Sources of Discontent:

An Examination of Intra-Group Divisions

Among the Basques in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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Abstract

This thesis will explore how divisions within ethno-nationalist communities affect nationalist/separatist movements. While some scholars characterize ethno-nationalist groups as homogeneous social and political units, through the examination of the Basque community in Spain as a case study, I will show that there exists a considerable plurality of interests within ethno-nationalist movements. This study highlights intra-group divisions based on regionalism, immigration, and ideology and argues for a more nuanced approached to the study of ethno-nationalist groups.
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**Acronyms:**

CDN  Convergencia de Democratas Navarros - Spanish nationalist party in Navarro

EA*  Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity Political Party)

EE*  Euskadiko Eskerra (Basque Country Left Party)

ETA  Euzkadi ‘ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty)

HB*  Herrie Batasuna (People United Party)

KAS  Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista (Socialist Patriotic Coordinator - includes the ETA, youth and women’s organizations)

MNLV  Mouvement Socialiste Revolutionnaire de Liberation Nationale (Basque National Liberation Front - coalition of social organizations)

PCE/IU  Partido Comunista de Euskadi/Izquierda Unida (Communist Party of Euskadi)

PNV*  Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)

PP  Partido Popular

PSOE-PSE  Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol-Partido Socialista de Euskadi (Spanish socialist party)

UA  Unidad Alavesa (Alavese nationalist party)

UPN  Union del Pueblo Navarro (Spanish nationalist party in Navarra)

*PNV, EE, HB and EA - all political parties that are in support of Basque Nationalism
Figure 1 – Basque Region

(Map source, Raento 1999, p. 221)
Figure 2 – The Basque Country

(Map source, Raento 1999, p. 220)
CHAPTER ONE: ETHNO-NATIONALISM EXPLORED

Introduction

The concept of nationalism, especially ethno-nationalism, has received growing attention in the last 100 years. Throughout the twentieth century, calls for sovereignty, autonomy and territory have been loudly proclaimed and sometimes violently pursued. However, it can be difficult to identify exactly what are the perceived cultural, economic, social and political benefits of separatism for ethno-nationalist groups living within multicultural settings and what are the divisions within ethno-nationalist movements.

The purpose of this study is to explore how ethno-nationalism is differently conceived, presented and/or resisted by various sectors of the ethnic community in drives for independence or autonomy. My analysis will focus on the Basque community in Northern Spain.

Importance of This Study

Scholars have estimated that there are up to nine thousand ethnic groups living in some 195 states around the world today. (Neitschmann 1994, Minahan 1996) Robert Clark writes: “In spite of its essential unity as a species, the human race has discovered an amazing number of criteria for dividing itself into countless subspecies.” (Clark 1984, p. 4) Most of these “subspecies” live in harmony with other subspecies. However, some do not. In the Rwanda alone, between 1994 and 1995, nearly a million lives were lost in ethnic conflict and many more disrupted. (Ignatieff 2000, p. 7) To quote Clark again:

In the premodern world, before, let us say the Industrial Revolution, ethnic nationalism was not a political issue. A very large number of what we would now call ethnic groups existed, certainly many more than exist today, but it did not occur to them to demand their own political institutions. Because legitimate political power did not emerge from any
sort of popular will, it made little difference if the rulers, and their values and institutions, were alien to the ruled. (Clark 1984, p. 5)

Today, many ethno-nationalist communities such as the East Timorese and Chechens demand not only legal and administrative autonomy, but independence as well.

The question of how different peoples can live together peaceably is an important one, both for the parties involved and for other communities as well. Even if it were desirable to divide the earth into ethnically pure communities, it would be impossible to do so. Ethno-nationalist communities that achieve territorial autonomy often are faced with smaller ethnic or religious minorities within their new nation. The old minority becomes the new majority in a process that can lead to infinite splitting. (Lapidoth 1997, p. 192/Heraclides 1997, p. 691, 700-701/Gurr 2000, p. 76-77, 85-86, 207)

For some minorities the solution may be personal autonomy, the right to practice one’s own religion and culture at an individual level. (Gurr 2000, p. 165) Some members of indigenous communities, such as the Inuit (Canada) or Miskito (Nicaragua, Honduras), strive for territorial autonomy. For other groups, such as the Chechens (Russia) or West Papuans (Indonesia), independent statehood is deemed the only viable solution. However, achieving autonomy or statehood does not guarantee that fundamental issues of cultural tolerance and political representation will be resolved. States and nations within them are rarely homogeneous, and minority groups in newly created states or autonomous territories may ultimately challenge the legitimacy of governing authorities.

