Conflict transformation does not simply alter the material conditions and structures that foster violence. It also seeks to transform orientations: our notions of the good, and the processes by which we develop, pursue and realize these. Specifically, conflict transformation is premised on the assumption that certain kinds of orientation – in particular strong, nationalistic orientations – foster and prolong violent conflict. To alter ‘violent’ orientations, conflict transformation practices do not simply modify specific values, goals or identities; more importantly, they change the nature of the processes and activities through which orientation takes place. In particular, one element of orientation is targeted: authenticity, or the degree to which we connect to, identify with and legitimate our orientations. The kind of authenticity that most often underlies strong, nationalistic orientations is what I shall call ‘transcendent authenticity’ (TA). It entails a robust, personalized connection between actors and collective orientations, and imbuing these actors with a strong sense of agency in generating their own orientations and in transcending current conditions. In practice, conflict transformation converts TA into immanent authenticity (IA), a normalized, stabilized and institutionalized version of TA. IA appears to be more conducive to peaceful relations than TA, and it aligns well with the institutions of governance, which are frequently used as a vehicle for peacebuilding. However, as a relatively weak form of authenticity, it is insufficient to replace TA. As a result, conflict transformation does not ‘transform away’ violent, TA-based orientations; it can instead create a set of new orientations that co-exist, compete or even conflict with the former, blinding policy-makers to persistent problems and creating more potential for conflict amongst orientations. The following will examine the effects of this element of conflict transformation in the context of the informal peace-building process in Northern Ireland since 1998 and, specifically, the transformation of the former prisoners’ movement. It will argue that whilst TA can lead to undesired consequences, it is a valuable and indispensable element of orientation and public life. The goal of conflict transformation,

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22 Non-constitutional. Here, I refer to the processes of state and society building that accompanied the ‘formal’ peace negotiations.
therefore, should not be to ‘transform away’ orientations based on TA, but rather to integrate TA within sustainable systems and processes of governance.

**Orientation, Conflict and Conflict Transformation**

Conflicts do not arise exclusively from material or structural conditions, or such is the basic assumption of conflict transformation. Within the context of conflict, orientations – the assemblage of identities and self-conceptions, collective myths, symbols, rules and taboos, histories, values, beliefs, aspirations, utopias and other elements of personal and social life - can all become objects of contestation and conflict. According to the literature on conflict transformation, these ‘products’ or ‘objects’ of orientations can become ‘root causes’ of conflict, when they are threatened or offended by the presence of alternative orientations. This can cause actors within a particular orientation to act defensively or to render more extreme the orientations with which they are engaged. In addition, some authors believe that certain orientations are intrinsically more conducive to violence than others. Vivienne Jabri, for example, argues that powerful norms such as just cause and reason of state have historically been used to legitimate violent behaviour on the part of state actors. Similarly, Anthony Oberschall asserts that ethnic myths that cut to the “fundamental values” of a community are more likely used by leaders to magnify the conflict.

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31 Jabri, *Discourses*, 29-44.
and vilify the other. In either case, it is assumed that certain orientations can become ‘cultures of violence’ or manifestations of ‘cultural violence’, which conflict transformation aims to convert into ‘cultures of peace’.

What, exactly, does this entail? In the case of transforming material and structural conditions, the process is fairly straightforward: one must design policies that alter the nature or distribution of material goods or territory, or reform institutions. Orientations, on the other hand, are non-physical and cannot be subjected easily to processes of design. One of the most important shortcomings of the paradigm of conflict transformation, in fact, is that it persists in framing orientations as ‘objects’, or relatively stable entities such as goals or identities. Yet, even within the literature, there is a gesture towards the idea that it is not static objects that must be transformed; in a rather oblique way, several authors refer to the transformation ‘deep structures’ such as worldviews, ‘cosmologies’ (the subconscious normative frameworks that shape civilizations), the ‘genetic codes’ of cultural transmission, the ‘deep narratives’ that underlie communities and even the entire ‘noosphere’ or realm of ideas, values and morals. As these references suggest, it is not ‘objects’ of orientation that are conducive to violence; a value or goal in itself is not violent. Rather, it is the processes by which these ‘objects’ are developed, pursued and realized – the process of orientation – which can engender violence and, it follows, must be transformed.

The term ‘orientation’ reflects these two aspects, given that it has at least two definitions. First, it refers to the act of orienting ourselves - to the enormous range of actions, thoughts, expressions and relational activities through which we develop, pursue and realize our idea of

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32 Oberschall, Conflict, 21.
33 Galtung, Peace, vii.
36 Galtung, Peace, viii, 81
37 Ibid, 207.
the good; it is, in other words, a verb. When used as a noun, ‘orientation’ refers to a product or outcome – ‘an’ orientation, or ‘objects’ such as goals and identities. Whilst traditional accounts of conflict transformation focus almost exclusively on the latter usage, I will argue that what is transformed, in practice, is both the process and the ‘product’ of orientation. By reframing the goal of conflict transformation in this way, its central attempt to alter the quality of orientation (see below) becomes more clear.

