Ireland, which was highlighted in sub-section 3.4.2.

As detailed in the preceding section, the emerging peace process in Northern Ireland directly led to the creation of the ‘Irish Forum’ to study the fledgling peace process and if any lessons could be learned. There were obvious parallels to be drawn between the two protracted conflicts in western Europe that now faced the prospect of resolution in the wave of post-Cold War peace efforts. The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the swell of peace agreements in the early 1990s reduced the ability to frame the conflicts as part of a global ideological movement. The hegemony of the liberal peace provided a model for negotiated settlement. However, connections between Irish and Basque nationalists did not begin with the Irish Forum in 1998.

In his analysis of Basque nationalism, Mees points out that connections with Irish nationalists began as soon as modern Basque nationalism emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.77 This is echoed by Aiartza, who contends that the links between Basque and Irish nationalist political movements were established at the beginning of the twentieth century, they continued right through the twentieth century, and they endure today.78 Proponents of armed warfare to achieve independence within Irish nationalism and Basque nationalism willingly drew parallels between both struggles. Both Irish republicans and militant Basque nationalists viewed their ethno-nationalist campaigns for independence through a colonial lens, presenting their movements as national liberation organisations. Despite being located in western Europe, they both borrowed heavily from Third World anti-colonial ideology and terminology to justify their demands, placing themselves as part of a global anti-imperialist movement. While military connections between the IRA and ETA have never been comprehensively revealed, it is strongly

78 Urko Aiartza, interview by author, 24 April 2020.
suspected that there were some low-level military connections between both militant organisations during the 1970s and 1980s. The Irish historian Tim Pat Coogan supports the argument that some military co-operation may have taken place. He has referenced an interview with an ETA spokesperson in Der Spiegel in 1974, who stated that ETA had “very good relations with the IRA,” as evidence of this co-operation.

It is evident that Sinn Féin and HB started to engage by the mid-1980s. This is revealed by the attendance of HB Senator, José Luis Enparanza, at Sinn Féin’s historic 1986 Ard Fheis. As the peace process began to take shape in Northern Ireland these contacts expanded. Senior HB figures, including Arnaldo Otegi, travelled to Ireland in 1998 and witnessed the developments first-hand. Much of the visit was private and went unreported, but according to Ó Broin they met with Sinn Féin representatives, IRA prisoners, NGOs, victims of the conflict, the SDLP, and Irish government representatives.

As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.1, in efforts to end protracted conflicts other peace processes can often act as a template. The influence of the Northern Ireland peace process in the Basque Country was clearly manifested in the creation of the ‘Irish Forum’. However, what is less visible and is hitherto under researched, is the significant engagement between Sinn Féin and the Basque nationalist left in the aftermath of the failure of the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement. This research finds that such engagements had a significant impact on the rebel-to-party transition of the Basque nationalist left and on its peace process negotiation strategy. This impact will be illustrated in sections 4.4 and 4.5, however it is imperative to first explain why the Basque nationalist left sought increased third-party involvement from Sinn Féin in this period. There were two important contextual elements in this regard.

First, the lack of Spanish government engagement in the peace process needs to be considered. Domestically there was a military stalemate and the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement revealed a ripeness for a resolution of the violent conflict within the Basque Country. However, this ripeness did not extend to Madrid. As outlined in sub-section 2.2.2, Zartman’s theory of ripeness is premised on a mutually hurting stalemate. It was not enough to have a ripeness for a resolution in the Basque Country alone, there needed to

81 Also known as Txillardegi, he is considered one of the founders of ETA.
be ripeness in Madrid as well. As highlighted in the preceding section, the PP led Spanish
government was not willing to engage with the process started by the Lizarra-Garazi
Agreement and the Agreement collapsed thirteen months later. The government did not
perceive itself as in a hurting stalemate and it continued to pursue a military victory rather
than a negotiated settlement, a popular strategy among conservative and nationalist voters
in Spain. It was in the aftermath of the collapse of the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement that the
nationalist left began to seek out greater engagement with Sinn Féin. The similarities in
the approach of John Major’s government to the first IRA ceasefire that collapsed in 1996 with
the approach of the Anzar government to the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement and ETA’s
connected ceasefire were highlighted in the preceding section. Thus, there was the
potential for lesson and experience sharing between the two movements at this time.

The second contextual element that needs to be considered is the international geopolitical
changes that took place in the immediate post-Cold War period. As discussed in section 2.1
of this thesis, after the conclusion of the Cold War there arose an irresistible force of
globalisation which was associated with the liberal peace agenda. The collapse of the Soviet
Bloc also denied armed left-wing groups a strong ideological grounding. With the peace
process in Northern Ireland and the demobilisation of the IRA, ETA found itself
internationally isolated and the Basque conflict became out of context in the twenty-first
century. Otegi recalls that the nationalist left historically thought that “ETA was going to
resolve everything” but by the 1990s “this was clearly not realistic.” This isolation was
only heightened in the post-9/11 period when it was clear to Batasuna’s leaders that the
use of armed warfare was no longer viable. The peace process in Northern Ireland
ensured there was a renewed focus on the Basque conflict as the last remaining armed
conflict in western Europe, but for the Basque nationalist left the peace process in Ireland
revealed that the cessation of violence did not necessarily also signify defeat. A similar
rebel-to-party transition via a liberal peace process offered the movement a chance to

85 Murua, "No More Bullets for ETA," 99-100; Paddy Woodworth, "Basque leader sees peace process as the
22, no. 3 (2005): 77.
88 Richard Gillespie, "Peace moves in the Basque Country," Journal of Southern European Studies 1, no. 2
transfer its national liberation campaign into the democratic political space without suffering a defeat in the conflict.

By the beginning of the 2000s the Basque nationalist left found itself increasing isolated in international terms and in a military stalemate, while the PP government’s resolute focus on a military victory instead of negotiations was gaining international support under the new US-led global securitisation agenda. A key strategist of the nationalist left, Urko Aiartza, acknowledged that the main lesson it learnt from the Lizarra-Garazi process was that it failed in getting international engagement in the process and the nationalist left needed to build relationships with international actors for future efforts. Therefore, although the conflict resolution attempt via the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement was influenced by international events, including the creation of the Irish Forum, there was no international involvement in the localised process itself. Aiartza’s reasoning was outlined in more detail by Batasuna in a position paper it published in January 2002 titled ‘A Scenario for Peace’, a title evidently borrowed from the seminal 1987 Sinn Féin document of the same name. In this influential paper Batasuna’s leadership argued that one of the major weaknesses of the Lizarra-Garazi process was the absence of the international community and international understanding of the Basque nationalist cause and grievances. An emerging key element for the Basque nationalist left to move the peace process forward was therefore not international models to copy, but international involvement in the process itself. One of the international actors it chose to involve was Sinn Féin.

As outlined in sub-section 2.2.7 of this thesis, movements engaged in conflict resolution efforts are particularly interested in foreign political parties who have concluded their own conflict resolution process, who can experience share and wield soft and moral power. The strong historical ties and mutual affection between Basque nationalists and Irish republicans, meant that Sinn Féin had the potential to influence the strategic thinking of sections of the Basque nationalist left. Aiartza and Zabalo revealed that the nationalist left followed with great interest the dialogue and negotiation process in El Salvador and South

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89 Aiartza, interview by author.

90 This is not uncommon. As was outlined in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter 2, existing peace agreements can often be used as suggested templates or focal points in negotiations to end prevailing conflicts


Africa, but that the peace process in Northern Ireland “had a particularly profound effect on Euskal Herria.” Woodworth points out that Basque nationalists watched closely as the IRA silenced its guns, gave up its unconditional demands, embraced negotiations, and Sinn Féin gained political progress at home and a significant international presence. Otegi reveals the capacity for Sinn Féin’s soft and moral power among the Basque nationalist left when he stated that: “negotiation was always regarded in the Basque Country as something suspect. But Sinn Féin and the republican movement showed us that negotiation did not have to lead to political treachery.” The importance of this at the social-psychological dimension of peacebuilding, as defined by Kelman in sub-section 2.2.7, is discussed in more depth in section 4.5 of this chapter.

The detailed engagements also affirm that the involvement of certain foreign political parties in peace processes is a new post-Cold War internationalism. As specified earlier in this section, there was suspected military connections between ETA and the IRA during the 1970s and 1980s, but now in the post-Cold War era the solidarity between Irish republicans and the Basque nationalist left had transformed into peace process lesson and experience sharing. Just like in the engagements between Sinn Féin and the ANC discussed in Chapter 3, in the Basque case once again this research finds the changed global political environment producing new modes of engagement between militant left-wing national liberation movements.

Both Sinn Féin and Batasuna demonstrated their mutual eagerness to work on this new form of engagement. According to the former international spokesperson for Batasuna, Esther Agirre, “[Batasuna] were willing to learn from their [Sinn Féin’s] experience and they [Sinn Féin] were keen to help and train us.” This thesis argues that Sinn Féin’s motivation to engage was rooted in its internationalism, which was outlined in section 3.3 of the preceding chapter, and Batasuna’s eagerness to engage was a function of its desire for international involvement in the peace process and to gain knowledge from the rebel-to-party transition experience of a similar movement. Otegi described the essence of the relationship between the two groups as: “of a strategic nature and of complete

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94 Woodworth, "Basque leader sees peace process as the way forward."
95 Esther Agirre, interview by author, 10 May 2020.
solidarity.”96 The importance of solidarity to this form of anti-imperialist internationalism was discussed in section 2.6, but strategically the relationship was equally important for the Basque nationalist left in its efforts to borrow moral and soft power from Sinn Féin for internal and external negotiations. The remaining sections of this chapter will explain the research findings in this regard.

4.4 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the Basque Nationalist Left’s External Negotiations: Building the Case for a Peace Process

Section 2.5 of this thesis presented Zartman’s characterisation of negotiations to end civil wars as asymmetrical, with the government party being stronger than the rebel side and with more resources and experience.97 Zartman’s suggestion that in an effort to reduce this asymmetry political movements on the rebel side can borrow power from third parties was also cited.98 After the collapse of the Lizarra-Garazi process, we see this development in the Basque Country. Batasuna placed an increasing focus on international involvement to undermine the forceful policies of the Spanish government in pursuit of a military victory over the Basque nationalist left and as a means to build support for a future negotiated peace process to end the conflict.99 However, the nationalist left did not have the necessary international connections and influence. The lack of interest among the Basque diaspora, the strategic irrelevance of the conflict to any other state except France, and the strong bilateral relations that Spain had with global powers, meant there was minimal international interest in engaging with the Basque nationalist left or conflict resolution efforts.100 One international third party that the Basque nationalist left could borrow soft power from was Sinn Féin.

Aiartza reveals that after the failure of the Lizarra-Garazi process Sinn Féin helped Batasuna build a relationship with the Clinton administration in Washington D.C. and Nancy Soderberg in particular.101 Sinn Féin also suggested Batasuna contact the ANC, sharing the positive impact that its engagement with the ANC had. According to Whitfield, after Batasuna were banned it was interested in learning how the ANC operated clandestinely

96 Arnaldo Otegi, interview by author, 6 October 2020.
97 Zartman, "Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts."
98 Zartman, "Conflict Resolution and Negotiation."
100 Ibid, 124.
101 Aiartza, interview by author.
for decades and Sinn Féin helped establish a link between the two.\textsuperscript{102} Sinn Féin also recommended to Batasuna the South African lawyer Brian Currin, who was involved in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Currin went on to play an important role in conflict resolution efforts in the Basque Country. He introduced Batasuna to several others with experience of the South Africa process, such as former government negotiator, Roelf Meyer, and the Secretary-General of the ANC, Kgalema Motlanthe.\textsuperscript{103} The Basque nationalist left therefore used Sinn Féin’s soft power to improve its own international standing in an effort to reduce the asymmetry in negotiations with the Spanish government.

The Basque nationalist left also used Sinn Féin’s third party involvement to assist its negotiations with other Basque parties and the Spanish government. As discussed in subsection 2.2.8, there is substantial existing literature on how third parties can incentivise or encourage warring parties to make peace, and on how warring parties interact with each other. However, the focus of the literature is primarily on foreign states, intergovernmental organisations, and NGOs. This research demonstrates that foreign political parties are also engaging in this area and having an impact. Aiartza explains that in Batasuna’s engagements with Sinn Féin, it sometimes requested Sinn Féin to send representatives to meet with other parties in the Basque Country.\textsuperscript{104} Rodolfo Ares, the former deputy leader of the PSOE in the Basque Country, disclosed that during his work on building a peace process in the Basque Country he met with Sinn Féin, and that he encouraged the Basque nationalist left to engage further with Sinn Féin and follow the path it had taken in Ireland.\textsuperscript{105} Ares was an arch critic of ETA, necessitating him to have round-the-clock armed close protection, but he believes that Sinn Féin’s relationship with the Basque nationalist left helped it “bet on abandoning terrorist activities” and to instead “defend their ideas through peaceful and democratic channels.”\textsuperscript{106} In a statement welcoming the 2006 ETA ceasefire Gerry Adams revealed that Sinn Féin had been in dialogue with all the Basque political parties and he had also personally written to the Spanish Prime Minister in an effort to assist the development of a peace process.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid, 144.
\textsuperscript{104} Aiartza, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{105} Rodolfo Ares, interview by author, 8 May 2020.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Gerry Adams, "Gerry Adams welcomes ETA Ceasefire," 22 March 2006, \url{https://tinyurl.com/2bj7fad}. 141
This acknowledges a soft power Sinn Féin had, as an illustration of a successful rebel-to-party transition, even among the Basque nationalist left’s staunchest opponents. It created a relatable example that could be emulated by the Basque nationalist left. This is not to say that other political parties were not involved in peace efforts in the Basque Country, for example the SDLP also engaged with Basque political parties, but Sinn Féin’s engagement at the behest of Batasuna was a strategic collaboration to assist Batasuna’s own negotiations with these Basque parties and improve its negotiating position. It was not an apolitical intervention from a neutral third party focused on mediating or assisting efforts to end the conflict, a common role of third parties in liberal peace processes highlighted in section 2.3. Instead, it was a partisan intervention in favour of an inclusive liberal peace process that would facilitate a rebel-to-party transition for the Basque nationalist left and in opposition to an exclusionary model or a victor’s peace that focused on the surrender or military defeat of ETA. Sinn Féin was specifically engaging to support the Basque nationalist left’s peace process strategy, illustrating that the engagements were a form of internationalism focused on solidarity between the two groups.

This research also divulges that Sinn Féin became involved in the direct negotiating process when the HD Centre in Geneva was hosting secret talks between ETA and the Spanish Government in 2006. Jonathan Powell informed the author that he was contacted by the Executive Director of the HD Centre, Martin Griffiths, about these talks. Powell states that Griffiths informed him that the talks had run into an impasse and he asked Powell to assist by travelling to Geneva with some influential Sinn Féin representatives to meet with ETA.108 The use of existing peace agreements as focal points for others in protracted conflicts, when a post-conflict alternative future seems remote, has been documented by Schneckener and it was discussed in sub-section 2.2.1.109 Powell maintains that the ETA representatives were sceptical he would bring credible Sinn Féin representatives, but he did, and according to Powell they gave the ETA representatives some “very sensible advice” during many hours of talks.110 Sinn Féin’s positive engagements with ETA and the exchange of strategic advice during the Geneva talks was also confirmed to the author by Aiartza.111

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108 Powell, interview by author.
110 Powell, interview by author.
111 Aiartza interview by author.
However neither Powell nor Aiartza revealed exactly what was shared at the secret talks and the engagement did not stop the negotiations from collapsing, with ETA’s ceasefire breaking down soon after.

The collapse and failure of the Geneva talks caused serious internal fractures in the Basque nationalist left, with many believing that the failure was because there was a lack of internal cohesion in the movement.112 As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7, Kelman argues that the needs and fears of rebel groups are often overlooked in peace processes but the social-psychological level is important in our understanding of how resolutions are arrived at.113 If one adopts a greed based lens, as the Spanish government done, it is convenient to blame the collapse on the futility of negotiating with ‘terrorists’. In contrast, viewed through a social-psychological lens advocated by Kelman, the Basque nationalist left was unable to make concessions because it was sensitive to the risk spoilers posed to its movement, especially considering the previous splits in the organisation which were highlighted in section 4.1. The failure of the talks therefore compelled the Basque nationalist left to work on the issue of internal cohesion before launching any new peace initiative. The deepening relationship with Sinn Féin before and during the Geneva talks, and the soft and moral power it could exert within the nationalist left, ensured that Sinn Féin were poised to assist in this internal cohesion process.

This section has dealt with Sinn Féin’s engagement in the early stages of the Basque peace process. It showed why the Basque nationalist left wanted Sinn Féin to become involved, the soft and moral power Sinn Féin could exerted within the Basque nationalist left, and how the Basque nationalist left could borrow soft power from Sinn Féin when engaging with domestic and international actors. The next section examines the considerable engagement and impact Sinn Féin had in the rebel-to-party transition that took place within the Basque nationalist left between the ending of ETA’s ceasefire in December 2006 and when it announced it had dissolved in May 2018.

112 Ibid.
113 Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict."
4.5 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the Basque Nationalist Left’s Internal Negotiations and Rebel-to-Party Transition

The failure of both the Lizarra-Garazi process and the Geneva talks revealed that there was a lack of internal cohesion within the Basque nationalist left. A portion favoured continuing ETA’s military campaign, while another block was trying to manoeuvre the movement to solely democratic politics. Aiartza and Zabalo maintain that after the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement there were significant internal problems in the Basque nationalist left regarding the strategic direction to take: should it advocate for a peace process with the Spanish government or a nation building process in the Basque Country. 114 This lack of internal cohesion was not resolved and according to Aiartza it is one the primary reasons why the Geneva talks failed, and why the nationalist left intensified its focus on this area afterwards. 115 This was also observed by Powell. He believes that Batasuna “took the lesson from the collapse of these talks that they needed to go back to their base and talk about a way forward, which they did over a series of months.” 116 The internal divisions were more serious than outsiders perhaps initially understood.

Even with the collapse of the talks and the ending of ETA’s ceasefire, the bombing of Madrid airport in December 2006 caught the Batasuna leadership, including its leader Arnaldo Otegi, by complete surprise. According to Woodworth, Otegi was “cloistered in a Basque farmhouse with a PSOE interlocutor discussing further peace moves when the bomb went off.” 117 This reveals that there was a serious divide in the movement over the way forward. Years later, and writing from his prison cell, Otegi said the Madrid bombing had put the nationalist left, “not at the edge of precipice, but falling directly into it.” 118 Aiartza also disclosed to the author that at one stage during this period the Basque nationalist left were at the brink of a major split. 119 The nationalist left could not enter a peace process or undertake a successful rebel-to-party transition until it first improved internal cohesion due to the threat of spoilers which could split the movement.

114 Aiartza, interview by author.
115 Ibid
116 Powell, interview by author.
119 Aiartza, interview by author.
As discussed in Section 2.5 of this thesis, the political transformation of groups away from an armed campaign of violence and towards democratic politics is one of the hardest peacebuilding challenges. During this transformation there is a significant risk of spoilers, which is defined in sub-section 2.2.7. The same sub-section details how the needs and fears of rebel groups are often overlooked in rebel-to-party transitions in liberal peace processes. This research illustrates that it was at this social-psychological level that Sinn Féin’s engagements had a significant impact on the Basque nationalist left’s rebel-to-party transition.

Within the Basque nationalist left ETA had a dominating presence and any attempt to question its actions was taboo. It amounted to calling in to question the half a century of violent struggle and the sacrifice of thousands of militants who had been killed or jailed. However the outcome of the 2006 negotiations with the Spanish government was a turning point in this relationship. Batasuna’s leadership, believing that the resumption of ETA’s military campaign would be catastrophically for the nationalist left and the independence movement, began to challenge ETA’s strategy. They were proposing a new strategy based on politics alone and an end to the hybrid political-militancy campaign. The move away from a hybrid militancy and political model to a complete rebel-to-party transition reflects the similar trajectory of the ANC and Sinn Féin. Such a strategy had the potential to cause a split in the Basque nationalist left, as it done in the mid-1970s. Therefore, the upmost care had to be taken by the proponents and the outside support of Sinn Féin was requested, mirroring Sinn Féin’s request to the ANC for similar assistance.

In order to deal with the sensitive subject of ETA decommissioning and disbanding, the leader of Batasuna, Arnaldo Otegi, never called into question the merits of armed campaign itself, instead he focused on the efficiency of the militant strategy. When he was released from prison in August 2008, he and others began an intensive internal process to find a collective internal strategy for the nationalist left to move beyond the armed campaign. He spent three months completely out of the public eye and focused on these

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120 de Zeeuw, From Soldiers to Politicians.
122 Murua, ”No More Bullets for ETA,” 96.
internal discussions. In February 2010 the nationalist left released a document entitled ‘Stand Up Euskal Herria’, after consulting 7,200 activists and getting the support of 80 percent of them. The document was historic because it was the first time the nationalist left ever evaluated, debated, and adopted a position on ETA’s armed campaign. By September 2010 ETA had announced another ceasefire and in January 2011 it declared that it was permanent. The ceasefire stayed in place until 2 May 2018 when ETA announced it had completely dissolved all its structures.

According to Whitfield’s definitive book on ETA, no international actors are known to have been directly involved in the highly sensitive and intense internal debates which led to this successful rebel-to-party transition except Sinn Féin representatives, who Otegi told her helped in terms of “pedagogy with our most militant structures.” This statement reveals that the Batasuna leadership were borrowing moral and soft power from Sinn Féin representatives to ensure that potential spoilers did not split from the movement, and instead, got behind the strategy to ensure a successful rebel-to-party transition. This was not an easy feat considering there were very deep fears of this process among the nationalist left, particularly as a result of the judicial actions of the Spanish state against the Batasuna leadership. According to Aiartza, the nationalist left viewed these judicial processes as an attempt by the Spanish state to split the movement in order to destroy its political project. A key aspect of the rebel-to-party transition was therefore not just to ensure it could occur via a negotiated peace process, but also to ensure that spoilers did not emerge and create a damaging fracture within the nationalist left during the transition.

The engagement of Sinn Féin in the internal proceedings of the Basque nationalist left as it undertook a rebel-to-party transition was discussed during the author’s interview with Otegi as part of this research. When asked, as part of the open-ended interview style chosen for this research, whether he had any interactions with foreign political parties in his work on the Basque peace process, Otegi pointed out that after the Geneva talks the relationship with Sinn Féin “became more intense.” He also stated that in the peace

125 The importance of this document and the strategy it contained is discussed in the next section of this chapter.
127 Ibid, 218.
128 Aiartza, “Strategic Thinking and Conflict Transformation: A Reflection on and from the Basque Country,”
129 Otegi, interview by author.
process that followed “a delegation from Sinn Féin was present in all subsequent steps that led to the declaration of Aiete, where Gerry Adams participated, as well as the declaration of Arnaga and the end of the armed struggle.” Otegi stated that Sinn Féin’s experience was “very valuable” to the Basque nationalist left, specifically mentioning the importance it placed on “the need for continuous debate with the grassroots” and “internal negotiation with your base.” When asked whether such engagements led to any changes in strategy, Otegi revealed it had an impact on “the issue of internal negotiation work”, as well as on different external strategies. This reveals that the nationalist left’s engagements with Sinn Féin were focused on experience sharing and strategic discussions related to the rebel-to-transition process, but also that the nationalist left were borrowing the soft and moral power of Sinn Féin to ensure internal support for the strategy and to reduce the threat of a split in the movement due to spoilers.

This strategic engagement during the rebel-to-party transition is echoed by Aiartza. He disclosed to the author that the nationalist left was aware of the support the ANC gave Sinn Féin during its own peace process and Batasuna were keen to get similar support. He highlighted the study trips to Ireland that took place, including private meetings with Sinn Féin in Belfast, and that senior Sinn Féin members visited the Basque Country “to discuss issues like prisoners and internal cohesion, [as] they were very relevant issues.” He also pointed to a visit by Martin McGuinness to the Basque Country to have “private meetings with middle rank and file comrades to discuss the process.” Aiartza said such engagements were multipurpose, sometimes to learn from Sinn Féin’s experience, and other times representatives “would come here [the Basque Country] to back us and support our strategy and to make our comrades understand the process.”

Aiartza specifically highlighted the importance of prisoner issues in these engagements. He disclosed that Batasuna “had the strong support of Sinn Féin for what we were doing with prisoners and former prisoners” and that “very, very important meetings” were

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130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Aiartza, interview by author.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
arranged with former Basque prisoners and Sinn Féin representatives. Such engagements were essential to the nationalist left because by late 2008 the total number of prisoners in the Basque Political Prisoners Collective (EPPL) rose to 755 – the highest number since 1969. Prisoners and former prisoners were a critical constituency in the nationalist left. But prisoners were dispersed throughout Spain and France, kept separate from each other, and due to difficulties in communications, they were not widely being consulted or informed on the ongoing peace process efforts. Rumblings of discontent grew, and it was creating a dangerous internal dynamic. As Batasuna could not get permission for Sinn Féin representatives to visit prisoners in jail it used its own newspaper, which prisoners were permitted to receive, to ensure that the messages relayed by these visiting Sinn Féin representatives could reach the prisoners.

Aiartza’s proclamation that high ranking Sinn Féin representatives visited the Basque Country to discuss prison issues, prisoner releases, and how to deal with and support former prisoners, was repeated by the Sinn Féin representatives interviewed by the author. One of Sinn Féin’s highest-profile female representatives and former IRA prisoners, Martina Anderson, visited the Basque Country with her husband, a Sinn Féin advisor and former IRA prisoner, to meet with former prisoners. Seánn Walsh also travelled to the Basque Country to talk to former combatants about conflict resolution and the process that Irish republicans went through. Gerry Adams stated he “travelled regularly to the Basque Country to participate in debates [on the peace process] and to encourage its development.” Adams also revealed that at different times he privately lobbied the Spanish government on issues relating to Basque prisoners and “the importance of showing communities progress on this issue.” He disclosed that the Basque nationalist left asked for assistance and Sinn Féin discussed with them strategies to move from an armed conflict into an unarmed political campaign.

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137 Ibid.
139 Ibid, 196.
140 Aiartza, interview by author.
141 Anderson, interview by author.
142 Walsh, interview by author.
143 Adams, interview by author.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
As discussed in section 2.5 of this thesis, negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry and rebel movements often need training and support in negotiating with experienced government officials. However, what is often neglected is that important negotiations happen internally during this process, both strategically and at the social-psychological level. In Sinn Féin’s engagement with the Basque nationalist left we can observe a foreign political party who has been through a similar rebel-to-party transition share its experience and assist with internal cohesion in this difficult process. In this specific case, Sinn Féin could exert significant moral and soft power and this was used by the Batasuna leadership to win over key blocs in the nationalist left, what Otegi called “our most militant structures.” Maillot has pointed out that Sinn Féin used engagements with the ANC for Irish republicans to learn lessons from their “comrades in arms” who had an extensive international reputation, and now that Sinn Féin had “gained respectability both at home and in international political circles,” it was playing the same role in the Basque process.

The Batasuna leadership extensively used engagements with Sinn Féin for internal negotiations and to build a successful strategy for a rebel-to-party transition. It borrowed Sinn Féin’s moral and soft power to help maintain internal cohesion during this tricky process - something that remains highly regarded today. Aiartza maintains that just like in Ireland and South Africa, “one of the success stories [was] that there was no [major] split... there was only small divisions. We learned a lot from Ireland regarding this.” This advice and support is crucial because it is horizontal peer advice in a very complex and delicate process. A process that is often poorly understood by outsiders who intervene in top-down or bottom-up engagements. Aiartza touched on this when interviewed by the author. He stressed that NGO workers or foreign government officials often think that such transitions are going to be like going into an office, making a decision, and then things go ahead quite quickly, but this is not the case in these transitions. In these processes’ cohesion is vitally important. Often what is missing is an understanding that due to internal processes sometimes you cannot move one step further even if you wanted to because the situation

148 Aiartza, interview by author.
149 Ibid
is not ripe. According to Aiartza, Sinn Féin and the ANC understood that better than anyone else due to their own experiences. He revealed that they understood certain issues without the need for explanation. Due to their own experiences they could read between the lines, and this was very useful as there were often very sensitive issues that were difficult to discuss openly. This, he believes, is the decisive difference between these engagements and being advised by an external expert.

Aiartza poignantly touches on an important point regarding ripeness. A peace process to end a civil war is improved by a successful rebel-to-party transition, therefore it is not just the traditional ripeness of a conflict for resolution that we should be concerned with, but also the ripeness for a rebel-to-party transition within the rebel movement and how foreign political parties can assist such transitions.

Sinn Féin’s engagement with Batasuna and the nationalist left was not just focused on internal cohesion and the rebel-to-party transition process. It also focused on external negotiation strategy. The next section will consider the impact such engagements had on the unilateral strategy undertaken by the nationalist left in the 2010s that ultimately led to ETA dissolving itself in May 2018, and the heavily localised hybrid liberal peace model that made it happen.

4.6 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the Basque Nationalist Left’s External Negotiations: Building the Case for Unilateralism and a Hybridisation of the Liberal Peace Model

The dissolution of ETA and the ending of the Basque conflict is peculiar because it happened without the establishment of a structured peace process between the state and the rebel movement. It was not as a direct result of negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government and there was no formal peace agreement. What occurred has been described by Zulaika and Murua as a case of “transformation of a political base... from a unilateral decision by ETA and the nationalist left in the broader context of an ambiguous process in which international actors played a pivotal role.” This unilateral peace strategy and the

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150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
transformation of the political base was made possible due to international engagement and a hybridisation of the liberal peace model. This section outlines Sinn Féin’s involvement in this regard, but first it details why a unilateral strategy was needed.

As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, Sisk has defined a peace process as: “a series of step-by-step, reciprocal, and self-reinforcing actions that are taken to steadily move a conflict away from violence toward regularised, consensual non-violent rules of interaction.” What was evidently missing in the Basque case was any sort of reciprocal actions from the Spanish state to the nationalist left’s unilateral steps. The Basque nationalist left maintain that the Spanish state never wanted an amicable resolution of the conflict, instead the only end to the conflict that was acceptable to either the PP or PSOE was the defeat of Basque nationalism itself. That the Spanish state would prefer a victor’s peace through military defeat of its opponents is not surprising. However, during ETA’s 2006 ceasefire, suspicions began to grow within the Basque nationalist left that the Spanish government wanted to deliberately sabotage any attempts to establish a peace process. This threatened the internal ripeness for a rebel-to-party transition and increased the risk of spoilers to the peace strategy.

During the 2006 ceasefire eight prosecutions of ETA militants and nationalist left activists took place. The banning of Batasuna and the jailing of its leadership, who were working on building a pathway towards peace, only reinforced the suspicions. Woodworth maintains that it was apparent there was not going to be any moment in the Basque peace process comparable to the Downing Street Declaration, as such a statement was completely unthinkable in a Spanish context. Basque nationalist parties that challenged the Spanish government to make a statement similar to the Downing Street Declaration, were accused of distorting the Irish peace model in an effort to avoid the imminent defeat of ETA. The Batasuna leadership were in a conundrum – they needed a peace process to complete a rebel-to-party transition but the Spanish government would not engage as it was not in a hurting stalemate. Thus, there was no ripeness in Madrid to negotiate and compromise on its desire for a victor’s peace over a negotiated settlement, especially as

the changed geopolitical context after 9/11 led to a new global securitisation discourse that supported military interventions to defeat terrorism.

In November 2004 at a packed football stadium in Anoeta, Otegi revealed a proposal for a two-track peace process. One track would involve ETA negotiating an agreement with the Spanish and French governments on the end of the violent conflict, and on technical issues relating to prisoners and victims. The other parallel track would involve Basque political and social forces negotiating a future political arrangement for the Basque Country.\(^\text{159}\) This two-track strategy was promoted by the nationalist left until the collapse of the Geneva talks in 2006. As mentioned in section 4.3, the nationalist left had determined that one of the major lessons from the Lizarra-Garazi failure was the need for greater international involvement. It succeeded in getting increased international engagement during the Geneva talks but the failure now stemmed from a lack of internal cohesion in the nationalist left. Section 4.5 of this chapter detailed the significant work done by the Batasuna leadership, with the assistance of Sinn Féin, to establish internal unity and a ripeness to complete a rebel-to-party transition, however it was now lacking a government interlocutor to advance a peace process. The Spanish government’s unwillingness to engage meant that a new strategy had to be formulated and this led to the adoption of a unilateral strategy.

The unilateral strategy was an outcome of the internal debate within the nationalist left between 2007 and 2010, that was outlined in the preceding section. ETA’s bombing of Madrid airport in December 2006 generated internal fractures in the nationalist left, resulting in Batasuna’s first public appeal to ETA to respect its commitments to a ceasefire to allow negotiations to continue. Between 2007 and 2010 consultations with 7,200 activists took place to evaluate, debate, and adopt a position on ETA’s armed campaign for the first time.\(^\text{160}\) The Batasuna leadership were convinced that a rebel-to-party transition and a pathway for ETA to dissolve was needed to salvage its political movement, but it needed a strategy to facilitate this. As the traditional peace process pathway of reciprocal steps with a government was off the table, it formed a unilateral strategy and this was outlined in the February 2010 document ‘Stand Up Euskal Herria’. Instead of a focus on achieving a peace agreement with the Spanish state this strategy had two recipients;

\(^\text{160}\) Ibid, 220.
Basque society and the international community.\textsuperscript{161} It was a hybridisation of the liberal peace that maintained the international level but heavily focused on the local, removing the central government almost completely. This research finds that Sinn Féin’s engagement with the Basque nationalist left assisted this unilateral strategy and the hybridisation of the liberal peace to enhance local ownership of the process.

Otegi has acknowledged that engagements with Sinn Féin “clearly had an impact on concepts such as unilateralism, the idea of taking steps that can strengthen our positions, the issue of internal negotiation, [and] the issue of strategic patience.”\textsuperscript{162} Aiartza has reflected similar sentiments, stating that “there were a lot of issues that we translated from them [Sinn Féin] into our current strategies. There are of course different wordings and different understandings, but they come from them.”\textsuperscript{163} This is echoed by Sinn Féin representatives who have been involved in the engagements. Kearney revealed that Sinn Féin offered its “perspectives on strategic development to our comrades in Euskal Herria and they have then in turn adapted and developed their own strategy, adopting strategic and political considerations of how to move forward.”\textsuperscript{164}

Sub-section 2.2.1 noted that the usefulness of insights from other conflicts and conflict resolutions to parties negotiating their own peace process has been examined in the existing literature.\textsuperscript{165} There has also been an exploration of lesson sharing between civil society peacebuilders that is grounded in reciprocity.\textsuperscript{166} While comparative learning from peace processes is not uncommon, lesson sharing between political movements on negotiating strategy in peace processes is under researched. In this case this research demonstrates that lesson sharing from Sinn Féin was adapted to the realities of the situation in the Basque Country by the nationalist left, and that it aided the development of a unilateral strategy to build momentum toward a local empowered peace process, momentum that was missing due to a lack of Spanish state engagement.

\textsuperscript{161} Zulaika and Murua, “How Terrorism Ends - And Does Not End: The Basque Case,” 347.
\textsuperscript{162} Otegi, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{163} Aiartza, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{164} Kearney, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{165} Pearson d’Estrée, “Problem-Solving Approaches.”
The importance of engagements with Sinn Féin in this regard has been acknowledged by Aiartza. He disclosed to the author: “one idea that Sinn Féin raised with us many times, was about creating momentum. Sometimes a political movement can create momentum itself through its own steps. So we translated that concept here, the idea of unilateral steps done by our movement in order to try create new scenarios.”

This substantiates that the Basque nationalist left not only incorporated lessons learned about internal cohesion from Sinn Féin into its rebel-to-party transition, as explained in the preceding section, but it also incorporated lessons learned about external negotiations and strategy. Aiartza reveals that in the engagements with Sinn Féin the nationalist left became aware of the fact that: “cohesion needs to go with movement... you need to move ahead. You need cohesion, but you cannot be stuck. If there is no progress you cannot get people to agree, it is impossible. So this balance is very important. And I think that we learned a lot about that from Sinn Féin and I think that was very useful.”

A new road map for the peace process based on this unilateral strategy was created and the first stage was the Donostia-San Sebastián International Peace Conference in October 2011. While critics derided the conference as nothing but theatre, it was fundamentally important to the Basque nationalist left strategy to ensure an international level to accompany its unilateral strategy. Zulaika and Murua maintain that “an international conference shaping the issue as a political conflict was what ETA needed to save face while ending... [it] allowed the replacement of the Spanish state with the representation of an international community.” Whitfield argues that the conference was “a creative use of international contacts that Batasuna had developed over the years... to assume prominent roles in the scenography required for ETA to take the irrevocable step towards its end.”