In an age when support for democracy and human rights is often the litmus test for acceptance by the international community, states that pursue political solutions
through negotiated settlements are likely to enjoy greater international support.
(Heraclides 1997, pp. 694, 703) However, autonomous arrangements and separatist
agreements pose several problems both for states and individuals within the disputed
territories. There are likely to be significant numbers of individuals or specific groups
who do not support separation from the state for a number of reasons. Some may have
ideological or political differences with the separatists. Some may feel a strong
affiliation socially and politically with the state. Some may feel it is not in their best
economic interests to secede. The new state or territory may not be economically viable
on its own and may have enjoyed a mutually beneficial trade arrangement with the host
state that would result in economic hardship if lost. Settlements may result in the
creation of new minorities within the autonomous region. Even in cases where
immigration into the disputed territory occurred decades earlier, inhabitants might have a
very clear sense of who they believe are “indigenous” and who are “late arrivals”. In
cases where there are racially or ethnically mixed populations this problem is likely to be
greater.

Literature Review

Scholars have approached the study of nationalism and ethno-nationalist
movements from several perspectives. However, the current debate revolves around two
basic arguments. The primordialists or essentialists (Stake (1997), Smith (1986), Connor
(1993), Horowitz (1985)) argue that nationalism is both a natural and an ancient
phenomenon, deeply embedded in human consciousness. These writers emphasize the
depth and durability of nationalist sentiment - the willingness of individuals to suffer and
die for nationalist ideals. They view nationalism as a powerful non-rational urge that
may be awakened by political leaders who emphasize language, cultural heritage and shared histories, but which is essentially driven by the masses. Modernists or constructivists (Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), Anderson (1991), Ozkirimli (2000), Rudolph and Rudolph (1993), Huntington (1993), Gurr (2000)) believe nationalism and nations are created, imagined or modeled on an ideal. They view nationalism as transitory in nature, a phase in human political and social development. These writers argue that nations are a relatively recent concept, less than 300 years old. They perceive the emergence of nationalism as an accident of history and explain it variously as a by-product of the modern Westphalian system, a post-religious, post-revolutionary political phenomenon influenced by the development of print journalism, centralized education, capitalism, and other factors. Modernists link the rise in nationalism to elite efforts to gain or regain political and economic power. In spite of their differing opinion as to the origins of nationalism, they tend to agree with the primordialists that it is a powerful force in international relations today.

Fred Halliday has argued that the debate on nationalism has reached an impasse and that the way out lies in “producing theoretically informed comparative histories, which will at the same time test the theories concerned against historical evidence.” (Ozkirimli 2000, p. 233) This study of Basque history and society with a view of identifying sources of intra-group variation in nationalist sentiment is another way to examine the applicability of current theories of nationalism.

A number of other writers have examined various aspects of autonomy, autonomous arrangements, separatism and partition. The focus is generally on what will work for the state or the international community, or on convincing states that autonomy

One of the weaknesses of the nationalism debate is the assumption that ethno-nationalist groups are homogeneous: that they speak, think, and act as one unified body in support of a particular nationalist agenda. While there often is broad based support within ethno-nationalist communities for a separatist agenda, there is also evidence that a nuanced view of these communities is more realistic. For example, Horowitz' (1985, p. 233-234) comprehensive work on ethnic groups in conflict suggests that ethnonationalist group standing as "backward" or "advanced" will impact their likelihood for secession. However, such a typology tends to reify group interests and histories and misses the intra-group dynamics that may be driving the move toward secession or autonomy. Scholars, such as Huntington (1993), write of broad cultural civilizational groupings, such as Confucianism or Islam, as determining future conflicts but make the unwarranted assumption that ethnonationalist groups within these "civilizations" are culturally and politically homogeneous.