What, exactly, is orientation? In the simplest terms, it can be defined as the manner in which we develop, pursue and realize concepts of the good. Processes of orientation are embodied in social interactions, structures and the norms of the polity. The term itself is inspired by the works of Charles Taylor, who argues that human action is animated by a strong impetus to align ourselves with ideas of the good. Human action, due to its creative and normative quality, is constantly bringing about “mutations and developments in ideas, including new visions and insights … alterations, ruptures, reforms, revolutions in practices; and also, through drift, change, constrictions or flourishings of practices … the alteration, flourishing or decline of ideas”40. To engage in orientation, we use practices such as ‘strong evaluation’ – the projection of higher ‘moral horizons’ as a means for making decisions that align us to our ideals41 - and ‘practical reason’ - a process in which we engage in arguments (with ourselves or others) in order to achieve a transition from one belief to another, under the assumption that it is a shared interest or problem that makes argumentation possible42. According to Taylor’s teleological view of human action, the actions in which we engage are, literally, constitutive of our morals, norms, ethics, identities and other aspects of orientation43.

**Orientation, Authenticity and Conflict Transformation**

As I mentioned above, framing orientation as a set of processes and their ‘products’ casts the goal of conflict transformation in a different light. Rather than changing goals, identities and values directly, it aims to alter process of orientation such that they generate more desirable ‘products’ (or vice versa). This involves changing the forms of action, expression and interaction in which particular communities engage, and, in so doing, changing the quality of

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42 Taylor, *Philosophical*, p. 53
43 Ibid.
orientation. In particular, one element of orientation is targeted: authenticity. Authenticity refers to the degree to which we connect to, identify with and legitimate our orientations – that is, how we render them genuine. The concept of authenticity is again drawn from the work of Taylor. In his influential treatise *The Ethics of Authenticity*\(^{44}\), he argues that authenticity entails an ethics of individualism, self-realization and expressive action that becomes detrimental to human relations when it is expressed as egoism, self-indulgence\(^{45}\), hedonism, and narcissism\(^ {46}\). However, according to Taylor, authenticity is “a powerful moral ideal… however debased and travestied its expression might be”\(^ {47}\). It is this that I wish to explore – the underlying values of authenticity and what makes them such a powerful element of orientation.

To do so, it is necessary to assume that different kinds of authenticity can exist, embodied in various ethics and practices. Here, I wish to examine a particular form of authenticity, one that is most often found in nationalistic orientations or those that are labeled as ‘cultures of violence’: transcendent authenticity (TA). As the name suggests, the driving force within TA is its promise to transcend current conditions and create genuinely new ones by emphasizing four aspects of orientation: originality, personality, community, and agency.

First, originality relates to the ability of human beings to bring about novelty – that is, to transcend current conditions – through creative action\(^ {48}\). The term also refers to the proximity of the actor in question to the change or moment of transcendence. She is not merely a participant in the change or moment of transcendence; she is its originator: she undergoes the *experience* of, quite literally, making or constructing it\(^ {49}\). Second, the element of personality suggests that orientation is directly related to the development of the self through original processes of self-realization\(^ {50}\). The morals, values and identities that develop through this process have personal resonance because the experiential processes of orientation fuse the actor’s actions with her understanding of herself. This connects the actor in a robust way to her orientation, which leads to a strong, intensive internal relationship.

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\(^{45}\) Taylor, *Ethics*, 15

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.

\(^{48}\) Ibid. 65.


between actor and orientation; however, it can also lead to rigidity, inflexibility or extreme beliefs. Thirdly, in a closely-related sense, TA is connected to the development of communal orientations. Indeed, the process of self-realization can only take place as a part of the development of a particular community, and, as Taylor, the process of self-realization strengthens the bond between persons and the communal groups in which they are embedded, as each member of the group contributes to the development of shared norms, values and goals\(^{51}\). Moreover, he suggests that these processes encourage individuals and communities to adopt a more critical, agential approach to community, which allows communities to conceive of themselves as self-directed\(^{52}\). Fourthly, a sense of (moral) agency is integral to TA. Two kinds of agency are particularly important: authorship and authority. The term ‘authorship’ refers to the creative control which an authoritative actor may exert over her own orientation by virtue of being its originator\(^{53}\). As a result, she is in an important sense responsible for its intended results, if not its unintended consequences. Since authorship suggests a sense of (at least partial) ownership of an action, it urges the actor to take responsibility for her actions, both in the sense of making them succeed and in attempting to correct perverse or undesirable consequences. Furthermore, the combination of personality and authorship results in orientations which actors or whole communities embody or wish to be recognized by. Authority, a closely-related concept, refers to the ability of a person to imbue a particular orientation with significance – that is, to approve, legitimate and adopt it by embodying it within her own actions and self-expressions\(^{54}\). In the case of TA, the latter occurs through the very processes in which an orientation is generated; authorship and authorization are elided.