As discussed in section 4.4, the nationalist left was assisted in its efforts to establish important international contacts by borrowing soft power from Sinn Féin, and section 4.2 highlighted that half of the international guests at the conference were connected to the peace process in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, Aiartza points out that the conference allowed ETA to make the necessary unilateral steps without a quid pro quo with the Spanish

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167 Aiartza, interview by author.
168 Ibid.
169 The background to this conference was detailed in section 4.2 of this chapter.
state, thus removing the damaging affect a failure of the Spanish state to reciprocate would have had internally within the nationalist left.\textsuperscript{172}

The Spanish government refused to attend the conference and refrained from any engagement with it. Publicly it remained steadfast to its goal of the defeat or surrender of ETA. However, between July to October 2011 messages between ETA and the Spanish government went back and forth through international facilitators like the HD Centre. As a result of these exchanged messages, and the Spanish government allowing the Donostia-San Sebastián International Peace Conference to go ahead, ETA and the international actors involved understood that this was part of an unspoken agreed road map with the Spanish government and dialogue would take place soon after the conference.\textsuperscript{173} When the Spanish parliamentary election in November 2011 resulted in the PP’s Mariano Rojay becoming Prime Minister, this road map lost all value. The new Spanish government simply refused to engage in any dialogue regarding the pending issues and the post-conference dialogue never happened.\textsuperscript{174}

The political landscape had completely altered, and the unilateral steps and strategy now became a unilateral process. The Basque nationalist left was now unilaterally creating new scenarios in its political development and ETA was taking steps to dissolve without waiting for an agreed peace process with the Spanish state.\textsuperscript{175} This was uncharted territory. In the dominant liberal peace model it is assumed that an armed actor willing to decommission and dissolve, with international support, in favour of a political party that would compete in liberal democratic elections would find an amenable government interlocutor to help facilitate the process. ETA had announced a permanent ceasefire, but without any positive response from the Spanish government there was a lack of clarity relating to how it would dissolve and decommission. To achieve a successful outcome, local ownership of the process, which is often criticised as being lacking in liberal peace processes, was key. In order to proceed with this strategy, the Batasuna leadership again turned to Sinn Féin for assistance and to learn from its experience.

\textsuperscript{172} Aiartza, "Strategic thinking and conflict transformation: A reflection on and from the Basque Country," 25.
\textsuperscript{173} Murua, "No More Bullets for ETA," 104.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, 105.
\textsuperscript{175} Aiartza, "Strategic thinking and conflict transformation: A reflection on and from the Basque Country," 26.
Aiartza contends that the Irish decommissioning process “was the closest to us. For us there were other DDR processes from around the world that were not useful at all, but the Irish process was very useful for us.” He informed the author that it was through engagements with Sinn Féin that the nationalist left learned about the process undertaken by de Chastelain and the idea of having an external body to supervise the decommissioning process. This process in Northern Ireland, which was overseen by the IICD, was put on a legislative footing by the British and Irish governments. When it became clear that the Spanish and French governments would not take steps to do something similar for ETA’s decommissioning process, the International Verification Commission (IVC) was established. This again highlights the hybridisation of the process. When a localised solution could not be found due to the lack of a central government interlocutor, it was brought from the local level to the international level. In this model the international became a substitute for the central government, while the local level was regionally rather than nationally focused.

The IVC, just like the IICD, was made up of international political and military figures that would be acceptable to and trusted by the militants, but expert enough to make the process reputable. As was the case in Northern Ireland, very little is known about the method and mechanism of inventory and sealing established by the IVC and ETA, but the processes were strikingly similar. Aiartza points out that the sealing of ETA arms dumps as a first step before full disarmament, demonstrates another learning taken from the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The IVC and later Basque civil society made the disarmament of ETA possible. They removed the blockage in the process due to the lack of state involvement. Not only was there no state engagement, but the Spanish and French governments nearly derailed the unilateral process by arresting members of the IVC and civil society activists. The interrogation and the threats to charge those involved with assisting a terrorist organisation bewildered international onlookers. Powell described the reaction of the

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176 Aiartza, interview by author.
177 Ibid.
Spanish state to ETA’s unilateral steps to decommission as “bizarre” and that “no
government in the world has ever said ‘no’ when a terrorist group offered unilaterally to
get rid of its weapons.”\textsuperscript{181} It was evident that this was the action of spoilers within the
Spanish state apparatus seeking to disrupt the process, however such disruption attempts
by spoilers did not manifest in the Basque nationalist left. Aiartza asserts that ETA’s ability
to maintain its chain of command and the commitment of all its structures to the
decommissioning process in the face of the arrest of some of its members involved, is not
something that is usually stressed but it should be.\textsuperscript{182} The focus of the nationalist left on
internal cohesion earlier in the process, including the experience sharing from Sinn Féin,
ostensibly secured this outcome.

This further illustrates the argument, detailed in section 4.5, that it is not just the ripeness
for conflict resolution between warring parties that should be singularly focused on. The
ripeness for a rebel-to-party transition within the rebel movement is vitally important. The
Basque case reveals that a significant focus on internal cohesion first, with assistance from
a foreign political party that has the moral and soft power to assist, can improve this
ripeness and lead to a successful outcome.

The final piece in the decommissioning process was the 8 April 2017 ‘Day of Disarmament’
event. On this day the Artisans of Peace, a collection of Basque civil society figures, handed
over data to the IVC given to it by ETA regarding its arms inventory and locations. The IVC
then transmitted the locations to the French authorities, so that they could dispose of the
weapons quietly. The public nature of the whole process, with the direct participation of
Basque civil society and thousands of people filling the streets in Bayonne alongside
important Basque political and cultural figures, made it possible for Basque society to
embrace the ownership of the process and collectively signal the end of the conflict.\textsuperscript{183} This
choreography also removed the prospect of any attempt on either side to classify the final
disarmament as victory or surrender in the conflict, particularly considering no Spanish

\textsuperscript{181} Jonathan Powell, “ETA needs Spain’s help to put its arms beyond use,” \textit{The Financial Times}, 4 March,
2014, \url{https://www.ft.com/content/1f453284-9c86-11e3-b535-00144feab7de}.
\textsuperscript{182} Aiartza, ”Strategic thinking and conflict transformation: A reflection on and from the Basque Country,”
31.
\textsuperscript{183} Basque Permanent Social Forum, “ETA’s disarmament in the context of international DDR guidelines,”
18.
authorities were present during any of the acts.\textsuperscript{184} Removing the Spanish government’s ability to claim a victory enabled a viable decommissioning process and ensured that a rebel-to-party transition was palatable to the Basque nationalist left.

This Basque model of conflict termination is unique and unparalleled. The unilateral strategy implemented by the nationalist left and the unilateral decommissioning process reveals deep local ownership of the process. It was not the implementation of a pre-packaged liberal peace model, which tend to depoliticise and deny local self-determination.\textsuperscript{185} There was no formal peace agreement with the state and the process does not conform to traditional understandings of a peace process due to a lack of state involvement. Although there were broad learnings from other peace process models, particularly from Ireland, the Basque case is not a technocratic liberal peace template. There was an acceptance of certain core elements of the liberal peace, such as liberal democracy and the involvement of civil society, but the Basque case is a unique hybridisation that is deeply localised and with an international level that was used as a substitute for the state’s involvement.

As illustrated in sub-section 2.2.5, there is a contemporary local turn in peacebuilding that is creating a hybrid peace.\textsuperscript{186} The unilateralism by the Basque nationalist left is an example of one such local turn and hybridisation. This hybridisation focused on local ownership of the process, but it was enabled by international actors such as the IVC, HD Centre, and others. This is not unusual. In sub-section 2.2.5, the argument that the campaign by indigenous political actors for local ownership of peacebuilding measures has itself become internationalised was put forward. The involvement of Sinn Féin and its engagement with the leadership of Batasuna assisted in the creation of a unilateral strategy to build momentum in the process, Sinn Féin’s soft and moral power aided Batasuna’s strategy of ensuring internal cohesion, and discussions on the decommissioning process assisted the unilateral design.

\textsuperscript{184} Aiartza, “Strategic thinking and conflict transformation: A reflection on and from the Basque Country,” 33.

\textsuperscript{185} As outlined in the Section 2.2. See - Mac Ginty, \textit{No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords}, 18; Richmond, “A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirenism and the Everyday.”

\textsuperscript{186} Mac Ginty, \textit{International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance - Hybrid Forms of Peace}. 158
Sinn Féin’s third party involvement focused on and assisted local ownership and the hybridisation of the liberal peace model to fit the local realities of the Basque case. In particular it helped to ensure ETA had a route to dissolve and the rebel-to-party transition could successfully occur without any major split within the nationalist left caused by spoilers. As such it was not an apolitical intervention by a neutral third party to establish a negative peace, but rather a partisan intervention by a third party to establish a positive peace that would aid the rebel movement undertaking a rebel-to-party transition.

What is commonly called the Basque peace process is exceptional, in that there was no written agreement and no formal peace process between the state and the rebel movement. There was significant back-channel dialogue, but ultimately ETA decommissioned and dissolved on a unilateral basis and not as result of formal negotiations with either the Spanish or French states. This was central to the nationalist left’s strategy of using the end of violence as a “can opener” to create an improved environment to launch a new political party to continue its campaign and achieve its national liberation aims.187 The strategy of unilateralism was a considerable success for the Basque nationalist left on three fronts. First, it created the necessary conditions for ETA to dissolve via a Basque owned peace process with international support. Second, it managed the threat of spoilers and avoided a disastrous split in the movement. Third, the political project of EH Bildu has gained significant electoral support among the Basque electorate.

The next section will provide a concluding critical analysis of this aggregated research into the involvement of Sinn Féin in the Basque peace process.

4.7 Concluding Critical Analysis of the Case Study

In her comparative examination of militant nationalism in the Basque Country and Ireland, Irvin contends that there are an ever-growing number of studies of political violence that focus on why individuals and organisations resort to violence as a tactic, but fewer studies that focus on examining why and under what conditions armed insurgent groups adopt alternative, nonviolent strategies.188 This thesis strives to fill part of this research gap and

this chapter has highlighted significant research findings in how foreign political parties can assist. The Basque Country is an intriguing case study because while ETA was severely weakened by police and judicial repression, such actions did not create a military victory for the Spanish state over ETA. Over the five decades of conflict ETA repeatedly demonstrated that it was able to replace arrested leaders and militants, and the violent conflict continued.\textsuperscript{189} ETA’s dissolution only occurred once the nationalist left demonstrated that it could more effectively continue the campaign by political means. In order to manifest this and to complete a rebel-to-party transition, the nationalist left got significant support from Sinn Féin.

The conditions that made ETA’s dissolution possible are unique to the Basque Country, just like every conflict is itself unique. While the Basque case has many distinguishing unique features, the nationalist left ostensibly and self-admittedly borrowed a lot from other processes, most significantly Ireland. The influence of the Northern Ireland peace process was not symbolic or theoretical in the Basque Country. As Mees points out, “it translated into concrete political practice by those who were keen to draw conclusions from [it].”\textsuperscript{190} This chapter has repeatedly demonstrated how the ending of the intractable conflict in the Basque Country was highly influenced by Ireland, just as Chapter 3 outlined how the South African process significantly influenced the peace process in Northern Ireland. However, a hitherto understudied element of this influence is Sinn Féin’s considerable involvement as a third party in the process and the impact of its engagements on the Basque nationalist left. The research findings contained in this chapter have begun to fill this research gap.

The first research question of this thesis is why does Sinn Féin get involved in foreign peace processes, with a particular focus on whether the involvement is a type of post-Cold War internationalism or whether it is an exercise to gain international legitimacy and recognition. In many aspects Sinn Féin’s support to Batasuna mirrors the support Sinn Féin got from the ANC. Aiartza raised this when interviewed by the author. He revealed that: “it was really interesting when we first got the report from Sinn Féin about the relationship and the meetings that they had with the ANC. Because in that report we saw what Sinn

\textsuperscript{189} Murua, "No More Bullets for ETA," 99.

\textsuperscript{190} Mees, "The Basque Peace Process, Nationalism and Political Violence," 183-84.
Féin looked for from the ANC and that was very useful to understand what we were in need of.”191

Aguirre furthered this point when she outlined how “Sinn Féin trained us in the dynamics of conflict resolution, setting up several workshops to deal with the conflict’s core issues in the way they learned from South Africans.”192 Aiartza describes this as a “mirror process. The ANC helping Sinn Féin, Sinn Féin helping us, and we are happy to help others now in their processes, like we were helped.”193 This reveals how movements attempting a rebel-to-party transition through a liberal peace process are clearly engaging with and learning from one another. As illustrated in this chapter, and the preceding chapter, this is motivated by solidarity and it is a new internationalism that emerged after the major geopolitical changes that occurred after the conclusion of the Cold War. Whereas once national liberation movements were engaging with the aim to provide military support, this case study has highlighted how such movements are now engaging to support rebel-to-party transitions via liberal peace processes.

This mirror process was very important in the Basque case because the nationalist left was suffering from a lack of internal cohesion and in need of strategic support. Internal ETA reports that were captured and leaked to the media show it would only accept the involvement of international actors that “don’t have prejudices...won’t make inappropriate comments about armed actions...[and] won’t ‘sell’ a process in advance.”194 Sinn Féin evidently ticked those boxes, and it went on to have an important role in assisting with internal cohesion to reduce the risk of spoilers and to forward the unilateral peace strategy that led to localised hybridisation of the liberal peace. This partially answers the second research question, regarding what Sinn Féin does when it becomes involved in foreign peace process.

The other element of the second research question relates to whether Sinn Féin’s engagements with the process are different from the interventions of other international third parties, and whether it is simply experience sharing or if it is more substantial. The research findings presented in this chapter show that the engagements did go significantly

191 Aiartza, interview by author.
192 Agirre, interview by author.
193 Aiartza, interview by author.
further than just experience sharing. Section 4.5 in particular highlighted Aiartza statement that the engagements were different as Sinn Féin understood what the nationalist left was doing without the need for explanation, due to its own peace process and rebel-to-party transition experience. Furthermore, the Basque nationalist left borrowed soft and moral power from Sinn Féin to assist with its internal and external negotiations on three issues: to build the case for the peace process domestically and internationally; to reduce the threat of spoilers; and to strategically assist with moving the unilateral strategy forward.

A point raised by Father Matteo Zuppi\(^{195}\) at a November 2006 peace conference in Bilbao is very pertinent in this aspect. Woodworth recalls Father Zuppi saying that a peace process “requires at least two rhythms. On the one hand, it is necessary to act fast and seize opportunities. On the other, it is necessary to allow a much slower rhythm so certain difficult matters can be digested. Achieving the right balance between these rhythms is a key to success, and that balance will differ in each specific case.”\(^{196}\) Due to having undergone a similar transition in its own process, and learning from the ANC’s prior experience, Sinn Féin appear to have informed the Basque nationalist left of the importance of this balance. From the information divulged in interviews with leadership figures in the nationalist left that were engaging with Sinn Féin, detailed throughout this chapter, two recurring themes of discussion are evident: ensuring you keep your base supportive of the strategy; and the importance of momentum. The former often needs a slower rhythm to ensure internal cohesion and the latter a faster rhythm to seize opportunities when they arise. Both of them are very unique to each case and highly influenced by local factors, but there can be shared learnings from other movements who went through a similar process, as the research findings of this case study show.

There are also significant lessons to learn from this case study. Aiartza believes that the Basque process demonstrates “the need to support strategic transformation inside movements, to remain involved even when a peace process collapses, and to stay in touch with armed groups, especially during difficult periods.”\(^{197}\)

\(^{195}\) A Catholic peace activist from the Community of Sant’ Edigio, who was instrumental in the peace accord between Frelimo and Renamo in Mozambique


Sinn Féin’s elongated involvement helped ensure there was no major split in the Basque nationalist left at a key point in the process – after the Geneva talks collapsed and internal factures emerged. The elongated engagement ultimately aided the Basque nationalist left to develop the unilateral strategy, and for it to take root and to grow momentum. The research findings contained in this chapter reveal the significant impact these engagements had on: the rebel-to-party transition; internal cohesion and reducing the threat of spoilers; external negotiation strategy; and the hybridisation of the liberal peace model that enhanced local ownership of the peace process. This answers the third research question of the thesis, regarding whether Sinn Féin’s involvement has any impact on the peace process and the parties to the negotiation.

The peace process in Northern Ireland clearly influenced conflict resolution efforts in the Basque Country. It has been suggested by some that this influence was indirect and simply just encouragement.¹⁹⁸ This study shows that the GFA itself had an indirect influence, but the research findings outlined in this chapter demonstrate that the deep and strategic engagements between the Basque nationalist left and Sinn Féin since 1998 had a much more direct impact on the process. The testimony of Otegi and Aiartza used throughout this chapter reveal the engagements assisted the Basque nationalist left with internal cohesion, reducing the threat of spoilers, and its strategic assistance helped ensure a successful rebel-to-party transition. Additionally, Sinn Féin’s soft power was shown to assist the nationalist left’s efforts to develop international contacts that were key to the Donostia-San Sebastián International Peace Conference and in enabling an international level in the unilateral process to replace the role of a central government.

This chapter has provided an overview of the Basque conflict and Sinn Féin’s involvement as a third party in the process that ultimately ended the violent conflict. It has answered the research questions and further demonstrated the multidimensional role of a foreign political party in a peace process. Whitfield has described the Basque process as: “a remarkable example of the possibilities for informal third-party involvement in dialogue of different kinds when conditions inhibit a more established process.”¹⁹⁹ Sinn Féin’s third party involvement is testament to this.

¹⁹⁸ Letamendia and Loughlin, "Peace in the Basque Country and Corsica?.
The next chapter deals with the second case study of this thesis, the conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state.
Chapter 5 – Sinn Féin’s Involvement in the Colombian Peace Process

This chapter contains the second case study of this thesis, the Colombian peace process. It details the research findings regarding the involvement of foreign political parties in the peace process and answers the three research questions outlined in Section 1.3, through an examination of Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Colombian peace process.

The chapter begins with a historical background to the conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state. It analyses the unsuccessful conflict resolution efforts in the mid-1980s and 1990s, before highlighting how the changing international geopolitical dynamics helped to facilitate the 2016 peace agreement that ended the conflict. It provides an analysis of Sinn Féin’s involvement in the peace process as a third party and examines the impact of this engagement on the rebel-to-party transition, spoilers, and the hybridisation of the liberal peace. It concludes with a critical analysis of Sinn Féin’s involvement and its impact.

5.1 The Origins of the FARC and the Conflict with the Colombian State

The conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state endured for over five decades and it was the longest running armed conflict in the western hemisphere. The conflict erupted in 1964 and concluded with a formal peace agreement in 2016, although a dissident group of FARC members who have refused to abide by the peace agreement have continued a low-level insurgency against the state. In the more than fifty years of conflict it is estimated that over 218,000 people were killed and over 4.7 million people were displaced.1 Similar to the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country covered in the previous two chapters, the Colombian conflict emerged at the height of the Cold War. However, unlike the two aforementioned conflicts and the Sri Lankan conflict that is examined in the next chapter, the civil war in Colombia was for the ideological control of the existing state and was not an ethno-nationalist war of independence. The FARC was more heavily influenced by Marxist ideology than the IRA, ETA or the LTTE, but it was not as deeply connected and

1 "Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity," Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, accessed 11 August 2022, [https://tinyurl.com/27me7etk](https://tinyurl.com/27me7etk).
dependent on the USSR as other armed left-wing rebel groups in Latin America were during the Cold War. The FARC remained an outlier as an armed left-wing rebel group in Latin America that withstood the collapse of the USSR and continued its armed insurrection in the post-Cold War period. This aspect is covered in detail in the next section of this chapter. Even though the FARC was not engaged in a conflict to establish a new nation state, it often used the language of a national liberation group to advocate its cause.

Similar to the Basque case study analysed in the preceding chapter, but unlike the Northern Ireland case, the Colombian conflict was not resolved in the immediate post-Cold War period through a formal peace agreement like so many other civil war conflicts during the 1990s. The conflict in Colombia continued into the twenty-first century and was profoundly reshaped after the US government launched its so-called ‘Global War on Terror’ after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Before illustrating how these significant international aspects influenced the contemporary conflict and peace efforts, including Sinn Féin’s involvement as a third party, it is important to first detail the historical roots of the conflict which predate the FARC’s emergence in 1964.

Since the European colonisation of Colombia, in which Spanish conquistadors used brute force to annex the territory, enforce slavery, and to destroy resistance to colonial rule, violence has beset the country’s polity. When Colombia gained its independence from Spanish rule, initially as Gran Colombia, it established the first constitutional government in South America. Despite having the region’s oldest democratic institutions as a bedrock of the state, Civico points out that Colombia also “has violence as a foundation and key element of its contentious political and democratic life.” The conclusion of Spanish colonial rule did not create significant structural change in Colombia, it merely resulted in a transfer of power from colonial administrators to an oligarchy comprising Spanish-descended Colombians, who divided themselves between the Liberal and Conservative

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2 Gran Colombia was a state established in 1819 that included what is now Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador, and parts of northern Peru and north-west Brazil. Gran Colombia was dissolved in 1831 due to political disagreements over federalism. This created the states of Venezuela, Ecuador, and what was called New Granada. After a civil war from 1861 to 1863, New Granada became the United States of Colombia, which lasted until it became the Republic of Colombia in 1886. In 1903 the Department of Panama, with the support of the USA, gained independence from Colombia as the Republic of Panama.

The failure of the post-colonial state to deliver structural change is one of the major grievances that underpinned the contemporary civil war.

During the nineteenth century the country endured nine violent conflicts between supporters of the Liberal and Conservative political parties. While there was a rare period of peace after the Thousand Days War concluded in 1902, this peace was ruptured by the assassination of the Liberal Party politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. Gaitán had built up a substantial following due to his populist rhetoric and he was the favourite to win the 1950 presidential election. His assassination sparked an uprising by working class supporters of the Liberal Party in Bogotá that spread throughout the country and led to a new conflict that became known as simply – *La Violencia*. This ten-year civil war led to an estimated 200,000 deaths.

*La Violencia* came to an end in 1958 when the Conservative and Liberal parties agreed the National Front power sharing pact. Under this pact the parties committed to alternating the presidency in four-year terms and sharing government positions evenly between them. While this compact ended the factional fighting between the two parties and their supporters that had afflicted Colombia since the mid-nineteenth century, the unity government was challenged by new movements confronting the country’s social inequalities. The power sharing pact created a negative peace which ended the direct violence, but not a positive peace that addressed the structural violence in the country. The terms negative and positive peace were defined by Galtung and discussed in section 2.1 of this thesis.

Foremost among the new militant groups challenging the state were armed communist peasants and in rural central Colombia they posed the greatest threat to the hegemony

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6 This civil war fought between October 1899 and November 1902 was the deadliest and most destructive conflict in Colombia until *La Violencia*.
8 Flores and Vargas, "Colombia: Democracy, violence, and the peacebuilding challenge," 583.
9 Galtung, *Peace, War and Defence*.
10 During the 1930s the Colombian Communist Party (PCC), unlike other communist parties in region, made organising and politicising peasants in rural areas a priority. During *La Violencia* the PCC had organised peasants into self-defence groups and the small rural areas they had taken control of were being run as communist enclaves.
of the Liberal and Conservative elite.\textsuperscript{11} Due to acute land inequality, rural Colombia was fertile territory for the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) to grow. In 1960 a mere 1.7 percent of landowners owned 55 percent of Colombia’s arable land, while just over 62 percent of farmers subsisted on less than 1 percent of the country’s cultivable land.\textsuperscript{12} Recognising the dangers this posed for the new unity government, the Colombian Congress passed the Agrarian Social Reform Law (Law 135) in 1961. This legislation was supposed to help peasants obtain legal title to their land and gain access to credit, however ten years after its implementation land inequality in the country had increased.\textsuperscript{13} Consequently, land inequality was one of the core grievances which led to the contemporary civil war between the FARC and the Colombian state.

The origins of the conflict were also rooted in Cold War developments in the region. After the Cuban revolution in 1959 the USA grew increasingly worried about what it viewed as communist threats in Latin America. In 1962 it sent a team from the Special Warfare Centre at Fort Bragg to evaluate the communist threat in Colombia and to advise the Colombian military on counter-insurgency tactics. The teams’ final report recommended covert US support for the Colombian military to undertake paramilitary and sabotage activities against communist movements.\textsuperscript{14} With this clandestine US support the Colombian government began a military campaign called \textit{Plan Lazo} to attack and to retake the rural communist enclaves in the country. It was a military attack on the so-called Marquetalia Republic in May 1964 that led to the establishment of the FARC. The massive Colombian military operation to retake Marquetalia was a success, but forty-eight armed communists escaped to the jungle. The group, led by Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas,\textsuperscript{15} reorganised as the FARC and set about building the guerrilla organisation that fought the Colombian army for over half a century.

The origins and ideology of the FARC are therefore significantly different than the other NSAGs examined in this research - the IRA, ETA and the LTTE. The latter group were part of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Leech, \textit{The FARC - The Longest Insurgency}, 10-11.
\item Ibid, 19.
\item Ibid, 19.
\item Ibid, 14.
\item These are the \textit{nom de guerre}s of Pedro Marín and Luis Morantes Jaimes respectively. A rite of passage for all new members of the FARC is to choose a \textit{nom de guerre}. This is done to protect their families from reprisals. FARC militants and their leaders are more widely known by these adopted names. When referring to FARC leaders and militants this thesis uses their \textit{nom de guerre} rather than their birth names, unless otherwise stated.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
an ethno-nationalist conflict and identify as national liberation movements. Although they were influenced by leftist political ideology, the violent civil war conflicts they were parties to revolved around ethno-nationalist demands for independence. In contrast, the civil war between the FARC and the Colombian government was concentrated on control of the existing Colombian state and its ideological direction. The FARC was not a national liberation movement with an ethno-nationalist demand for independence and it did not seek to alter Colombia’s external borders. Rather than a focus on the oppression of a specific ethnic group, the FARC was concerned with what it viewed as the oppression of the majority by an elite minority through the capitalist economic model and a post-colonial state structure which concentrated political power in the hands of a small elite minority. Despite these differences we still find foreign political party involvement in the contemporary Colombian peace process, through Sinn Féin’s broad engagement with the FARC, and the reasons for this are outlined in section 4.3.

While the FARC’s foundational ideology was rooted in Marxism, it was a Marxism influenced by Colombia’s reality, particularly the rural reality. It is important to recognise and reiterate the peasant roots of the FARC. Although the PCC viewed the FARC as its military arm, they essentially operated as two different organisations and eventually split in 1993. From the outset the PCC refused to formally support the development of an armed insurrection in Colombia, as it did not believe the ideal circumstances had been reached in the country for a successful armed communist revolt. The PCC legally organised in Colombia’s cities while the FARC operated in remote rural areas. Hence, they developed and acted like two separate organisations.

The FARC’s leadership also took pride in the organisation’s autarkic nature and not being dependent on foreign support to operate. The FARC’s roots in the peasant self-defence organisations of La Violencia meant that, in contrast to other guerrilla groups in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, it did not adhere to Ché Guevara’s foco theory of small guerrilla units in the countryside acting as the vanguard to create the conditions necessary

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17 Ibid, 132.
for national revolution. This was because the FARC was formed by an already politicised peasantry responding to socio-economic inequalities and seeking to defend themselves against state repression. The FARC was just one of many left-wing NSAGs that emerged in Colombia in the 1960s and 1980s. Other significant rebel groups include the 19th of April Movement (M-19) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). However, the FARC was the largest and most rural focused of all the left-wing NSAGs.

This rural focus of the FARC is an important characteristic of the group, and it impacted the rebel-to-party transition that occurred as part of the peace process. Therefore, it is imperative to consider the unique geographical makeup of Colombia when analysing the conflict and political system in Colombia. Unlike other countries in the region, Colombia’s principle cities – Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Baranquilla – are all separated from each other by vast mountains and dense jungles, ensuring that its crucial provincial regions all developed in isolation from the capital. The diverse topography of Colombia, with three ranges of the Andes, the Amazon rainforest, the Orinoco grasslands, and the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, means the country has historically been difficult to govern from the centre. This has created what Kline labelled “political archipelagos,” where the national government is not always the strongest actor and is limited in its ability to enforce laws. Rural Colombian engagements with the national government have historically involved confrontations with its military forces and this cultivated a distrust of central government, which still persists today. The impact of this issue on the rebel-to-party transition of the FARC is discussed in more depth in section 5.4 of this chapter.

Gutiérrez-Sanin has described three distinct stages of the FARC’s organisational evolution. The first was its creation and early development as a peasant self-defence force. The second stage was its evolution into a mobile guerrilla organisation up to the early 1980s. By this point the FARC had entrenched itself in its traditional strongholds in the southern and eastern regions of Colombia and it was acting as a de facto government in vast swathes of the countryside. The third and final stage was its transformation into an

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19 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 22.
20 Ibid, 4.
22 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 4-5.
irregular army, which occurred with the adoption of a new military strategy at the Seventh Guerrilla Conference in May 1982. This Conference resulted in the FARC adding People’s Army (Ejército del Pueblo – EP) to its name and an explicit change in military strategy. The strategic changes focused on a more offensive approach, including an expansion into medium sized cities and an enlargement of its political activities. May 1982 also saw the election of Belisario Betancur as the President of Colombia and soon after taking office he initiated peace talks with various NSAGs, including the FARC.

5.2 Attempted Peace Processes and the Ending of the Conflict

The preceding section outlined the political and historical developments that led to the creation of the FARC and its development from a peasant self-defence organisation into an irregular army in control of vast swathes of the Colombian countryside. This section will analyse the failures of the various conflict resolution attempts that began after Betancur’s election and the eventual peace agreement which brought an end to the conflict between the FARC and the Colombian government in 2016, focusing particularly on the international level.

5.2.1 The FARC’s First Attempted Rebel-to-Party Transition

In May 1984, two years after the election of Belisario Betancur as President, the FARC and the Colombian government signed the Uribe Accords, which set the terms for a ceasefire and a negotiated pathway to resolve the violent conflict. The agreement contained eleven points on implementing and monitoring the ceasefire, but it also committed the government to political and agrarian reform. At the outset the FARC informed government negotiators that it would commit to a ceasefire and the political process, but it would not demobilise because it did not trust that the state would not kill amnestied guerrillas, as it done to Liberal militants during La Violencia.

In 1985 the FARC, with the support of the PCC, set up a new political party to contest elections – the Patriotic Union (Unión Patriótica – UP). This represents the FARC’s first

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26 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 27.
attempt at a rebel-to-party transition through a peace process, as the creation of UP was
the result of the Uribe Accords. However internal developments within the FARC also
influenced the attempted rebel-to-party transition.

At the end of the 1970s the FARC mostly consisted of peasants and agricultural labourers,
but in the early 1980s an influx of new recruits with intellectual backgrounds coming from
the urban middle classes joined its ranks. This precipitated efforts by the FARC to update
its political ideology and to grow its support in urban areas.\footnote{27} In a 1983 plenary the FARC
formally decided to participate in elections. Phelan points out that this was done for two
distinct reasons.\footnote{28} Firstly, elections would become a new tactic in the battle to gain power.
Secondly, participation in elections would allow the FARC to focus on the mass mobilisation
of those traditionally excluded from the political process. This fresh focus on expanding its
political activities was to complement its new army-like structure and offensive military
strategy, not to replace it.\footnote{29} It was not an attempt to reconstitute the FARC as a political
party, but it was a shift from a sole focus on militancy to a dual militancy and political
model. This form of rebel movement transition is the focus of research done by Grisham\footnote{30}
and was illustrated in section 2.5. It also mirrors the ‘Armalite and Ballot Box’ strategy of
Sinn Féin described in section 3.2 and the similar hybrid model followed by the Basque
nationalist left after the Txiberta meeting in 1977, detailed in section 4.1.

The first test for UP was the March 1986 local and national elections, and it far surpassed
expectations. It gained 350 local council seats, twenty-three deputy positions in
departmental assemblies, nine seats in the national House of Representatives, and six seats
in the Senate.\footnote{31} In the presidential election that took place two months later the party’s
candidate, Jaime Pardo Leal, a lawyer and long-time member of the PCC, came third after
receiving nearly 350,000 votes. This was the most votes ever received by a leftist candidate
up to that point.\footnote{32} Such results from a new party with very limited funding suggested that
it had gained support far beyond the limited base of FARC supporters and it had tapped

\footnote{27} Ortiz, "Insurgent Strategies in the Post-Cold War," 135.
\footnote{28} Alexandra Phelan, "Engaging Insurgency: The Impact of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement on FARC’s
\footnote{29} Gutiérrez-Sanin, "The FARC’s Militaristic Blueprint," 630.
\footnote{30} Grisham, \textit{Transforming Violent Political Movements - Rebels Today, What Tomorrow?}
\footnote{31} Phelan, "Engaging Insurgency," 842.
\footnote{32} Leech, \textit{The FARC - The Longest Insurgency,} 28.
into a section of the electorate seeking an alternative to the two traditional parties that still dominated Colombia’s political system.

UP’s unexpected performance at the ballot box, particularly at the local level, posed a direct threat to politicians from traditional parties who had previously enjoyed power through appointment as part of a system of cronyism and patronage. Steele and Schubiger argue that UP’s challenge to this clientelist system led some of these politicians from traditional parties to ally with emerging right-wing paramilitary groups. Consequently UP candidates, members, and sympathizers were targeted for assassination in what has increasingly been called a “political genocide.” Between 1985 and 1995 UP claims that over 2,000 of its members and supporters were murdered. This includes two presidential candidates, eight members of Congress, and over one hundred local deputies, mayors, and council members. The scale of these violent attacks on UP far surpasses anything faced by Sinn Féin and the Basque nationalist left during their rebel-to-party transitions described in Chapters 3 and 4, and it was the result of several local factors.

The emergence of right-wing paramilitaries at this time was not an unfamiliar development in the Colombian conflict. In 1968 the Colombian government introduced Law 48 which granted the military the legal right to organise and arm civilian ‘self-defence’ units and they were used sporadically throughout the 1970s. However, as the signing of the Uribe Accords in 1984 committed the Colombian military to a ceasefire, the military began intensifying the creation and use of these paramilitary groups for counter-insurgency operations against guerrilla organisations and to wage a ‘dirty war’ against left-wing political activists. Furthermore, after Virgilio Barco won the 1986 presidential election it quickly became apparent that he would not continue the peace process created by his predecessor.

37 When discussing armed conflict in Colombia it is general accepted practise to refer to armed militant groups with a right-wing ideology as paramilitaries, whereas those with a left-wing ideology are described as guerrillas. This thesis adopts this common designation.
38 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 29.
via the Uribe Accords, and the ceasefire broke down in 1987. This enabled the military and paramilitaries to respond to the electoral success of UP with enhanced violence and targeted assassinations.³⁹

By this stage the rebel-to-party transition completely disintegrated as many disarmed FARC members who were working for UP fled the urban areas they had moved to and returned to the jungle to take up their weapons again. As violence increased the FARC and UP distanced themselves from each other but there was no let up. The perpetrators of the violence against UP legitimised their actions by arguing that they were simply countering the FARC’s strategy of procelitismo armado or armed political campaigning.⁴⁰ The lack of any protection from the state allowed the assassination of political activists to happen on a mass scale. Civico, who has carried out an ethnography of paramilitary groups in Colombia, argues that rather than seeing paramilitaries as weakening the power of the state, they can be “interpreted as the war machine acquired by the state to produce violence and extend its sovereignty over spaces seen as external, wild, and unruly.”⁴¹

The FARC’s dual political and military strategy was in disarray. As Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis highlighted, it did not work for Irish republicans and the Basque nationalist left either. In the Irish and Basque cases peaks of support at the ballot box were eroded in subsequent electoral contests after enhanced IRA and ETA activity; revealing the difficulties in implementing a dual political and military strategy in a liberal democratic political system.⁴² However, in these two cases the democratic political space remained open to Irish republicans and the Basque nationalist left and they completed a full rebel-to-party transition. In the case of the FARC, UP’s electoral success unleashed a wave of targeted political violence that effectively closed off the path to democratic political competition. This led to a complete reversal in the rebel-to-party transition process. At the FARC’s eight guerrilla conference in 1993 it had militarily regrouped and it was no longer focused on the

³⁹ Ibid, 30.
⁴¹ Civico, The Para-State: An Ethnography of Colombia’s Death Squads, 23.
⁴² Berti and Gutiérrez’s examination of how rebel movements can balance a ‘ballots and bullets’ strategy was highlighted in section 2.5. See – Berti and Gutiérrez, "Rebel-to-Political and Back?"
political process, as it had formally split from the PCC by this point. It also reorganised militarily as a regular standing army that could control territory and lay siege to cities.  

5.2.2 The Immediate Post-Cold War Period

In 1990 the newly elected President, César Gaviria, launched fresh peace efforts through the creation of a new constitution – dubbed the Peace Constitution. This occurred at the beginning of the wave of liberal peace processes that followed the ending of the Cold War, as highlighted in section 2.1. However, in contrast to other left-wing NSAGs in the region, the collapse of the USSR had little impact on the FARC’s operational capabilities. Unlike these other rebel groups, the FARC was not dependent on external material support, political support, or sanctuary to survive and wage war. In response to developments in Europe the FARC said: “The validity of the armed struggle is not determined by whether the Berlin wall fell or not; it is determined by the reality of our country and here, the political, economic and social disequilibrium and the state violence that impelled the rebellion, continue in place.”