In her work on citizenship, Nira Yuval-Davis points out the theoretical problems of separating groups into two dichotomous divisions “without paying attention to other dimensions of social divisions and social positionings, such as gender, intranational ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, stage in the life cycle, and so on ...” (Davis 2000, p. 72) Ted Robert Gurr, also repeatedly emphasizes the heterogeneous nature of "identity groups" and the necessity on the part of ethnopolitical leaders to build intra-group coalitions among competing factions to achieve political goals. (Gurr 2000, p. 5, 66, 76, 77, 79) He notes specifically: "The capacity for ethnopolitical action [further] depends
on overcoming narrower loyalties to clans, classes, and communities.” (Ibid. p. 76)

Stephen Van Evera explores the effects of immigration and emigration on ethno-
nationalist groups and how "intermingling" populations affects ethnic conflict. (Van
Evera 1994) Dmitry Gorenburg’s study of nationalist sentiment in Tartarstan also
provides an interesting counterpoint to reductionist views of ethno-nationalist groups.
(Gorenburg 2000)

Gorenburg explained that most scholars who study nationalism assume that
support for a nationalist agenda is either randomly distributed or identical among all
members of an ethnic group. He found that neither of the above was true. Rather, in his
research on the influence of state institutions on nationalist sentiment, his surveys
revealed significant differences in support for nationalism among groups within
Tartarstan. Gorenburg found that (1) women were much less likely to support
nationalism than men; (2) Muslims were more likely to support nationalism than non-
Muslims, but very religious Muslims were less likely to support nationalism; (3) those
with higher levels of education were more likely to support nationalism; and (4)
industrial workers and agricultural workers were less likely to support nationalism.
Language also played a part in support for nationalism; fluent Tartar speakers were more
likely to support nationalism. (Gorenburg 2000, p. 129) In short, Gorenburg uncovered
a wide spectrum of opinions in regard to nationalism in different sectors of Tartar
society. My work has been influenced by the belief that Gorenburg and Yuval-Davis’s
findings may apply to other ethno-nationalist movements as well.

Preliminary research on the Basque community and ethno-nationalism indicates
that more research is needed into the different perceptions held by various sectors of the
Basque community as regards nationalism, statehood and independence. In this work, I will explore the extent of differentiation in the Basque Country as to the desire for administrative autonomy, security, freedom to practice culture and the means to achieve economic prosperity vs. achieving statehood. Otherwise stated, I will examine how different sectors of ethno-nationalist communities may be satisfied with less or different demands than others, whose priorities are centered on independence.

There are several ethnic conflicts that have defied resolution for decades, the Basques being one of them. In order to solve these disputes, it is necessary to dispel the myth of homogeneity. There are many reasons why this myth has persisted. Nationalists have promoted simplistic portrayals of ethno-nationalist communities in their attempt to unify diverse constituencies. The popular press has perpetuated the concept of ethnic homogeneity by failing to identify for their audiences the diversity within populations they report on. Scholars who, sometimes justifiably, refer to “The Basques” or “The Chechens” in their attempt to place those groups in an international context for purposes of comparative theoretical studies nevertheless may contribute to the perception that they are homogenous societies.

It is my belief that a closer look at intra-group differences will provide clues as to why violence continues in some ethnic conflicts and what different sectors of ethno-nationalist communities desire in terms of their political future. A deeper historical and contemporary analysis into the ethnic, cultural, political and economic differences within these communities is needed as the basis for a conflict resolution process that addresses the perceived needs of all parties involved and has the potential to produce a lasting peace.
Definitions

For purposes of this study, an ethno-nationalist community is a group of people who perceive themselves to be distinct from others on the basis of a shared history, culture, race, language, and/or religion and are united by their belief in a right to self-determination within a historical territorial homeland. In reality, the perceived differences are sometimes difficult or impossible for outsiders to see. Ethnic groups may speak the same language, share the same religion or appear racially indistinct from other populations with whom they have lived and intermarried for generations. However, this fact does not in any way lessen the strength of their own perceived “separateness” or “specialness.” Personal autonomy is the right to practice religion, educate children in the chosen language of the ethnic group and follow other traditional cultural practices of one’s group. In this study, I will adhere to Corntassel’s definition of autonomy, i.e., “A territorial political arrangement aimed at granting a group that differs from the majority of the state population and that constitutes a majority in a specific region some legal means of expressing its distinct identity.” (Corntassel 1999)

The term “elite” has been used to describe several different groups. In general, it refers to a member of society who is influential due to some special status he or she holds by virtue of birth, education or membership in a particular social group or profession. In this work it is used to describe groups which may constitute an elite at one point in time but not another, such as agrarian landholders and the clergy who were considered elites in the 19th century but are no longer referred to as elites in the literature of today. Throughout this work, I have attempted to describe how the term “elite” applies in each context in which it is used.
A Case Study Approach

In this study, I will focus on the Basque population in Spain. A case study approach serves two purposes here: first, to examine whether different sectors of the Basque community have had different agendas vis-à-vis nationalism and separatism over the past one hundred and fifty years; and, second, I expect the case study to lead to a better understanding of ethnic conflict and to assist me in refining my theory about a larger collection of cases. (Stake 1998, p. 89) Thus, I am using this instrumental case in both a heuristic/exploratory and a theoretically informed manner. (Eckstein 1975) This approach is appropriate here because it will highlight the fact that ethno-nationalist demands may vary a great deal within the ethno-nationalist community itself. As with Gorenburg's (2000) work, I attempt to uncover intra-group divisions within the larger phenomenon of Basque nationalism, which has undergone several transformations since the Franco era in Spain.