It is easy to see why TA is so central to the development of strong, nationalist identities: it is based on a robust, deep-seated, personal connection to a self-directed, self-originating collective orientation. As discussed above, however, it is this kind of orientation that is considered most conducive to violence. Therefore, one of the most important effects of conflict transformation has been to transform TA into IA, a form of authenticity which is based on very different values, ethics and practices.

\(^{51}\) Taylor, Modern, 18; Taylor, Ethics, 74; Taylor, Sources, 513  
\(^{52}\) Taylor, Philosophy, 215  
\(^{53}\) Orientations and their ‘products’ are always, to varying degrees, influenced by a large number of factors beyond the actor’s control. The key insight here is that the actor has some control over the effects of her actions in relation to her orientation.  
\(^{54}\) Taylor, Secular, 582.
IA, Governance and Conflict Transformation

Once again, the central ethos of IA can be derived from its name: rather than encouraging the extreme, transcendent alteration of current conditions, it seeks to bring about gradual change through stable, immanent processes, which are often equated with civic virtues or activity. By ‘immanent’, I mean contained within the realm of everyday life and ‘normalized’, processual human interaction. It does not eschew the idea of transcendence entirely, but makes the polity as a whole – not persons or groups – the subject of transcendence, and thus institutionalizes transcendence.

In order to understand IA its transformation of TA, it is necessary to appreciate the former’s relationship to a particular mode of human action: the processes, networks and institutions known as governance. Indeed, the institutions and practices of governance are very frequently used as vehicles for altering the forms of action (often radical social movements or ‘informal’ social networks) that engender TA. Although I am unable to expand upon the nature of governance here, a brief sketch is required. First, governance is based on a ‘central dynamic’ which involves the conversion of complexity – the forces of diversity, pluralism and (conflictual) interaction – that take place in society into positive, self-sustaining social ‘energy’. Amongst the most important sources of complexity is the proliferation of orientations and their potential to create conflict. Governance is based on the assumption that complexity can be abstracted – that is, radically simplified and integrated as ideas, interests or norms move ‘upwards’ from society through a number of flexible institutions and processes. As these norms, goals, identities and the like are abstracted, they become modified and integrated in such a way that the conflicts between them are transcended. In other words, governance is a form of orientation in which the norms, institutions and process of the polity become the medium and object of this process.

55 Due to constraints of time and space, I cannot expand upon this here; suffice it to say that the implementation of governance has become, in recent years, the most important vehicle of conflict transformation. Indeed, the establishment of good governance is often conflated with peace-building.
Governance is based on the linkage of ‘civil society’ – all ‘informal’ or non-state organizations – with the state and bureaucracy, creating one large network by which the norms of the polity are generated. In fusing civil society with the state, a new concept of ‘civic democracy’ has emerged, based on the ‘inputs’ into the generation of norms made by individualized actors and the demographically-defined identity groupings (based on patterns of behavior and needs), into which they are placed. Democracy itself is reframed as a set of processes in which the norms of the polity are abstracted from this process, and in which individuals engage simply by living their everyday lives. Indeed, the quality of everyday life – in particular, economic well-being, health and mutually beneficial interaction - becomes the primary ideal of the polity, rather than radical transcendence or change. Finally, the kind of democracy embodied by governance is one of unintended consequences and impersonal politics. The activities in civil society form the basis of transformative processes and the justification of the norms of the polity; however, these actions are only the first inputs into a long and convoluted process. In undertaking these activities, actors neither directly intend to bring about the normative changes that occur as a result. This is largely because the ultimate outcomes of their actions occurs at a much higher level of the polity – in changes to norms, policies and institutions, after having been ‘processed’ in a number of ways. Moreover, actors are as the source of ‘inputs’ – generic, simplified, and relatively homogeneous group or individual interests that are ‘complete’ or realized by the time they become inputs into the process of governance. This means that self-realization is separated from the process of orientation.