Exploratory peace talks between the Colombian government and various guerrilla groups, including the FARC, took place in Venezuela and Mexico in 1991 and 1992. The government argued that its new constitution eliminated the need for armed groups and the only thing left to negotiate was the demobilisation of the guerrillas. An important point of debate and contention at the talks was the neoliberal economic model being implemented in Colombia. The government even sent a specialised team to the negotiations to defend this economic model and argue that the significant economic changes demanded by the FARC were impossible, due to the new post-Cold War globalised economy that Colombia was part of. The FARC’s reluctance to join the conflict resolution efforts, unlike others and particularly M-19 who helped to draft the constitution, stemmed from its unwillingness to demobilise without a formal negotiated settlement and transformative economic change.

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46 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 31.
48 Chernick, "Negotiating Peace amid Multiple Forms of Violence," 183.
The FARC once more returned to its rural heartlands and focused on its military strategy. Peasants had always constituted the majority of its base but after the split with the PCC, the mass killing of UP activists, and a growing critic of the validity of armed conflict by urban leftists in the post-Cold War era, the FARC was once again becoming a primarily rural-based organisation. Its role in national politics had peaked in the mid-1980s with UP’s electoral successes and in the 1990s it began to lose political influence and relevance. However, it remained a potent fighting force and was achieving military successes on the battlefield.\(^4^9\) While regionally and globally the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm was leading to an unprecedented amount of peace agreements in the so-called ‘decade of the peace agreement’, by 1998 the FARC had an estimated 18,000 members and it controlled 6,222 of the country’s municipalities, representing approximately forty per cent of the country.\(^5^0\)

The FARC therefore bucked the trend found among left-wing rebel groups during the immediate post-Cold War period, as it did not enter a liberal peace process and it lost influence in the political system, but it grew in military strength. Chapter 6 of this thesis demonstrates that the LTTE had a similar trajectory during this immediate post-Cold War period. The FARC’s separation from UP due to the violent repression it faced ensured that by the 1990s the FARC was almost exclusively focused on military issues. Its restructure to a more formal and standing army enabled it to capture and hold more territory. Consequently, there was little ripeness for a negotiated settlement to the conflict, as per Zartman’s theory of ripeness outlined in sub-section 2.2.2, because the FARC were not facing a hurting stalemate.

The 1990s also saw a proliferation of paramilitary groups. According to a report drafted by the Colombian Ministry of Defence, the government estimated that the number of paramilitary combatants grew from 850 to 5,900 between 1992 and 1999.\(^5^1\) The emergence of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) paramilitary group in 1997 was to have a profound effect on the conflict and future peace efforts.

The 1998 presidential election was won by the Conservative Party candidate, Andrés Pastrana, who campaigned on a platform of peace amid escalating violence. After his

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\(^{4^9}\) Leech, *The FARC - The Longest Insurgency*, 36-37.

\(^{5^0}\) Ibid, 62-63.

\(^{5^1}\) Civico, *The Para-State: An Ethnography of Colombia’s Death Squads*, 95.
electoral victory, and undeterred by the fact that the FARC were not in a hurting stalemate, new peace talks with the FARC were urgently launched. These talks also marked the first time that the Colombian government asked for international help with peace negotiations.\textsuperscript{52} International involvement in the talks illustrate that the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm was influencing conflict resolution efforts. Instead of agreeing a ceasefire to facilitate the talks, in November 1998 a demilitarised zone (DMZ) the size of Switzerland was established to assist negotiations. When the talks eventually began, they immediately soured. The leader of the FARC did not appear at the planned meeting with President Pastrana in January 1999 and there were conflicting visions for a peace agreement and process. The government was focused on a bilateral demobilisation agreement whereas the FARC wanted a national dialogue on a transformative process involving civil society groups that would ultimately be submitted for the approval of a constituent assembly.\textsuperscript{53}

Similar to the negotiations under President Gaviria in the early 1990s, the FARC wanted an extensive and broad negotiated settlement before demobilising. This contrasted with the Colombian government’s narrower focus. The FARC did not trust that the government of Pastrana could guarantee security from paramilitaries, who opposed the process, and the proliferation of paramilitary groups under the AUC fed FARC’s suspicions of a repeat of the ‘political genocide’ that occurred after UP’s electoral success.\textsuperscript{54} Additionally, it is unlikely that either side felt they were in a mutually hurting stalemate and therefore there was lack of ‘ripeness’ for conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{55} The FARC’s recently changed military tactics had resulted in the capture of new territory and it had an upper hand over the Colombian military, who appeared weak at the time.\textsuperscript{56} On the state side, the Colombian military was demoralised by the creation of a DMZ, but in 1999 the Colombian government established the Plan Colombia initiative with the USA, leading to enhanced American military support and aid.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{53} Kline, Chronicle of a Failure Foretold, 55-59.


\textsuperscript{55} Sub-section 2.2.2 detailed Zartman’s theory of ripeness and the importance of mutually hurting stalemates in conflict resolution processes. Chapters 3 and 4 highlighted the influence such stalemates had on confliction resolution efforts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country.

\textsuperscript{56} Kline, Chronicle of a Failure Foretold, 173.

\textsuperscript{57} Plan Colombia was initiated as a US foreign aid strategy to combat drug trafficking and left-wing NSAGs in Colombia. It led to enhanced US military aid and training of the Colombian military.
Two major post-Cold War developments occurred at this time to further impact on the conflict and peacemaking process efforts in Colombia: the US ‘War on Terror’ campaign and the rise of Bolivarianism after the election of Hugo Chávez in neighbouring Venezuela. The next sub-section will deal with each development in turn.

5.2.3 The ‘War on Terror’ and the Emergence of Bolivarianism

When cocaine production intensified in Colombia in the 1980s, it impacted the whole country. In certain zones under the FARC’s control, the production of coca paste and cocaine base was regulated by the FARC. It established set prices that drug traffickers were required to pay peasants for coca or it sold it to processors directly to earn profits to fuel its insurgency. The FARC essentially took on the role of a parallel state authority in areas where narcotics were produced, receiving taxes and maintaining order, but not selling or transporting the drugs. Neither the US nor the Colombian governments were ever able to undisputedly demonstrate that the FARC was an organisation that trafficked cocaine internationally, but they used this narrative more forcefully after Plan Colombia was signed. Although Plan Colombia was officially created to tackle cocaine production and drug trafficking, the FARC became the principal military target, even though paramilitary groups were evidently more deeply engaged in drug trafficking.

The US Congress passed legislation to implement Plan Colombia in the summer of 2000 and just over 12 months later the 9/11 al-Qaeda attacks in Washington D.C. and New York resulted in the Bush administration launching the so-called ‘Global War on Terror’. This fuelled the rise of a realist global securitisation discourse that challenged the liberal internationalism that was dominant in the immediate post-Cold War period. This new realist securitisation doctrine which prioritised military might, directly challenged the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm and encouraged greater direct and indirect military intervention around the world, including in Colombia, and as Chapter 6 also demonstrates, in Sri Lanka as well. By labelling the FARC as ‘narco-terrorists’ the US was now able to combine its existing ‘War on Drugs’ with its new ‘War on Terror’ campaign, thereby

58 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 56-65.
59 Ortiz, "Insurgent Strategies in the Post-Cold War," 137.
60 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 72.
61 Ibid, 80.
Justifying its escalating military intervention in Colombia’s civil war, which had significant effects on the conflict and resolution efforts.

Under the George W. Bush administration Plan Colombia was altered to fit into the new realist securitisation doctrine. The amount of US military aid going to Colombia tripled and Colombia became the third largest recipient of US military aid after Israel and Egypt. The US government, rather than supporting the peace process, was restructuring the Colombian military for battle. With this assistance the Colombian military underwent the most profound change in its history, gaining more troops, weapons, and training than ever before. The concentrated US military intervention in the conflict to bolster the state forces to gain a military victory is mirrored in the Sri Lankan case and discussed in section 6.2 of the following chapter. This approach is in stark contrast to the Northern Ireland case covered in Chapter 3, when the US government used its power to encourage a negotiated settlement, even appointing a Special Envoy who chaired the peace talks.

In the 2002 presidential election former Liberal Party member Álvaro Uribe ran as an independent candidate on a platform of ending the peace talks and militarily defeating the FARC. He tapped into growing public anger about the lack of progress in the peace talks and the continuance of violence associated with the conflict. His victory in the first round, by a 22-point margin and with over 53 percent of the vote, marked the end of the peace talks and a new escalation in the conflict with the FARC. Efforts to establish a negotiated peace process were discarded as the Uribe government, with US political and military support, sought a military victory. The changing geopolitical dynamics due to the ascending realist securitisation doctrine, fuelled by the US-led ‘Global War on Terror’, enabled the Uribe government to gain US military and political support to end efforts for a negotiated settlement to the conflict and to pursue a military victory. This US intervention to support and empower the Colombian state to shift its efforts from attempting to find a negotiated settlement and to instead pursue a military victory, closely resembles what occurred with the fledgling Sri Lankan peace process during the same time period. This is explored and analysed in depth in section 6.2 of the following chapter.

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64 Kline, Chronicle of a Failure Foretold, 174.
While Uribe’s administration empowered the military to go on an offensive assault to defeat the FARC, it entered into peace talks with the AUC and other paramilitaries. In December 2002 the AUC announced a unilateral ceasefire and Congress passed a law authorising government officials to negotiate with all armed groups, including paramilitaries, to legally equalise the status of paramilitary groups with guerrilla organisations.66 The demobilisation of the AUC began in 2003 and over the next five years more than 30,000 paramilitary members disarmed.67 It prompted many to question why the paramilitaries, who were at the peak of their power, would unilaterally demobilise and disband. While the Colombian government used the full lexicon of peacemaking to describe the process, the reality was that the paramilitaries were not an enemy adverse to the state, rather they were an essential component of the government’s conflict strategy and this was a plan to re-strategize.68 The ‘parapolitics’ scandal revealed just how imbedded the AUC were with key members of Congress, including with the former President of the Senate Mario Uribe, a cousin of President Álvaro Uribe, who was jailed for concerting with paramilitaries.69

At the same time the FARC was undergoing an ideological shift. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it began to move away from a Marxist orthodoxy to the less theoretically rigid post-Cold War leftist ideology of Bolivarianism; an ideology championed by Hugo Chávez, then president of neighbouring Venezuela. Bolivarianism combines nationalist and left-wing ideas, but veers away from the establishment of a classical socialist model.70 It is heavily influenced by Marxism, but is more associated with ideas of nationalism, independence, anti-imperialism, and the legitimacy of armed campaigns.71 The FARC now began to promote itself as both Marxist and Bolivarian.72

This ideological shift and the political developments in Latin America in the early 2000s made a rebel-to-party transition more likely. Chávez demonstrated that a Bolivarian alternative could organise politically and win democratic elections in South America.

67 Ibid, 95.
68 Ibid, 197-201.
69 The ‘parapolitics’ scandal relates to a series of judicial investigations into connections between national politicians and the AUC, that ultimately led to the conviction of over sixty Congressmen and seven governors. See: “Parapolitics,” Colombia Reports, 22 May, 2019, https://colombiareports.com/parapolitics/.
70 Ortiz, “Insurgent Strategies in the Post-Cold War,” 130.
71 Phelan, ”Engaging Insurgency,” 840.
72 Ibid, 840.
Furthermore, the election of left-wing Presidents in neighbouring Brazil and Ecuador, as well as in Bolivia, meant that the FARC’s armed campaign was quickly becoming out of context in a region that was democratically electing left-wing governments. When this occurred in the region during the Cold War, the governments were soon overthrown in right-wing military coups supported by Washington. The changed regional political landscape due to the conclusion of the Cold War made a rebel-to-party transition more conceivable to the FARC and therefore increased the prospects that a negotiated settlement could be reached. However, the Uribe administration was steadfast in its focus on a military solution and the global geopolitical landscape after 9/11 ensured continued US support for this position.

Despite some military successes in the early 2000s the FARC began to lose ground in the conflict as the decade advanced. In just one month, March 2008, the FARC lost three members of its Secretariat: Raúl Reyes was killed by the Colombian military in Ecuador; Iván Ríos was killed by his own security chief; and its leader and co-founder, Manuel Marulanda died of a heart attack. Three months later the Colombian military carried out a successful operation to free Ingrid Betancourt and three US military contractors, who were the FARC’s most prominent prisoners. The FARC were militarily pushed out of nearly all the areas it captured in the 1980s and 1990s, and it now only maintained a significant presence in its heartlands of the south-east, south-central highlands, and south-west. These dramatic events led to widespread speculation that the FARC was now a spent force and that it could no longer continue its insurgency. When Uribe’s former Minister for Defence, Juan Manuel Santos, was elected as Colombia’s new President in 2010, the prevailing narrative was that it was only a matter of time before the FARC was defeated. Instead, Santos embarked on an ambitious peace process that ultimately ensured a negotiated end to the conflict.

5.2.4 The Development of a Liberal Peace Process

Secret exploratory meetings between representatives of the FARC and Colombian government took place in 2011 and the following year the negotiations were made public. By this stage the talks had moved to Havana, and they were being facilitated by the Cuban and Norwegian governments, who acted as guarantors to the talks. This prominent role for

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73 Leech, *The FARC - The Longest Insurgency*, 137.
74 Ibid, 138.
foreign states as international third parties in the negotiation process reveals a direct influence of the liberal peace paradigm in this new conflict resolution initiative. In Santos’ address to the nation publicly announcing the talks he said that the first principle was to learn from past mistakes in earlier peace process attempts. Therefore, this time the parties began with preliminary meetings before the main talks, to explore areas for concession secluded from the media and the public and to agree to concentrate on the most contentious issue first – land inequality and reform.  

After four years of extensive talks and despite multiple crises nearly derailing the process, on 24 August 2016 a final agreement was announced. The 297 page document contained agreements between both sides on six agenda items: (1) Comprehensive rural reform; (2) political participation; (3) ending the conflict; (4) solution to illicit drugs; (5) victims of the conflict; (6) implementation, verification, and endorsement. The agreement’s focus on democritisation, human rights, and the rule of law as conflict resolution tools demonstrates that the agreement was influenced by the liberal peace model, as described by Richmond and Mitchell and highlighted in sub-section 2.2.5 of this thesis.

The agreement was signed amid huge international fanfare and placed before the Colombian people in a national plebiscite on 2 October 2016. In a shock result, the electorate rejected the agreement with 50.2 percent voting against ratification. The unexpected outcome has been attributed to three factors: the low turnout of 32 percent; the successful anti-agreement campaign carried out by the opposition Centro Democrático (CD) party led by ex-President Uribe; and because voters were only given one month to digest the extensive agreement.

The failure to pass the agreement in a national plebiscite sent both sides back to the negotiating table to revisit some of the more controversial aspects. A renewed agreement was announced on 24 November 2016, which added thirteen pages to the original

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77 Richmond and Mitchell, "Peacebuilding and Critical Forms of Agency: From Resistance to Subsistence."
The new agreement placed stricter limits on the scope of land reform, contained stronger protections of private property, included more punitive transitional justice terms, stipulated the FARC must end all illegal economic activity, and curtailed the amount of state funding the FARC could use in future political campaigning. Instead of another plebiscite the revised agreement was passed by both houses of the Colombian Congress that same month. The FARC then began to move into the designated transition zones and within six months it handed over its weapons arsenal. The speed and the public nature of the DDR process was remarkable. It contrasts sharply with the slow and secretive IRA and ETA decommissioning processes outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. The impact of this expeditious and public approach on the process is examined in more depth in section 5.5.

The peace agreement included measures to support a rebel-to-party transition and to increase the participation of groups traditionally excluded from the political system, such as women, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous peoples. As part of the peace process the FARC transformed from an armed rebel group into a political party. It chose the name Common Alternative Revolutionary Force, which in Spanish is *Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común*, in order to keep the same FARC acronym. The FARC was not able to mobilise significant popular support as a political party in its first electoral contests. In the March 2018 parliamentary elections, the new FARC political party won just 0.5 percent of the national vote and it only secured representation in the Congress because the peace agreement automatically granted it five seats in each chamber until 2026. On 24 January 2021 the FARC announced that the political party was changing its name to Comunes.

The second round of the presidential election in June 2018 saw the election of Iván Duque of the CD party, whose campaign was mostly focused on a pledge to undo and amend the 2016 peace agreement. Since his election the Colombian government has not initiated the plans and programmes for rural reform outlined in the peace agreement, it has shifted from

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80 Ibid, 37-38.
81 Reveло and Sottilotta, "Barriers to Peace," 2.
83 Steele and Schubiger, "Democracy and Civil war: The Case of Colombia," 595-96.
84 Radina Gigova and Fernando Ramos, "Colombia’s FARC party is changing its name to ‘Comunes’," CNN, 27 January, 2021, [https://tinyurl.com/my4zs4tk](https://tinyurl.com/my4zs4tk).
crop substitution to aggressive anti-drug policies, and systematically challenged the transitional justice measures.\textsuperscript{85} In addition the violent activities of paramilitaries have increased, including the assassination of demobilised FARC members and their families. The government has failed to live up to its guarantee of security for demobilised FARC members and FARC political activists, one of the pillars of the agreement.\textsuperscript{86} Social leaders are being murdered in increasing numbers since the peace agreement was signed and Colombia is now one of the most dangerous countries in the world for social and human rights activists.\textsuperscript{87} Paramilitaries, connected to the interests of large landowners and big business, are also attempting to forcibly displace communities that live in areas previously controlled by the FARC, as these areas come under increased economic attention.\textsuperscript{88}

These developments pose a direct challenge to the peace process and threaten its viability. A small FARC dissident group that did not accept the terms of the peace agreement has grown in recent years. In August 2019 one of the FARC’s negotiators of the peace agreement, Iván Marquez, released a video announcing he had joined the dissidents, believed to number over 2,300 armed militants, and calling on others to join this “new phase of armed struggle” as the Colombian government had “betrayed” the peace process.\textsuperscript{89} This split in the FARC was due to spoilers and it is analysed in more depth in subsection 5.4.5.

The peace agreement remains unfulfilled today and the process has come under attack from the government, paramilitaries, and FARC dissidents. However, the peace process remains in place and the bulk of the FARC have not returned to conflict. While one can correctly say the peace process successfully ended the violent conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state, it has not been fully implemented nor has it tackled the grievances which created the conflict. In this sense it is closer to Galtung’s definition of a

\textsuperscript{85} Revelo and Sottilotta, “Barriers to Peace,” 3.
\textsuperscript{86} Steele and Schubiger, “Democracy and Civil war: The Case of Colombia,” 595.
\textsuperscript{87} Joe Parkin Daniels, “‘We’re being massacred’: Colombia accused of failing to stop murder of activists,” The Guardian, 8 October, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/2p9dmxhb.
negative peace rather than the more elusive positive peace,\(^90\) as described in section 2.1 of this thesis.

The next section of this chapter outlines how and why Sinn Féin became involved in the peace process as a third party.

### 5.3 International Involvement and the Role of Sinn Féin

International involvement in negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian state first began during the Pastrana administration and it led to increasing international engagement in peace efforts in Colombia.\(^{91}\) The 2016 peace agreement and subsequent peace process had significant international involvement, most prominently via the Cuban and Norwegian third party facilitation of the talks. Their involvement followed a traditional model of third party state involvement with conflict resolution through the mediation and facilitation of negotiations, as highlighted in section 2.3 of this thesis. This involves direct engagement with the leadership and key negotiators of both warring parties at the Track I level, or what Lederach terms the top level of conflict resolution.\(^92\) However, there was less visible international involvement in the process from foreign political parties, including Sinn Féin.

The Santos administration strongly encouraged international involvement in the peace process and examined international experiences even before beginning formal talks with the FARC. Santos has revealed that immediately after his election he engaged with international peace advisers and he studied seventeen conflict resolution processes from around the world.\(^93\) He examined both successful and unsuccessful processes, to learn lessons before commencing negotiations with the FARC.\(^94\) He divulged that one of the successful cases he studied was the peace process in Northern Ireland, a conflict Santos was personally familiar with. One evening in December 1974, when Santos was living in London and working for the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia, he was strolling in Piccadilly when he was thrown off his feet by an IRA bomb that exploded at the

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\(^90\) Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research."
\(^91\) Guáqueta, "The Way Back in Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now," 35.
\(^92\) Lederach, Building Peace.
\(^93\) Juan Manuel Santos, "An Evening with H.E. Former President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos," Trinity College Dublin, 15 November 2018.
\(^94\) Ibid.
nearby Naval and Military Club.\textsuperscript{95} According to Jonathan Powell, Santos remained fascinated with Northern Ireland and the peace process since this experience.\textsuperscript{96}

Powell was one of the international advisers that Santos engaged with immediately after his election. Powell informed the author that he travelled to Colombia in 2010 to meet with Santos and they discussed the peace process in Northern Ireland, which ended with Santos inviting him back to speak about the peace process in more detail.\textsuperscript{97} It was in this return visit that Santos informed Powell of the secret back channel that he opened to negotiate with the FARC.\textsuperscript{98} Santos wanted advice on how to proceed and for Powell to set up a panel of experienced international figures to help.\textsuperscript{99} Separately, the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, offered Santos assistance with the process and this led to Sergio Jaramillo, who was the head of the government team charged with exploratory talks with the FARC, travelling to London to consult Michael Oatley, the former MI6 officer who opened a back channel for talks with the IRA.\textsuperscript{100}

The Colombian negotiators appeared to have gained significant knowledge from these engagements, because when Martin McGuinness visited Colombia in 2014 at the invitation of President Santos he said: “[I] was absolutely shocked by the level of knowledge of the... Colombian government chief negotiators about our peace process. They know absolutely everything... they know all the different personalities on the British side, the Sinn Féin side, the unionist side.”\textsuperscript{101} The Colombian government also learned that the person used by the British government as a back channel to talk to the IRA was Brendan Duddy and McGuinness was very surprised to find out that the Colombian government codenamed its back channel to the FARC: Brendan.\textsuperscript{102} In addition, Santos has stated that the Irish government were always supportive and helpful to him and the peace process.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{95} Matthew Campbell, "Colombia peace built by British veterans of IRA accord," \textit{The Sunday Times}, 25 September, 2016, \url{https://tinyurl.com/26esrnce}.
\textsuperscript{96} Powell, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Campbell, "Colombia peace built by British veterans of IRA accord."
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Derry Journal}, "Brendan Duddy and the Colombians," 8 April, 2014, \url{https://tinyurl.com/26xvdzd}.
\textsuperscript{102} Niall Ó Dochartaigh, "The secrets behind a peace process," \textit{RTÉ} 17 November, 2017, \url{https://tinyurl.com/mv2v2e2a}.
\textsuperscript{103} Santos, "An Evening with H.E. Former President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos".
As illustrated in section 2.3 of this thesis, experience and lesson sharing between peace processes is nothing new and existing peace agreements are regularly used as templates for emerging processes. Thus, engagements between governments in this manner are common. However, an understudied element in the experience and lesson sharing between peace processes is the engagement of certain political parties with rebel movements, something which happened extensively in the Colombian peace process.

Around the same time that the Colombian government was engaging with the British and Irish governments, Justice for Colombia (JFC), a campaigning organisation created by trade unionists in Britain and Ireland in response to trade union repression in Colombia, began to connect political parties in Belfast with the emerging peace talks in Havana.\(^{104}\) Through the avenue opened by JFC, all the major political parties in Northern Ireland would become involved in cross party engagements at different stages and levels of the Colombian peace process. However, Sinn Féin more than any other party went on to play a significant third party role in the peace process through its bilateral engagements with the FARC.

This was not Sinn Féin’s first engagement with the conflict in Colombia. In August 2001 three Irish citizens travelling on false passports were arrested in Bogotá airport and they soon became known in Ireland as the Colombian Three.\(^{105}\) The Colombian government accused them of training the FARC in bomb making and military techniques, stating there had been growing links between the IRA and the FARC since 1998.\(^{106}\) The men themselves claimed they were part of “a steady stream of foreign visitors” who travelled to the DMZ “to exchange views and ideas regarding the Colombian and the Irish peace process” with the FARC.\(^{107}\) Monaghan says that initially they had discussions with the FARC’s public relations personnel, but as time went by “more senior FARC people would drop by and take part in the exchange of ideas.”\(^{108}\) This was echoed by FARC spokespeople. Speaking after the arrest of the Colombian Three, the then leader of the FARC, Manuel Marulanda, stated that the three had “come to talk with us to exchange opinions, to learn about a very

\(^{105}\) They were James Monaghan, a former IRA prisoner who is believed to have held high ranking positions in the organisation; Martin McCauley, received a suspended sentence for weapons charges in 1985 and believed to be a former IRA member; and Niall Connolly, a Sinn Féin member who was resident in Cuba and believed to be doing some part-time work for Sinn Féin.
\(^{106}\) Gentry and Spencer, “Colombia’s FARC: A Portrait of Insurgent Intelligence,” 471.
\(^{108}\) Monaghan, Colombia Jail Journal, 15.
distinctive reality, but most importantly to get to know us” and that claims of IRA training “were a deliberate provocation” aimed at harming the peace process in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{109}

The arrests in Colombia caused a political storm in Ireland, as accusations of continued IRA activity seriously threatened to derail the fledgling peace process. The Sinn Féin leadership stated it had no knowledge that the men were travelling to Colombia and did not sanction it.\textsuperscript{110} Unionists claimed that the presence of Irish republicans in an active war zone in Colombia showed that the IRA would not continue to honour the terms of the GFA.\textsuperscript{111} The men were convicted of travelling on false passports and then on appeal sentenced to seventeen years for training FARC rebels, in what Sinn Féin spokespeople described as a “miscarriage of justice of mammoth proportions” and “a political decision by the Colombian courts.”\textsuperscript{112} It soon emerged the men had already fled Colombia while on bail and they re-emerged in Ireland shortly after. The Irish government made no attempts to extradite them and in April 2020, in what would have been the final year of their sentence, they were granted an amnesty by a special tribunal set up under the peace process between the Colombian state and the FARC.\textsuperscript{113}

Such inauspicious and difficult beginnings did not appear to deter Sinn Féin’s future engagement in peace efforts in Colombia, which began before the contemporary process started in 2011. In June 2007 Sinn Féin MLA and former IRA hunger striker, Raymond McCartney, travelled to London to address a JFC conference on securing a peace process in Colombia, relaying Sinn Féin’s experience of the Irish peace process and the role prisoners played throughout the process.\textsuperscript{114} By 2009 JFC were arranging visits to Belfast for key figures working behind the scenes to establish a peace process, such as the Deputy Secretary General of the PCC, Carlos Lozano.\textsuperscript{115} This highlights Sinn Féin’s engagement in conflict resolution in Colombia before formal negotiations had started on a peace

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{113} Parkin Daniels and McDonald, “Colombia grants amnesty to alleged IRA bomb making trio.”
\textsuperscript{115} Mariela Kohon, interview by author, 27 March 2020.
agreement, what Albin has labelled as the pre-negotiation or first stage in her three stage model of peacemaking outlined in sub-section 2.2.2.

Mariela Kohon, who was the Director of JFC from 2011 to 2016 and an advisor to the FARC on international issues from 2016 to 2018, was one of the driving forces behind the FARC’s engagements with political parties in Belfast. She informed the author that JFC knew Powell was advising Santos and they thought it was important for the FARC to get access to the experience of parties in Northern Ireland as well. This was confirmed to the author by Tanja Nijmeijer, a former FARC militant with the nom de guerre Alexandra Nariño, who was a member of the FARC negotiating team in Havana. Nijmeijer reiterated that the FARC’s initial engagements with Sinn Féin and other parties in Northern Ireland happened at the suggestion of Kohon and JFC, who made the initial contact and arrangements. According to Kohon, exchanges between the FARC and Sinn Féin took place on a wide variety of topics related to the negotiations and peace process, namely: prisoners, trust building measures with counterparts, legislating an agreement, issues of political strategy, electoral strategy, party building, and internal cohesion through all steps of the process.

Kohon states that from the outset of these engagements the FARC was very clear that there were big differences in the contexts between both organisations and Sinn Féin approached the engagements respectfully aware of these differences. FARC negotiators thought it was important to learn from other peace processes, but not simply transplant models or ‘magic formulas’ on the Colombian process. Pastor Alape, a member of the FARC’s ruling Secretariat, informed the author that “dialogue with international actors allowed us [the FARC] to learn from other peacebuilding experiences” and that “the peace process in Ireland was very inspiring to the process of negotiating the peace agreement.” This was also publicly stated by Sinn Féin representatives who were part of the engagements. McGuinness’ statement on his 2014 visit to Colombia contains the following acknowledgement: “while one peace process cannot be simply transplanted to another

116 Ibid.
117 Tanja Nijmeijer, interview with author, 29 May 2020.
118 Kohon, interview by author.
119 Ibid.
121 *Nom de guerre* for José Lisandro Lascarro
situation there are undoubtedly valuable lessons which can be learned from the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements that we have reached.”

Sinn Féin MP Paul Maskey travelled to Havana to meet with the FARC negotiators in 2015 and his statement also includes a qualifying sentence that: “whilst acknowledging that no two situations are the same, and we cannot be prescriptive, I will bring our experiences of the Irish peace process to the table”.124

This demonstrates that Sinn Féin’s third party engagement in the process was through a horizontal relationship with the FARC, not top-down. The top-down relationship that external third parties can form with the warring parties in a peace process is a key criticism of the liberal peace, and this was highlighted in sub-section 2.2.8 of this thesis. Sinn Féin’s horizontal engagement with the FARC mirrors the engagements the ANC had with Sinn Féin and Sinn Féin had with the Basque nationalist left. As highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, in both those cases participants said the engagements did not involve pushing a particular model and they were different than engagements with other third parties due to shared similar experiences and mutual understanding.

The FARC leadership prided itself on what it saw as the FARC’s self-reliance in its campaign and its lack of dependence on an external actor, but it did take a keen interest in international issues and international solidarity.125 The FARC’s structures contained an International Commission and according to Alape, it maintained a constant relationship with governments, parties and social organisations on all continents.126 Although there was significant cross party engagement in the Colombian peace process, Kohon contends that Sinn Féin’s engagement with the FARC was different to others. She claims that there was an initial trust there already due to the history of conflict and a kind of mutual respect, which expanded as personal engagements increased.127

One can see the strength of this mutual respect in the fact that the leader of the FARC placed flowers at the monument in Havana to the 1981 Irish republican hunger strikers on

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126 Alape, interview by author.
127 Kohon, interview by author.
the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bobby Sands’ death.\textsuperscript{128} The tenth national guerrilla conference of the FARC, the last conference before it transformed into a political party, released a communique which “fraternally greets our brothers and sisters from Sinn Féin” and thanks the party for “believing in peace in Colombia.”\textsuperscript{129} When McGuinness died in March 2017 the Secretariat of the FARC released a statement sending its “heartfelt condolences” and stating that he was an “example of the revolutionary struggle for peace, social justice, solidarity, and internationalism.”\textsuperscript{130}

This further strengthens the argument, contained in section 2.3 of this thesis, that rebel groups engaging with political parties who have a similar ideology and a history of conflict resolution interact as equals in a horizontal relationship, and it is somewhat different to other third party relationships which can commonly be top-down or bottom-up. This element was also highlighted in the Basque case by Aiartza and contained in section 4.5 of the preceding chapter. Furthermore, it highlights that internationalism and solidarity are at the core of these engagements, which this thesis argues is a new post-Cold War internationalism between national liberation and rebel groups connected to the liberal peace.

The engagements between the FARC and Sinn Féin did not stop when the peace agreement was signed. Sinn Féin representatives continued engagements with the FARC and the peace process. In April 2018 Mickey Brady MP travelled to Colombia to meet political leaders on both sides and civil society groups as part of an international delegation “to monitor the peace process implementation.”\textsuperscript{131} While in May 2019 Senator Paul Gavan went to Bogotá for one week as part of a “Peace Monitor Mission” for JFC, when he also met with the lawyers of then jailed FARC leadership member Jesús Santrich.\textsuperscript{132} These engagements reveal that Sinn Féin’s involvement went further than basic experience sharing or the promotion of the peace process in Northern Ireland as a template for Colombia. Just as in the Basque case, Sinn Féin representatives were engaging to support the non-state side in

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{129} FARC-EP. "To Sinn Féin." 23 September 2016, \url{https://tinyurl.com/ych9hu6t}.
\bibitem{130} Derry Journal, "FARC says McGuinness was a 'revolutionary' and friend of the Colombian people," 24 March, 2017, \url{https://tinyurl.com/e84n3tef}.
\bibitem{131} Mickey Brady, "Brady Travels to Colombia as Part of International Peace Monitor Delegation," 4 April 2018, \url{https://tinyurl.com/bp9rrnnp}.
\bibitem{132} Paul Gavan, "Gavan Meets with Lawyers of Jesús Santrich." 30 May 2019, \url{https://tinyurl.com/3cjm6rdz}.
\end{thebibliography}
the process. This further highlights the political nature of these engagements and that the involvement of foreign political parties in peace processes is a new form of internationalism that has emerged in response to the upsurge of liberal peace processes in the post-Cold War era.

This section has illustrated that the contemporary Colombian peace process had significant international third party involvement and how Sinn Féin became involved as a third party. It demonstrated that Sinn Féin’s involvement began at the pre-negotiation stage, continued through the negotiation to agreement phase, and continues today in the post-agreement and post-conflict stage as the process has come under strain. This highlights Sinn Féin’s engagement in the Colombian peace process at all stages of Albin’s three stage model of peacemaking. This section also determined that Sinn Féin engaged horizontally to support the FARC and suggests this is part of a new post-Cold War internationalism between national liberation and rebel groups.

The remaining sections of this chapter specifically analyse the impact of these engagements on the FARC’s external negotiations, its internal negotiations on the rebel-to-party transition, and its negotiation strategy to achieve a hybrid peace that empowers the local level.

5.4 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the FARC’s External Negotiations: Borrowing Soft Power

As outlined in section 2.5 of this thesis, Zartman has stated that negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry, with the rebel side significantly weaker than the government side. To improve their standing in the negotiations, rebel groups can borrow power from third parties. In the case of the Colombian peace process, this research has found evidence of the FARC borrowing soft power from Sinn Féin to boost its international standing which was damaged by the ‘narco-terrorist’ label placed on it and to break through the Colombian government’s attempts of international isolation. As highlighted in sub-section 5.2.3, the US had combined its ‘War on Terror’ and ‘War on Drugs’ campaigns to become more heavily involved in the Colombia conflict in the 2000s. The imposition of

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134 Zartman, "Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts."
the ‘narco-terrorist’ label on the FARC by those who favoured a military victory for the Colombian state over a negotiated resolution of the conflict, meant that at the beginning of the peace process the FARC had little international legitimacy. This section illustrates how the FARC used Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Colombia peace process to borrow soft power to amend its weak international standing and boost its position at the negotiating table.

Kohon informed the author that the engagements between Sinn Féin and the FARC initially had two aims. One aim was to exchange experiences and the other “was to break through the taboo of speaking to the FARC and the FARC basically not being allowed to interact with anyone.”\textsuperscript{136} According to Kohon having international representatives, like Sinn Féin elected representatives who have been through their own conflict resolution process, speaking out about the importance of equality between the parties and putting pressure on the Colombian government, helped to open up the international space for the FARC.\textsuperscript{137} Similar efforts by the state to internationally isolate the rebel negotiators and to preclude them from speaking to international actors occurred in the Sri Lankan case, and this is analysed in section 6.4 of the next chapter.

Kohon says that although “Sinn Féin was obviously the party that the FARC would gain the most from talking to,” initially the engagements were always multi-party.\textsuperscript{138} JFC arranged the first multi-party delegation from Northern Ireland to Colombia in November 2012 and it included meetings with President Santos, FARC prisoners, and an address to Congress.\textsuperscript{139} In May 2013 a cross party delegation visited Havana and this was the first international engagement the FARC negotiators had.\textsuperscript{140} Kohon believes such engagements helped ensure equality at the negotiating table. The Colombian government was trying to isolate the FARC internationally and engagements like this gave parity to the negotiating parties.\textsuperscript{141}

A specific example of Sinn Féin’s engagements aiding the FARC’s efforts to establish parity in the negotiations occurred when Conor Murphy, a Sinn Féin MP who follows a policy of abstentionism from the Westminster Parliament, exceptionally co-hosted a public meeting

\textsuperscript{136}Kohon, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140}Geoghegan, "How the Irish brought a peace deal to Colombia."
\textsuperscript{141}Kohon, interview by author.
in the Westminster building on the emerging Colombian peace process on his return from the cross-party delegation to Havana in 2013. This meeting in Westminster became the first public engagement, in Colombia or abroad, that involved the Colombian government and FARC representatives appearing side-by-side on the same panel.\textsuperscript{142} This reveals that the FARC could borrow soft power from Sinn Féin to reduce the asymmetry in negotiations through efforts to promote the principle of parity between the two negotiating parties.