The Basque community is located in Europe and the population is spread across France and Spain. I have chosen to focus on the Basques in Spain because the nationalist movement has received considerably more visible support in that community. My reading of the literature indicates that the history of the Basques can be traced back for several hundred, even thousands of years and reflects a long struggle for self-determination but also periods of peaceful co-existence with state governments and other groups. The Basques have experienced periods of cultural repression but have also been granted administrative autonomy at various times in their past and now enjoy some measure of administrative autonomy.

A reading of literature on ethno-nationalism indicates that ethnic conflicts
frequently involve similar themes and aspects of the Basque history can be found in histories of other ethno-nationalist groups. There is often a long history of violent conflict and repression in ethnic conflicts. Ethno-nationalist communities often perceive themselves to be racially distinct from the general population or other groups. Most ethno-nationalist communities struggle for the right to conduct their affairs in their own language, including the right to educate their children in that language. Finally, ethno-nationalist communities often practice a different religion from the majority. Given these attributes, any two case studies may contain somewhat similar circumstances. However, all ethnic conflicts are also unique. Each involves people of different races, religions, histories and cultures with unique needs and aspirations. A case study design highlights the importance of understanding each situation as unique.

Research Methods

Marshall and Rossman write that qualitative research is particularly well suited to exploring “where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds.” (Marshall and Rossman 1999, p. 57) In this study, I employ a qualitative approach involving historical analysis to examine what are, and have been, the perceptions of various sectors of the Basque community vis-à-vis nationalism and separatism.

It is important to understand the historical context of this conflict in order to understand how perceptions have developed and changed over time. I examine the history of the Basques with special emphasis on the emergence of nationalist movements in the late 1800’s, points in history when peace has failed, autonomous arrangements, and the influence of the state on the affairs of the ethno-nationalist community. To determine the sentiments of various sectors of the community today, I focus on the development of
the ethno-nationalist movement since 1975.

This study has utilized the following research methods:

- Reading and viewing interviews of first-hand historical accounts by parties involved in the Basque conflict during and following the Franco period, e.g., members of the Spanish armed forces, citizens and members of Basque society and governments.

- Studying the work of other researchers describing disrupting events.

- Probing for information on popular support for nationalist/separatist agendas (polls, voting results, etc.), again with a view to getting as many different viewpoints as possible.

- Researching the numbers and proportions of individuals supporting political groups and parties with nationalist and separatist platforms.

- Investigating polling data on popular support for political programs such as partition or autonomy arrangements and results of referendums on partition or autonomy and examine results of the elections held in the last twenty years.

- Studying official statements of political parties and political organizations of the Basques.

- Reading translated excerpts from manifestos and other writings by Basque activists in order to better understand the Basque culture, popular ideologies and the genesis and support for separatist movements.

- Looking at the official website of the Basque government, with a view to better understanding what policies the Basque populations are supporting today.

- Exploring film, literature, folk tales, songs, poetry and cultural practices such as festivals for clues to better understand the culture.

Analysis
In Chapter Two I present my findings first as a brief historical narrative of the Basque community. Narratives are stories that researchers construct from the data. They are, by nature, subjective and I have included historical highlights that I believe are relevant to the theme of this work. Another researcher would, no doubt, have made different choices based on his or her assessment.

The narrative details who this community is (culturally, ideologically, racially, etc.) and where they came from, what the basis of their territorial claims is, how ethno-nationalism developed, how the state responded or failed to respond to ethno-nationalist demands and what the consequences of those decisions have been.

In Chapter Three I outline principle divisions in the Basque nationalist movement. In Chapter Four I explore sources of conflict within the Basque community, assess the level of satisfaction with the current political arrangement and provide suggestions for future conflict resolution efforts. In Chapter Five I present my research findings, examine the applicability of existing theory to ethnonationalist movements and briefly outline suggestions for future research.