The ideal of governance has important implications for authenticity. Specifically, civil society is framed as the source of authenticity or the realm within which multiple, conflicting – but authentic - orientations exist. Its fusion with the state and public sector is expected to authenticate the norms that these embody whilst creating a new, centralized inclusive

59 Newman, Modernizing, 12.
61 Taylor, Modern; Dean, Governmentality, 20.
orientation in which all other orientations can be reconciled. However, the converse implication is also true; the fusion of civil society with bureaucracy is expected to dampen some of the more extreme effects of TA and ‘immanentize’ it – that is, to reorient it towards stable goals oriented towards the improvement of everyday life. Although IA is a unique form of authenticity, it is parasitic upon TA; thus, it entails a drastic alteration of each of the four major elements of TA. First, the driving force behind orientation is changed from one of transcendence to one of stabilizing and gradually improving everyday life. Secondly, it alters the element of originality by changing the relationship of actors to the processes of orientation with which they engage. Specifically, it creates distance between actors and the outcomes of their actions as orientation becomes a function of the polity rather than persons or groups. Actors are the origin of normative change, or inputs into it, but they are not originators; they do not actively construct the orientation of the polity and they cannot control or even fully comprehend the effects of their actions upon it.

Thirdly, IA promotes an impersonal concept of political participation in which the presence or inclusion of individuals and groups in the processes of transformation becomes the primary measure of participation. In other words, the boundary between everyday ‘non-political’ activities and deliberate ‘political’ activity is collapsed. As a result, the main inputs into the process (and into the orientation of the polity) are those of everyday activity, not the deliberate, conscious development of norms. Orientation itself becomes a normalized pattern of activity rather than a source of personal development. Furthermore, it is the polity itself that undergoes transformation – not persons or communities – which drastically weakens the experience of self-and-community development. By engaging in orientation, persons and communities do not reflexively develop themselves, but rather the processes and institutions that govern them.

Finally, the elements of authorship and authorization are changed dramatically. As described above, specific actors cannot be framed as originators of any given outcome beyond the direct repercussions of their actions, nor do they feel a strong personal connection to changes in the orientation of the polity, as these have been placed almost entirely beyond their control.

For this reason, actors are no longer authors of changes in orientations; however, they can still *authorize* or *authenticate* changes in orientation by acting in such a way as to express support for or disagreement with a given change. For instance, if the members of a demographic group reacted positively towards a new policy or institution, it could be claimed that their action authorized it. This, however, constitutes a profound shift in the meaning of the term; in the case of TA, authorship and authorization are elided, but here, they are separated. Rather than authorizing orientations *by* originating them, actors must instead imbue changes in orientation with authority by accepting or rejecting them. In turn, this implies that they must accept the basic premise of the changes and can only make marginal alterations.

In brief, then, the transformation of IA to TA can be summarized as such: first, an emphasis on originality is replaced by an image of actors as inputs, factors or resources in processes – I shall refer to this as ‘processualism’. Secondly, personal and group transcendence is relocated to the polity and constrained within stable, relatively rigid institutions, a quality which I shall refer to as ‘institutionalized transcendence’. Thirdly, the meanings of authorization and authority are shifted to suggest the post hoc authentication or authorization of changes in orientation, rather than their origination.

**Context Study**: *Transforming the Former Prisoners Movement*

To appreciate the significance of the conflict transformation of TA to IA, it is necessary to ground the arguments above in a concrete case. Here, I shall explore the transformation of the former prisoners’ movement as a part of the broader informal peacebuilding strategy in Northern Ireland since 1998. The former prisoners’ movement initially arose amongst persons interned and imprisoned for violent activities and their supporters. As combatants, strategists and other key members of paramilitary organizations, they tended to be highly politicized and influential within their ethno-territorial groups, although Republicans were more so than Loyalists\(^{65}\). As such, it was believed that a transformation of this extreme,\(^{64}\)

\(^{64}\) Limited space prevents me from providing an in-depth case study; the following is intended to provide a brief illustration of the principles outlined above and their effects on the conflict transformation process. This context study draws upon primary and secondary literature on the former prisoners’ movement, and 21 personal interviews conducted with prominent members of the movement, representing each major paramilitary group.\(^{65}\) Whilst Republicans were often viewed as heroes by their communities, Loyalists were often treated with a degree of disapproval or even ostracism.
nationalistic orientation would have a profound impact upon the broader peace process. As a means for transforming this orientation, the movement was subsumed within a set of peacebuilding policies based on the tenets of governance, including the European Union’s Peace and Reconciliation scheme (PEACE I, II and III). These policies focused on building and enhancing civil society organizations as a means of generating local support for the outcomes of the formal peace process and enhancing social and wellbeing. In practice, this often entailed the conversion of radical movements based on social networks and paramilitary structures – which, suffice it to say, did not align well with the institutions of governance – into NGOs that embodied the ideals of stability, transparency and democratic internal governance. In other words, it radically altered the forms of orientation in which the movement engaged.