The Colombian government also appear to have recognised the importance of these international interventions, with President Santos inviting McGuinness to Colombia in 2014 to engage with political leaders from all sides.\textsuperscript{143} Adams informed the author that the Sinn Féin leadership were acutely aware of the message this would send to the Colombian people and all political groups due to Martin’s position as Deputy First Minister and as a former combatant and prisoner.\textsuperscript{144} The visit appeared to have an impact on President Santos. Powell reveals that when President Santos undertook the first Colombian state visit to Britain in 2016 he was only supposed to visit London, but taking advantage of his proximity to Northern Ireland he personally requested a visit to Belfast to express gratitude to McGuinness for his visit to Colombia, and his help and advice.\textsuperscript{145} The same year that Santos visited McGuinness in Belfast, Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams used a visit to Cuba to meet with the FARC negotiators in Havana.\textsuperscript{146} The engagement of the Sinn Féin leadership with both the President of Colombia and the FARC leadership shows that its involvement took place at what Lederach calls the top level of conflict resolution,\textsuperscript{147} as outlined in sub-section 2.2.2. It was also a demonstration of support for parity of esteem between the negotiating parties. Kohon believes that Sinn Féin’s engagements at the highest levels “definitely had an impact on the process in terms of breaking through [the] taboo and giving the FARC more of a level... there’s no doubt that it had an impact in that way.”\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} McGuinness, "McGuinness to visit Colombia to support peace process,"
\textsuperscript{144} Adams, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{145} Powell, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{147} Lederach, \textit{Building Peace}.
\textsuperscript{148} Kohon, interview by author.
This section detailed how the FARC borrowed soft power from Sinn Féin to counter the attempts of the Colombian government to isolate the FARC internationally and to reduce the asymmetry in the negotiations. The engagements were not only focused on borrowing soft power for external negotiations, they also focused on internal negotiations to facilitate a rebel-to-party transition. The next section examines the impact of Sinn Féin’s engagements on this critical issue.

5.5 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the FARC’s Internal Negotiations and the Rebel-to-Party Transition

Section 2.5 of this thesis describes at length how rebel-to-party transitions are a central element in post-Cold War peace processes. Despite the regularity of such transitions in contemporary peace processes, it has been described by de Zeeuw as one of the hardest peacebuilding challenges.\(^\text{149}\) The complexity of this challenge is compounded by the factors outlined in sub-section 2.2.7, such as: the risk of spoilers\(^\text{150}\) and the needs and fears of rebel group members being overlooked.\(^\text{151}\)

Section 5.2 of this chapter detailed the various attempts to end the five-decade long conflict between the FARC and the Colombian state. Every attempt included different efforts to bring the FARC into the democratic political process and every attempt failed. This section examines why the contemporary process formally ended the conflict with a FARC rebel-to-party transition and the impact of Sinn Féin’s engagement on that process.

Although the FARC was closely connected to the PCC for much of its history, they were quite separate organisations. Therefore, although nominally it was linked to a political party, the FARC largely operated only as a NSAG. In this regard it differs significantly from the IRA who were closely connected to Sinn Féin, and ETA who were closely connected to Batasuna. In both cases the primary focus of the rebel movements on militancy gradually shifted to a dual militancy and political model, and ultimately a full rebel-to-party transition. It is important to highlight that the transition involved the NSAG decommissioning and disbanding, leaving the existing political party as the sole vehicle for

\(^{149}\) de Zeeuw, *From Soldiers to Politicians*, 1.

\(^{150}\) Using Stedman’s definition as illustrated in section 2.2.7.

\(^{151}\) Building on Kelman’s research highlighted in section 2.2.7. See: Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict."
supporters to continue the national liberation campaign. This contrasts sharply with the case of the FARC who in order to complete a rebel-to-party transition had to create a new political party. This important aspect of the rebel-to-party transition is somewhat comparable to the LTTE, and this is discussed further in section 6.5 of the next chapter.

After the 1984 Uribe Accords the creation of UP was the FARC’s first attempt to seriously enter the democratic political process. However, UP was not a political wing of the FARC and the violent targeting of its representatives and members ensured the FARC soon distanced itself from the party. The official rupture of ties between the FARC and the PCC in the 1990s saw the FARC create the Clandestine Colombian Communist Party (PCCC), which was essentially its underground political wing in urban areas. It did not operate openly and it did not partake in elections. The attempted peace process under the Pastrana administration never reached the point of political participation. Therefore, the 2016 peace process was the first formal effort to fully demobilise the FARC and to provide implementation mechanisms to support the rebel group’s full transition into a political party, active in all aspects of the democratic political process. 152

5.5.1 Specific Challenges Faced by the FARC

The rebel-to-party transition of the FARC was quite different from the two cases already examined in this thesis. Sinn Féin existed as a political party with its own structure and history alongside the IRA, as did Batasuna and ETA. The rebel-to-party transitions in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country led to the demobilisation of rebel groups, and their members were largely subsumed into existing political parties. In the case of the FARC a whole new political party had to be established to complete the rebel-to-party transition and the FARC faced three major obstacles in this regard.

Firstly, since the Seventh Guerrilla Conference in 1982 declared the FARC a ‘people’s army’ and added EP to its title, the group was structured more like a regular army than a guerrilla organisation. While this was a military decision to improve its offensive capabilities, it also ensured that FARC fighters became increasingly separate from the population. For example, they lived in special camps rather than among the population, they wore army uniforms rather than civilian clothes, and commanders referred to civilians as a different

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and distinct entity. Unlike its origins as a peasant self-defence organisation, over time the FARC transitioned from a wandering guerrilla force to a distinct army, creating a disconnect with the general populace.

The second major obstacle faced by the FARC was Colombia’s weak democratic system and the aftermath of the targeted massacre of UP. Despite Colombia’s relatively positive showing in cross-national datasets of democracy and regular democratic elections in which power is handed over, decades of conflict had hollowed democratic practises in Colombia and assimilating a FARC political party was a major challenge. One of the main arguments used by guerrilla groups to legitimise their armed campaign was the lack of political guarantees for opposition groups to participate in Colombian politics safely. While there have been successful demobilisations of other smaller left-wing rebel groups in the early 1990s, none of the political movements they created survived in that format and many former members became involved in civil society activities instead.

The shadow of the violence directed against UP also casts a long shadow. Rodrigo Granada, a member of the FARC leadership, maintained that the FARC had learned from the “planned systematic extermination” of UP and was determined “not [to] let history repeat itself.” Despite the confidence of the leadership there was still deep distrust among the rank-and-file, not only due to the UP experience, but because state repression was one of the main motivating factors for them joining the FARC and little work was done in advance of the peace process to stop the killing of civil society activists. This again contrasts sharply with the cases of Sinn Féin and Batasuna. Although at the height of the conflict both groups faced state repression and had members assassinated and imprisoned, the repression was not close to the scale of the targeted massacre UP suffered. One can draw similarities between the FARC’s experience and that of the LTTE. The state encouraged repression of the Tamil people and the multiple pogroms, culminating in Black July in 1983 which essentially closed off the political space in Colombo to Tamil political activists who

154 Flores and Vargas, “Colombia: Democracy, violence, and the peacebuilding challenge,” 587.
156 Between 1989 and 1994 the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), the Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame (MAQL), the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), and the Coorriente de Renovación Socialista (CRS) all demobilised and became political actors.
159 Nariño, “Prospects for Peace: Negotiations with FARC,” 224.
advocated for a Tamil Eelam, rendered a LTTE rebel-to-party transition unworkable unless there was significant state and political reform in the centre. This is discussed further in section 6.5 of the next chapter.

An additional factor the FARC had to contend with in relation to the democratic system was that the violence against UP had also targeted left-wing voters. The killing and expulsion of UP sympathisers from their communities has been labelled by Steele and Schubiger as “political cleansing.” This political cleansing undermined support for UP and forced the FARC to withdraw to more rural and remote locations. It strengthened the ties regional elites had with paramilitary groups and deprived the FARC of its civilian base. This culminated in reducing the potential voter base for the FARC when it underwent a rebel-to-party transition. One can once again draw similarities here with the LTTE’s experience, as the various anti-Tamil pogroms had forced Tamils to largely flee from their homes in southern and central areas of the island and to confine themselves to only the north and east or flee completely and join the growing Tamil diaspora in exile.

The third major obstacle faced by the FARC was that establishing a truly national organisation in Colombia is a complicated undertaking due to the size of the country and its topography. While the FARC was essentially a national guerrilla organisation, throughout its history it was more focused on achieving local power than national power. No other Colombian guerrilla force obtained the high degree of centralisation that the FARC achieved, however it was still a predominately rural organisation. Many of the other guerrilla groups were led by middle-class urbanites, whereas the FARC was founded by peasants and most of its leaders came from the peasantry. It had largely ignored more conventional avenues to transform society, such as elections and engagement with national institutions, instead focusing on the community level. This may be a sensible policy for a rebel organisation to build support, but it makes the transition to a political party engaged in national elections more complex. The FARC’s traditional strongholds were in southern and eastern Colombia, and in the south-central highlands. In its transition to a political party it had to attempt to gain support from Colombia’s principal cities – Bogotá,

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160 Steele and Schubiger, "Democracy and Civil war: The Case of Colombia," 590.
161 Ibid, 590.
163 Leech, The FARC - The Longest Insurgency, 24.
Medellín, Cali, and Baranquilla – areas where it lacked any traditional support and which are separated by vast expanses of land.

This third and final element is a dramatic difference when compared to the IRA, ETA, and LTTE. They were NSAG underpinned by ethno-nationalism and engaged in conflicts of national liberation. Therefore, they could rely on a significant pool of supporters from that ethno-nationalist background to support their political goals. They did not need to secure wider support from groups or regions in the state they were in conflict with, just from within their own communities or nations. This is an important nuance in the Colombia case when compared to the other cases in this thesis.

Despite these unique and localised problems that the FARC faced in transitioning from a rebel group into a political party, it officially done so on 1 September 2017 when it launched the FARC political party, now known as Comunes. From the outset of the peace talks with the Santos government the FARC sought the assistance of others who went through their own rebel-to-party transition to aid its transition. One foreign political party that heavily engaged with the FARC on its rebel-to-party transition was Sinn Féin. The remaining subsections examine these engagements and the impact it had.

5.5.2. ‘Bringing Your Constituency With You’

As outlined in section 5.4, Sinn Féin representatives started travelling to Colombia and Havana once the peace talks were made public in 2012. One of the principal areas of the engagement between the FARC and Sinn Féin was rebel-to-party transition. At the Tenth National Guerrilla Conference of the FARC-EP in September 2016, which formally ratified the peace agreement negotiated in Havana, the FARC released a communique addressed ‘To Sinn Féin’. In the communique the FARC said: “The interchange of experiences with your party which has succeeded in taking the step from military political organisation to political party, developing its electoral policy with great wisdom and real commitment to the Irish people, has been priceless. You’re an example and we hope we can continue counting on your accompaniment in this great battle of ideas to come.”164 This statement

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164 FARC-EP, ”To Sinn Féin.”
reveals the importance the FARC leadership publicly placed on Sinn Féin’s experience of rebel-to-party transition and the engagements between the two movements.

In the engagements between the FARC and Sinn Féin, just like Sinn Féin’s engagements with the Basque nationalist left detailed in section 4.5 of Chapter 4, we again see that ensuring rank-and-file members are updated on the process was a subject for discussion. One of Sinn Féin’s most senior advisors, Ted Howell, travelled to Havana in July 2016 to meet with the FARC negotiators. Howell gave a candid interview with the FARC peace delegation media team sharing that he had discussed the importance of “bring[ing] your own constituency along with you” with FARC negotiators, specifically mentioning the difficult problems that will be faced later on in the process if this is not done. Just two months before Howell’s visit Séanna Walsh and Michael Culbert, both former IRA prisoners also visited the FARC delegation in Cuba. Culbert said he brought a clear message with him: discuss the negotiations with the rank and file, start community dialogues, and get members deliberating. Culbert maintained that his advice was based on the work Irish republicans had done for many years to win over all those who were invested in the republican campaign to support the peace process strategy. Walsh informed the author that he talked to former FARC combatants about the conflict resolution experience in Ireland and how this could inform the peace process in Colombia.

Nijmeijer, former FARC member and participant in the peace talks in Havana, also related Sinn Féin’s support to the FARC in the rebel-to-party transition. She informed the author of discussions between the two groups on the difficulties faced in transitioning from an armed movement to a political movement. Nijmeijer contends that Sinn Féin representatives informed the FARC negotiators that there would be important discussions between two sections of people in the organisation during the transition process: the older established membership and newer members. With the representatives explaining the way that Sinn

167 Geoghegan, "How the Irish brought a peace deal to Colombia."
168 Ibid.
169 Walsh, interview by author
170 Nijmeijer, interview by author
171 Ibid.
Féin dealt with difficulties between these two sections. Furthering the argument that the engagements were horizontal in nature, rather than top-down or bottom up, Nijmeijer maintains that in the engagements Sinn Féin representatives were: “very, very respectful of our process. They would not say you have to do this or you have to do that. But one thing they would emphasise a lot on was, you have to take your constituency with you… different members of Sinn Féin, all telling us that same thing the whole time.”

Nijmeijer revealed that she finds this support “very curious” now because she thinks that one of the biggest mistakes that the FARC has made is that it has not taken its constituency with them, and it was an important lesson it should have learned. She left the FARC in January 2020 and not focusing on bringing its rank-and-file membership through the process accordingly was one of the main reasons she left. Kohon also says that she is not sure that the FARC really took on board the lessons learned and advice it was getting in these meetings regarding engagement strategies to build support among young members and women members for the peace process and the political strategy. This exposes that Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC on the rebel-to-party transition ultimately had little impact on the FARC leadership’s strategic decisions on the transition.

5.5.3 Engagements on Prisoner Issues and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants

A particular focus on prisoners also seems to have taken place in these engagements. Kohon said that despite the huge difference in the prisoner situation in Colombia and Ireland, “issues around prisoners were of huge interest” in the discussions. As already highlighted in the Northern Ireland and Basque cases, prisoners are a core constituency in rebel-to-party transitions. Sinn Féin appeared well placed to assist the FARC on this issue due to the soft and moral power it had with this constituency. For example, when 1,500 FARC prisoners went on hunger strike to demand the release of prisoners who had serious

172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Kohon, interview by author.
177 Ibid.
health complications, they released a press statement thanking former 1981 IRA Hunger Striker and then Sinn Féin MLA Pat Sheehan for his statements of support.\textsuperscript{178}

Culbert reveals that during his engagement with the FARC negotiators in Havana he discussed some of the issues faced by ex-prisoners when they are released and how certain factors can lead them to be disgruntled and decide to persist in armed conflict, and that the FARC should pay particular attention to this and learn the lessons from others.\textsuperscript{179} This experience sharing highlights the awareness that ex-prisoners can act as spoilers, as defined in sub-section 2.2.7, to a peace process and undermine a rebel-to-party transition.

Similarly, Jennifer McCann, a former IRA prisoner and Sinn Féin MLA, travelled to Havana to meet with the FARC negotiators. She travelled as part of an international delegation of female ex-combatants who exchanged ideas with the gender subcommission negotiators about the reincorporation of ex-combatants, the decommissioning of arms, security guarantees, and specific issues faced by female ex-combatants.\textsuperscript{180} McCann also emphasised that she discussed the role former prisoners can play in developing a peace process\textsuperscript{181} and the importance of bringing the families of prisoners on board with any peace strategy.\textsuperscript{182} Another high-profile former female IRA prisoner and Sinn Féin MLA, Martina Anderson, travelled to Colombia to attend a conference on the Colombian peace process organised by the government in 2016. She revealed to the author that she snuck away one evening to secretly meet FARC representatives.\textsuperscript{183} She said they extended an invite to her to return with McCann and to travel into the jungle to meet female combatants to further share their peace process experience, but due to domestic political demands she could not travel again and the proposed follow up meeting never happened.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{179} Culbert, "Interview with Michael Culbert, former IRA prisoner."
\textsuperscript{180} FARC-EP Peace Delegation, "Historical Meeting of Female Ex-Combatants," 20 May 2016, \url{https://tinyurl.com/3auu4h3b}.
\textsuperscript{181} Jennifer McCann, "Jennifer McCann travels to Cuba for Colombian peace process talks," 18 May 2016, \url{https://tinyurl.com/4mwnmr}.
\textsuperscript{182} McCann, Jennifer. "Interview with Jennifer McCann." By FARC-EP Peace Delegation. 20 May 2016. \url{https://tinyurl.com/2r9pf98c}.
\textsuperscript{183} Anderson, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
Nijmeijer contends that the female FARC combatants in particular were very eager to learn lessons from the experiences of former female combatants in other peace process. The issue was of major importance to the FARC because women made up approximately 33 percent of the armed force. Despite the relatively high number of female combatants, women were still largely marginalised from the peace process. Although the creation of a gender subcommission was promoted as a historic success for the integration of a gender perspective in negotiations, by the time it was created three of the six points of the peace agreement were already settled: rural reform; political participation; and solution to illegal drugs. Nijmeijer said exchanges with Sinn Féin were interesting to female FARC members, but as the reintegration of FARC ex-combatants was a very rural focused process, the Irish process was substantially different and the FARC members learned more from the Nicaraguan and Guatemalan experiences in this regard.

Therefore, despite the considerable amount and the extent of Sinn Féin engagements with the FARC on prisoner and ex-combatant reintegration issues, there is little evidence that it impacted on the FARC’s strategy regarding prisoners and the reintegration of combatants as the Northern Ireland and Colombia contexts were so different in this regard.

5.5.4 Engagements on Political Strategy

According to participants in the engagements between the FARC and Sinn Féin, the meetings also focused on political strategy and how to build support for the party after a rebel-to-party transition. Kohon reveals that Sinn Féin shared electoral strategies and party building techniques with the FARC, such as how to utilise supporter databases and how to turn the focus on the implementation process to grow the party’s reach. Nijmeijer informed the author that Sinn Féin also held workshops on election campaigns, canvassing, and election strategy for the FARC, which were led by “a specialist on elections.

185 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
189 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
190 Kohon, interview by author.
191 Ibid.
This began during the peace negotiations in Cuba and continued afterwards with Sinn Féin representatives travelling to Colombia, visiting FARC members in a Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR), and local representatives in Bogotá. These engagements occurred in the run-up to local elections, and the Sinn Féin representatives had specific meetings with local candidates and members in advance of the election.

While Kohon and Nijmeijer speak positively about these engagements on election strategy and party building, both are aware the FARC’s post-agreement political project has gone poorly. While on paper the rebel-to-party transition has been a success – the FARC rebel group no longer exist and the Comunes has replaced it – the party only received 0.5 percent of the national vote in the 2018 parliamentary election and its representation in Congress was only secured due to clauses in the peace agreement. Once again there is little evidence that Sinn Féin’s engagement with the FARC on this issue had any significant impact on the strategic decisions of the leadership.

5.5.5 Splits and Spoilers

The FARC’s rebel-to-party transition was beset by major internal problems and a significant split in the leadership saw a dissident FARC group established by what can be defined as spoilers to the peace process. The transition has also been hampered by wider problems with the peace process. The continuation of paramilitary groups has been a major obstacle to the peace process and the FARC’s rebel-to-party transition. As detailed in section 5.2, security concerns and a repeat of the massacre of UP members were one of the major fears FARC members held when entering into the peace process. The targeted killings of former FARC combatants and their families has damaged the DDR process and paramilitary violence continues to spoil the peace process in Colombia. Between the signing of the peace agreement in November 2016 and April 2021, 276 former FARC combatants were assassinated, and 904 social activists were murdered in the same period.

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192 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
193 ETCRs were temporary camps where ex-FARC members lived during the DDR process, before reintegration back into their communities.
194 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
195 Justice for Colombia, "Rise in violence as eight FARC former combatants murdered in nine days," 26 April 2021, https://tinyurl.com/5h9hffs.
paramilitary groups continue to act as spoilers to the peace process, as defined by Stedman and illustrated in sub-section 2.2.7 of this thesis. They have resisted land restitution efforts and expanded their control of territories left by the FARC following the peace agreement. Therefore there is a perception among former FARC combatants that the peace process has stagnated over the inadequate security guarantees for political integration and the lack of land redistribution.

As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7, the needs and fears of rebel groups when they enter negotiations or sign a peace agreement are often overlooked. With such a focus on ending the direct violence between the two warring parties, the social-psychological dimensions of conflict are ignored and can lead to splits in the rebel group due to the emergence of spoilers.

Additionally, over 3,400 FARC members were in prison when the peace agreement was signed, fewer than half were granted amnesties, pardons or early releases under the amnesty law passed by Congress and there is inertia from the Colombian government to resolve prisoner issues. Prisoners are a core constituency for rebel groups and as illustrated in section 1.5, prisoner releases are a key political battle ground in the post-conflict political arena. Not sufficiently resolving prisoner issues damages the rebel-to-party transition as it creates internal fissures at a time when unity behind a political strategy is fundamentally important.

The apathy of the government to fully implement the peace process, the lack of security guarantees for demobilised members in the face of attacks by paramilitary groups acting as spoilers, the failure to resolve prisoner issues, and the absence of a peace dividend have all combined to internally weaken the FARC after the rebel-to-party transition. After the extremely poor election results and deepening internal problems, a serious split occurred in August 2019 when former FARC commanders and negotiators Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich announced they were setting up a dissident group to resume an armed campaign. Due to their rejection of the peace agreement and their return to violent conflict to

196 Maher and Thompson, "A Precarious Peace."
undermine it, they can be defined as spoilers under Stedman’s definition put forward in sub-section 2.2.7.

Sinn Féin’s Chairperson, Declan Kearney, released a statement calling the announcement of this split “disappointing and regrettable.” Kearney’s statement placed the blame on the Colombian government for not implementing the state’s commitments under the peace agreement and commended the FARC political party for continuing to abide by its commitments and for its “leadership at a time of heightened tension and danger in Colombia.” Thus revealing Sinn Féin’s support for the political leadership of the FARC in continuing the rebel-to-party transition in the face of a damaging split caused by spoilers.

This split in the FARC exposes that Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC on its rebel-to-party transition, specifically on ‘bringing your constituency with you’, did not lead to the absence of spoilers. This contrasts with the findings of the Basque case study in Chapter 4, which demonstrate that Sinn Féin’s engagement with the rebel-to-party transition did reduce the threat of spoilers. In comparison, section 6.5 will show that the LTTE also suffered a major split in the group due to spoilers, but this did not occur after the rebel-to-party transition process as in the case of the FARC.

5.5.6 Reasons for the Limited Impact of the Engagements

Nijmeijer believes there was either a lack of will or a shortage of capacity within the FARC leadership to heed the advice and learn the lessons from the engagements with Sinn Féin on ‘bringing your constituency with you’ and political strategy. She stated she felt embarrassed for some Sinn Féin delegations who travelled to Cuba because, despite being kind and appreciative, the top leadership figures of the FARC often did not attend meetings with them and did not take into account the lessons being shared. In the period after the peace process was concluded, Nijmeijer remembers internally the FARC were already realising mistakes were being made and she thought that the Secretariat would now engage more with these Sinn Féin delegations. However, according to Nijmeijer, when the

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200 Ibid.
201 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
202 Ibid.
Sinn Féin delegation visited the ETCR and local representatives in Bogotá to provide support and advice in advance of the elections, meetings with the Secretariat still never happened. The FARC leader Timochenko only committed to a short protocol courtesy meeting with the delegation before they left Bogotá.

Kohon believes the engagements could have had a greater impact if international funding to aid the rebel-to-party transition was secured, but it never came through and there was pushback from donors to the peace process regarding developing the FARC as a political party. Kohon maintains that both Sinn Féin and the FARC were keen to work on a significant programme of exchanges focused on party development, with a particular focus on urban organising in cities where the FARC had less experience and historically had to operate clandestinely, as well as on political messaging strategy and communication. However the lack of funding for this programme of exchanges became an obstacle, as well as the internal situation in the FARC, and these engagements never happened.

5.6 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the FARC’s External Negotiation Strategy: Enhancing the Local Level in a Hybridisation of the Liberal Peace Model

Section 5.2 of this thesis outlined the various unsuccessful conflict resolution efforts in Colombia since the mid-1980s. One of the reasons why these previous attempts failed was the difference between both sides on how wide ranging a peace agreement should be. While Colombian governments have favoured negotiating a narrow military agreement to end the conflict, the FARC’s longstanding position was that there should be civil society participation in the process and for the whole country to debate the agreement in constituent assemblies. With the end of the Cold War and the rise of the liberal peace paradigm, which was defined and discussed in section 2.1, the Colombian government’s position gradually shifted. Under the Uribe administration the government used the US ‘War on Terror’ campaign and the prevailing realist securitisation doctrine to seek a victor’s peace via a military victory, but the Santos government shifted tactics to pursue a peace

\[\text{Kline, } \textit{Chronicle of a Failure Foretold, } 59.\]
agreement heavily influenced by the liberal peace paradigm. The liberal peace model was also gradually accepted by the FARC, but it maintained its demands for an increased focus on the local level, in line with the local turn in peacebuilding discussed in sub-section 2.2.6, leading to a hybridisation of the liberal peace model that enhanced the local level. This section illustrates these developments and analyses Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC on enhancing local ownership of the process.

During peace talks in the 1990s the FARC put the neoliberal economic model as an agenda item at the talks. While the government debated the issue at the talks it made clear that the economic model was non-negotiable.\textsuperscript{209} The government was content to support the rewriting of the Colombian constitution by constituent assembly in 1991 in an effort to pacify armed left-wing rebel groups, but changes to the neoliberal economic model would not be contemplated. This was deeply concerning for the FARC because it believed Colombia’s economic model was one of the main causes of the conflict.\textsuperscript{210} The economic model remained a major obstacle for the FARC in the Havana peace talks, but ultimately agreement was reached not to have the topic as a specific agenda item in the peace agreement. It appears that the political victories for Bolivarianism and for the left in Latin America in the twenty-first century, as highlighted in sub-section 5.2.3, had created a political model for the FARC to follow in order to implement the economic changes it believed was necessary. Therefore, instead of the economy being an agenda item in the talks, like it was in 1991 and 1992, ‘political participation’ was one of the six agenda items in the peace agreement. The focus on political participation in a liberal democratic system and no discussion on changing the neoliberal economic model are key pillars of the liberal peace model, as highlighted in section 2.4.

The political developments in Latin America also ensured that the FARC accepted international involvement in the Havana peace talks, another key pillar of the liberal peace model outlined in section 2.4. The FARC’s acceptance materialised, according to Nijmeijer, because the existence of left leaning governments in Latin America made it possible to have impartial oversight of any final agreement and a political model for the FARC to follow.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{210} Nariño, “Prospects for Peace: Negotiations with FARC,” 223.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
During the negotiations in Havana the FARC continued to argue for its traditional policy of creating constituent assemblies to debate any final agreement. While it was not successful in getting agreement on this, it successfully ensured that the final agreement would be put before the electorate in a national plebiscite. The FARC and Colombian government also acceded to national and international demands for certain civil society participation in the talks and the creation of a historic gender subcommission, as discussed in section 5.4.3.

Therefore, it is evident that the FARC accepted core elements of the liberal peace such as liberal democratic political competition and liberal institutionalism, and it conceded to the peace agreement not altering the neoliberal economic model in Colombia, receiving concessions on land reform in return. In this sense the liberal peace paradigm strongly influenced the 2016 Colombia peace agreement but the agreement itself was not a pre-packaged template, there was a local turn that influenced aspects of the agreement. This is common across all the cases included in this thesis; however, the local turn is stronger in some cases and in different areas. For example, there was a significant local turn and bottom-up decommissioning process in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, but top-down approaches in Colombia and Sri Lanka. Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC reveal that there was a focus on enhancing local ownership, re-politicising the process, and a hybridisation of the liberal peace model.

As outlined in section 2.4 of this thesis, the depoliticising of peace processes is a key feature of technocratic liberal peace models that focus on peacebuilding by blueprint.\(^{212}\) There was an early attempt at depoliticization in the process when the Colombian government refused to publicly appear with the FARC and tried to internationally isolate the group. This effort did not face resistance among many international actors, which is not uncommon. Richmond argues, as highlighted in section 2.4, that international actors are generally sensitive to local ownership and needs in contemporary peace processes, but they still have a tendency to favour a top-down orthodox liberal peace model.\(^{213}\) By using the example of the peace process in Northern Ireland and Sinn Féin’s international profile, the FARC were able to borrow power to push back against this attempted depoliticization. As highlighted in section 5.3, the efforts of Sinn Féin resulted in the Colombian government sharing a


\(^{213}\) Richmond, "The Problem of Peace: Understanding the 'Liberal Peace'," 299-300.
panel with the FARC for the first time. This established a certain level of parity in the talks. This illustrates that the campaign for local ownership and the re-politicisation of peace processes is being internationalised through the involvement of foreign political parties. This mirrors what occurred in the Basque Country and was highlighted throughout Chapter 4. The LTTE also attempted this strategy but was unsuccessful and the reasons for this are discussed in section 6.4.

Section 2.4 highlighted that this thesis would examine how foreign political parties can assist local rebel groups in retaining and gaining political power in liberal peace transitions. Section 5.4 put forward the research findings regarding Sinn Féin’s engagement with the FARC on rebel-to-party transitions, but these engagements also focused on disarmament and external negotiations. According to Kohon, engagements between the FARC and Sinn Féin also focused on decommissioning of weapons and negotiating strategies. This form of experience sharing and strategic engagement can be viewed as a partisan engagement with the peace process to improve the knowledge of the rebel organisation and strengthen its ability to influence the negotiations by enhancing local ownership of the process in key areas. This is echoed by Pastor Alape, who informed the author that engagements with Sinn Féin allowed the FARC to “gather their negotiating experiences.”

In the engagements on negotiation strategy, it appears that the focus was not limited to the immediate negotiations to reach an agreement, but also on the future implementation of any agreement. In 2014, two years before the peace agreement was finalised, Sinn Féin MLA Conor Murphy met with lawyers in Colombia and drew parallels with Ireland regarding post-conflict restorative justice measures and a proposed truth commission. This was followed by a visit from Paul Maskey MP to the negotiators in Havana to discuss the same topic. Kohon also informed the author that discussions took place in Havana between Sinn Féin and FARC representatives on what to do once there was an agreement and how to transform the provisions into legislation. She stated that on the suggestion of Sinn Féin, Irish lawyers travelled to Havana and had engagements with FARC legal advisors.

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214 Kohon, interview by author.
215 Geoghegan, "How the Irish brought a peace deal to Colombia."
216 Alape, interview by author.
218 Maskey, "Maskey to meet with Colombian Negotiators."
219 Kohon, interview by author.
regarding the legislative process and the negotiation process on legislation once a peace agreement is reached.\textsuperscript{220} Once again we see experience sharing and strategic engagement focus on improving the knowledge of the rebel organisation in relation to the different peace process stages with the aim of enhancing its ability and readiness to shape the process to suit its own local realities and political aims. While a significant element of the peace agreement has been negotiated into legislation in Colombia, there is deep frustration from the FARC and civil society organisations that supported the peace process, that government inertia has failed to see the legislation fully enacted and enforced.

The other significant area of engagement on negotiating strategy to enhance local ownership related to ceasefires and decommissioning. Section 4.6 of the preceding chapter demonstrated the research findings that ETA’s decommissioning actions mirrored that of the IRA’s and that Sinn Féin’s engagements helped enable Batasuna’s unilateral strategy in this regard. In the Colombian case, this research did not find a similar outcome from Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC on the decommissioning process, but Kohon recalls that the discussions around ceasefires were particularly useful.\textsuperscript{221}

Throughout the conflict resolution process, the FARC had called unilateral ceasefires but subsequently faced attacks from the Colombian army. Therefore, the FARC had a particular focus on getting the Colombian government to agree to a bilateral ceasefire. Kohon notes that there was a lot of practical discussions between Sinn Féin representatives and FARC negotiators on ceasefire experiences, including how to create a situation in which ongoing ceasefires were respected.\textsuperscript{222} Pastor Alape confirms that through these engagements the FARC negotiators learned about taking political and emotional risks to open up new spaces and forcing the Colombian government into concessions.\textsuperscript{223}

However, when it came to decommissioning, the evidence indicates that the FARC leadership appear to have found Sinn Féin’s experience not particularly useful for its own context. In contrast to the Irish and Basque cases, the FARC decommissioning process moved extremely fast. A final peace agreement was announced on 23 August 2016 and the Colombian electorate voted on it in a referendum on 2 October 2016. After the referendum

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{223} Alape, interview by author.
failed the agreement was modified and it was approved by Congress on 29 November 2016. The FARC agreed to a decommissioning process of just six months and by July 2017 it had handed over its weapons to the UN Verification Mission in Colombia who oversaw the process.

The speed of the decommissioning process came as quite a shock to some high-ranking members of the FARC. Nijmeijer informed the author that even before Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC negotiators in Havana, the peace delegation always spoke of ‘putting weapons beyond use’, a term they gained from the process in Northern Ireland. Nijmeijer remembers that she said in interviews and conversations that this was the model the FARC would follow and that it implied a long, slow process of handing over weapons and not handing them over directly to the Colombian government or military. She believed it would be a ten or fifteen year process. Therefore she found it “very strange” that after all the engagements with Sinn Féin in Havana, including specific meetings with the Secretariat of the FARC on the decommissioning process, that “totally the opposite thing was done” on decommissioning. Of particular note is that Howell mentioned Sinn Féin representatives had passed on the principle that “you can’t be rushed” and “there is no instant fix” to the FARC in their engagements. Yet the FARC’s decommissioning process happened in just six months – a rapid pace for such a momentous step in the rebel-to-party transition.

Nijmeijer informed the author that she was “very, very surprised” with the six months process and only learned about it the day the agreement was announced, because a separate standalone technical commission was dealing with the decommissioning process. Even today Nijmeijer does not know why the short six months process was agreed and why the leadership of the FARC did not take on board the experience of Sinn Féin and others on decommissioning. She believes perhaps it was because they had little time to commit to these side meetings and take onboard the lessons or perhaps it was a lack of capacity. Either way, she believes that the lessons the FARC could have learned

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224 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
227 Howell, "Interview with Ted Howell, Sinn Féin Representative."
228 Nijmeijer, interview with author.
229 Ibid.
about the decommissioning process, and keeping the rank-and-file informed, were not learned by the FARC.\textsuperscript{230} The accelerated timeline for this decisive step in the process highlights that there was a lack of local control over the process.

It is noticeable that the FARC leadership were under enormous time pressure to get a deal done. The secret negotiations between the government and the FARC began very soon after President Santos was elected in August 2010. In September 2012 Santos publicly announced the talks and they entered formal negotiations in Havana. Despite initial quick progress the negotiations repeatedly stalled and by 2016 Santos was in the second half of his second, and constitutionally enforced, final term as President. There was a rush to get the agreement finalised and ratified before Santos left office, as there was a strong anti-agreement challenge from right-wing political groups led by former President Uribe. Powell confirms that he and others were telling the FARC that delaying the agreement and pushing it into a new Presidency risked undoing all the progress that had been achieved, as the next President may not be as sympathetic to a peace process as Santos.\textsuperscript{231} Therefore it is highly likely that the FARC leadership attempted to embed the agreement before a new President took office by ensuring it passed by referendum and this would be followed by a quick off-the-shelf decommissioning process, rather than a slower locally owned \textit{ad hoc} process, as in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. An agreement confirmed as the will of the Colombian people and a completed decommissioning process would mean a future unsympathetic President would not be able to find a military excuse to restart the conflict. The shock referendum result hampered this plan.

The referendum on the agreement produced an anti-agreement majority and the Uribe political bloc then coalesced behind Iván Duque Márquez, who went on to win the 2018 Presidential election. His administration has repeatedly stalled progress on the peace process and failed to fully implement the agreement leaving ex-FARC guerrillas stranded and unarmed in demobilisation camps watching the FARC political project fail to electorally take off. The DDR process has been severely impacted as a result. DDR programmes often heavily focus on socio-economic issues for combatants, however combatants also need to

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
have an outlet for political reintegration or the process risks collapsing.\textsuperscript{232} This was highlighted in section 2.5 of this thesis. Without a political outlet to create political change and to tackle the root causes of the conflict, a DDR process risks leading to a negative peace rather than a positive peace, as defined by Galtung and illustrated in sub-section 2.2.7.\textsuperscript{233}

While the FARC decommissioning process was a success on paper – the rebel group which began its armed insurrection in 1964 handed over its weapons arsenal and dissolved in 2017 – this has not translated into success for the Comunes political party that replaced the rebel group. The process has also failed to create a positive peace. Paramilitaries rapidly filled the power vacuum in rural areas created by the FARC’s quick demobilisation, establishing a new cycle of violence.\textsuperscript{234} This new wave of paramilitary violence has directly and indirectly undermined the peace process through the assassination of ex-FARC combatants. It has also led to the violent acquisition of land in territories formerly controlled by the FARC through forced displacement, thus obstructing the land reform elements of the peace agreement.\textsuperscript{235}

Therefore, from the FARC’s point of view, one cannot say that its quick decommissioning strategy has been a success for its members and supporters. That is not to say that a slower decommissioning strategy, learning from the lessons of Sinn Féin, would have led to a better outcome. That is hypothetical and we will never know. However, from the examination of the decommissioning processes in the cases examined in this research, and from the point of view of the rebel-to-party transition, the slower and locally owed processes in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country proved more beneficial, then the faster and more technocratic process in Colombia. The point raised by Father Zuppi at a 2006 peace conference in Bilbao,\textsuperscript{236} referenced in section 4.7, that a peace process requires two rhythms unique to each process – a fast rhythm to seize opportunities and a slower rhythm to digest certain difficult matters – cab be viewed as pertinent in the Colombian case as well.