Limitations of This Study

It is always dangerous to make assumptions about what someone thinks or feels or desires. In order to explore this question adequately, one would like to spend several months living in the community being studied and conduct numerous on-site personal interviews. However, even then, one could be considered an "outsider". In the words of researchers Marshall and Rossman:

“A study focusing on individual lived experience typically relies
on an in-depth interview strategy ... Studies focusing on society and culture, whether a group, a program, or an organization, typically espouse some form of case study as an overall strategy; this entails immersion in the setting and rests on both the researcher's and the participants’ worldviews.” (Marshall/Rossman 1999, p. 61)

Unfortunately, the immersion approach was beyond the scope of this enterprise.

One of the basic premises of this study is that, due to the varied nature of ethnic communities, it may not be prudent to assume that community consensus exists in ethno-nationalist conflicts. Likewise, it would not be prudent to draw inferences about communities other than the one presented in this study. As Robert Stake explained “the purpose of case study is not to represent the work, but to represent the case.” (Stake 1998, p. 104) However, I hope to explore whether and how the techniques employed in this study may be useful in other cases in researching the sources and nature of ethno-nationalist movements. The findings may show that the differences in various sectors of ethno-nationalist populations in the case here studied are not being, or have not been, addressed. If that is the case, more effort should be made to uncover the variation in nationalist/separatist sentiment in different sectors of communities involved in ethnic conflict.

Conclusion

In this study, I examine the Basque community as a case study to determine the differences in how nationalism is conceived, presented and/or resisted by different sectors of ethno-nationalist societies in drives for independence and autonomy and to illustrate the importance of determining the origins of separatist sentiment. The findings in this specific case study are not necessarily generalizable to other ethnic populations,
but I would argue that the approach is, i.e., assuming heterogeneity exists in societies in which ethno-nationalist movements exist and attempting to determine the sources and significance of that heterogeneity in cases of ethnic conflict. Not only is it important to determine the perceived needs of different sectors of ethno-nationalist communities from an ethical standpoint, it also is imperative to ask the question from the standpoint of finding lasting solutions to conflict. If decision-makers can find a way to address needs and concerns of all members of ethno-nationalist communities including immigrants and radical actors, there is a much greater likelihood that peace will be lasting.
CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF THE SPANISH BASQUES

The Basque nationalist movement can be loosely divided into three stages:

(1) The emergence of nationalism. This period includes the Basque history leading up to the emergence of nationalism in the mid-to-late 1800’s and early 1900’s;

(2) The Franco period. This period begins during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930’s and continues until General Franco’s death in 1975; and

(3) The post-Franco period - 1975 to present.

Within each of these loosely framed time periods, the impact of different sectors of Basque society on the nationalist movement has varied. In this study I will focus on the post-Franco period. I have included a brief discussion of the early history of Basque nationalism to provide a basis for understanding the roots of this movement.

1. Pre-history Through the Emergence of Nationalism

In order to understand the Basque community it is necessary to understand something of the history of the Basque people. The Basques, or Euskadi’s, are one of the oldest surviving ethnic groups in Europe. Their precise origins are unknown, but they are said to have arrived in their current territory overlapping the borders of Northern Spain and Southern France, anywhere from 70,000 to 5,000 years ago. (Boomgard 1999, p. 1) The origin of Euskera, the Basque language, is likewise a mystery. Basque scholar and historian Mark Kurlansky writes, “though numerous attempts have been made, no one has ever found a linguistic relative to Euskera. It is an orphan language that does not even belong to the Indo-European family of languages.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 23) The language has a long oral tradition of poetry and song that predates the Indo-European
languages, however it was translated into written form fairly late. The first known written work in Euskera is a set of poems by Benat Etxepare published in 1545. (Written Euskaldun Culture, p. 1) The obscure origins of the Basque people and their language have served as a basis for nationalists promoting a mythical, primordial ideal of the Basque nation that has existed continuously since pre-history.

The most predominant objective racial characteristic of the Basques is the highest Rh-negative blood factor in Europe. Other distinctive physical characteristics, also known as cultural “markers,” are said to be thick eyebrows, long earlobes, a long straight nose and strong chin. Nineteenth century studies of Basque skulls concluded that they were, in fact, physically different from other Europeans of that time. It was argued variously that Basque skulls were evidence of a link to Cro-Magnon man, Germans, Turks, Tartars, Magyars or Laplanders. (Kurlansky 1999, pp. 19-21) However, in spite of evidence of unique physical traits, or perhaps because of their relatively weak differentiation from other southern Europeans, it is the Basque language that has emerged as the unifying cultural marker of Basque identity in the Basque nationalist movement. The role of language in this movement will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.