This becomes particularly clear when one assesses the contrast between the forms of orientation used by the movement in the 1970s-1980s and those adopted ‘post’-transformation, after 1998. During the 1970s, the early forms of action adopted by the movement were “very militaristic and hierarchical in nature, reflecting…the discipline and order of a conventional army”, rather than the informal, ‘grassroots’ forms of action common to conventional social movements. One of the most important moments in the development of the movement was the creation of command structures unique to each paramilitary grouping; for example, Provisional IRA (PIRA; Republican) elected its Officer in Command (OC), who appointed and directed a range of officers and staff. The forms of action taken within these command structures was generally direct and responsive to

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70 McKeown, Out, xii.

particular events, needs or changes in policy. For example, when limitations were placed upon the number of food parcels allowed per week, prisoners formed cooperatives to share out the scarce resources contained within their personal parcels. Escapes and strikes were also important uses of direct action. An important hunger strike occurred in 1972 in which former IRA prisoner Billy McKee lead forty prisoners on a protest for prisoner of war status, which developed into the famous ‘blanket strike’, in which prisoners refused to wear prison uniforms, which branded them as criminals (rather than political prisoners), and draped themselves in prison blankets instead. This escalated into what was known as the ‘no-wash protest’ by Republican prisoners and the ‘dirty protest’ by prison officials, in which prisoners refused to wash, then, eventually began to smear excrement on their walls and to throw it out their windows as a form of protest. Perhaps the most notorious of the direct protests staged were the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981, in which a number of high-profile prisoners, including MP Bobby Sands, took part. These forms of action had a very specific expressive capacity; direct action on the part of prisoners was not only intended to further their own political development, but also to influence a broad, public audience. Within the prisons, these organizational structures and activities of the prisoners expressed their identities and “served as a daily reminder of why the men were in prison, as volunteers of their own chosen group, fighting for their cause”, simultaneously conveying this message to the public through the use of social networks, paramilitary structures and the media.

As a vehicle for orientation, the early movement strongly emphasized TA. First, it was highly original, in that it was deliberately constructed from the actions of those who engaged in it, and thus in very close proximity to it. Changes in the goals, ideas and activities embodied by the movement were spontaneous and responsive to changes in the prison regime or the political ideas of prisoners as these developed. Secondly, this orientation was highly personalized; it was based on the experiential self- and collective- development on the part of its participants. Each prisoner who engaged in such an activity was expected to undergo extensive ‘politicization’ or personal political development by taking part in direct action and participating in the social structures created. In addition, several important ‘personalities’

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72 McKeown, Out, 121.
73 McKeown, Out, 202; Crawford, Defenders, 40.
74 O’Malley, Biting, 18.
75 Ibid, 20-29.
76 Ibid, 22.
77 O’Malley, Biting.
78 Crawford, Defenders, 32.

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emerged and became influential in the orientation of the movement, including those of famous prisoner politicians such as Sands, Bernadette Devlin and Gerry Adams. Simultaneously, these activities and social structures gave rise to a strong sense of community and collective identity. Thirdly, the elements of authority and authorization were crucial to the movement in its earliest stages. The existence of the separate command structure within the prisons itself suggests the tendency of the movement to self-authorize and self-legitimate; here, the two functions are clearly elided. Moreover, the movement retained ‘creative control’ over the aims and goals of the movement by actively forging an identity contrary to the one promoted by the prison staff and statutory bodies rather than accepting the latter. Moreover, members of the movement assumed authorship - ownership of and responsibility for the social structures, identities and other social objects they constructed.

In the ‘post-transformation’ period, however, the kind of authenticity embodied by the movement changed dramatically. As early as the 1980s, and particularly during the hunger strike and the negotiations surrounding its resolution, the relationship between members of the movement and prison staff became more formalized⁷⁹. Furthermore, the movement became more closely-linked to formal politics with the election of MPs who were imprisoned during their tenure in parliament, such as Sands and Bernadette Devlin⁸⁰. These changes presaged the more substantial ones that would appear with the maturation of governance policies in the mid-to-late 1990s, particularly after the Good Friday agreement, as large numbers of prisoners were released under its terms. At this point, the policies of governance made a decisive shift towards framing prisoners with a new identity – the former prisoner – and converting their social networks into a set of NGOs designed to meet the perceived needs of this demographic⁸¹. The first major development of this trend occurred in 1996, with the creation of EPIC and Tar Isteach, former prisoners’ groups for UVF/RHC and PIRA prisoners, respectively⁸². Each focused on creating employment opportunities for former prisoners, providing them with standardized skills and training, engaging them in ‘dialogue’ with other former prisoners and organizations, offering emotional support and counseling for these individuals and their families, providing advice regarding benefits and statutory services available and initiating programmes to combat violence amongst youth⁸³. A very

⁷⁹ McKeown, Out, 40.
⁸⁰ Ibid.
⁸¹ Shirlow et al, Politically.
⁸³ Shirlow, Politically, 37.