\textsuperscript{232} Guáqueta, "The Way Back in Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now."
\textsuperscript{233} Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research."
\textsuperscript{235} Maher and Thompson, "A Precarious Peace," 2143.
\textsuperscript{236} Woodworth, "The Spanish-Basque Peace Process: How to Get Things Wrong," 70.
This section has demonstrated that the FARC and the Colombian government both accepted key pillars of the liberal peace model and adopted them into their peace agreement. The FARC maintained its key demand for local ownership of the process by ensuring that the agreement was put to a referendum but there was subsequently a lack of local ownership in the decommissioning process. The findings of this research highlight that Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC were focused on enhancing local ownership of the process, showing that the local turn in peacebuilding and the hybridisation of the liberal peace model has itself become internationalised through foreign political party engagements with rebel groups. However, the impact of these engagements appears weak in this case, specifically in relation to the crucial decommissioning process.

5.7 Concluding Critical Analysis of the Case Study

The end of the FARC’s fifty-four year long insurgency with the signing of the 2016 Colombian peace agreement was widely recognised as one of the most important global political events in the 2010s, resulting in President Santos being awarded the 2016 Noble Peace Prize. Unlike previous conflict resolution attempts in Colombia, this peace process was highly influenced by the liberal peace model and consequently had significant international involvement. The formal negotiations took place in Havana, with Norway and Cuba acting as guarantors of the process, and Chile and Venezuela were designated facilitators. The negotiations and agreement were keenly followed by international and local NGOs, who visited Havana at various times of the negotiations to meet with the negotiating delegations, and they remain active in highlighting the need to fully implement the agreement.

Santos stated early in the process that he believed it would succeed by learning the lessons of the previous failed processes in Colombia. As indicated in Section 5.3, Santos had also studied foreign processes and in particular the peace process in Northern Ireland. However, what was hitherto unexamined was the engagements between the FARC and foreign political parties to gain insights into, and learn lessons from, other peace processes. Kohon stresses that the engagements she helped set-up with the FARC on the peace process in Northern Ireland had a cross party element.237 At different points all the major parties in

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237 Kohon, interview by author.
Northern Ireland had some involvement in the peace process, travelling to Havana to meet the negotiators or travelling to Colombia for wider engagements.\(^{238}\) In these engagements they shared not only the successes of the peace process in Northern Ireland, but also the challenges that remain.\(^{239}\) However, as documented in this chapter, the engagements with Sinn Féin were of particular interest to the FARC and this bilateral engagement went much deeper than the multi-party exchanges. Sinn Féin, at the highest levels of party, became formally involved in structured engagement with the FARC throughout the negotiation process and in the post-Agreement phase.

Section 1.3 outlined the three research questions that this thesis will examine. Research questions one and two relates to why Sinn Féin becomes involved in foreign peace processes and what these engagements entail. Just like in the Basque case study in the preceding chapter, the research findings presented in this chapter indicate that Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Colombia peace process mirrors the involvement of the ANC in the peace process in Northern Ireland. While the ANC also had engagements with FARC negotiators in Havana,\(^{240}\) it was more limited and less frequent than Sinn Féin’s broad and consistent engagement. In the author’s interviews with Sinn Féin and FARC participants, as well as those with direct knowledge of the engagements, core elements of rebel-to-party transitions such as internal cohesion, communicating with members, and the decommissioning process appear to have been the focus of these engagements. This mirrors the discussions between the ANC and Sinn Féin in the 1990s, and subsequently, between Sinn Féin and the Basque nationalist left. This is further evidence that movements attempting a rebel-to-party transition through a peace process are clearly engaging with other movements who have completed this contemporary aspect of post-Cold War peace processes.

As highlighted in section 3.3, Sinn Féin is motivated to undertake these engagements as a form solidarity and this thesis presents it as a new form of post-Cold War internationalism. In the post-Cold War period and the extensive increase in peace agreements to end civil wars, new connections between certain political parties and rebel movements entering into peace processes has developed. Section 5.3 of this chapter referenced the Colombian

\(^{238}\) Ibid.
\(^{239}\) Geoghegan, "How the Irish brought a peace deal to Colombia."
\(^{240}\) Kohon, interview by author; Nijmeijer, interview by author.
government’s accusations that there were military connections between the FARC and the IRA. This was an alleged example of Cold War era left-wing rebel movements influencing each other in conflict. However, the findings of this research empirically confirm that in the 2010s engagements were taking place on negotiating tactics, ceasefire strategies, decommissioning, communicating to the rank-and-file, and how to best to achieve political goals through a rebel-to-party transition in a liberal peace process.

In section 2.4, this thesis pointed out that the involvement of foreign political parties can be viewed as an attempt to hybridise the liberal peace and to empower local actors to re-politicise technocratic processes and enhance local ownership. The Colombian peace process was heavily influenced by the dominant liberal peace paradigm. It is a complex undertaking for a rebel group to negotiate an extensive contemporary peace agreement in a foreign capital completely cut off from its base, knowing that it is difficult to merge its national and ideological goals to go hand-in-hand with a liberal peace agreement. Sinn Féin gained from the ANC’s experience as a national liberation movement that shaped a liberal peace agreement in a manner which allowed it to pursue its national liberation goals in a liberal democratic system and the Basque nationalist left gained from Sinn Féin’s experience in a similar manner. As this chapter acknowledged, Sinn Féin’s partisan engagement in the Colombian peace process aimed to improve the FARC’s knowledge of the different peace process stages and to enhance its ability to shape the process to suit its local realities and political aims. The engagement can therefore be seen as a form of solidarity within this new post-Cold War form of internationalism among left-wing rebel groups and national liberation movements.

The second research question of this thesis also focuses on whether Sinn Féin’s engagements are different from other third parties. This chapter discloses that Sinn Féin’s engagement with the FARC was significantly different to other political parties from Northern Ireland. Unlike the other parties, Sinn Féin could share its experience of a rebel-to-party transition and the lessons learned. It also provided advice on ceasefires, decommissioning, and prisoner issues from the prospective of a movement that has undertaken a rebel-to-party transition. While the engagements were primarily focused on experience sharing, and those interviewed by the author acknowledged the vast differences in the two processes, the research finds that horizontal advice does seem to have been shared on key negotiating principles as well.
Sinn Féin engaged at the highest level, what Lederach has termed the top level of conflict resolution, and it was able to wield a certain amount of soft power due to its conflict experience and relative post-conflict political success. Such soft power can be harnessed by a rebel group internally and externally. As was detailed in Section 2.5 of this thesis, negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry, with the government party stronger and with a wider array of resources and expertise than the rebel side. To this end, the rebel side can often borrow power from third parties to reduce the asymmetry in the negotiations.241 This chapter presented evidence that the FARC borrowed soft power from Sinn Féin to improve its position in the initial negotiations with the Colombian state. Section 5.3 pointed out how the FARC used engagements with Sinn Féin to force parity with the Colombian government on the international stage, for Sinn Féin to engage with Santos’ administration on its behalf, and for the domestic Colombian audience to see the benefits of a successful peace process and rebel-to-party transition. We can therefore state that the engagements went much further than just experience sharing.

However, this case study found that the borrowing of soft power for internal negotiations was much more limited when compared to the research findings in the Basque case. Batasuna used Sinn Féin representatives regularly to internally improve support for its peace strategy and to win over the most militant members of the Basque nationalist left. In contrast Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC primarily happened in Havana with the peace delegation, not with the FARC rank and file.

The third research question of this thesis relates to whether Sinn Féin’s involvement had any impact on the peace process and the parties to the negotiation. In the Colombian case it appears that the detectable impact of Sinn Féin’s engagement on the FARC was quite weak. This chapter has outlined how Sinn Féin representatives repeatedly focused on ‘bringing your constituency with you’ throughout the process and on a strategically slow decommissioning process. However unlike with the ANC, Sinn Féin, and Batasuna, the FARC were unable to contain spoilers within its ranks and it suffered from a major split. Some high-profile members have formed a dissident force to continue the armed campaign, while others have simply left the new political party having become disillusioned with the movement.242 Furthermore, the decommissioning process happened in a rapid six-month

242 Nijmeijer, interview by author.
time period, far different from the processes in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, and according to the evidence presented in this chapter, in contrast to advice put forward during engagements between FARC and Sinn Féin representatives.

Unlike the Northern Ireland and the Basque cases, in Colombia the rebel-to-party transition has so far not translated into political success for the rebel movement that underwent the transition. The FARC party’s poor results in the 2018 elections are evidence of that. The chapter referenced several specific localised factors that might explain this. Firstly, unlike with Sinn Féin and Batasuna, the FARC had to essentially create a political party from inception. Secondly, the rebel group was predominantly a rural based organisation, and it had a very limited presence in Colombia’s major cities. Thirdly, its rural base was separated by extensive distances and geographically challenging terrain. Fourthly, the government resisted efforts to fully implement the peace agreement and there has been a resurgence in paramilitary activities.

Additionally, the impact Sinn Féin could have on the process may have been hindered by the fact that the parties and contexts are substantially different. Sinn Féin is a political party over one hundred years old connected to a historical demand for national independence. The FARC had relatively no political party history and is a rural based movement engaged in an campaign to ideologically transform an existing defined state, rather than a national liberation campaign. Although the membership of the FARC contained a significant percentage of ethnic minorities historically discriminated against, such as indigenous Colombians and Afro-Colombians, it was not engaged in an ethno-nationalist conflict. National liberation movements engaged in ethno-nationalist campaigns for independence generally have a block of supporters, based on national identity, that can ensure core support during a rebel-to-party transition. Sinn Féin and Batasuna had this, the LTTE would have had this if it undertook a rebel-to-party transition, whereas this element is missing in the FARC’s process.

A lack of political success is also interlinked with spoilers in a rebel-to-party transition. If there is an unsuccessful transition, one that does not lead to at least some initial political success, then there is a higher risk of spoilers leading to the creation of dissident factions to violently challenge the peace process. On the other hand, if significant dissident factions led by spoilers materialise, then the chances of a successful rebel-to-party transition
reduce. Both of these self-reinforcing issues have beleaguered the FARC since the peace agreement was signed.

Considering the significant number of engagements uncovered by this research between Sinn Féin and FARC representatives that focused on the rebel-to-party transition process and ‘bringing your constituency with you’, and taking into account what has ultimately developed, it appears Sinn Féin’s engagements had little or no impact on the strategic decisions taken by the FARC leadership. Furthermore, the FARC’s rapid decommissioning process, despite engagements with Sinn Féin representatives suggesting the opposite, also reveals little or no impact. However, this research did discover that the FARC borrowed soft power from Sinn Féin to oppose the government’s efforts to internationally isolate the group in the process thus helping to re-politicise the liberal peace process, provide some level of parity for the FARC in the negotiations, and improve local ownership.

The next chapter examines the third and final case study: Sinn Féin’s involvement in the 2002-2006 Sri Lankan peace process.
Chapter 6 – Sinn Féin’s Involvement in the 2002-2006 Sri Lankan Peace Process

This chapter contains the third and final case study of this thesis – the 2002-2006 peace process between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state. This case study provides additional research findings to further demonstrate the role played by certain political parties in foreign peace processes. By exploring Sinn Féin’s involvement in the contemporary Sri Lankan peace process, this case study also answers the three research questions outlined in section 1.3.

The chapter begins by providing a historical background to the civil war in Sri Lanka. It details the conflict resolution efforts that began in 2002 and examines why the peace process collapsed in 2006, ultimately leading to a military victory for the Sri Lankan state. It explores the international involvement in the peace process, with a particular focus on Sinn Féin’s engagement and the role it played. Thereafter it examines the impact and results of this engagement on the LTTE’s negotiation strategy and the rebel-to-party transition process. Lastly it concludes with a critical analysis of Sinn Féin’s involvement in the peace process.

6.1 Background to the Conflict in Sri Lanka

Between 1983 and 2009 Sri Lanka was convulsed by a civil war between the LTTE and the state. It is estimated that over 100,000 people died in the conflict and hundreds of thousands more were internally displaced or forced to flee the island.¹ The LTTE’s aim as a militant Tamil² nationalist organisation was the establishment of an independent Tamil Eelam state in the north and east of the island. At the height of its military powers in the late 1990s and early 2000s the LTTE was widely recognised as one of the most effective NSAGs in the world, with thousands of soldiers under arms, a navy, and even an air force.

² Throughout this chapter when reference is made to ‘Tamil/Tamils’ the author is referring to Tamils resident in or from the island of Sri Lanka. When referring to Tamils in India the author will use the term ‘Indian Tamils’.
The LTTE also had a political wing, an international section, a finance department, an intelligence wing, and a police force.³

The LTTE refuted attempts to characterise its movement as ‘separatist’. In his first interview with a professional journalist, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE, firmly rejected the separatist label. He declared: “Our struggle is for self-determination, for the restoration of our sovereignty in our homeland. We are not fighting for a division or separation of a country but rather, we are fighting to uphold the sacred right to live in freedom and dignity.”⁴

The LTTE therefore self-identified as a national liberation movement of the people of Tamil Eelam.⁵ Popular support for the LTTE came from two sets of grievances among Tamils. The first set were generated by British colonial policies and the post-colonial Sinhala centric state building project. The second set was generated as a result of the humanitarian crisis that the military conflict caused.⁶ Both sets of grievances are important to understand the ideology underpinning the LTTE and the involvement of international actors in the peace process that began in 2002.

The island of Sri Lanka is the historical homeland of the Sinhalese and Tamil people. These two ethnic groups, with different languages and cultural traditions, lay claim to two ancient civilisations that have inhabited the island for millennia. Research into the historical demographics of Sri Lanka suggests that in pre-colonial times the island was made up of multiple small ethnic groups and not simply Sinhalese and Tamil.⁷ However it is these two ethnic groups that persevered and created distinct kingdoms on the island, and in more recent times, two distinct ethno-nationalist formations. The ancient history of these two ethnic groups and their mere presence on the island does not explain the protracted civil war that took place between 1983 and 2009. To understand the roots of this conflict one should first examine the impact European colonisation had on the island. According to

³ Malathy Naguleswaran, A Fleeting Moment in my Country - The Last Years of the LTTE De-Facto State (Atlanta, USA: Clarity Press, 2012), 120.
Anton Balasingham, one of the LTTE’s key political strategists and negotiators, “foreign colonialism laid the foundation for the national conflict.”

Sri Lanka endured over 450 years of European colonisation, one of the longest spans of European control over a non-European territory, and this has left a lasting impact on the island and its inhabitants. The island attracted such intense interest from European powers due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean and the Trincomalee harbour, one of the world’s biggest natural harbours. European colonisers originally administered the island as separate kingdoms and it was not until reforms introduced by the British colonial administration in 1833 that a unified political structure was introduced. The British decision to amalgamate the Tamil and Sinhala kingdoms into one unitary state structure was based on its desire to bring this strategic territory under a single central command to create greater political and military stability. This same motive reappears to influence British and US intervention in the peace process some 170 years later, a point examined in detail in the next section of this chapter.

Apart from the creation of a unitary state structure, other governance measures introduced by the colonial administration began to change how inhabitants viewed each other. In the 1835 census of the island the colonial administration grouped people into five categories: whites; free blacks; slaves; aliens; and resident strangers. In 1871 the terms ‘race’ and ‘nationality’ appeared in the colonial administration’s enumeration activities, with 78 nationalities and 24 races enumerated; Sinhalese and Tamil were classified as both races and nationalities. By 1911 the label ‘nationality’ was dropped from the colonial census and only ‘race’ appeared. The introduction of such methodologies led to radical changes in Sinhalese and Tamil political consciousness and contemporary nationalism. Attributes such as language, race, religion, and even skin colour were transformed into fundamental features of identification.

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8 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 3.
11 Ibid, 217.
15 Hashim, When Counterinsurgency Wins, 65.
As communities began to inquire more deeply into their history and connection to the island, Sinhalese nationalism began to develop a racist and sectarian character for two primary reasons. Firstly, Sinhalese nationalism is greatly influenced by the determination to make Theravada Buddhism the dominant religion on the island.\(^\text{16}\) Secondly, as noted by Fernando, Sinhalese nationalism encourages Sinhalese “to consider themselves racially superior to Tamils, leading to a perception among the numerically greater Sinhalese that the entire island belonged to them and the rest were ‘invaders’.”\(^\text{17}\)

While the foundations of the conflict lie in European colonialism, Tamil nationalism as an ideology and political movement emerged, argues Balasingham, due to “Sinhala chauvinistic state oppression.”\(^\text{18}\) Tamil nationalism evolved as a secular ethno-nationalism as opposed to the ethno-religious nationalism of the Sri Lankan state. As Sri Lanka advanced towards independence, Sinhalese nationalists moved to capture the post-colonial state building process to reorganise the state in their image and centralise power in their hands. The aim was to enshrine a structure of ethnic hierarchy, with pre-eminence for the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority community.\(^\text{19}\) Focus was not placed on a nation building process to ensure the inclusion of the minority Tamil community in the unitary state. Instead, various post-independence governments in Colombo introduced policies which inflamed tensions between the two communities. Such policies included discrimination in the civil service to favour Sinhalese workers, government interference in university admissions, and land redistribution schemes to settle Sinhalese communities in areas of the Dry Zone that were considered an integral part of the Tamil homeland.\(^\text{20}\)

The racist state building project was initially opposed by the Tamil polity through non-violent means. Early expressions of Tamil nationalism found organisational expression in the Federal Party (FP). Its electoral success in the 1956 parliamentary elections was interpreted as a mandate from the Tamil people for a federal form of self-government on the island.\(^\text{21}\) The FP went on to oppose the 1956 Official Language Act\(^\text{22}\) through non-violent

\(^{16}\) Ibid, 60.
\(^{17}\) Fernando, “Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace,” 217.
\(^{18}\) Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 9.
\(^{20}\) Hashim, When Counterinsurgency Wins, 73-77.
\(^{21}\) Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 11.
\(^{22}\) Widely known as the Sinhala Only Act as it legislatively replaced English with Sinhala as the sole language of the state
Gandhian inspired satyagraha protests, which continued after the act was passed. The violent reaction by Sinhalese nationalist mobs to Tamil peaceful protests in 1958 led to the first massive ethnic riots after independence.\textsuperscript{23} A further satyagraha campaign in 1961 motivated mass Tamil protests that were met with a forceful military crackdown. According to Balasingham, the militarised repression of the satyagraha campaign was the beginning of a transition away from non-violence strategies within Tamil nationalism.\textsuperscript{24}

In the 1970s Tamil politics underwent what Liyanage describes as a “metamorphosis.”\textsuperscript{25} Not only were the Tamil youth frustrated about the ineffectiveness of non-violent resistance, but the adoption of a new constitution in 1972 legally affirmed the unitary political structure of the Sri Lankan state with Sinhala as the sole official language and pre-eminent status for Buddhism. The decision of Sinhalese political leaders to firmly close the door on Tamil demands for federalism and equality, led to a new state-seeking Tamil nationalist endeavour.\textsuperscript{26} The creation of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) political grouping in 1972 and the adoption of the Vaddukoddai Resolution in 1976\textsuperscript{27} formalised political demands for an independent Tamil Eelam state. The TULF won an overwhelming endorsement from the Tamil electorate in the 1977 election, becoming the official opposition in the Sri Lankan Parliament. A myriad of Tamil insurgent groups, who had no faith in the political process and favoured armed resistance instead, were formed in this period, including the LTTE in 1976.

The creation of an executive presidency in 1978, which only further politically disenfranchised Tamils, and subsequent legislative moves to make it a criminal offence to advocate for a separate state on the island, resulted in the TULF announcing in July 1983 that it would resign its seats in the Parliament in Colombo. On 23 July 1983 the LTTE carried out its first military attack on the Sri Lankan army and the ensuing Black July anti-Tamil pogroms marked the beginning of the civil war. The July 1983 pogroms marked the worst intercommunal violence the island experienced, unparalleled in its ferocity, brutality, and

\textsuperscript{23} Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{24} Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 13.
\textsuperscript{25} Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 51.
\textsuperscript{26} Uyangoda, Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Changing Dynamics, 11.
\textsuperscript{27} The seminal Vaddukoddai Resolution, which was adopted by the TULF at its inaugural national conference on 14 May 1976, marked the first specific political demand for an independent Tamil Eelam state from the Tamil polity.
in the scale of the destruction. Unlike previous intercommunal riots the Black July pogroms witnessed an organised pattern of violence against Tamils and their economic base in Colombo, with accounts of Sinhalese mobs using voter lists to identify Tamil homes and shops to target. According to Prabhakaran, the “July holocaust was a pre-planned well-orchestrated genocidal pogrom against the Tamils.” Balasingham maintains that the events of July 1983 “left a deep scar in the collective soul of the Tamil nation, irreparably damaging the relationship between the two communities.”

The ensuing conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state can be divided into four separate phases, each with their own unique attributes and aspects. Hashim labels these four phases as: Eelam War I (1983-9); Eelam War II (1990-1994); Eelam War III (1995-2001); and Eelam War IV (2006-2009).

Uyangoda reminds us that we cannot consider the conflict as an introverted civil war. Internationalisation of the conflict was a continual feature, with regional and international dimensions constantly shaping it. From the outset of the conflict in 1983, amid the Cold War rivalry between the USA and USSR, the war took on an international character due to Sri Lanka’s geostrategic importance and its proximity to India. The Sirimavo Bandaranaike administration (1970-1977) had instituted a variety of socialist economic policies and a policy of non-alignment in the Cold War, bringing Sri Lanka closer to the USSR and China. When Jayawardene swept to power in 1977 his administration began to introduce capitalist economic reforms and build stronger alliances with the US, Britain and Israel, with an emphasis on upgrading its security apparatus. This major geopolitical turning point ensured that the Sri Lankan state, although nominally a member of the NAM, was supported by the Western Bloc for the remaining Cold War period and would have its implicit support when the civil war broke out. This is comparable to the other cases in this thesis. Colombia joined the NAM in 1981 but was militarily and economically supported by the Western Bloc during the Cold War, and the state sides in the Northern Ireland and Basque conflicts were integral members of the Western Bloc. Additionally, the rebel groups

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29 Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 52.
30 Prabhakaran, “Anita Pratap interview with Vellupillai Prabhakaran.”
32 Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*.
34 Fernando, ”Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace,” 218.
in all four conflicts maintained a left-wing ideology, but none of them was dependent on the USSR or the Eastern Bloc.

In 1979 the Sri Lankan government also introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act to legally formalise the language of terrorism in Sri Lanka. Deploying this rhetoric of terrorism was an attempt by the government to de-legitimise Tamil political demands for independence through the securitisation of the political issue and to win international legitimacy for the state’s militarised response to these demands.\(^{35}\) By contrast, the LTTE deployed a narrative that the conflict was a war of national liberation and self-determination.\(^{36}\) When the violent conflict erupted the Jayawardene administration asked for Britain’s military assistance to train its troops in sixteen different fields, including counter-insurgency tactics and commando operations.\(^{37}\) The creation in 1983 of Sri Lanka’s Special Task Force (STF), a paramilitary unit within the police force focused on counterinsurgency, was the result of British security officials advising their Sri Lankan counterparts based on their experience of the conflict in Northern Ireland.\(^{38}\)

India viewed its neighbour’s descent into civil war with deep concern and it soon intervened. India’s intervention was a result of its overarching geostrategic interests, but it was also motivated by domestic political factors. Geo-strategically India’s intervention was about removing the presence and interference of adverse external forces, which it feared would destabilise its security and strategic environment.\(^{39}\) In the late 1970s and early 1980s India was an ally of the USSR in the Cold War. Viewing Colombo’s growing security and economic relations with the Western Bloc with alarm, India moved to back Tamil militants in an effort to counterbalance the Sri Lankan government. Domestically India was also deeply concerned that a Tamil militancy could spread across the Palk Strait to Tamil Nadu. It therefore offered covert military support to Tamil militant organisations in an effort to control and direct them.\(^{40}\) Such support was initially widely welcomed among Tamil nationalists as their internationalisation efforts at this point were almost exclusively


\(^{36}\) Ibid, 94.


\(^{40}\) Naguleswaran, *A Fleeting Moment in my Country*, 158.
focused on India and it was felt that political and military support from India could redress the imbalance between Tamil and Sinhalese forces.\textsuperscript{41} However it is important to note that even at the beginning of Eelam War I the LTTE resisted what it termed as the “excessive externalisation” of the conflict.\textsuperscript{42} This resistance grew stronger in later stages of the conflict and is discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter. The LTTE met with the Indian secret service in this period and Balasingham concedes that it agreed to military training and in doing so “became a player in the covert game launched by India.”\textsuperscript{43} After initially receiving support from India, the LTTE soon ended up in direct conflict with India.

Towards the end of the Cold War, and with Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister, India began to shift away from the Moscow axis. Consequently, India’s approach to the conflict in Sri Lanka underwent a major shift. It began to collaborate with the Sri Lankan state politically and militarily, negotiating the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987. This accord aimed to disarm Tamil militant groups and resolve the conflict through a devolution of power under a unitary state system.\textsuperscript{44} The Accord was an exclusionary top-down agreement. It was formulated and formalised by the offices of the Indian Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka President. Neither the Tamil nor the Sinhalese polity were involved, and it was not discussed in the Indian or Sri Lankan parliaments.\textsuperscript{45} Balasingham claims that the Accord was handed to him and Prabhakaran in a Delhi hotel and they were asked to consent to it in under two hours.\textsuperscript{46}

While other Tamil militant groups agreed to support the Accord and disarm, the LTTE refused. According to Balasingham a secret agreement between the LTTE and Rajiv Gandhi was struck, in which the LTTE refused to support the Accord, but it would not oppose it as long as guarantees that the Tamil people would be protected from violence were kept.\textsuperscript{47} This secret agreement soon collapsed. The Indian soldiers that arrived in Sri Lanka, as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) established under the Accord, began to collaborate with Tamil militant groups that had been trained and funded by India, in an

\textsuperscript{41} Uyangoda, \textit{Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Changing Dynamics}, 32.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, 32.
\textsuperscript{43} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 59.
\textsuperscript{44} Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor's Peace," 218.
\textsuperscript{45} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 99.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 101.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 106.
attempt to disarm the LTTE by force. Rather than a peacekeeping force, the LTTE declared the Indian troops in the Tamil homeland “an army of occupation.” Removing the IPKF became another front for the LTTE in its national liberation campaign for an independent Tamil Eelam state and it enhanced the LTTE’s weariness of foreign intervention in the conflict. This had an impact on the 2002-2006 peace process and it is discussed in more detail in section 6.3.

The Indian efforts to isolate and defeat the LTTE failed. Over 1,200 Indian soldiers were killed and the unpopularity of the IPKF among both Tamil and Sinhalese communities encouraged the LTTE to negotiate an agreement with the Sri Lankan government to end the IPKF presence on the island. The last Indian troops left in March 1990; this marked the end of Eelam War I and the beginning of Eelam War II. Until the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987 Tamil militant politics was characterised by pluralism. By the early 1990s the other Tamil militant groups had been decimated and the LTTE became the outright dominant organisation in Tamil nationalism. This led to an important evolution in the conflict: the LTTE’s dominant position as the leader of militant Tamil nationalism facilitated enhanced support from the important Tamil diaspora and the beginning of the formulation of a de facto Tamil Eelam state. The significant impact of this de facto state formulation on the dynamics of the 2002-2006 peace process are discussed throughout section 6.4 and 6.5.

The LTTE began Eelam War II with an immense boon; it simply walked into the areas vacated by the departing IPKF and took over what remained of the infrastructure. It began gradually constructing a sanctuary and forming a de facto Tamil Eelam state. The election of Chandrika Kumaratunga as Sri Lankan President in November 1994 and her conciliatory language on the conflict, raised hopes that a peace process may take hold in Sri Lanka, joining the wave of other peace agreements then occurring in the emerging post-Cold War era. There was an immediate end to hostilities upon her election and in January 1995 a

48 Ibid, 115-20.
50 Liyanage, 'One Step at a Time', 56.
51 Hashim, When Counterinsurgency Wins, 100-01.
ceasefire agreement was established, but by April 1995 it had collapsed and Eelam War III had begun.\textsuperscript{53}

The LTTE decried the negotiation process that materialised after the ceasefire in January 1995. The talks had taken place at two levels: direct negotiations at a technical level and indirect negotiations at a leadership level via an exchange of letters through the good offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{54} This was the first involvement of an international facilitator in peace talks between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state, and it highlights the influence of the hegemonic liberal peace paradigm in this period on conflict resolution efforts. Nevertheless, indirect consultations via letters proved an inefficient and unconducive negotiation method in the attempt to find a political negotiated agreement to end the protracted conflict.

In Eelam War III the Sri Lankan state initiated a two-pronged approach to the conflict. On the one hand it pushed an uncompromising military strategy to defeat the LTTE, but it also attempted to win over the Tamil population by agreeing to address their grievances. The strategy was termed ‘war for peace’.\textsuperscript{55} In parallel the Sri Lankan state commenced an extensive international campaign to press a narrative that the LTTE was not amenable to a negotiated political solution to the conflict and the Sri Lankan state had no choice but to pursue all-out war.\textsuperscript{56} Without major international allies the LTTE remained dependent on the Tamil diaspora to counter these allegations at the international level.

The Sri Lankan state used this international campaign to procure weapons and its military spending skyrocketed. It launched its largest major military offensive against the LTTE to date in May 1997 and was so sure it would result in military triumph that it called the offensive Operation \textit{Jayasikurui} – meaning Certain Victory in Sinhalese. Although the offensive was initially effective and the Sri Lankan military pushed the LTTE back into its heartland in Vanni, the LTTE established a successful counterattack causing significant Sri Lankan casualties and capturing new military hardware.

\textsuperscript{53} Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 65.
\textsuperscript{54} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 197-98.
\textsuperscript{55} Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 65.
\textsuperscript{56} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 332.
Operation *Jayasikurui* was called off in failure in February 1999 and the humbling rout created a narrative internationally that the Sri Lankan state could not militarily defeat the LTTE, and a negotiated settlement was needed.\(^{57}\) The LTTE continued its military offensive and in April 2000 it captured Elephant Pass, a military base of immense strategic importance at the gateway to the Jaffna peninsula. The loss of Elephant Pass was a humiliation for the Sri Lankan armed forces. It suffered huge casualties and the poor logistics in place to support a defence of the crucial base were an embarrassment for the state.\(^{58}\)

By the end of 2000 both sides had suffered huge casualties and appeared exhausted. After a brief ceasefire the LTTE surprisingly went on a renewed offensive capturing more territory in the north in early 2001. In July 2001 it launched its most high-profile attack in Colombo. Fourteen LTTE militants attacked the Bandaranaike International Airport destroying eight military aircraft and five Sri Lankan Airlines passenger planes.\(^{59}\) The attack caused hundreds of millions of dollars in direct damage to the aircraft and it resulted in a significant downturn in the tourism sector, a key industry for Sri Lanka’s economy.\(^{60}\) The intense military offensive and the heavy losses on both sides, coupled with the dire humanitarian situation in the north and worsening economic situation in Colombo, created a mutually hurting stalemate.\(^{61}\) This mutually hurting stalemate produced a ripeness for negotiations, coherent with Zartman’s theory of ripeness outlined in sub-section 2.2.2. This ripeness was seized on by a new international facilitator for peace talks – the Norwegian state. The victory for the United National Front (UNF) in the December 2001 elections swept Ranil Wickremasinghe to power on a pro-peace platform. This was followed by a month-long ceasefire that led to the signing of a Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) on 22 February 2002.

The next section illustrates the domestic and international factors that heralded a collapse of the CFA and ultimately a military victory for the Sri Lankan state in the conflict.

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\(^{57}\) Jeyachandran Gopinath, interview by author, 19 August 2020.


\(^{61}\) Liyanage, *One Step at a Time*, 67.
6.2 From a Negotiated Peace to a Victor’s Peace

Fernando points out that since 2002 Sri Lanka has experienced two types of peace: a negotiated peace and a victor’s peace. The former began with the CFA in February 2002 and the latter emanated from the military victory of the Sri Lankan armed forces over the LTTE in May 2009, concluding Eelam War IV which began in 2006. To critically analyse Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Sri Lankan peace process it is important to first outline the reasons for this definitive shift between a negotiated and a victor’s peace, as it is intrinsically connected to the internationalisation of the peace process.

The 2002 CFA came into existence after one of the most intense periods of fighting between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military. There had been no break in the fighting since the collapsed peace efforts in 1994 and 1995. Although the Sri Lankan state began the new phase of the fighting as the stronger party and made initial gains, the CFA was negotiated at a time when the LTTE was in the ascendency and had managed some decisive military victories. One of the key features of peace talks between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state is that they always occurred when the LTTE was in the ascendency. Abeywardane points out there was a widespread belief that the LTTE only negotiated when it was weak, but the opposite was in fact true; when the LTTE was weak the Sri Lankan state attempted to militarily defeat the group rather than negotiate, as it ultimately did in 2009.

When the CFA was negotiated it froze the military-territorial balance of power, which at that time favoured the LTTE, and consequently it actualised the de facto dual-state structure on the island. The war was consuming around 40 percent of the Sri Lankan state’s annual budget and it had lost control of vast swathes of the north and east of the island to the LTTE. Fernando argues that when the CFA was signed “the unitary Sri Lankan state was at the weakest point in its history.” Therefore the LTTE entered the negotiations

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62 Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace.”
64 Bāshana Abeywardane is a Singhalese journalist, academic, and political activist who was involved in civil society activism in support of peace and interaction between ordinary Sinhala and Tamil people.
65 Bāshana Abeywardane, interview by author, 26 May 2020.
after the CFA trying to manifest its military advantage into political capital, while the Sri Lankan state wanted to alter the balance back into its favour. The internationalisation of the process was a method the Sri Lankan state used in this endeavour.

The CFA and subsequent peace process came into effect at what Fernando classifies as an interface between liberal internationalism and realist global securitisation discourse. As outlined in Section 2.1 of this thesis, the end of the Cold War ushered in a massive increase in peace agreements and the hegemonic rise of the liberal peace paradigm. However, the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York and Washington D.C. and the subsequent US-led global ‘War on Terror’, created a new realist securitisation doctrine with an emphasis on military power. This development challenged the predominant position of liberal internationalism. Sri Lanka’s geostrategic location in South Asia and the military importance of Trincomalee harbour brought the island and its peace process to the confluence of the geopolitical contest between these liberal and realist paradigms. Although Jaffna was the cultural capital of Eelam Tamils, the LTTE were very specific that Trincomalee would be the capital of a Tamil Eelam state. This policy was a significant threat to the US securitisation agenda in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

The initial phase of the peace process was highly influenced and motivated by liberal internationalism and the liberal peace paradigm. Development and democratisation were prioritised as elements to transform and resolve the conflict, recognising grievances as the cause of the conflict. The peace process also had high levels of direct and indirect international involvement for the first time. As outlined in the preceding section, the conflict in Sri Lanka was never an introverted civil war and regional and international dimensions continually impacted it. Nevertheless, aside from India’s involvement in the late 1980s and the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord, there was never significant international engagement in a negotiated resolution of the conflict. The internationalisation of the peace process in Sri Lanka was a consequence of the dominance of liberal internationalism at the time and it was initially accepted by both warring parties.

69 Ibid, 208.
70 Jeyachandran Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
72 Uyangoda, Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Changing Dynamics.
From 16 September 2002 to 21 March 2003 six rounds of peace talks took place between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in different locations in Europe and Asia. Liyanage has identified six pillars to the process: (1) The CFA; (2) the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM); (3) third party facilitation by Norway; (4) head table negotiations; (5) an international ‘safety net’ headed by the co-chairs; and (6) the respective peace secretariats. Norway had a history of engagement in the development sector in Sri Lanka and a reputation as an international peacemaker, enabling it to be accepted by the two parties as the facilitator of the peace talks. Furthermore its status as a small country with no colonial past and no overt geopolitical interests in the South Asian region meant its facilitation was accepted by India, who as the major regional power had a *de facto* veto on external involvement on what it viewed as its sphere of influence.

The involvement of a neutral state to facilitate talks, rather than an NGO or an international organisation also suited the negotiation strategies of the LTTE and Sri Lankan government. The LTTE was seeking international legitimacy and a foreign state facilitator that would provide parity of esteem between the group and the Sri Lankan state, was beneficial. The Wickremesinghe government was seeking to avoid more high-stakes international involvement, such as by the UN, thus Norway’s neutral facilitation was an agreeable middle ground. Although maintaining neutrality was an important objective of the Norwegian facilitators they were often accused of bias and partiality by both sides.

The election of Wickremesinghe in 2001, who favoured closer ties with the West, opened the door for the first significant role for Western countries in a negotiated resolution of the conflict. He favoured international involvement for economic reasons and to create a so-called international ‘safety net’. The strategy was to use the peace process to drive rapid economic development in Sri Lanka and to integrate the northern and eastern provinces into the neoliberal economic strategy outlined in his government’s ‘Regaining Sri Lanka’

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74 The SLMM was a multilateral body created to monitor the ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military. It had sixty members from five countries – Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland.
75 Liyanage, *One Step at a Time*, 172.
76 Höglund and Svensson, "Damned if you do, and damned if you don’t."
78 Ibid., 181.
79 Höglund and Svensson, "Damned if you do, and damned if you don’t," 342.
81 Liyanage, *One Step at a Time*, 186.
plan.\textsuperscript{82} Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Sri Lanka had dropped sharply since the early 1990s as donors specifically called for conflict resolution first before increased aid would flow to the island.\textsuperscript{83} Wickremesinghe hoped the nascent peace process would restart this flow of ODA and international economic assistance to the island.

The government therefore primarily focused on internationalising the peace process and did little to build support for the process domestically or to have a safety net that was formed by the ordinary people on the island.\textsuperscript{84} It was a highly regimented top-down process. As highlighted in section 2.4, one of the paramount pitfalls of orthodox liberal peace interventions is the lack of ownership over the process that local inhabitants feel.\textsuperscript{85} The overt focus on internationalising the Sri Lankan peace process and the lack of a domestic component caused significant problems in later stages, particularly after the LTTE presented its Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) model as a proposed new governance structure. The fallout that occurred after the ISGA model was presented is discussed in more detail later in this section.

The LTTE also favoured international involvement in the initial stages, but at a reduced level compared to the government. The LTTE was building a \textit{de facto} state structure, but it was largely branded as a terrorist organisation abroad. It therefore strived for international acceptance as the authentic representative of the Tamil population and as a legitimate political actor.\textsuperscript{86} However, it did not share the Sri Lankan government’s desire for an internationally backed neoliberal economic intervention in the north and east as part of the peace process. The LTTE’s ideology was influenced by socialism and economic nationalism, and it was weary of opening up the Tamil homeland to Sri Lankan and global market forces.\textsuperscript{87} Instead the LTTE made clear that it wanted international acceptance of its \textit{de facto} administration structure in the north and east, and it would then coordinate and

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 185.
\textsuperscript{84} Abeywardane, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{85} Mac Ginty, "Where is the Local? Critical Localism and Peacebuilding."
\textsuperscript{86} Liyanage, \textit{One Step at a Time}, 188.
\textsuperscript{87} Uyangoda, \textit{Beyond the Talks: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka}, 20.
negotiate with the Sri Lankan government and international community future economic and development programmes from a position of parity.\textsuperscript{88}

The first rounds of the peace talks focused on humanitarian needs and economic development, rather than the core political issues underlying the conflict. The strategy was to build confidence incrementally by focusing on the humanitarian consequences of the war before moving on to more arduous negotiations regarding a political settlement. This incremental approach was based on lessons learned from the failed 1994-1995 process, which lacked such initial confidence-building measures.\textsuperscript{89} This strategy was also underpinned by the external belief that foreign investment would bring economic development and this would reduce support for armed conflict. This focus on economic development to transform the conflict was a key aspect of the liberal peace toolbox. Foreign governments and international financial institutions lined up as donors before negotiations on what the post-conflict situation would look like had even started. The one-day Oslo Peace Support Conference in November 2002 saw one hundred delegates from nineteen countries pledge around $70 million to a Northeast Reconstruction Fund.\textsuperscript{90} Intervening in such a purposive manner at such an early stage was, as Sriskandarajah points out, motivated by the neoliberal belief in the positive relationship between peace and economic growth.\textsuperscript{91}

While the economic and development discourse dominated the early stages, the turn to democratisation and a political solution revealed sharper divisions between the conflicting parties and external actors. As outlined in section 2.4 of this thesis, the depoliticising of peace processes is a key feature of technocratic liberal peace models that focus on peacebuilding by blueprint.\textsuperscript{92} The Wickremesinghe administration was keen to depoliticise the process, focusing on ODA and international economic support rather than Tamil grievances. The efforts of the Sri Lankan government to internationally isolate the LTTE during the talks mirrors the Colombian government’s attempts to do the same with the FARC, which was highlighted in section 5.4 and 5.6 of the preceding chapter.


\textsuperscript{89} Goodhand and Walton, "The Limits of Liberal Peacebuilding," 308.

\textsuperscript{90} Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 211.

\textsuperscript{91} Sriskandarajah, \textit{The Returns of Peace in Sri Lanka}, 14-18.

\textsuperscript{92} Westendorf, \textit{Why Peace Processes Fail: Negotiating Insecurity After Civil War}. 
In late November 2002 there was a political breakthrough when Prabhakaran stated that the LTTE were “prepared to consider favourably a political framework that offers substantial regional autonomy and self-government in our homeland on the basis of our right to internal self-determination.” This was the first time the LTTE had publicly stated that it would be willing to embrace a negotiated political settlement that was not a separate state. The LTTE were proposing a bottom-up federalism that would recognise its de facto state administration, a radical departure from the top-down power-sharing arrangements that the Sri Lankan state and India had proposed as part of previous conflict resolution efforts. Although no formal commitment was made, it seemed that the Sri Lankan government and international actors were initially open to the concept. However, as the talks progressed into December, it became clear that the Sri Lankan government was still committed to political models that devolved power from the centre, whereas the LTTE were concentrated on developing bottom-up federal models.

The last round of direct negotiations took place in March 2003 and the following month the LTTE announced it would not take part in further negotiations, as it had grown frustrated at the lack of progress in the talks in the face of mounting humanitarian problems and what it viewed as “the excessive internationalism of the process.” The LTTE began to perceive increasing international involvement in the process as an attempt to deviate “the power balance of the parties, to the disadvantage of the LTTE.” This critical development occurred as liberal internationalism was being replaced by realist securitisation as the guiding approach to international intervention in the process.

Foreign involvement in the Sri Lankan peace process was initially influenced by liberal internationalism and focused on development and democratisation. After the 9/11 attacks, and the US and British military invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003, the military and geostrategic importance of South Asia for the US grew enormously. The realist securitisation agenda that came with the US global ‘War on Terror’ led to greater US involvement in the Sri Lankan peace process and its enhanced involvement affected the

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93 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 401.
94 Uyangoda, Beyond the Talks: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka, 2.
95 Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 212.
96 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 405.
97 Ibid, x.
98 Ibid, x.
power balance in favour of the government. Furthermore, the island was seen as a strategic location to contain the increasing sphere of influence of China in South Asia.

Balasingham remembers a senior US official at the Oslo Peace Support Conference calling on the LTTE to renounce “terrorism and violence” and announce that it had ended “its armed struggle for a separate state.” Balasingham was displeased that comments “discrediting the Tamil freedom struggle” were made at an international forum organised to support and encourage peace and a negotiated settlement. The unilateral decision of the US government not to invite the LTTE, who remained on the US list of terrorist organisations, to a donor meeting in Washington D.C. in April 2003 in preparation for the second donor conference, caused a rupture in the parity between the warring parties that undermined the peace agreement. According to the Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, the Washington event “violated the parity of status between the parties and set in motion the demise of the Peace Process.” The decision, which was backed by India, showcased the ascendancy of a new securitisation and exclusionary approach to the peace process by powerful international actors.

Up until this point there was a delicate parity of esteem in the process, but the US-led securitisation agenda was undermining this critical balance. Balasingham maintains that international actors began “imposing constraints and prescribing parameters on one party [the LTTE]” and this “began to shift the strategic equilibrium in Sri Lanka’s favour.” The LTTE viewed its marginalisation from the Washington conference as a dismantling of the parity of esteem. It responded by suspending its participation in the peace talks and boycotting the subsequent Tokyo conference. The internationalisation of the process and Wickremesinghe’s international ‘safety net’ began to represent a containment strategy for the LTTE, who viewed it as a trap to force it into accepting an unfavourable and moderate power-sharing agreement – the so-called ‘peace trap’.

99 Ibid, 393.
100 Ibid, 393.
101 Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, Bremen, Germany (2013): 34.
102 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 400.
103 Ibid, 434.
The peace talks collapsed but the CFA did not. This was a unique development in the conflict. Previously when negotiations collapsed the war resumed almost immediately, but in this case the war did not resume for another three years. The LTTE worked on producing a new proposal to revive the negotiations, the ISGA model. This was the first concrete proposal ever produced by the LTTE for a negotiated political solution to the conflict and it plunged the Sinhalese body politic into crisis. The Sri Lankan President, bowing to pressure from Sinhalese nationalists after the proposal was made public, dissolved Parliament and a new United People Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government came to power in the subsequent elections. The new government not only ruled out negotiations on the ISGA proposal, but openly argued for a military solution to the conflict. If one views international involvement in the Sri Lankan peace process through a carrot and stick prism, the carrot approach used at the beginning of the process was now phased out and the stick became the main instrument directed at the LTTE.

The US emphasised its stance on the process when it renewed its listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in June 2004 and offered the new Sri Lankan government the opportunity to revive free trade negotiations to further its material capabilities. Indian and US intelligence services also began working closer with their Sri Lankan counterparts on tracking LTTE movements and US Navy SEALS began training the Sri Lankan Navy. At this critical period in the peace process elite British military advisors also provided hands-on assistance and training to the Sri Lankan military. Rather than putting pressure on the Sri Lankan government to come back to the negotiating table and discuss the ISGA proposal, Britain, the US, and India were providing the government with the tools needed to reignite the war with the LTTE. This mirrors the US military support that was given to the

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106 Abeywardane, interview by author.
111 Jeyachandran Gopinath is one of the founders of the influential online Tamil newswire service TamilNet, and its current editor. He contends that the US military’s covert assistance to the Sri Lankan navy which began at this time was focused on disrupting the LTTE’s naval supply lines and this is what ultimately led to the collapse of this vital supply lines during Eelam War IV. See: Gopinath, interview with author, 19 August 2020
113 Phil Miller, Britain’s Dirty War against the Tamil People 1979-2009 (Bremen: International Human Rights Association, 2014).
Uribe government in Colombia during the same time period to pursue a military victory in the conflict with the FARC, rather than placing political pressure on the government to revive negotiations on a political settlement. Such actions contrast sharply with the strong US political support that was given to finding a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Northern Ireland in the 1990s.

Under the securitisation agenda the unitary structure of the Sri Lankan state with a single source of power in Colombo was more favourable than a negotiated settlement that opened the door for bottom-up federalism on the island, considering the increasing geostrategic importance of the island. This growing geostrategic relevance was not only because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also due to emerging power dynamics between the US and China and regional dynamics between China and India.\footnote{Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 217-18.} China was actively looking to gain influence and a foothold in South Asia and the US and India were concerned about the UPFA’s developing relations with China.\footnote{Viraj Mendis, interview by author, 4 June 2020.} China was augmenting large scale investment to Sri Lanka, including the Hambantota port, and providing the government with military supplies.\footnote{Naguleswaran, \textit{A Fleeting Moment in my Country}, 159.} The Chinese axis influenced the actions of the USA and India regarding Sri Lanka, by enhancing the case for increased military assistance and support for the unitary state structure, but the Chinese pivot did not play a direct role in the dismantling of the power balance in the peace process.\footnote{Naguleswaran, \textit{A Fleeting Moment in my Country}, 159.} In fact Naguleswaran recalls that the first foreign diplomat to visit the LTTE after the peace talks started was the Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka.\footnote{Naguleswaran, \textit{A Fleeting Moment in my Country}, 159.}

Under the growing securitisation agenda, the military defeat of the LTTE, rather than a negotiated settlement that risked establishing a bottom-up federalism, became more favourable to US military and strategic interests.\footnote{Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 219.} If the peace process succeeded one of the main demands of the LTTE, as laid out in its official political programme, would have been to make the Indian Ocean a peace zone. Such a development would have made it relatively difficult for any external powers to use the island of Sri Lanka as a vital hub to further their geopolitical and military ambitions in the region.\footnote{Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, \textit{Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka}, Bremen, Germany (2013): 35.} Drawn into the dynamics

\footnote{Abeywardane, interview by author.}
of the global ‘War on Terror’, the power relations began to favour the Sri Lankan state and the expectation that it could militarily defeat the LTTE rather than negotiate a political settlement increased.\(^{121}\)

The EU largely encouraged a development and democratisation approach to the peace process at the outset, influenced by a liberal internationalist approach, but by 2006 it had diverged to favour a peacebuilding approach centred on militarised state building.\(^{122}\) Under heavy pressure from the US and British governments, in May 2006 the EU decided to legally ban the LTTE as a terrorist organisation.\(^{123}\) The new global securitisation discourse and militarised geopolitical strategy had reframed the grievance-based conflict in Sri Lanka as greed-driven terrorism.\(^{124}\) The EU’s decision was, according to the Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, “the most devastating blow to the peace process, destroying the ‘parity of status’ and paving the path to a full scale war.”\(^{125}\) It was ultimately viewed by the Sri Lankan government as a green light to restart military operations\(^{126}\) and to breach the CFA.\(^{127}\) The LTTE had repeatedly stressed the importance of the equality of status in the negotiations, but its needs and fears were overlooked. As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.7, the needs and fears of rebel groups when they enter negotiations or sign a peace agreement are often overlooked, but these social-psychological dimensions are integral to the conflict resolution process.

Eelam War IV started in July 2006 and ended in May 2009 with a Sri Lankan military victory and the decimation of the LTTE. The Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka ruled that the Sri Lankan state was guilty of crimes of genocide against Tamils in the conflict and continuing acts of genocide in the post-conflict period.\(^{128}\) Despite the unfolding war crimes not a single UN Security Council meeting on Sri Lanka was held during Eelam War IV, revealing that international powers who supported the unitary state structure for different reasons were content with a military victory for the Sri Lankan state even in the face of serious human rights violations.\(^{129}\) Enhanced links between the US and Sri Lankan military greatly

\(^{121}\) Höglund and Svensson, "Mediating Between Tigers and Lions," 186.
\(^{122}\) Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 220.
\(^{123}\) Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, Bremen, Germany (2013): 17.
\(^{124}\) Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 220.
\(^{125}\) Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, Bremen, Germany (2013): 34.
\(^{127}\) Permanent People’s Tribunal, Tribunal on Sri Lanka, Dublin, Ireland (2010), 20.
\(^{128}\) Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka, Bremen, Germany (2013).
improved the latter’s naval capacity to disrupt LTTE supply lines in the war and fighter jets and drones purchased from Israel had a significant impact on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{130} The US also shared exclusive satellite images of the so-called ‘No Fire Zones’ with the Sri Lankan government.\textsuperscript{131} The military victory for the Sri Lankan state ensured that the unitary state structure was reconsolidated and the LTTE demands for an independent Tamil Eelam or bottom-up federalism were quashed in the ensuing onslaught.

This section outlined the major international dynamics that were influencing the peace process, specifically the shift from a liberal peace approach based on development and democratisation to a victor’s peace underpinned by militarisation and securitisation. The international actors involved in the peace process were primarily state actors, but just like in the Basque and Colombian case studies, Sinn Féin also became involved in the peace process as a third party. While Sinn Féin’s involvement in the process was significantly more limited when compared to the Basque and Colombian peace processes, engagements did occur at the highest levels of both Sinn Féin and the LTTE. The rest of this chapter answers the three research questions of this thesis by detailing why Sinn Féin engaged with the process, what types of engagements it had with the negotiating parties, and whether its engagement had any noticeable impact on the parties and the process.

6.3 Sinn Féin’s Involvement in the Peace Process

To understand how and why Sinn Féin became involved in the Sri Lankan peace process we must first account for the LTTE’s left-wing national liberation ideology and its approach to international actors.

6.3.1 The LTTE’s Ideology and International Connections

The LTTE principally fought the Sri Lankan state alone and it had no foreign state backer. In the early stages of Eelam War I, the LTTE, like other Tamil militant groups, received military and financial support from India. Section 6.2 detailed how its refusal to accept India’s demands, particularly in support of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987, brought India and

\underline{130} Hashim, \textit{When Counterinsurgency Wins}; Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.

the LTTE into direct conflict. After this confrontation the LTTE operated without any known support from a foreign state and the LTTE’s key external focus became its diaspora. According to Gopinath, Prabhakaran’s experience with the Indian government made him resolute in building an organisation completely based on Eelam Tamils and resources from the diaspora. Prabhakaran built a structure that first prioritised LTTE cadres on the island, that secondly focused on support from the Tamil diaspora, that thirdly received solidarity from Tamil Nadu, and which lastly had connections with other national liberation movements who the LTTE could learn from and gain international solidarity. Naguleswaran recalls that: “a common refrain in LTTE discourses in Vanni was that [the LTTE] depend on no one but the Eelam Tamil people to wage their struggle”. Similar nationalist characteristics and framing were found in the IRA, ETA and the FARC, but the LTTE were certainly far more detached from the international sphere than the other rebel groups examined in this thesis.

Isolated in the Jaffna peninsula and in the jungles of Vanni, the LTTE was largely cut-off from the rest of the world and the diaspora was its international lifeline. The Tamil diaspora is estimated to number between 600,000 to 800,000, the majority of which are linked to the exodus that occurred after the Black July pogroms in 1983. The LTTE created an International Secretariat to handle foreign affairs and diaspora issues and its network within the global diaspora was divided into two main functional areas: advocacy and finance generation. Although the IRA and the PKK are noted NSAG who built a support network among the significant Irish and Kurdish diasporas, the LTTE’s highly organised support structure was perhaps unmatched among NSAGs, bringing in an estimated $200 to $300 million per year at its height. On the advocacy front the LTTE initially used the diaspora to spread news about the war, especially IPKF and Sri Lankan military abuses, setting up a coordination office in France and local telephone systems in every country that

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132 Naguleswaran, A Fleeting Moment in my Country, 159.
133 Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
134 Ibid.
135 Naguleswaran, A Fleeting Moment in my Country, 159.
137 Ibid, 99.
had a Tamil diaspora. Later on it used the diaspora to conduct political and legal campaigns against the banning of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation.

During the Cold War period the LTTE situated itself in the socialist camp, but unlike other left-wing militant groups operating in the South Asian region, it had no known direct links to the USSR or China. This is similar to the positions taken by the IRA, ETA and FARC that were discussed in previous chapters. Gopinath maintains that Prabhakaran was very aware of the strategic location of the island and the importance of Trincomalee harbour, and therefore was weary of all of the global powers as he felt they would always act in their own interest. When Prabhakaran was asked in his first media interview in 1984 what type of state Tamil Eelam would be, he stated that it will be “a socialist state” and “a neutral state, committed to non-alignment and friendly to India respecting her regional policies, particularly the policy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.” This came before the LTTE’s conflict with the IPKF. Rather than a sole focus on left-wing ideology, the LTTE proclaimed itself as a national liberation organisation for the people of Tamil Eelam. Therefore, it shared more in common with the IRA and ETA who also viewed themselves as national liberation organisations and were engaged in an ethno-nationalist conflict, rather than the FARC who were focused on the ideological control of an existing state.

The LTTE’s ideological statements promoted egalitarianism. It stood against caste-based discrimination, believing this would be a threat to the creation of Tamil Eelam, and this ensured that Tamils from so-called lower castes swelled its ranks. Women also played a crucial role in the LTTE. Female LTTE combatants had heroine status and the LTTE justified the recruitment of women as a way of facilitating women’s liberation. However, women’s involvement in the LTTE was not always voluntary and forced recruitment existed, particularly among girls below 18 years of age.

139 Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
140 Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah, "Liberation struggle or terrorism? The politics of naming the LTTE," 97.
141 Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
142 Prabhakaran, "Anita Pratap interview with Vellupillai Prabhakaran."
143 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, v.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
As a self-proclaimed left-wing national liberation movement, it had similarities and resemblance to ETA and the IRA. However, unlike ETA and the IRA, but comparable to the FARC, the LTTE did not have a separate political party associated with it. Instead, it was both a military power and a political organisation in one.\textsuperscript{147} This important difference is examined more closely in section 6.5.

The LTTE leadership stated that it learned from the historical experience of anti-colonial movements in Africa and Latin America when adopting its early guerrilla warfare tactics, but it insisted that models from other national liberation campaigns could not be adopted and blindly applied to its context.\textsuperscript{148} The LTTE was also not only limited to guerrilla tactics and strategy. It devoted considerable resources to building up a conventional military structure to control and defend the vast swathes of territory it captured.\textsuperscript{149} This is another similarity that the LTTE shared with the FARC. The LTTE was also one of the very few militant groups that made the transition from irregular war to conventional war, and it remains the only NSAG that developed conventional ground, naval, and aerial capabilities.\textsuperscript{150}

Balasingham maintains that Prabhakaran always refused offers of foreign training for the LTTE, including an offer to join Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) training camps in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{151} Despite a statement from Prabhakaran that the LTTE had ties with other national liberation movements from the beginning of its existence, very little is known about such ties, and Prabhakaran refused to speak publicly about it.\textsuperscript{152} Therefore the depth of its internationalism and connections with other national liberation movements is unknown. Gopinath points out that the LTTE were always careful about openly supporting other national liberation movements, perhaps because it was solely dependent on maritime routes for its supply lines and it did not want global powers focusing on these lines due to their own national security interests.\textsuperscript{153} Consequently one does not find a body of public statements from the LTTE regarding other national liberation movements and

\textsuperscript{147} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, v.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{149} Hashim, \textit{When Counterinsurgency Wins}.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Prabhakaran, "Anita Pratap interview with Vellupillai Prabhakaran."
\textsuperscript{153} Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
messages of solidarity that are a common feature of the internationalism of other national liberation movements.

In contrast to other national liberation movements, the LTTE also largely operated as a *de facto* state after Eelam War I, controlling territory and administering a civilian population. To understand the vital importance of parity of status in the peace talks, one must account for the fact that from the late 1990s onwards the LTTE thought and acted more like an emerging state than a rebel organisation. Like any emerging state, the LTTE sought recognition and international legitimacy for its state. It also had economic and humanitarian concerns for the population under its control, and it needed international support to lift the Sri Lankan imposed economic embargo that was having a profound impact on daily life in the LTTE controlled territory. Therefore, the LTTE’s internationalism was more akin to a state seeking support from other states, rather than as a national liberation movement engaged in solidarity with other likeminded movements.

Despite the desire for greater international recognition, the LTTE was sensitive to and weary of external involvement in the peace process. Balasingham wrote that the LTTE viewed Wickremesinghe’s international ‘safety net’ as a containment strategy against the LTTE. Throughout the peace process the LTTE was suspicious of international entrapment via the peace process and cautious in its engagements with external actors. Considering the LTTE’s weariness of external forces, the remaining sub-sections of this section illustrate how and why Sinn Féin became involved in the Sri Lankan peace process.

### 6.3.2 The Absence of Pre-Existing Irish-Tamil Connections

Existing connections between the rebel group and the foreign political party engaging in the peace process, before a peace agreement has been signed or a peace process has begun, have been identified in all the preceding cases in this thesis: the detailed historical connections between Irish republicans and the ANC were highlighted in sub-section 3.4.2; the historical connections between Basque nationalists and Irish republicans were illustrated in section 4.3; while Sinn Féin’s public efforts to support a peace process in

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Colombia predating even the beginning of public negotiations in 2012 was highlighted in section 5.3. In contrast, this research found no historical or significant political connections between Irish republicans and Tamil nationalists or the LTTE that predates the 2002 peace process. One can draw comparisons between the nationalist liberation ideologies of the two movements, which promoted an armed campaign to expel an occupying force from their ancient homelands, and there was evidently mutual awareness among both groups. When asked in 1984 how he felt about being the most wanted man in Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran responded: “an Irish leader once remarked that when the British indict a person as a terrorist it implied that he was a true Irish patriot. Similarly when the Sri Lanka government refers to me as the most wanted man it means that I am a true Tamil patriot.”

From the outset of Eelam War I the LTTE’s media were making references to conflicts in South Africa and Ireland as similar to the Tamil national liberation campaign. Finding common cause was not surprising because the apartheid South African government and British government were providing support to the Sri Lankan military. British security officials also trained the Sri Lankan police on the counter-insurgency tactics they used in Northern Ireland. This included a visit to Belfast by the Senior Deputy Inspector General and the Assistant Superintendent of the Sri Lankan police, “to see first-hand the roles of the police and army in counter-terrorist operations.” While the Sri Lankan state was attempting to learn from the British military experience in Northern Ireland, one does not find a similar example between the IRA and the LTTE.

6.3.3 Sinn Féin’s First Engagements with the Peace Process

In the two other case studies in this thesis, Sinn Féin’s involvement began very early on in the process. Sinn Féin engaged with the Basque nationalist left even before serious peace talks took place and Sinn Féin representatives were some of the first international actors to visit the FARC negotiators in Havana, but there were engagements even before this visit. In contrast, the first known engagement between the LTTE and Sinn Féin, uncovered in this

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157 Prabhakaran, "Anita Pratap interview with Vellupillai Prabhakaran."
158 Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
159 Ibid.
160 Miller, Exporting Police Death Squads - From Armagh to Trincomalee.
research, took place in October 2003. Several rounds of peace talks had already taken place by this stage, but the talks had not yet collapsed. Therefore, this engagement occurred in the second stage of Albin’s three stage model of conflict resolution processes that was highlighted in sub-section 2.2.2. The importance of the timing of the engagements between Sinn Féin and the LTTE is discussed in sub-section 6.3.5.

The first engagement took place during an LTTE study visit to Europe organised by Norway. As illustrated in sub-section 2.2.1, existing peace processes are often used as a focal point or as a suggested template during negotiations to resolve prevailing conflicts. Norway’s suggestion of a study tour to Europe for this purpose was accepted by the LTTE and it sent a high-profile team of negotiators on the trip. Eleven LTTE negotiators, including S.P. Tamilselvan and Colonel Karuna, visited Ireland with the support of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and they met with Sinn Féin TDs Aengus Ó Snodaigh and Martin Ferris in Dublin.\(^\text{162}\) While the study trip took a holistic approach to conflict resolution and involved private meetings in the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Ó Snodaigh explained that in the bilateral meetings between Sinn Féin and the LTTE, prisoner issues and maintaining unity in the movement during a peace process were discussed.\(^\text{163}\) Tamilselvan revealed that while recognising conflict resolution differs from country to country, the LTTE representatives had “obtained valuable information” from the engagement and he hoped contact would be maintained.\(^\text{164}\) Despite interest from both sides, contacts were not maintained. According to Tamilselvan the LTTE were interested in further trips to Ireland to build on initial engagements, but the Sri Lankan government curtailed LTTE visits to Europe.\(^\text{165}\) This is in stark contrast to the findings of the Basque and Colombia cases examined in this thesis. In the Basque case the Spanish government did not overtly stop engagements between the Basque nationalist left and Sinn Féin, whereas the Colombian government encouraged Sinn Féin to engage with the FARC, and President Santos done so himself. While the Sri Lankan state put an end to the LTTE study visits to Europe, in 2005 President Mahinda Rajapaksa visited Ireland and met with Sinn Féin’s Martin

\(^{162}\) Scott Millar and Maguire Siobhan, "Tamil Tigers pick Ulster’s brains on peace," *The Sunday Times*, 12 October, 2003, [https://tinyurl.com/43fyns4s](https://tinyurl.com/43fyns4s).

\(^{163}\) Ibid.

\(^{164}\) Ibid.

This illustrates that while the Sri Lankan state was determined to stop similar engagements with the LTTE, President Rajapaksa was eager to personally engage with the Sinn Féin leadership.

### 6.3.4 Sinn Féin’s Reengagement with the LTTE

From the author’s interviews with Sinn Féin representatives, as well as Tamil and Sri Lankan activists and academics, the next LTTE engagements with Sinn Féin did not occur until January 2006 when the peace process was on the brink of collapse. After McGuinness’ meeting with President Rajapaksa he was approached by a peace organisation in Colombo – the Initiative for Political and Conflict Transformation (INPACT) – to travel to Sri Lanka to share his peace process experience and encourage both sides to recommit to a ceasefire.\(^{167}\) INPACT had previously arranged a visit for John Hume to Sri Lanka.\(^{168}\) Sinn Féin were weary of partaking in what it viewed as a global “peace process industry,”\(^{169}\) but after it was promised McGuinness would meet with both the leadership of the government and the LTTE it agreed to engage.\(^{170}\) Sinn Féin Chairperson, Declan Kearney, states that this was motivated by Sinn Féin’s internationalism and a “sense of fraternal duty and responsibility that we owe to other struggles to be as helpful as possible.”\(^{171}\)

In January 2006 McGuinness travelled to Sri Lanka accompanied by party adviser Aidan McAteer, who admits that it “was sort of a step into the dark” and they did not know how receptive either side would be.\(^{172}\) Engagements took place with the President of Sri Lanka, civil society groups, and LTTE representatives, but they were unable to cross the frontline and meet the LTTE leadership in Vanni. Eleventh-hour talks to stop Eelam War IV breaking out took place in Geneva in February 2006, leading to McGuinness and McAteer returning to carry out an engagement with the LTTE leadership across the frontline in July 2006.\(^{173}\)

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167 Ibid.
168 McAteer, interview by author.
169 Adams, interview by author.
170 McAteer, interview by author.
171 Kearney, interview by author.
172 McAteer, interview by author.
Similar to the Basque and Colombia case studies documented in this thesis, Sinn Féin’s engagement in Sri Lanka was at the Track I level, directly with the leadership and key negotiators of the government and the rebel organisation, and what Lederach terms the top level of conflict resolution. In the Basque Country the engagements began at the request of the Basque nationalist left, whereas in Colombia it initially came via a request from a civil society organisation. The Sri Lanka replicates the Colombia case, with the request for Sinn Féin involvement coming from a third party first and that it also included Sinn Féin’s engagement with the government. Such high-level engagement with the government is absent from Sinn Féin’s engagement in the Basque peace process.

6.3.5 The Timing of Sinn Féin’s Engagement

The timing of these engagements is another important aspect in Sinn Féin’s involvement. As outlined in sub-section 2.2.2, there are broadly three stages to peacemaking according to Albin. In the Basque and Colombian cases Sinn Féin’s engagement commenced even before a peace process began – the pre-negotiation stage or stage one in Albin’s model. While initial engagements between the LTTE and Sinn Féin in Ireland in 2003 were reported as positive by both sides, the Sri Lankan state stopped such engagements from happening again. Therefore, Sinn Féin’s most significant engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process only came when McGuinness visited the island in 2006 as part of the eleventh-hour efforts to save the creaking process from total collapse. Rather than progressively moving through Albin’s stages of conflict resolution, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE had reached the second stage, negotiating an agreement, but had receded through the stages and were on the brink of resuming conflict. This severely limited any potential impact that the engagement of a foreign political party with just soft power could have on the parties or the process, especially considering the significant involvement of states with hard power in support of the Sri Lankan state.

As highlighted in sub-section 2.2.2, Zartman’s theory of ripeness is an important aspect of this research. The two other case studies in this thesis revealed that Sinn Féin’s engagement occurred when there was a ripeness for conflict resolution among the warring parties, due to a military stalemate. Of particular importance to these engagements was

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174 Lederach, *Building Peace*.
175 Albin, "Peace Vs. Justice."
that a ripeness within the rebel movement for a rebel-to-party transition was also present. Neither element was present in Sinn Féin’s 2006 engagement with the Sri Lankan peace process. While there was a mutually hurting stalemate that created a ripeness for conflict resolution in 2002, which led to the CFA and the beginning of the peace process negotiations, by 2006 parity of esteem had been dismantled and the process was teetering on the brink of collapse, with both sides preparing for a resumption of the armed conflict.

With the understanding of why, how, and at what level Sinn Féin engaged in the peace process, the next two sections (6.4 and 6.5) examine if the interventions had any impact on the process and the parties, specifically the LTTE. Like the two other case studies in this thesis, there is a focus on three specific areas: internal and external negotiation strategies, enhancing the local level via a hybridisation of the liberal peace model, and the rebel-to-party transition. There is significantly less of a focus in this case study on the hybridisation of the liberal peace as the direct negotiations collapsed quickly and a negotiated settlement after the initial CFA was never reached. However, the attempted hybridisation of the liberal peace model that underpinned the early stages, through a re-politicisation of the process and the focus on the local level via bottom-up federalisation as a future political model, are examined in the next section.

6.4 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the LTTE’s External Negotiation Strategy: Parity of Esteem and Local Ownership

Section 6.3 of this chapter highlighted the increased international involvement in conflict resolution efforts in Sri Lanka after the CFA was signed and talks on a peace process began. During this early period liberal internationalism was dominant and the international community sought to use the ceasefire to focus on economic development to bring about a resolution of the conflict.\(^{176}\) The Wickremesinghe government attempted to use international involvement in the process to revive Sri Lanka’s floundering economy and extend neoliberal market forces to the north and east of the island, while also discrediting the LTTE and its political goals.\(^{177}\) The LTTE had its own interest in international involvement in the process. The LTTE had gained the upper hand on the battlefield, but it was still designated or viewed as a terrorist organisation in Sri Lanka and by foreign states. It wanted

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to shift the label of terrorist organisation, gain international recognition of the *de facto* state it administered, and acquire economic assistance.\(^{178}\)

As explained in section 2.5 of this thesis, negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry – a stronger state party with a wide array of resources and a weaker rebel group with limited resources and negotiation experience.\(^{179}\) However, when the CFA was signed in Sri Lanka, the LTTE had recently gained the military upper hand in the conflict and was in the ascendancy. On the global political scene however the Sri Lankan state was dominant as a recognised state actor, while the LTTE lacked recognition as a *de facto* state and was labelled by powerful global actors as a terrorist organisation. There was thus significant asymmetry in favour of the Sri Lankan state. Therefore, the LTTE favoured more local ownership of the process, while the Sri Lankan state wanted to enhance the international level and involvement.

At the beginning of the peace process the LTTE gained legitimacy from the Sri Lankan state, when the government delisted the group as a terrorist organisation in order to facilitate negotiations. The Track I negotiations facilitated by Norway also created a possible avenue for international recognition. Entering into direct negotiations with the Sri Lankan state via the mediation of a third party state actor offered the LTTE the opportunity to gain recognition as an equal partner in the process with the Sri Lanka state. The LTTE repeatedly emphasised that parity between the two warring parties was a pre-requisite of the negotiations and parity of status became a cornerstone of the LTTE’s negotiation strategy in the peace process.\(^{180}\) In order to establish and maintain parity of esteem the LTTE needed to overcome the asymmetry that existed between it and the Sri Lankan government at the international level. However, the LTTE lacked the power to reduce this asymmetry itself and therefore had to look towards external actors.

As detailed in section 2.5, Zartman argues that rebel movements can reduce this asymmetry in negotiations by borrowing power from third parties.\(^{181}\) In the Basque case study, this research found that the Basque nationalist left borrowed soft power from Sinn Féin as a foreign political party to overcome asymmetry at the international level. The

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\(^{179}\) Zartman, "Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts."

\(^{180}\) Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 118.

\(^{181}\) Zartman, "Conflict Resolution and Negotiation."
preceding chapter revealed that the FARC attempted to force parity of esteem with the help of left-wing governments in Latin America, but it also borrowed soft power from Sinn Féin at the beginning of the negotiations. However, this research does not find a similar attempt to borrow power from Sinn Féin or other foreign political parties in the LTTE’s approach to the negotiations. The LTTE did however focus on borrowing power from Norway, as the third party foreign state facilitator. The next sub-sections will analyse the reasons for this and the limited impact of Sinn Féin’s engagement in this regard, compared to the two other case studies in this thesis.

6.4.1 Norway and Parity of Esteem

At the beginning of the process the LTTE was content to accept Norway as a mediator and facilitator of the talks. This was not only because Norway was seen as an impartial and neutral actor in the conflict, but importantly for the LTTE, Norway was also one of the only state actors that had official contact with the LTTE leadership and would engage with them freely. A key aspect of Norway’s mediation style was to treat warring parties in an equal manner and establish parity, what Höglund and Svensson term a “strategy of even-handedness.”¹⁸² This fitted into the LTTE’s negotiation strategy of establishing parity and Balasingham commended the Norwegians for their skilful facilitation and taking great care to maintain parity of esteem between the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE.¹⁸³ However, Norway was an outlier as a state actor with this approach and it faced accusations of bias from nationalist Sinhalese political forces.¹⁸⁴ They regularly accused Norway of undermining Sri Lankan sovereignty and attempting to strengthen the LTTE by reducing the asymmetry through a ‘equalizing strategy’.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, Norway was not a state power that commanded significant hard power and when states that wielded significant hard power undermined the parity of esteem Norway was unable to redress it. The next sub-section illustrates the geopolitical dimensions that fuelled these interventions and led to a dismantling of the parity that was crucial to the negotiations.