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strong aspect of the transformation of the movement was the expectation that former prisoners’ NGOs should provide public services, including general services such as counseling related to social benefits and the referral of clients to statutory bodies.\(^8^4\)

In order to carry out these new roles, organizations began to centralize, adopt formal NGO or committee structures, engage in expansion activities and take part in comprehensive consultation and direct lobbying of statutory bodies. The encouragement of ‘formal politics’, or the channeling of activism into parliamentary politics, was also an important trend\(^8^5\).

Moreover, a strong emphasis was placed on the conversion of more internalized, intra-group development to formal meetings, conventions and fora amongst former prisoners’ organizations. In particular, the advocacy and lobbying role of organizations is highlighted. For instance, Coiste ni-Iarchimi, an umbrella group for ‘mainstream’ Republican former prisoners, perceives one of key functions to be the translation of “radical ideas into hard policy.”\(^8^6\)

Moreover, organizations are encouraged to cultivate dialogue, interaction and other discursive processes amongst their members and the executives of the organizations themselves, all of which is expected to contribute to the integration of the movement into a unitary ‘sub-sector’ within civil society\(^8^7\). In particular, cross-community contact between members of former prisoners’ organizations representing opposing paramilitary groupings is encouraged\(^8^8\).

In addition, these organizations adopted the language and concepts of the governance approach to conflict transformation, including an emphasis on ‘self-help’\(^8^9\), ‘social economy’\(^9^0\) and community leadership as a means of conflict transformation\(^9^1\). The adoption of these goals suggests a conscious decision to integrate the work of these organizations with broader government policies, particularly in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement, which entrenched the priority of reintegrating former prisoners (as did PEACE II). Despite this, a return to peaceful, stable everyday life is espoused as a major goal by most of the persons

\(^8^4\) Ritchie, Mike. (Coiste Na Iarchimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007; Halligan, Fra (Teach Na Failte), Personal Interview, 23 March, 2007.
\(^8^5\) Michael Culbert (Tar Anall/Coiste Na Iarchimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007.
\(^8^6\) Mick Byers (Coiste Na Iarchimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007.
\(^8^7\) Domhnall O’Cobtaigh (Iarchimi Fear Manach), Personal Interview, 9 March, 2007; Anthony MacIntyre (Independent), Personal Interview, 31 July, 2007.
\(^8^8\) O’Cobtaigh, Interview.
\(^8^9\) Roberts, Halligan, and O’Cobtaigh, Interviews
\(^9^0\) O’Cobtaigh, Interview
\(^9^1\) Halligan, Interview.
interviewed. The adoption of service delivery as a major function and primary goal of former prisoners’ NGOs exemplifies this trend. Finally, the identity and overall orientation embodied by the movement changed drastically; great effort was taken amongst these NGOs to dispel the image of former prisoners as “monsters”\(^92\) or even “ruthless sectarian killers”\(^93\) and to provide a new identity which would allow them to be “taken seriously”\(^94\) in the realm of formal politics. In large part, this meant adopting the role of professional managers and “legitimate service providers” encouraged by funding criteria and statutory bodies\(^95\). Several interviewees took a positive stance towards this identity, referring to themselves the “think tank of the Republican movement”, its “vanguard” and a “touchstone” through which real, accurate information about the broader Republican movement could be accessed\(^96\) and even as “monitors of the peace process”\(^97\).

The form of orientation undertaken by the movement ‘post-transformation’ illustrates the conversion of TA to IA. First, the orientations of the new former prisoners NGOs valorize everyday life and institutionalized transcendence – peace, good relations, economic and social development, and the normalization of behaviour within the community – rather than radical transcendence. Secondly, the originality embodied by the early movement gave way to the adoption and alteration of goals, values and identities derived largely from the formal peace process and the requirements of funding bodies. Thirdly, the highly personalized nature of the early movement was transformed into a processual notion of participation: the activity of providing services and advocacy was expected to undergird the formal peace process generally, but without directly engaging in it. Moreover, in the early days of the movement, specific persons were particularly influential as leaders or prison OCs, and their personal convictions, actions and support was crucial to the orientation of the movement. Following the transformation, however, these roles were flattened into relatively standardized roles within and amongst organizations\(^98\). Thirdly, transcendence – in this case, the realization of the formal peace process, rather than the specific goals of the movement – was shifted from the movement itself to the polity as a whole, and the movement became one input in this