¹⁸² Höglund and Svensson, “Damned if you do, and damned if you don’t,” 342.
¹⁸³ Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 464.
¹⁸⁴ Höglund and Svensson, “Mediating Between Tigers and Lions.”
¹⁸⁵ Höglund and Svensson, "Damned if you do, and damned if you don't," 342.
6.4.2 Geopolitical Dimensions that Dismantled the Parity of Esteem

As the talks progressed the Sri Lankan government had a deliberate strategy of marginalising the LTTE internationally and this approach was aided by international geopolitical developments. The liberal internationalism that was predominant at the beginning of the process gave way to a new global securitisation agenda based on militarised state-building, which underpinned the US-led invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Consequently, the basis of the conflict in Sri Lankan was increasingly ascribed to greed-based terrorism rather than ethno-nationalist conflict underpinned by grievances.\textsuperscript{186} Similar efforts to ascribe conflicts underpinned by significant grievances as the result of greed-based terrorism in this new post-9/11 global securitisation agenda were documented in the Basque and Colombian cases contained in the preceding two chapters of this thesis.

The shift of global powers towards a greed-based discourse of the conflict generated a decreased international tolerance of the LTTE and a greater belief within the LTTE that the “excessive internationalisation” of the process was disrupting the power balance of the parties to its disadvantage.\textsuperscript{187} The LTTE argued that the Western block of nations were unfairly picking on every slippage of its conduct while ignoring the decades of Sri Lankan government atrocities to which it was reacting.\textsuperscript{188} The US decision not to invite the LTTE to the Washington donor meeting in June 2003 ruptured the parity of esteem in the negotiations and the EU’s decision to proscribed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in May 2006 demolished it. Norway lacked the power to stop this dismantling of the parity of esteem by state actors with significant hard power and to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.\textsuperscript{189} This points to a peace process with high levels of international involvement driving the agenda and low levels of local ownership, a predominate criticism of the liberal peace model that was discussed in section 2.4.

\textsuperscript{186} Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor's Peace."
\textsuperscript{187} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, x.
\textsuperscript{188} Naguleswaran, \textit{A Fleeting Moment in my Country}, 160.
\textsuperscript{189} Höglund and Svensson, “Mediating Between Tigers and Lions,” 186.
6.4.3 The Lack of Local Ownership of the Peace Process

The LTTE was increasingly frustrated over the lack of local ownership in the process. In a similar position the Basque nationalist left and the FARC sought external assistance to borrow power to enhance their ownership of the process, and this included engagements with Sinn Féin. This research finds that the LTTE did not seek to borrow power from external actors in a similar way to enhance its ownership of the peace process. There were three reasons for this.

Firstly, the LTTE was distrusting of greater international involvement in the process and it focused on the local level instead. As outlined in section 2.4, one of the predominate criticisms of liberal peace interventions that involve significant international engagement is that they tend to deny self-determination. This is contested by actors who want to determine their own peace agreement and post-conflict process. The LTTE agreed to enter negotiations with Norway as an international third party facilitator, but it consistently rejected the enhanced international involvement that followed, such as the creation of the donor co-chairs group. Its opposition to expanding international involvement was a response to the Sri Lankan state’s strategy of using the process to delegitimise the LTTE in the early stages and to build up international support for a military victory in the conflict in the later stages. Whereas in the Northern Ireland and Basque cases the rebel group favoured international involvement in order to put pressure on the state side to make compromises in the process, in the Sri Lankan case increasing internationalism would only favour the state side. This was because the new global securitisation agenda heavily favoured the Sri Lankan state and the maintenance of a unitary state structure on the island. A military victory rather than a negotiated settlement was in the geopolitical interests of states with significant hard power. Comparisons with the Colombia case are difficult because a negotiated settlement did not involve redrawing the state’s borders or its political structure, ensuring the international geopolitical dimensions were significantly different.

Secondly, the LTTE did not have an expressed international strategy or international aspirations, apart from a focus on the Tamil diaspora. As highlighted in section 6.1, the LTTE

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190 Malathy Naguleswaran, interview by author, 12 October 2020.
did not have significant existing connections to other national liberation movements nor did it have a foreign state backer. The LTTE therefore had no organised international network to support its positions and to safeguard its interests in the peace process, whereas the Sri Lankan government’s international connections were more geopolitically driven. While powerful global actors like the USA and the EU politically backed a negotiated peace settlement in Northern Ireland and did not undermine the peace process efforts in the Basque Country and the 2016 Colombian process, these powerful international actors did not favour a negotiated settlement in Sri Lanka which would have amended the unitary state structure. As a result, significant hard power in the global political system was weighted in favour of the Sri Lankan state.

The support of these powerful global actors for a negotiated peace process and the absence of disruptive interventions in the other case studies in this research, allowed the rebel groups in these cases to interact with and borrow power from other international actors, including foreign political parties. In contrast, in the Sri Lanka case, those who wanted to assist with soft power could not viably counteract the significant impact of the hard power that undermined efforts for a locally owned negotiated settlement. This occurred with Norway’s intervention, as was illustrated in sub-section 6.4.1, but it also transpired in Sinn Féin’s engagements with the LTTE. As highlighted in sub-section 6.3.3, the LTTE was stopped from undertaking further formal visits to Europe to build on the positive engagements that took place in Ireland in 2003 with Sinn Féin and others. In the Northern Ireland, Basque and Colombian cases, engagements between the rebel movements and foreign political parties were never disrupted and stopped in this way.

Thirdly, considering that the LTTE was administering a de facto state structure and was engaged in conventional warfare, one does not find as strong an emphasis on learning from the experiences of other rebel movements in peace processes as its situation was somewhat unique. According to Mendis, the LTTE did conduct a political analysis of the El Salvador peace process, as it saw similarities between itself and the FMLN. This was motivated by a desire to learn about how peace processes can be used as a counter-insurgency tactic to weaken militant groups, not as an example to copy. Due to the

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191 Abeywardane, interview by author.
192 Mendis, interview by author.
193 Ibid.
international dynamics highlighted in the preceding sub-section, the LTTE was not focused on how best to harness international involvement and to borrow power from international actors, but it was instead focused on reducing international interventions in the process that were affecting the balance of power in favour of the Sri Lankan state. The LTTE were therefore apprehensive of international actors and international involvement in the peace process.

Abeywardane argues that in the case of the Sri Lankan peace process geopolitical factors and external actors were in fact effective and powerful spoilers. As highlighted in section 2.2.7, this thesis uses Stedman’s definition of spoilers as: “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.” Considering that global powers such as the USA and Britain clearly favoured a unitary state structure, viewing a negotiated settlement which altered this model as a threat to their geopolitical interests in the Indian Ocean, their military support to the Sri Lankan state which enabled the dismantling of the CFA and the pursuit of a military victory, can be explained using Stedman’s definition as the actions of spoilers.

Nevertheless, the LTTE did not completely retreat from engagements with international actors and third parties. This research has uncovered that during the two Sinn Féin visits to Sri Lanka in 2006 there was engagement on negotiation strategy between the LTTE and Sinn Féin. This advice was markedly different from the message that other international actors were delivering. The following two sub-sections provide the research findings regarding the engagements with Sinn Féin on this issue.

6.4.4 The Excessive International Focus on LTTE ‘inflexibility’

The shift of global powers towards a greed-based discourse of the conflict decreased international tolerance of the LTTE and reduced international receptiveness to alternative political and constitutional models for Sri Lanka. At the beginning of the negotiations in the peace process there was a relative willingness in Colombo and among international actors to support a bottom-up federalised approach that could accommodate the LTTE’s demands

194 Abeywardane, interview by author.
for Tamil self-determination. In the changed geopolitical setting after 9/11 both India and
the USA gradually made clear that their political and financial support for the process
became dependent on the abandonment of this bottom-up federalised approach.\textsuperscript{196} Sri
Lanka’s enhanced geostrategic value under the emerging securitisation agenda ensured
there was a prevailing international interest in the island remaining under one military
command. Fernando points out that Tamil Eelam became ‘untenable’ and ‘unwise’
compared to the independence of South Sudan and Kosovo, which respectively, have oil
wealth and host the largest US military camp in Europe.\textsuperscript{197} Bottom-up federalism also
particularly threatened US access to Trincomalee harbour, as the LTTE had already publicly
stated that it would not allow the harbour in a Tamil Eelam to be used by foreign
militaries.\textsuperscript{198}

Rather than encouraging both sides to reach a mutually agreed political and constitutional
settlement, international actors applied pressure on the LTTE to first commit to giving up
violence and to abandon its demand for an independent state. International interventions
concentrated on pushing the LTTE to be ‘more flexible’, despite the LTTE previously
announcing it was willing to explore other political models instead of an independent state,
such as bottom-up federalism, as long as the model respected Tamil self-determination.
This notion of LTTE inflexibility, according to Fernando, rested on a two-party theory which
reduced the conflict to localised antagonism between competing actors while overlooking
international dimensions.\textsuperscript{199} Additionally, Gopinath maintains that the LTTE was always
ready to compromise on the goal of full independence, but it was not prepared to do this
until there was a credible, workable, and trustworthy internationally mediated federal
solution on the table that it could present to Tamils for support.\textsuperscript{200} Instead, international
actors pressured the LTTE to announce it would abandon its demand for a separate state
first and only then could negotiations on a federal solution take place.

This shift of international discourse on the conflict from grievance-based to greed-based,
with a focus on dismantling the LTTE and repudiating Tamil self-determination, completely
ignored the needs and fears of the Tamil population on the island. In the 2004 election the

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{198} Mendis, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{199} Fernando, "Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace," 207.
\textsuperscript{200} Gopinath, interview by author, 31 July 2020.
Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which was viewed as a proxy for the LTTE at the time, won 74 percent of the vote in Tamil majority areas. Ignoring the local realities and neglecting to seriously engage with local concerns is one of the principal criticisms of contemporary liberal peace processes, as outlined in section 2.4 of this thesis.

The lack of local ownership in the Sri Lankan process was highlighted by the refusal to invite the LTTE to the Washington donor conference. The LTTE stated that if it was not going to be invited to meetings to decide how aid related to the peace process would be spent in the north and east, then it was not going to be part of its implementation. Consequently, rather than seeking enhanced international support or to borrow power from external actors to reduce the asymmetry in the process or to hybridise the liberal peace model to increase local ownership, the LTTE lost faith in the process altogether. Abeywardane observes that the LTTE felt that “international conditions were not offering them breathing space and the unfavourable conditions [could] actually suffocate them to death.”

In the Basque and Colombian cases, this thesis reveals that the rebel movements reached out to international actors, including Sinn Féin, early on in the process to reduce asymmetry in the negotiations and enhance local ownership of the process. The evidence presented in this chapter shows that the LTTE tried to follow a similar path, undertaking study trips to Europe and meeting with Sinn Féin and others in Ireland, but that it was soon prohibited from doing so by the Sri Lankan state. International state actors completed this exclusion by not inviting the LTTE to important donor conferences and then designating the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. Such unfavourable geopolitical conditions, hindering engagements with favourable international actors, were not present in the peace processes examined in this research. As a result, the LTTE’s engagement with international actors to share experiences and to borrow power to enhance local ownership of the process was noticeably limited.

However, this research did find that very late in the process, when the CFA was on the brink of collapse in 2006, significant Sinn Féin engagement with the LTTE occurred and it focused

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201 Mendis, interview by author.
202 Abeywardane, interview by author.
203 Ibid.
on negotiation experience sharing and strategy. The next sub-section explores this engagement.

6.4.5 Sinn Féin’s Engagements on Negotiation Strategy and Experience Sharing

Significant Sinn Féin involvement in the peace process did not occur until January 2006, when Martin McGuinness travelled to Sri Lanka for the first time. McGuinness’ first trip only granted a visit to Colombo and he supported Norway’s efforts to convene eleventh hour talks in Switzerland to stop the process from completely collapsing. At the time he said he impressed upon all sides “the need for inclusive dialogue.” Adams points out that the decision to send McGuinness was made in full consciousness of his status as a former combatant and political prisoner who became Deputy First Minister in a power sharing government as part of a peace process.

McGuinness returned again in July 2006 and this time he travelled to Kilinochchi with Sinn Féin adviser Aidan McAteer to meet with the leadership of the LTTE Peace Secretariat – S.P. Tamilselvan, Balasingham Nadesan, Seevaratnam Pulidevan, and S. Bavanandan. McGuinness revealed that this was “the primary purpose” of his original visit to Sri Lanka but “logistical reasons” hampered it from occurring then. The decision to make a second journey, after the first did not allow for a meeting with the LTTE leadership in Vanni, was an explicit statement of support for parity of esteem in the negotiations. Furthermore, crossing the frontline at a delicate moment in the peace process with ongoing sporadic military clashes reveals a compelling commitment from McGuinness and Sinn Féin to engage in the process, when other international third parties were unwilling to do likewise.

The only participant of the July 2006 Kilinochchi meeting that is still alive at the time of writing is McAteer. He informed the author that he remembers that the LTTE leaders they met had “enormous respect for [McGuinness] and for what he was saying” but that they

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206 Adams, interview by author.
208 McGuinness, "Martin McGuinness meets Tamil Tiger leadership in Sri Lanka."
were also “sceptical about the prospects of the process.”

This is echoed by Naguleswaran, who was not present in the meeting, but was working in the office of the LTTE Peace Secretariat at the time and remembers being in the building when the meeting took place. She states that from her personal understanding, the LTTE leadership were happy for McGuinness to visit but ultimately it was too late in the process to have an impact or for it to lead to further engagements.

Naguleswaran recalls that McGuinness was initially viewed as just another representative of the unhelpful international actors in the peace process. The LTTE had just been banned as a terrorist organisation by the EU in May 2006, so at the time of McGuinness’ visit distrust and scepticism of international actors was high. The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal on Sri Lanka found that this decision by the EU was “a grave error that destroyed the parity of status necessary for the continuation of the peace process.” However, during his visit McGuinness told local reporters that it was a “huge mistake for the EU leaders to demonise the LTTE and the political leaders of the Tamil people”, something Tamilselvan was highly appreciative of. Naguleswaran believes that the engagement with Sinn Féin in July 2006 made the LTTE aware that there were some international actors aligned with the LTTE’s thinking and McGuinness’ forthright comments perhaps had some influence on the LTTE’s decision to attend the October 2006 peace talks, which it was initially reluctant to do. McGuinness’ comments reveal Sinn Féin’s criticism of the international level for undermining local conflict resolution efforts by dismantling the parity of esteem and support for enhancing the local level by restoring this parity in an effort to find a negotiated political settlement. This was an appeal not to completely disregard the liberal peace model, but to hybridise it to enhance local ownership of the process. This is comparable to Sinn Féin’s engagements in the Basque and Colombian peace processes, specifically highlighted in sections 4.6 and 5.6 of this thesis.

McAteer informed the author that one of the key messages Sinn Féin relayed in the engagement with the LTTE was that even if you are deeply sceptical of the process, test

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209 McAteer, interview by author.
210 Naguleswaran, interview by author.
211 Ibid.
214 Naguleswaran, interview by author.
your opponent to the absolute limit, until they walk away or you force them to do something positive in terms of developing the peace process.\textsuperscript{215} This is once again an example of direct experience sharing on negotiation strategy from a political party who had negotiated its own peace process with a rebel movement currently engaged in negotiations. It is similar to the advice shared with the Basque nationalist left regarding creating momentum and unilateral actions that was documented in section 4.6 of this thesis. However, while this advice sharing had a noticeable impact on the strategy of the Basque nationalist left in the peace process, Naguleswaran believes that Sinn Féin’s engagement was ultimately too late in the Sri Lankan process to have any decisive impact.\textsuperscript{216} This is a sentiment McAteer also shared with the author. He maintains that during his visit in 2006, although there was an openness to engage in dialogue, he was aware both sides were clearly building up militarily and both felt they could achieve a military victory.\textsuperscript{217} This highlights that the ripeness for a negotiated settlement that was present at the beginning of the process due to the mutual hurting stalemate, in line with Zartman’s theory of ripeness outlined in sub-section 2.2.2, was no longer present. This indicates that the impact of foreign political party engagement differs depending on what stage of the conflict resolution process it occurs and if a ripeness for a negotiated resolution to the conflict is present.

Negotiation experience sharing and negotiation strategy also featured in McGuinness’ engagement with TNA political representatives during his visit to Colombo in January 2006. The meeting took place in the home of Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam – who was then a TNA MP and is now an MP for the Tamil National People’s Front (TNPF). Ponnambalam remembers a lot of international personalities visiting at this time to try convince the LTTE to ‘be a bit more flexible’ in order to move the peace process forward and he informed the author he expected the same from McGuinness.\textsuperscript{218} Instead he remembers McGuinness and his message as “distinctly different” and “a breath of fresh air.”\textsuperscript{219} Unlike other international personalities that visited, Ponnambalam remembers that the TNA representatives felt McGuinness did not try to lecture them, not even on the question of

\textsuperscript{215} McAteer, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{216} Naguleswaran, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{217} McAteer, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{218} Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, interview by author, 13 December 2020.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
human rights. Instead McGuinness was keen to understand their view of what was going on and he provided strategic negotiation advice. According to Ponnambalam, McGuinness told them that as long as they were flexible on the notion of statehood, that they do not insist on it as a precondition, and they are willing to consider alternatives, then everything else is up to the Sri Lankan government to deliver and they should hold firm on their fundamentals.

Here one can identify a distinct difference between Sinn Féin’s engagement in the peace process compared to other third parties. Ponnambalam explains that international actors were telling TNA representatives and the LTTE to be more flexible and to compromise on the issue of self-determination, whereas McGuinness and Sinn Féin were telling them that independence was their trump card, that they had already shown flexibility and willingness to consider alternatives, and it was therefore the Sri Lankan state that needed to provide the flexibility now. Ponnambalam says the attendees “were to some extent taken aback in the meeting” because they were not used to hearing this sentiment from international actors and they were under the impression from the background they received before the meeting that “Sinn Féin had more or less become somewhat of an establishment tool.” Therefore, unlike in the Basque and Colombian cases, in the Sri Lankan peace process this research finds that Sinn Féin began its engagement without significant soft or moral power, an important aspect of foreign political party engagements that was discussed in sub-section 2.2.7. Ultimately Ponnambalam said he left the meeting with a different impression and that some junior TNA members present who were closely associated with the LTTE were satisfied with McGuinness’ conclusions.

Interestingly McGuinness’ advice dovetails with the expectations that Prabhakaran had for the peace process. Gopinath recalls Prabhakaran telling him that he gave the LTTE negotiators only one objective: establish for the international community that a Sri Lankan government will never come up with a genuine political solution or model that is workable or acceptable to the Tamil people. The tactic rested on the assumption that Sri Lankan

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220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
222 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
negotiators would repeatedly come up with clearly unworkable models. When international actors would then attempt to alter the models into something workable, they would continuously be rejected and the international community would then recognise the Sri Lankan government as unreasonable. When this moment was reached, the LTTE would put forward an acceptable model that the international community could support.\(^{227}\) Gopinath revealed that in his conversation with the LTTE leader, Prabhakaran told him that the LTTE was prepared for compromise and to create this workable solution but that the compromise had to be based on international guarantees on the right to self-determination.\(^{228}\) If those guarantees were agreed then the LTTE would go to the Tamil public and seek their support for this comprised solution to an independent state. But until those guarantees were firmly in place the LTTE would maintain its demand for an independent Tamil Eelam state.\(^{229}\)

This implies that if the Tamil right to self-determination was recognised in a compromised political model and the Tamil people had to right to decide their own political future by accepting or rejecting the model, that a negotiated solution to the conflict was viable. International guarantees were crucial because of the lack of trust among the LTTE that the Sri Lankan state would abide by an agreement without international guarantees.\(^{230}\) This strategy conforms with the advice Sinn Féin were giving, that there was no need for the LTTE to be more flexible than it already had been on the issue of self-determination, and it contrasts sharply with other international actors who were pointedly focused on pressuring the LTTE to be more flexible on self-determination as a means to end the impasse in the negotiations. Furthermore, it highlights that a hybridisation of the liberal peace model would have been acceptable to the LTTE. It supported a locally designed political model that would address the needs and fears of Tamils, and recognise their right to self-determination, but which had an international level to ensure the Sri Lankan state abided by these guarantees.

\(^{227}\) Ibid.  
\(^{228}\) Ibid.  
\(^{229}\) Ibid.  
\(^{230}\) Ibid.
6.4.6 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagement on the Negotiation Process

In the Basque and Colombian case studies in this thesis, evidence was put forward that rebel movements could borrow soft power from foreign political parties, and in particular Sinn Féin, to reduce the asymmetry in negotiations and to use its experience to solicit negotiation advice. Evidence provided in this chapter shows this was not the case for the LTTE in the Sri Lankan peace process.

Firstly, Sinn Féin did not have sufficient power as a third party to make a meaningful difference in averting the collapse of the Sri Lankan peace process in 2006. The shift of global powers towards a greed-based discourse of the conflict and the rise of a realist global securitisation approach after 9/11 led to significant international interventions that disrupted the power balance in the peace process. Foreign political parties like Sinn Féin, and even a state actor like Norway, lacked the hard power and ability to reverse this spiral and restore the parity of esteem that was dismantled by the Washington conference in June 2003. Despite Sinn Féin’s overt criticism of the EU’s decision to list the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in May 2006, its soft power could not stop this development quashing the parity in the negotiations, which ultimately gave the green light for the government of Sri Lanka to breach the CFA and re-start military operations.231 Secondly, Sinn Féin lacked the power to improve local ownership of the process and reduce what the LTTE deemed ‘excessive internationalisation’. Its negotiation advice perhaps encouraged the LTTE to attend the eleventh-hour talks in Geneva in October 2006, but both sides were already gearing up for a full-scale military confrontation and Sinn Féin’s negotiation experience was incapable of reversing this. This illustrates the limitations of Sinn Féin’s engagements in foreign peace processes.

McGuinness’ two visits to Sri Lanka in 2006 suggest that perhaps there was potential for further Sinn Féin engagement if the process did not collapse so soon after the second visit. The positive reaction from the LTTE and Tamil political representatives to these visits, despite initial low expectations, and because McGuinness’ message was declared as noticeably different to the narrative from other international actors, indicates that further Sinn Féin engagements would have likely been welcomed despite the weariness of the LTTE

at that stage to international third party actors in the process. Additionally, on his final visit to the island in July 2006 McGuinness stated that: “Sinn Féin will continue to play any role that we can to assist the peace process in Sri Lanka.” Kearney also informed the author that Sinn Féin had prepared material for further engagements and meetings.

Ultimately Sinn Féin’s engagements with the LTTE came too late in the conflict resolution stage when a ripeness for a negotiated settlement was no longer present and parity of esteem was dismantled by the changing international geopolitical dimensions. As Sinn Féin lacked the necessary hard power to reverse the descent into full scale war there was little Sinn Féin could do with soft and moral power except transmit solidarity. On behalf of Sinn Féin, McGuinness made statements calling for an end to the worsening conflict and for a negotiated solution in July 2008. In May 2009 he called for a humanitarian ceasefire and argued that a military victory would not achieve a long-term settlement. This demonstrates the limitations of foreign political parties as a third party in peace process, especially when confronted with the hard power of states and overarching geopolitical dynamics. It also highlights that the timing of foreign political party engagements correlates to the impact it can have.

The Basque and Colombian case studies revealed that rebel-to-party transitions are an aspect of contemporary peace processes that can involve foreign political party engagement. The next section details Sinn Féin’s involvement and limited impact in this area in the Sri Lankan peace process.

6.5 The Impact of Sinn Féin’s Engagements on the LTTE’s Internal Negotiation Strategy: The Rebel-to-Party Transition

Section 2.5 of this thesis pointed out that the transformation of a rebel movement into a political party is one of the hardest contemporary peacebuilding challenges. Sub-section 2.2.6 also outlined how movements making this transition often look towards likeminded

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232 McGuinness, "Martin McGuinness meets Tamil Tiger leadership in Sri Lanka."
233 Kearney, interview by author.
236 de Zeeuw, From Soldiers to Politicians.
movements who have made similar evolutions for guidance and support. In Chapter 3 evidence was provided to show how the ANC supported Sinn Féin in this process and Chapters 4 and 5 presented the research findings related to Sinn Féin’s assistance to the Basque nationalist left and the FARC with this complex challenge. In the Sri Lankan peace process that began with the CFA in 2002, a rebel-to-party transition for the LTTE was never substantially discussed or explored. This is in contrast to previous conflict resolution attempts in Sri Lanka, particularly the 1989 negotiations. The following sections outline the four limiting factors which hindered and discouraged a rebel-to-party transition for the LTTE, and why Sinn Féin, in contrast to the Basque and Colombian peace processes, did not significantly engage with the LTTE on this element of contemporary civil war peace processes.

6.5.1 The LTTE Acting as a De Facto State

The first factor that one must take into account is that by the early 2000s the LTTE were acting more like a de facto state than an orthodox rebel movement or NSAG. After the IPKF withdrawal the LTTE found itself in control of vast swathes of territory which it expanded through military victories in Eelam War III. In order to control the expansive territory and administer the large population under its authority, it created quasi-government structures, including a revenue collection department, police and judiciary services, public amenities, and economic development initiatives.237 A complex arrangement with the Sri Lankan state was also established to ensure a relative high degree of formal public service provision in the north and east of the island.238 Such an arrangement protected the Sri Lankan government from accusations of fomenting a humanitarian disaster and it ensured that a central government link to these areas was maintained, to counter the LTTE’s image as a Tamil Eelam government-in-waiting.239

However the north was subject to a crippling economic embargo by Colombo and this had a profound impact on daily life in LTTE administered areas.240 This created a complex political-military problem for the LTTE: the greater its military successes on the battlefield

239 Ibid, 310-11.
240 Ibid, 312.
the harsher economic conditions became in areas under its control. Consequently, once the CFA was agreed, the LTTE desperately needed to deliver development and economic benefits for the Tamil population, not as a rebel movement, but as a de facto state.

Therefore, unlike in the other case studies in this thesis, the LTTE was not focused on a rebel-to-party transition when it entered negotiations on a peace process. Instead, it was focused on preventing a humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged areas that it was in administrative control of. After the CFA the LTTE focused on developing institutional capacity to facilitate relief and rehabilitation programmes funded by foreign aid and economic flows, for example the creation of the Planning and Development Secretariat (PDS). It was not concentrating on establishing a political party to contest democratic elections to the Parliament in Colombo. This contrasts substantially with the experiences of the rebel movements in the other cases in this thesis. Instead of a rebel-to-party transition, the LTTE was thus focused on a state-building project.

The immediate international declarations of economic support and development aid which came with the liberal internationalist approach at the beginning of the peace process, created an opportunity for the LTTE to harness this international support to address the humanitarian needs of populations under its control, while also furthering its state-building project. This accounts for the LTTE’s embrace of the liberal peace project that was initially focused on reconstruction and development before the complex political resolution of the conflict. However, as pointed out in sub-section 6.4.4, the LTTE wanted full local control to decide how aid would be spent in the north and east, and its exclusion from the Washington donor conference undermined this.

Section 6.4 of this chapter detailed how parity of esteem was gradually dismantled as the negotiations proceeded due to international interventions. At the same time the LTTE was also growing increasingly frustrated and disillusioned that the material benefits and peace dividend, promised from the international community as a result of the peace process

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242 Stokke, "Building the Tamil Eelam State," 1033.
244 Stokke, "Crafting Liberal Peace," 936.
negotiations, was not reaching the Tamil people.\footnote{Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 430.} Despite the public promises made when the negotiations began, the LTTE was not receiving a material boon to provide to the populations under its control by the time the talks collapsed in mid-2003.\footnote{Ponnambalam, interview by author.} This lack of a peace dividend made the process unsustainable for the LTTE as it inhibited its state-building project.

There was the possibility that the humanitarian response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami could have revitalised the process, with both parties agreeing to form the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS). Fernando argues that this could have provided a form of shared humanitarian sovereignty to de-securitise and de-ethicise the conflict while resurrecting the peace process.\footnote{Fernando, “Negotiated Peace Versus Victor’s Peace,” 216.} Instead, concerns related to a recognition of the LTTE’s \textit{de facto} administration in the north, led to the USA deciding not to allocate funds to P-TOMS and to Sinhala nationalists securing a high court order blocking its implementation.\footnote{Mampilly, "A Marriage of Inconvenience," 316.}

The LTTE’s pressing need to respond to the humanitarian needs of the population it administered and its \textit{de facto} state status, limited the ability of foreign political parties to engage as their experience was not relevant to the LTTE. There was no initiative at this time for a rebel-to-party transition and the LTTE was not considering transforming into a political party to contest democratic elections at this stage. The experience of foreign political parties, like Sinn Féin, may have become relevant later on in the Sri Lanka peace process if a political agreement was reached between the LTTE and government on a federal solution, as appeared to be happening after the talks in Oslo when the concept of internal self-determination was floated. But ultimately this was never agreed upon and the negotiations never delivered a mutually acceptable political model. Perhaps the rebel-to-party experiences of Sinn Féin and the ANC, particularly their approach to power-sharing governments, may have become useful to the LTTE if such a compromise model came into effect. However, that is hypothetical speculation as such progress was never reached.
6.5.2 Military Operations Versus Political Activities

Looking at the meso level and exploring the organisational history of the LTTE, important aspects of the rebel-to-party transition that were highlighted in section 2.3 of this thesis, one finds that the organisation placed a stronger emphasis on its military operations compared to its political activities. This is the second factor which inhibited a rebel-to-party transition.

The military crackdown against the satyagraha campaign in the 1960s, constitutional changes in the 1970s that discriminated against Tamils, and ultimately Black July in 1983, had persuaded LTTE cadres and supporters that the moral power of non-violence was inadequate for their political goals. Prabhakaran openly stated that he “strongly felt that armed struggle was the only way to confront a system which employs armed might against unarmed, innocent people.” The reaction of the Sri Lankan state to Tamil demands for self-determination was to close off avenues that would have allowed their political expression. The introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act by the Sri Lankan government in 1979 formalised the language and rhetoric of terrorism to de-legitimise Tamil political demands for independence and enabled a securitisation response. Furthermore, the sixth amendment to the 1983 constitution outlawed advocating for a separate and independent state on the island, by peaceful or violent means. There were therefore limited political openings for a rebel-to-party transition for the LTTE. As a result, the organisation concentrated more on building up its military strength and focused less on its political operations.

Until it was militarily defeated in 2009 the LTTE was one of the most advanced NSAG in existence, capable of waging an irregular insurgency and fighting a conventional war. It was the only NSAG to develop conventional ground, naval, and aerial capabilities. This created a structural imbalance between the military and political wings, making it somewhat unique among national liberation movements. Abeywardane remembers a high-ranking senior member of the ANC, who was in contact with the LTTE right up until the final stages of the war, stating that the ANC is a political organisation that had a military

250 Balasingham, War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers, 14.
251 Prabhakaran, “Anita Pratap interview with Vellupillai Prabhakaran.”
252 Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah, “Liberation struggle or terrorism? The politics of naming the LTTE,” 89-91.
253 Hashim, When Counterinsurgency Wins, 40.
wing, but the LTTE was a military organisation that had a political wing.\textsuperscript{254} Similarly, McAteer recalls being amazed at the LTTE’s advanced conventional military power when he travelled to Kilinochchi and how more developed the LTTE were militarily than politically.\textsuperscript{255} In this regard, the LTTE was comparable with the FARC who also had far more developed military structures than political structures. Both the LTTE and the FARC also encountered severe limitations on their access to a democratic political system due to state repression and violence. In contrast ETA and the IRA were linked to existing political parties who, over time, could gain access to the democratic political system with less state repression and violence than found in Sri Lanka and Colombia.

The 2002 CFA created a conditional shift within the LTTE’s campaign from military operations to political activities. The political wing now emerged as the leading unit in negotiating the peace process and advancing the state building project.\textsuperscript{256} The LTTE demanded that the Sri Lankan government de-proscribe the organisation before the first peace process negotiations took place in Thailand, as it would not attend if it was a banned, illegal entity.\textsuperscript{257} However, neither the CFA nor the subsequent negotiations made any specific attempt to focus on a LTTE rebel-to-party transition. This is in contrast to the 1989 peace talks, when the LTTE agreed to create a political party: the People’s Front of Liberation Tigers (PFLT).\textsuperscript{258} Nevertheless, the TNA was formed in 2001 and it was largely viewed as a proxy of the LTTE because it openly aimed to create political unity among the Tamil polity in support of the LTTE.\textsuperscript{259} In the 2004 parliamentary elections the TNA won the majority of seats in the northern and eastern provinces.\textsuperscript{260} The LTTE used this outcome to claim a popular national mandate for the LTTE despite not constituting itself as a political party and directly contesting elections.\textsuperscript{261} This indicates that the LTTE was cognisant of the need for a political platform to demonstrate a mandate from the Tamil people and to gain support for its political goals.

\textsuperscript{254} Abeywardane, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{255} McAteer, interview by author.
\textsuperscript{256} Stokke, "Building the Tamil Eelam State," 1036.
\textsuperscript{257} Balasingham, \textit{War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers}, 372.
\textsuperscript{258} Balasingham, "Premadasa - LTTE Talks," 179.
\textsuperscript{259} "Tamil parties' alliance formed to support liberation struggle," TamilNet, 28 October, 2001, 
\textsuperscript{260} Liyanage, \textit{One Step at a Time'}, 140.
\textsuperscript{261} Stokke, "Building the Tamil Eelam State," 1036.
There was potential for impactful foreign political party intervention if the talks progressed and parity of esteem was not dismantled. Norway and Switzerland supported the LTTE’s political operations financially in an attempt to strengthen the political wing of the organisation vis-à-vis the military wing.\(^{262}\) Additionally, at the sixth session of the peace talks in March 2003 the LTTE revealed it had strengthened its Political Affairs Committee and it would undertake studies into systems of government, federal models, consult with foreign parliamentarians, and go on study tours abroad.\(^{263}\) This could have subsequently led to foreign political party experience sharing on rebel-to-party transitions, as happened in the Colombian peace process when the FARC had to establish a new political party. As outlined in sub-section 6.3.3, the LTTE did send representatives to Europe for this purpose and they met with Sinn Féin representatives in Dublin. Although both sides spoke positively about this initial engagement and possible follow-up meetings, the Sri Lankan government subsequently refused to facilitate similar follow-up trips for the LTTE representatives.

### 6.5.3 Spoilers and the Karuna Split

Thirdly, as outlined in section 2.5, the issue of spoilers is of paramount concern to rebel movements in peace processes, especially during the rebel-to-party transition phase. In the Basque and Colombian case studies, this thesis detailed how Sinn Féin’s engagements with the Basque nationalist left and the FARC included a focus on reducing the threat of spoilers within their movements during the peace process. This came in the form of strategic advice regarding ‘bringing your constituency with you’ and direct engagements from Sinn Féin representatives who had moral and soft power with rank-and-file combatants and political cadres. This research did not find evidence that such engagements happened with the LTTE. In contrast, by the time Sinn Féin significantly engaged in the Sri Lankan process in 2006 a major split in the LTTE had already occurred, thus reducing the utility of Sinn Féin’s experience sharing and advice on reducing the spoiler threat. This split in the LTTE, caused by a spoiler as defined in sub-section 2.2.7 using Stedman’s definition, had a significant destabilising impact on the group and the peace process.

In the mid-1980s the LTTE militarily defeated other Tamil militant organisations and subsumed smaller ones into its structure. It grew into a monolithic power that dominated


the Tamil polity and no major split occurred until 2004. In March of that year Colonel Karuna, one of the LTTE’s most successful military commanders, became the first major defection from the LTTE since it achieved its monolithic status.\textsuperscript{264} This was a political setback and militarily damaging for the LTTE because Karuna was one of its primary negotiators and the principal commander of the LTTE forces in the east. It was the LTTE’s major advances in the east, such as the capture of Elephant Pass in April 2000, that gave the LTTE the upper hand in the conflict and forced a mutually hurting stalemate. Karuna also left with approximately 2,500 eastern cadres to form the rival Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP).\textsuperscript{265} The split reduced the LTTE’s military power in the eastern front and the intra-Tamil dispute, which resulted in violent conflict between the two sides, diverted time and resources away from the peace process.

Hashim states that Karuna’s defection happened under a cloud of festering discontent among Tamils in the east, who began to feel that they were being dominated by northern Tamils making decisions in Jaffna while eastern Tamils were being used as cannon fodder.\textsuperscript{266} Karuna also complained that he was being marginalised from the discussions that were happening with foreign mediators in the Vanni region while he was on the frontline in the east.\textsuperscript{267} Karuna conforms with Stedman’s definition of a spoiler because he was a leading figure who believed that the peace process emerging from the negotiations threatened his power and interests, and he used violence to undermine attempts to achieve it by setting up a rival armed rebel group that entered into direct violent conflict with the LTTE.

In contrast to Hashim’s reasoning for the defection, Gopinath maintains that Prabhakaran was aware that the north was much more developed than the east and was concerned the LTTE was becoming “north centric.”\textsuperscript{268} This led Prabhakaran to establish regional commanders in the east and to decentralise power, despite internal military criticism of the decision.\textsuperscript{269} This sensitivity also led him to appoint Karuna as part of the peace process negotiating team, to ensure there was an eastern presence at the table.\textsuperscript{270} Gopinath

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{264} Liyanage, ‘One Step at a Time’, 141.
\bibitem{265} Hashim, When Counterinsurgency Wins, 121-22.
\bibitem{266} Ibid, 121.
\bibitem{267} Ibid, 121.
\bibitem{268} Gopinath, interview by author, 19 August 2020.
\bibitem{269} Ibid.
\bibitem{270} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
therefore speculates that Karuna’s defection was part of a counterinsurgency strategy to divide the LTTE at a sensitive time when the negotiations were faltering.271

Sinn Féin’s significant engagement with the LTTE and the peace process only began in January 2006, almost two years after the Karuna split. Therefore, the meaningful engagement in relation to spoilers that was detailed in the Basque and Colombian cases is absent from the Sri Lankan case. Interestingly, in Sinn Féin’s first engagement with the LTTE in Dublin in October 2003, Ó Snodaigh confirms that the LTTE representatives were “particularly interested in how republicans have succeeded in maintaining a unity in all parts of the movement as we moved forward with the peace process.”272 Therefore, the LTTE were evidently focused on internal spoilers at this time and seeking to learn from others, like Sinn Féin, who overcame this obstacle during a peace process. Intriguingly, Karuna was one of the LTTE negotiators present in the meeting with Sinn Féin, just five months before he split from the movement.273

Furthermore, by the time Sinn Féin significantly engaged in 2006, the LTTE’s fears were no longer focused on internal splits caused by spoilers. It was instead focused on international actors operating as spoilers, as referenced in sub-section 6.4.3, and on spoilers in the new administration in Colombo attempting to reignite the conflict. While the Wickremasinghe administration had focused on creating an international coalition to support the peace process, Philips points out that it made no effort to reach out to Sinhala people and create a domestic support base for the process.274 It was a Sinhala nationalist backlash that swept the UPFA to power after the ISGA model was tabled, and they were elected on the promise that there would be no negotiation over the unitary structure of the state and a rhetoric that openly called for a military solution.275 By the time Rajapakse was elected President in November 2005 both sides had come to the conclusion that the peace process was not in their interests and both sides wanted to extradite themselves from the so-called ‘peace trap’.276

271 Ibid.
272 Millar and Siobhan, “Tamil Tigers pick Ulster’s brains on peace.”
273 Ibid.
McAteer became aware of this during his visit to Sri Lanka in 2006. He informed the author that the government talked the language of peace in formal engagements during his visit, but in less formal engagements he was introduced to Generals and Admirals who were openly talking about the state’s military ability and the new military hardware it had acquired. McAteer felt they were trying to use him and McGuinness to send a message to the LTTE, that it should compromise or the Sri Lankan military will come at it hard. Similarly, when McAteer met with the LTTE leadership figures, he remembers that they were openly saying they felt the LTTE had the military capabilities and popular support to withstand any Sri Lankan military offensive and to hold onto the territories it controlled.

6.5.4 The Lack of a Decommissioning Element in the Peace Process

The fourth and final aspect that reduced the impact foreign political party engagement could have had was the absence of decommissioning or DDR provisions in the peace process. There was no mention of a decommissioning process for the LTTE in the CFA or in the subsequent negotiations. Hence there was no space for Sinn Féin to engage on this critical peace process element, as it did in the two other cases examined in this research. In the Basque and Colombian cases experience sharing and advice on decommissioning was paramount to Sinn Féin’s engagements. In the Sri Lankan peace process the context was completely different and the CFA instead created a Line of Control (LoC) between the warring parties and the SLMM to monitor the ceasefire. There are three factors that can explain why the context was different in Sri Lanka compared to the other cases.

Firstly, the peace process began when the LTTE was in the military ascendency and had just amassed significant victories over the Sri Lankan military in the east. This is very different from the military situation that preceded the peace processes in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and Colombia. None of those cases provide an example of the rebel movement being in the ascendancy on the battlefield in the period immediately before peace process negotiations.

277 McAteer, interview by author.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid.
Secondly, as highlighted in section 6.1 and sub-section 6.3.1, the LTTE was at the height of its military power in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and widely recognised as one of the most effective NSAGs in the world. It had thousands of soldiers under arms and was the first NSAG to develop conventional ground, naval, and aerial capabilities. A decommissioning process as seen in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country is out of context when compared to the conditions that existed in the Sri Lankan conflict.

Thirdly, as discussed in sub-section 6.5.1, the LTTE was acting more like a *de facto* state than an orthodox rebel movement or NSAG. A decommissioning process, like those seen in the other cases in this research, is relevant for rebel organisations in peace processes and not for a movement that is operating as a *de facto* state. Therefore, such a process would have been a poor fit due to the conditions that existed in Sri Lanka at the time of the peace process negotiations.

As a decommissioning process was not relevant to the context in Sri Lanka at the time and therefore did not feature in the negotiations on the peace process, the utility of Sinn Féin’s engagement with the LTTE, when compared to ETA and the FARC, was limited. McAteer’s account of his visit to the island and his engagements with both sides, reflects that they were building up militarily and openly speaking of their military capabilities, not looking for advice or lessons learned from the IRA decommissioning process.280

### 6.6 Concluding Critical Analysis of the Case Study

Fernando points out that the Sri Lankan peace process is a “useful case study for theorists in peace and conflict to explore the correlation between the liberal peace model, human rights, international relations and geopolitics.”281 It is also a beneficial case study for this research on the involvement of foreign political parties in civil war peace process, as evidenced by Sinn Féin’s brief initial engagement in 2003 and its more significant engagements in 2006. However, the extent of this engagement and its impact was on a much smaller scale when compared to the two other case studies in this study, thus revealing the limitations of such engagements.

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280 Ibid.
This case study also adds additional empirical evidence to answer the research questions of this thesis. It helps to answer the first research question by providing further evidence that the involvement of certain political parties in foreign peace processes is part of a post-Cold War internationalism. It also demonstrates that experience sharing between rebel movements who have negotiated a liberal peace process to a successful conclusion for their political movement and those who are in midst of their own liberal peace process negotiations, occurs even when there are no pre-existing connections between both movements.

In answering the second research question of this thesis, this case study illustrates that Sinn Féin’s engagements focused on experience sharing with the LTTE, enhancing the local level in a hybridisation of the liberal peace model, and supporting parity of esteem in the negotiations. It also provides local testimony that the engagements of Sinn Féin in the Sri Lankan peace process were noticeably different than other international third parties. At the beginning of the peace process there was a group of international actors keen to make the process a showcase of liberal peace achieved through development and democratisation, but as the negotiations faltered and the geopolitical dynamics shifted, international actors with significant hard power instead focused on a militarised state-building approach to peacebuilding. This led to the dismantling of the parity of esteem, a neglect of the needs and fears of the LTTE with the process, and concerted international pressure being place on the LTTE as the ‘inflexible’ party unwilling to compromise. This research provides testimony and empirical evidence that Sinn Féin’s engagement was directed at supporting parity of esteem and the negotiation advice it conveyed around flexibility was the opposite of what other international actors were communicating to the LTTE and Tamil political activists.

Regarding the third research question, this case study reveals the limitations on the impact that foreign political party engagements can have on peace processes and the negotiating parties. This chapter detailed that the LTTE had a three-fold strategic approach to the peace process: to reengage in the international sphere as a legitimate political actor and sole representative of the Tamil people; to establish its administrative structures in the areas it controlled as the de facto state authority; and to acquire international aid for development. To achieve these aims the LTTE primarily engaged with state actors, principally Norway as the third party facilitator of the talks. The LTTE did not actively seek to borrow power from
foreign political parties, such as Sinn Féin, like the Basque nationalist left and the FARC did. The LTTE did send delegations to various European countries in 2003 and after meeting with Sinn Féin in Ireland there was a stated willingness from both sides to continue, however the LTTE was prevented from conducting further study visits and follow up engagements. The findings presented in this chapter reveal the limitations of such engagements when geopolitical dynamics and states with significant hard power obstruct rather than encourage the peace process.

Additionally, this case study illustrates the importance of timing when it comes to foreign political party involvement in peace processes. Sinn Féin’s significant engagement came late in the process, when it was on the brink of collapse due to the powerful geopolitical dynamics favouring a Sri Lankan military victory, highlighting the minimal impact a third party actor with soft power can have in such a scenario. As international actors gradually abandoned the carrot approach used at the beginning of the process, in favour of increasing its use of the stick against the LTTE, the power balance was considerably altered. Sinn Féin’s commitment to parity of esteem, by conducting a second trip from Ireland to Kilinochchi with the sole purpose of engaging with the LTTE, and its public condemnation of the EU’s listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, was a transmission of solidarity. However, it could not impact the power imbalance created by the uneven interventions of powerful state actors in the process. These powerful geopolitical dynamics and interventions in the peace process marks the Sri Lankan case as significantly different from the other case studies in this thesis.

The Basque and Colombian case studies also revealed the impact foreign political party engagements can have on the rebel-to-party transition and the decommissioning provisions of a peace process. This chapter outlines the substantial differences in the Sri Lankan context that ensured both these aspects were not present in the peace process negotiations. Consequently, this case study illustrates that the engagement of certain foreign political parties in civil war peace processes can be restricted and ineffectual unless the process contains these key elements. These two elements are at the core of foreign political party engagements in peace processes and experience sharing in this regard can

282 Höglund and Svensson, “Schizophrenic Soothers.”
be impactful. Without these elements the engagements appear to be much less impactful, as the research findings of this study divulged.

Lastly, this case study adds new material to the existing literature on the Sri Lankan peace process and its ultimate collapse. While every insurgent movement is covert for security measures, the LTTE leadership were intensely secretive even within the organisation. They never published their own military thinking or strategy to the public or even within the military organisation. This has created a problem for researchers today, because the LTTE leadership were all killed in the last stages of the war and there is no record from them of what they thought during each stage of the peace process and Eelam War IV. This research aids our understanding of this crucial period by introducing to the literature the testimony of McAteer – the only living participant of the Sinn Féin meeting with the LTTE Peace Secretariat leadership in Kilinochchi weeks before the outbreak of Eelam War IV. His insights shed a new light on the mindset of the key LTTE leadership figures at this time. This is complemented by first-hand testimony from Naguleswaran and Ponnambalam who were present in Kilinochchi and Colombo respectively for Sinn Féin’s two engagements in 2006. Their first-hand testimony presented in this thesis also contributes to our knowledge of developments in those crucial months before Eelam War IV commenced.

283 Gopinath, interview by author, 19 August 2020.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This final chapter provides an overall conclusion to this study. The next two sections offer an outline of the role of foreign political parties in peace processes and a summary to the answers to the research questions that were put forward in Chapter 1. The main conclusions of this research are then outlined, highlighting how the research findings advance the existing literature and theories related to contemporary peace processes. The final two sections illustrate two limitations of the research and three avenues for future research.

7.1 Political Party Engagement in Foreign Peace Processes

The aim of this research was to explore the involvement of certain foreign political parties in civil war peace processes since the end of the Cold War. It set out to discover why this is occurring, what role these foreign political parties are playing, and if their involvement has any impact. It was made clear in section 1.2 that not all political parties who have experience of conflict resolution are becoming involved in foreign peace processes, but ‘certain’ political parties are. These parties share three characteristics:

- Parties who were directly involved in negotiating a peace process to end a conflict in their own country.
- Parties from the broad left-wing tradition and who identify as national liberation movements.
- Parties who were connected to a NSAG in the conflict.

While the involvement of third parties has become a regular feature of contemporary peace processes – with the existing literature pointedly examining the role of foreign states, intergovernmental organisations, CSOs, diasporas, and NGOs – the role of foreign political parties had hitherto remained unexamined. The documentation of Sinn Féin’s engagement in the three foreign peace processes presented in Chapters 4 to 6 of this

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1 Gawerc, "Peace-building: theoretical and concrete perspectives,"; Hampson, Crocker, and Aall, "Negotiation and International Conflict,"; Kaldor, Global Civil Society: An Answer to War; Keane, Global Civil Society?; Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution; Smith and Stares, Diasporas in Conflict; Stedman and Rothchild, "Peace Operations: From Short-Term to Long-Term Commitment," Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement."
thesis, coupled with the ANC’s engagement in the Northern Ireland peace processes that was presented in Chapter 3, provides substantial empirical evidence demonstrating the involvement of foreign political parties in contemporary peace processes.

### 7.2 Summary of the Answers to the Research Questions

To achieve the research objectives this study examined in detail one political party – Sinn Féin – and explored its involvement in three foreign peace processes as case studies. The justification for the selection of the case studies was presented in section 1.4 and three research questions were developed to become the central focus of this thesis.

1. Why does Sinn Féin get involved in foreign peace processes?
   
   *(Is it a new type of post-Cold War internationalism based on anti-colonial/anti-imperialist ideology? Or is it to gain international legitimacy and recognition for its own rebel-to-party transition for domestic political ends?)*

2. What sort of engagements does it have after becoming involved?

   *(Is it different from the interventions of other third parties? Is it simply experience sharing or does it go deeper than that?)*

3. Does its involvement have any impact on the peace process and the parties to the negotiation?

In answering these research questions, theories regarding the local turn in liberal peacebuilding, spoilers, ripeness, rebel-to-party transitions, and the impact of third parties were examined and utilised. Both primary and secondary sources were used to ascertain the reasons behind foreign political party engagement in peace processes and its impact, through an interpretive method of historical analysis. In particular this research relied on the twenty-two structured and semi-structured interviews that the author conducted with key participants to get an insider view and to ensure local realities were captured in the analysis.

Focusing on the first research question, all three case studies demonstrated that Sinn Féin’s engagements were not neutral but instead focused on efforts to improve and strengthen the rebel movement *vis-à-vis* the government side in the peace process. The research findings suggest that the motivation for these engagements was a new post-Cold War form
of internationalism that was based on existing channels of anti-imperialist internationalism and solidarity. Through its engagements with the three foreign peace processes covered in this study, Sinn Féin are promoting a message, consciously or unconsciously, that it is feasible for the liberal peace to go hand-in-hand with movements for self-determination and national liberation.

While Sinn Féin’s engagements with foreign peace processes was not found to have a significant connection to domestic political issues, its promotion of the liberal peace as a route for national liberation movements and rebel groups can be used domestically to counter the narrative that it had betrayed its revolutionary roots through its support for the Northern Ireland peace process. Furthermore, through continued engagements with national liberation and rebel movements after the GFA was signed and compromises were made by the party in the peace process, the Sinn Féin leadership could use these interactions to ensure the more left-wing activists in the party remained engaged. Therefore, there was some domestic benefits of this work for the party as well.

Tackling the second research question, this research found that Sinn Féin’s engagements were multidimensional. The case studies identified that Sinn Féin’s engagement occurred at all stages of Albin’s three stage model of peacemaking. In the Basque and Colombian cases Sinn Féin’s engagement was found at the first or pre-negotiation stage, while its engagement at the second stage – from negotiation to agreement – was ascertained in all three cases. Sinn Féin’s engagement at the third stage of post-agreement and post-conflict was again highlighted in both the Basque and Colombian cases. Furthermore, Sinn Féin’s engagement also occurred at different levels of the conflict resolution process. Using Lederach’s three level approach to conflict resolution, this research found that Sinn Féin primarily engaged at the top-level with the rebel side in all cases. However, the research also demonstrated that there was top-level engagement with the government side in the Colombian and Sri Lankan cases, albeit less frequently than engagements with the rebel side. Additionally, Sinn Féin’s engagement at the middle and bottom levels with the rebel side was also identified in the Basque and Colombian case studies.

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3 Lederach, Building Peace.
As pointed out in the opening paragraph of this section, Sinn Féin’s engagements in the peace processes were pointedly focused on assisting the rebel side rather than neutral engagements. This research revealed these engagements to be heavily concentrated on the rebel-to-party transition element of the peace process, with a particular focus on spoilers and internal negotiations. Section 2.2.7 of this study put forward the argument that the needs and fears of rebel movements and their supporters are often overlooked in peace processes, but interestingly the research found evidence that there was a clear focus from Sinn Féin in all three cases on the social-psychological level within the rebel movements to address these needs and fears.

The research also demonstrated that in all three cases there were clear attempts by the rebel movements to enhance local ownership of the peace process, but not to overhaul the liberal peace model entirely. It found that Sinn Féin’s engagements attempted to assist the rebel movements with these efforts to hybridise the liberal peace and to improve local ownership.

In answering the third research question, this research found that the impact Sinn Féin had on the peace processes and the parties to the negotiations was mixed, with three different outcomes across the three cases.

Chapter 4 demonstrated that there was a significant impact on the Basque nationalist left based on substantial engagement. The primary research and interviews conducted with key leaders and participants, revealed significant experience and lesson sharing between Sinn Féin and the Basque nationalist left, particularly on the rebel-to-party transition process. Sinn Féin’s use of its soft power to help the Basque nationalist left establish international contacts to build a case for a peace process was also a finding of this research. This ultimately led to the Donostia-San Sebastián International Peace Conference, which this study illustrated as a major initial step in building the hybrid liberal peace model that succeeded in ending the violent conflict. Furthermore, the research findings demonstrate Sinn Féin used its soft and moral power at the social-psychological level to assist the Basque nationalist left in building internal cohesion for a rebel-to-party transition and to avoid a major split in the movement.

Chapter 5 established that there was considerable engagement between Sinn Féin and the FARC but ultimately the impact on the process and the FARC was more limited. Initially Sinn
Féin was able to use its soft power to reduce the international isolation of the FARC, to repoliticise the process, and improve the parity in the negotiations. This also enhanced local ownership of the process and thereby assisted in its hybridisation. The chapter also demonstrated significant engagement on the FARC’s rebel-to-party transition that focused on: ‘bringing your constituency with you’; political strategy; prisoners’ issues; and the reintegration of ex-combatants. However, the research findings show that such engagements had little impact on the FARC’s strategy – to the frustration of some of those interviewed – and the FARC’s transition was subsequently weakened by a split caused by spoilers soon after the transition took place. Sinn Féin’s engagement on the rebel-to-party transition, particularly on decommissioning, shows an attempt to share lessons learned and suggested ways forward for the FARC negotiators based on other processes. However, the impact of these engagements on the FARC was minimal judging by the strategic decision to undertake a very different DDR process over a much shorter period of time compared to the experience and lessons learned from the IRA’s process that was shared by Sinn Féin’s representatives.

Chapter 6 ascertained that there was limited engagement between Sinn Féin and the LTTE, and very little impact was found. This study highlighted how the LTTE engaged with Sinn Féin early on in the peace process, and despite positive comments on the utility of the engagement from both sides, follow up engagements did not happen at this time due to the Sri Lankan government’s decision to restrict the overseas travel of the LTTE negotiators. The chapter demonstrated that subsequent engagements took place, but it came at a stage when the peace process was already on the brink of collapse. Despite Sinn Féin’s support for parity of esteem in the negotiations in later engagements, the evidence presented in this case study suggests its impact on the LTTE and the process was limited. This was because the engagements occurred when the process was crumbling due to the powerful interventions of foreign states who sought to disrupt the process for their own geopolitical aims, and Sinn Féin’s engagements lacked the power to reverse the collapse. This study also demonstrated that the Sri Lankan peace process suffered from a lack of local ownership. Ultimately, the research shows that Sinn Féin’s engagements and soft power could not have a significant impact when faced with the interventions of those with hard power. The research also found that there was a limited chance for Sinn Féin to engage
with the LTTE on rebel-to-party transition issues because the peace process ultimately never reached the stage of a possible LTTE transition to a political party.

7.3 Main Conclusions of the Research

This research provides the first comprehensive study into the involvement of foreign political parties in civil war peace processes. It demonstrates how the geopolitical changes that occurred after the conclusion of the Cold War contributed to certain rebel movements embracing the fundamentals of the liberal peace and using peace processes to conduct rebel-to-party transitions with the aim of continuing their campaigns for self-determination. Furthermore, it highlights how rebel movements were connected by ‘internationalist nationalist’ anti-colonial demands during the Cold War⁴ and the existence of a rich history of anti-colonial movements collaborating and learning from one another’s experience.⁵ Bringing these two components together, this research establishes that as rebel-to-party transitions became a feature of post-Cold War peace processes, these existing channels of solidarity⁶ and collaboration led to foreign political party involvement in peace processes to assist rebel movements using soft power and to share lessons learned. This study therefore concludes that the motivation for these engagements is a new post-Cold War internationalism, which is connected to pre-existing anti-imperialist internationalism and solidarity practices. However, it does acknowledge that while such engagements by foreign political parties were not particularly connection to domestic political issues, that they did bring some domestic benefits by appealing to more left-wing activists in the party and helping to keep them engaged after compromises were made during the peace process and rebel-to-party transition.

Furthermore, this study illustrated Richmond’s argument that the term ‘local ownership’ is commonly used by international actors in liberal peace processes, but it can be depoliticising at times and there is a clear avoidance of the term self-determination by these actors.⁷ However, a focus on self-determination is crucially important for rebel

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⁴ Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*.
⁵ Gleditsch, "The The Spread of Civil War,” 604.
⁶ A definition of solidarity by Featherstone was put forward in section 2.6 - that it is “a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression”. Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism*, 5.
⁷ Richmond, "A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirenism and the Everyday,” 565; Richmond, "Beyond local ownership in the architecture of international peacebuilding,” 358.
movements. The evidence provided from the three case studies in this research suggests that foreign political party engagement aims to help rebel movements re-politicise a peace process and refocus the attention back to self-determination. This study thus concludes that this engagement can be seen as an attempt to continue a campaign for self-determination and national liberation in the changed post-Cold War geopolitical conditions via a liberal peace process.

This study also contributes to the existing literature on third party involvement in civil war peace processes by providing empirical evidence on the actions of a hitherto understudied third party in contemporary peace processes. The research findings show the multidimensional nature of foreign political party involvement in peace processes and the biased nature of the engagements focused on improving the positions of the rebel movement in the peace process, thus providing us with new data and expanding our understanding of third party engagements. Of particular significance is the unique empirical investigation this study provides into the impact that these foreign political party engagements can have on a selection of rebel movements and peace processes.

The involvement of political parties in such concerted and coordinated engagements in international affairs highlights that foreign policy is not just the preserve of states. Traditionally the analysis of foreign policy has largely excluded an examination of political parties, as evidenced in the assertion that ‘politics stops at the water’s edge’. However, in recent years the literature has expanded to examine the influence of political party ideology on the foreign policy decision making of governments. This includes an examination of the impact of Islamist parties on the foreign policy decisions of North African governments after the Arab Spring and the influence of European populist parties on foreign policy making. Further studies have highlighted how an examination of party

\[\text{8 Stephanie C. Hofmann and Benjamin Martill, "The Party Scene: New Directions for Political Party Research in Foreign Policy Analysis," International Affairs 97, no. 2 (2021): 307.}\]

\[\text{9 Georg Wenzelburger and Florian Böller, "Bomb or build? How party ideologies affect the balance of foreign aid and defence spending," The British Journal of Politics and International Relations 22, no. 1 (2020).}\]


\[\text{11 Fabrizio Coticchia and Valerio Vignoli, “Populist parties and foreign policy: The case of Italy’s Five Star Movement,” The British Journal of Politics and International Relations 22, no. 3 (2020).}\]
manifestos can inform the analysis of foreign policy decision making in a particular country context.\textsuperscript{12}

Hofmann and Martill’s eminent 2021 article on political party research in foreign affairs analysis, goes further by challenging researchers to not focus on whether parties’ matter in foreign policy making, but rather to explore how, when, and where they matter.\textsuperscript{13} This study has taken up that challenge. It demonstrates how political parties can become foreign policy actors in their own right and how their ideology can motivate them to become involved in foreign peace processes. Chapter 3 highlights how the ANC’s ideology influenced the South African government’s engagement with the peace process in Northern Ireland, but also how the party itself became an impactful actor in the peace process through its engagements with Sinn Féin. The three case studies contained in Chapters 4 to 6 illustrate Sinn Féin’s role, without leading or being part of the Irish government, as a third party actor in the Basque, Colombian, and Sri Lankan peace processes.

The findings from this study therefore reenforce that foreign policy is not just the preserve of states. It concludes that not only can political parties influence foreign policy decision making, but they can also function as foreign policy actors in their own right through their role as third party actors in peace processes outside their own countries.

The diversity of the case studies used is a strength of this research, and it raises an important finding regarding how impactful foreign political party engagement can be across different contexts. The conflict in the Basque Country, like the conflict in Northern Ireland, was an ethno-nationalist conflict in Western Europe. Consequently, it can be suggested that Sinn Féin’s experience sharing was substantially more impactful in the Basque peace process when compared with the others due to its similarity to the Northern Ireland context. In contrast, the Colombian conflict was not an ethno-nationalist conflict, and this study highlighted that the domestic context and political conditions in both Colombia and Sri Lanka are vastly different to Northern Ireland. This makes it possible to


\textsuperscript{13} Hofmann and Martill, "The Party Scene: New Directions for Political Party Research in Foreign Policy Analysis."
propose that Sinn Féin’s experience was less relevant to these contexts and consequently its engagement was less impactful.

This study therefore concludes that foreign political party engagements in peace processes that have similar contexts to its own peace process experience can be more impactful than engagements with peace processes to end conflicts in substantially different contexts.

Additionally, this study’s examination of Sinn Féin’s involvement in the Basque peace process highlighted that before these contemporary engagements there was a long-standing relationship between Irish republicans and Basque nationalists. The interviews with key figures in the Basque nationalist left and Sinn Féin conducted as part of this research revealed a deep mutual respect and solidarity between the two movements. An implication of this is the possibility that these existing connections helped enhance the moral and soft power of Sinn Féin in its engagements with the Basque peace process and the nationalist left.

This study found no such established historical connection between the FARC and Sinn Féin and between the LTTE and Sinn Féin. While the interviews conducted for this research suggest mutual respect and appreciation in both cases, the lack of significant historical connections would appear to have reduced the impact of Sinn Féin’s soft and moral power when compared to the Basque case.

This study therefore concludes that existing historical connections between the foreign political party and the local rebel movement can enhance the soft and moral power of the foreign political party in its engagements. This research finding is complemented by the fact that strong historical connections also existed between Irish republicans and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa, and this was detailed in section 3.4.2 of this thesis. These existing connections can account for the enhanced soft and moral power the ANC had in its engagements with Sinn Féin, thus enhancing how impactful its engagement was on Sinn Féin as evidenced in sections 3.5 and 3.6.

The expansive literature on rebel-to-party transition is largely silent on the role foreign political parties can play in this important element of contemporary peace processes. In section 2.3 this study highlighted that Söderberg Kovacs and Hatz had identified the need for more research into third party involvement in such transitions, including a focus on
learning from other processes.14 This study undertakes this research and it is one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine foreign political party involvement in rebel-to-party transitions across a number of cases.

The research findings in this area indicate that differences in the rebel-to-party contexts influence how impactful foreign political party engagements are. This study identified that the ANC’s engagements with Sinn Féin significantly impacted on the Irish republican rebel-to-party transition, particularly in reducing the threat of spoilers. Furthermore, the experience of Sinn Féin proved particularly relevant and useful for the Basque nationalist left, but it is important to highlight that the Basque nationalist left, like the Irish republican movement, maintained a joint political and militancy model before undertaking a rebel-to-party transition. In both these cases an existing political party led this transition as part of a peace process. This contrasts with the rebel-to-party contexts found in the two other case studies in this research.

In Colombia the FARC was essentially trying to establish a new political party from inception in order to complete its rebel-to-party transition. Although those interviewed for this research and other primary sources used in the study suggest that Sinn Féin’s engagements with the FARC on this transition was welcomed and appreciated, it appears that the vastly different context and task were factors which reduced the impact of the engagements when compared to the Basque case. Likewise, in the Sri Lankan case the LTTE was one of the most advanced NSAGs at the time of the peace process and was essentially running a de facto state. The research found Sinn Féin’s rebel-to-party transition experience was not as impactful to the LTTE in this context as it was to the Basque nationalist left. Additionally, in both the Colombian and Sri Lankan cases this study highlights how democratic political competition was severely restricted for the rebel movements when compared to Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, further complicating the rebel-to-transition process and reducing the impact of Sinn Féin’s engagements.

Due to these research findings, this study concludes that while Sinn Féin’s relative success in conducting a rebel-to-party transition without a significant split due to spoilers was of particular interest in foreign peace process engagements, such engagements can be more

impactful when the rebel-to-party transition experience of the foreign political party is similar to what the local rebel movement is seeking to undertake and is less impactful when the rebel-to-party transition context and path is substantially different.

This study has also gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of foreign political party engagement in efforts to improve local ownership in peace processes and to assist local efforts in the hybridisation of the liberal peace. Mac Ginty’s suggestion that the ability of local actors to resist or subvert the liberal peace depends on their ability to retain or gain political power during a liberal peace transition was illustrated in section 2.4 of this thesis.15 The findings of this research build on Mac Ginty’s argument by revealing the involvement of foreign political parties in the enhancement of the political processes for conflict resolution in intractable conflicts via assistance to rebel movements in their step-by-step move away from conflict through a peace process. Furthermore, this research documents that the engagement of certain foreign political parties with rebel movements involved in a peace process is focused on assisting them to maximise their political position during and after a rebel-to-party transition and to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the government. The evidence provided in all three case studies in this research highlights how foreign political party involvement in peace processes includes a focus on ensuring local concerns and participation are not overridden or ignored. As such, this research concludes that these engagements are assisting the local turn in peacebuilding and the hybridisation of the liberal peace by rebel movements. This is evidence of an internationalisation of the local turn in peacebuilding.

Section 2.4 of this thesis outlined the differences between a negative hybrid peace and positive peace according to the existing literature. This study argues that one of the most important actors in efforts to hybridise peacebuilding measures to create a positive hybrid peace are rebel movements transitioning to a political party, and they strive to have an ad hoc empowering positive hybrid peace process rather than accepting an off-the-shelf liberal peace blueprint. Through this lens this research has achieved two outcomes. Firstly, it documents the role of foreign political party assistance to create positive hybrid peace models. Secondly, it highlights how the demands of indigenous political actors for local ownership has itself become internationalised.

While there is acknowledgement in the existing literature that support must exist for negotiators in peace processes and that negotiations to end civil wars are characterised by asymmetry, there has been a lack of attention on the role foreign political parties can play in this regard. This research adds significant empirical evidence demonstrating that foreign political parties can use soft power to assist rebel movements in their efforts to reduce this asymmetry and to improve their negotiating skills and knowledge. The research findings of the Sri Lankan case also highlight that this power is limited if the engagements occur when a conflict is not ‘ripe’ for negotiated settlement and when international actors with substantial hard power intervene to disrupt the peace process.

Additionally, the focus in the existing literature has been on negotiations between the warring parties, whereas this research provides new evidence demonstrating how important internal negotiations are for the rebel movement and that foreign political parties have used their soft and moral power to assist in these internal negotiations as well. While the needs and fears of rebel movements have been overlooked in this area in the research to date, this study demonstrates that foreign political parties particularly engage at the social-psychological level to address these needs and fears. All three cases show that that rebel movements were particularly interested in discussing with Sinn Féin its relative success in managing the threat of spoilers during the rebel-to-party and how it used engagements with the ANC to assist with internal negotiations during this period.

Lastly, there is an expansive existing literature on the international impacts of the peace process in Northern Ireland and the sharing of lessons learned. However, this study is the first comprehensive investigation into Sinn Féin’s involvement in foreign peace processes and it establishes that these engagements mirror the ANC’s engagements in the peace process in Northern Ireland. It highlights the significant role and impact that the ANC’s engagements had on the Irish republican rebel-to-party transition, particularly in assisting with internal negotiations and reducing the threat of spoilers, which then became of particular interest to other movements engaging with Sinn Féin on their own rebel-to-party transition. As such, this research contributes to our further understanding of the international significance and impact of the GFA and the Northern Ireland peace process.
7.4 Limitations of the Research Findings

A limitation of this study is that the research only focuses on ‘certain’ political parties. Section 1.2 specifically pointed out that such engagements are undertaken by a particular type of political party and section 1.4.1 highlighted that it is imperative to recognise that not all political parties who have experience of conflict resolution are becoming involved in foreign peace processes. The characteristics of the political parties that are invited to engage with foreign peace processes substantially limits the scope of the findings to a small group of political parties. Notwithstanding this limitation, as highlighted throughout the preceding section, this exploratory research provides substantial new empirical evidence and primary data to further our understanding of a range of factors and theories related to contemporary civil war peace processes.

A further limitation of this study, that was highlighted in section 1.4, is that the case studies in this thesis are all protracted civil wars that began during the Cold War and concluded in the post-Cold War era, specifically in the post-9/11 period. It is important to highlight that the findings regarding the impact of foreign political party engagements is limited to peace processes connected to specifically defined types of civil wars and it is not suggested that the research findings are relevant to all peace processes to end all types of civil war.

7.5 Avenues for Future Research

This research, using Zartman’s theory of ripeness, found that foreign political parties become involved when a conflict is ‘ripe’ for a negotiated settlement and the impact of their engagements is significantly limited if this ‘ripeness’ is not present. This study also highlighted that a certain ‘ripeness’ needs to exist within a rebel movement for it to be able to complete a successful rebel-to-party transition and to reduce a potentially damaging fracture of the movement from spoilers. This ‘ripeness’ appears to develop slowly and at a different pace to progress in other areas of a peace process. Father Zuppi’s argument, that was highlighted in section 4.7, that a peace process requires two rhythms unique to each process – a fast rhythm to seize opportunities and a slower rhythm to digest certain difficult matters – is very pertinent to this ‘ripeness’ within rebel movements for a rebel-to-party

16 Zartman, "Conflict Resolution and Negotiation."
transition. Further research to investigate the importance of this ‘ripeness’ in rebel-to-party transitions would be of great help to our understanding of this crucial element of contemporary peace processes.

A further avenue for future research would be to repeat this study using the Basque nationalist left as a case study to explore if it has become involved in foreign peace processes to share its experience and lessons learned from the Basque peace process. Sinn Féin’s engagements in foreign peace processes mirrors the engagement it had with the ANC on the peace process in Northern Ireland, and it would be an interesting contribution to the literature and our understanding of foreign political party involvement in peace processes to establish if the Basque nationalist left has also mirrored this engagement through its own involvement in foreign peace processes.

Lastly, as highlighted in section 1.4.1, the ANC’s involvement in foreign peace processes was largely excluded from this research because it has also used state levels of diplomacy as the government of South Africa when engaging with foreign peace processes, whereas Sinn Féin’s engagements were almost exclusively on the party-to-party level. Further possible research could usefully explore the ANC’s dual state-and-party involvement in foreign peace processes, examining the impact such hybrid engagements can have on the local rebel movements and the conflict resolution processes.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Open Ended Interview Questions – Sinn Féin Representatives

Guiding questions for open-ended interviews with Sinn Féin representatives:

- Can you provide me with some biographical information and your role in Sinn Féin?

- Were you involved in the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement? And Sinn Féin’s political strategy after the Agreement was signed? If so, please describe your involvement and role.

- Are you aware of any support Sinn Féin received from foreign political parties during the Good Friday Agreement negotiations? Or in the post-conflict period after the Agreement was signed?

- Why do you believe Sinn Féin has formally engaged in foreign peace processes and what motivates this work?

- What do you believe Sinn Féin hopes to achieve through its engagement with foreign peace processes?

- What did you discuss in your meetings with Basque/Colombian/Sri Lankan political movements?

- Do you believe such engagements impacted on the respective peace process?

- Are you still involved with that peace process? Do you still engage with the representatives that you met?
Appendix 2: Open Ended Interview Questions – Case Studies

Guiding questions for open-ended interviews related to the three case studies:

- Can you provide me with some biographical information and describe the role you played in the peace process in your own country?

- In your work on this peace process did you have any interactions with foreign political parties, including Sinn Féin?

- At what stage of your peace process did you first start working with Sinn Féin?

- Did you invite them to take part or was it done through a third party?

- What was the objective of your engagements with Sinn Féin representatives?

- What was discussed in your meetings with Sinn Féin representatives?

- Did you find your engagement with Sinn Féin representatives beneficial or not, and why?

- Did it lead to any changes regarding your group’s negotiating strategy with the government or with your own base?

- Did your discussions with Sinn Féin impact the political strategy of your movement and help the transition to solely democratic politics?

- Is contact between your organisation and Sinn Féin ongoing?