\(^{92}\) Culbert, Interview.
\(^{93}\) Halligan, Interview.
\(^{94}\) Culbert, Interview.
\(^{95}\) Barnes, Joe (Tar Isteach), Personal Interview, 21 June, 2007.
\(^{96}\) Culbert, Interview; O’Cobtaigh, Interview.
\(^{97}\) McKeown, Laurence (Coiste ni Iarchmimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007.
\(^{98}\) Of course, on an ‘unofficial’ basis, these individuals retain their distinct status, but in terms of the formal process of orientation – governance – they are impersonalized.
broader moment of transcendence. In other words, the movement itself is now expected to remain as a relatively stable source of ‘input’ into the transformation of the state, governing institutions and civil society. Finally, the elements of authorization and authority, which were elided and strongly pronounced in the early movement, were separated. Moreover, there were reassigned the function of authorizing goals and values generated through the formal peace process by means of consultations and formalized lobbying, and authenticating these by embedding them in the activities, policies and structures of NGOs. In short, the elements of processualism, institutionalized transcendence and the separation of authorization and authorship are strongly emphasized.

Outcomes: An ‘Authentic’ Transformation?

This brief case study has suggested that conflict transformation policies in Northern Ireland post 1990s effectively transformed TA into IA. Yet how successful were they in changing orientations? In other words, did these IA-based orientations ‘transform away’ the more radical identities, images and goals upon which they are based? Several trends would suggest otherwise. First, many interviewees expressed resistance to the new orientation adopted by the movement. This is reflected in the contention that transformation was an inevitable, compulsory or even coercive process, in which they would be “forced to change, whether [they] like it or not”99. A number of respondents suggested that the processes transforming their movement were powerful, large-scale, and out of the control of single actors or groups, such that they simply had to find ways to fit within the changes taking place100. Moreover, many respondents conveyed a sense of loss in relation to their ‘old’ orientation and a nostalgia for it. It is widely believed that the activity that took place in the prison was of a special quality; namely, that it encouraged solidarity, political development and social bonding that does not take place in everyday life101. One interviewee suggested that, although he supported the peace process and preferred the current standard of living, daily life had lost some of its meaning since the advent of the new orientation102. Some respondents viewed this

99 Halligan, Interview.
100 McKeown, Interview. Barnes, Interview, Maguire, Harry (Community Restorative Justice Ireland), Personal Interview, 18 June, 2007; MacIntyre, Interview.
101 O’Cobtaigh, Interview; Byers, Interview.
102 Halligan, Interview
process as a matter of relinquishing ‘higher goals’ or more ‘principled’ forms of action\textsuperscript{103} whilst others accepted it as a necessary compromise or tactical change\textsuperscript{104}. In addition, there was evidence of a strong reluctance to renounce the ‘old’ orientations; several interviewees insisted that, although they have genuinely adopted the new identity of the movement, they have not disavowed their original (paramilitary) identities\textsuperscript{105} and that changing the identities, goals or activities of the movement was not tantamount to disowning or apologizing for the ‘old’ orientation\textsuperscript{106}. Finally, although most of the persons interviewed stated that their views had changed as they engaged in the PEACE programme and activities related to it, their major concerns – the normative and practical issues around which the ‘new’ orientation revolves – remain unchanged, including a lack of trust between former prisoners and those perceived to represent statutory bodies. In short, there appears to be a general perception that the peace process is incomplete; whilst it is felt that practical policy issues are at least in the process of being dealt with sufficiently, “the underlying issues are still there” and there are many root causes that “haven’t been acknowledged” either at an institutional, community or personal level\textsuperscript{107}. This evidence of resistance to changes in the movement’s orientation suggests that the basic problems around which the original orientation developed still remain.

In a more obvious way, the ‘splitting’ of orientations that took place in the ‘post-transformation’ movement also suggests that the new orientations created by conflict transformation policies did not ‘transform away’ the original, TA-based movements. One way in which this manifests itself is in the separation of the professional, peace-time personal identity from that of the combatant. One respondent suggested that it was difficult to reconcile his earlier self-image as a paramilitary operative with that of his role as a manager and lobbyist for a number of NGOs, although both remain central to his self-understanding\textsuperscript{108}. Similarly, the ability of many former prisoners to re-identify themselves as a form of victim (in order to avail of services and funding opportunities) whilst strongly defending their role as activists or combatants exemplifies this\textsuperscript{109}. In addition, the old identity, associated with ‘political’ activity, was carefully separated from new professional

\textsuperscript{103} MacIntyre, Interview; Curry, Sean, Harry Donaghy and Sean O’Hare (An Eochair), Personal Interview, 27 June, 2007.
\textsuperscript{104} Byers, Interview; Ritchie, Interview.
\textsuperscript{105} Curry, Donaghy and O’Hare, Interview; McKearney, Interview; Culbert, Interview.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid; Halligan, Interview.
\textsuperscript{107} Ritchie, Interview; Culbert, Interview; Brady, Sean (Coiste na Iarchimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007; Maguire, Interview.
\textsuperscript{108} Culbert, Interview.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid; Barnes, Interview.
identities; those representing paramilitary groups or affiliated with specific political parties were careful to distinguish between instances in which they are ‘speaking as’ members of these organizations or as members of their own NGOs. Furthermore, many interviewees stated that it is crucial to maintain an image of political neutrality when acting on behalf of their NGOs and were careful to distance their own opinions from the policies of their organizations. However, at the same time, most respondents also stressed that personal political involvement is an integral aspect of their lives and self-images. One prominent member of Coiste described his organization as “a non-political organization of people who are all political”. Another example of the splitting of orientations is the formation of the ‘dissident’ and ‘mainstream’ Republican identities. The former term refers to members of the broader Republican movement who do not agree with the Provisional IRA (PIRA)/Sinn Fein-aligned branch of the movement, and many of whom are opposed to the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. ‘Mainstream’ Republicans (such as members of Coiste) tend to take a somewhat exclusionary and derogatory stance towards ‘dissidents’ and seek to distance themselves from these persons and groups. The development of the ‘mainstream’ and ‘dissident’ identities suggests the attempt to bracket off any groups, persons or even activities that explicitly embody the ‘old’, TA-based orientation within a ‘dissident’ identity, whilst sharply demarcating the new, IA-based orientation within the ‘mainstream’ identity. This, in turn, suggests that a number of orientations – authenticated in very different ways – continue to coexist within the former prisoners’ movement in contemporary, ‘post-transformation’ Northern Ireland.

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper has argued that the process of conflict transformation changes the nature of orientation by attempting to convert TA into IA. This is brought about, in large part, by altering the forms of orientation in which people engage in the hopes of replacing ‘violent’ orientations with more peaceful ones. Yet, although transformation appears to have altered these forms of orientation and the particular values, goals and identities they ‘produce’, this

110 For example, Coiste na Iarchimi is closely-tied to the political party Sinn Fein and the provisional IRA, whilst Teach na Failte is affiliated with the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the INLA. Ritchie, Interview; McCorley, Rose (Coiste na Iarchimi), Personal Interview, 14 June, 2007; Halligan, Interview.
111 McKearney, Interview; Ritchie, Interview.
112 Culbert, Interview.
113 Ritchie, Interview; Byers, Interview.
has not resulted in the ‘transforming away’ of the original TA-based orientations. On the contrary, it has resulted in multiple orientations that are ‘equally’ authentic in terms of each respective form of authenticity. Why is this so?

Simply put, IA is not a strong enough form of authenticity to replace TA. As I have argued above, TA forges a strong, personalized connection between actors and their orientations. Through the process of orientation, actors exercise moral agency and creative control, gaining a sense of ownership of their orientations and imbuing these orientations with authority and legitimacy through their actions. IA orientations, on the other hand, are characterized by a relatively weak, distant and formalized relationship between actors and the orientations they adopt. Although these ‘new’ orientations are authentic by the criteria of IA, they are not fused with the self-perceptions, aspirations and ‘moral horizons’ of actors. Therefore, although actors may identify with or support them to varying degrees, they are legitimised, authorized and internalized by actors in a much more tenuous manner. In other words, it is not enough that an orientation be authentic; the nature of the authenticity in question matters.

The upshot of this argument is that TA is not only an element of orientation which is deeply significant to the actors in a conflict, but it is also highly beneficial to a polity transitioning from violent conflict. Ideally, a peace settlement should be grounded firmly within the orientation of the polity, not simply its institutions. Moreover, it should be ‘owned’ by citizens themselves and become an integral part of their identity and self-perception. This implies that the transcendence of conflict itself should take place at the level of persons and groups, not simply institutions, if it is these persons and groups who are expected to embody change. Therefore, it appears TA would be much more conducive to the successful transformation of orientations than IA. The goal of conflict transformation, then, requires a substantial shift. Specifically, it should not be the goal of policy-makers to ‘transform away’ TA due to well-grounded fears regarding its potential to foster violence. Rather, an emphasis should be placed upon rendering TA compatible with the processes and institutions of governance, counterbalancing its undesirable tendencies by grounding them in a sustainable framework whilst imbuing this framework with the robust authenticity provided by TA.

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