Ludger Mees argues that the historical roots of the Basque conflict go back to the 1400’s when the marriage of King Fernando and Queen Isabela united the powerful Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. This paved the way for unification of the Iberian Peninsula into one state. However, Spain was unable to assimilate its diverse population into a strong nation in the same way other multi-ethnic European states did in the 19th century. This inability to foster a strong Spanish nationalism eventually
contributed to the growth of several smaller ethno-nationalist movements within the state. (Mees 2001, pp. 800-801/Bermendi 1999, 79-98)

There were several reasons why nationalism in Spain did not develop as it did in other Northern European states. A strong tradition of Catholicism in Spain diluted the impact of liberal ideology and the cult of the individual. A traditional agrarian aristocratic elite in the Basque territory maintained political power through a system of clientelism (Caciquismo) thus weakening the power of the central state government. The state was further hampered by on-going and expensive military conflicts that depleted state funds that could have otherwise been directed toward developing a culturally unifying statewide public education system. Education was, for the most part, left in the hands of the Catholic Church, which had no interest in promoting state loyalty or liberal ideals. (Ibid.)

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, other emerging liberal European states developed a national army of “citizen soldiers.” This was seen as an important unifying element in the creation of European nationalist sentiment. However, in Spain, military service was simply an obligation for those too poor to avoid it. Thus the Basques and other groups were never completely assimilated into a larger Spanish state. (Mees 2001, pp. 800-801/Beramendi 1999, 79-98)

The Basques have a long history of living peacefully within larger states. From the twelfth century until the late 19th century both the French and Spanish Basques were able to maintain their hold on local power, partly through the fueros, (local statutes and charters) a system of political semi-autonomy that had survived since the seventh century. The fueros system embodied the rights of the Basque people, not concessions
allowed to them. In other words, the system emerged from Basque society and culture, it was not a structure imposed upon them or political rights granted to them by imperial rulers. It allowed their representatives to veto royal edicts (though this right was rarely employed by the provincial assemblies). It exempted their sons and husbands from obligatory military service unless a conflict was fought on Basque soil and allowed the Basques to be exempt from royal taxation. It was only when both the French and Spanish gradually revoked this autonomy in 1850s through the 1870s that Basque nationalism emerged. (Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 1/Clark 1984, p. 13/O’Neill 2000, p. 57/Kurlansky 1999, p. 158)

Under the fueros, each province had a separate autonomous political/administrative system and had separate arrangements with the crown or central government. The Viscaya and Guipuzcoa provinces had particularly enjoyed special privileges and responsibilities vis-à-vis the Spanish crown since the 16th and early 17th centuries. It is important to note that administratively, politically, and to some extent culturally, there was no unified Basque community prior to the dissolution of the fueros. (Shafir 1995, p. 88-89)

The landholders, who were the traditional agrarian elite held the majority of the power in the fueros. Their interests were linked to the artisan class who resisted modernization out of fear they could not compete with industrial products. However, the interests of an emerging industrial and commercial bourgeoisie were centered around protecting their products from the competition of duty-free imports of European goods. They hoped to move customs operations to the coast to increase the price of imported goods. This was not in the interests of the lower classes who relied on customs-free
imports of some basic necessities due to the fact that over time, the Basques have been squeezed onto a smaller, less productive territory and could not grow or produce enough to provide for the population. (Mees 2001, pp. 801-802/Clark 1984, p. 13/Shafir 1995, p. 91-94) Intra-regional and urban/rural political cleavages have persisted in the Basque case and will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.

An emerging liberal class agitated for a reform of the fueros to give more power to the business class. However, the central government responded by eliminating the fueros completely. The elimination of the fueros also hastened the elimination of old social and economic orders and allowed the development of a capitalist economic system. Iron ore exports increased and the profits were poured into new industries such as shipbuilding, railways, chemicals and later banking. The new capitalists were economically linked to the Spanish state. When in the 1800’s both France and Spain revoked Basque administrative autonomy, it provoked strong reactions in the Basque communities and created a broad-based movement called fuerismo, whose aim was to restore political autonomy to the Basques. (Ibid.) This paved the way for Sabino Arana y Goiri and others to build support for a Basque nationalist movement in the late 1800’s. (Minahan 1996, p. 169)

The Role of Elites in the Emergence of Nationalism

The term “elite” is used to describe several different groups in the Basque society of the late 1800’s. One group is the intelligentsia, the well-educated sons of prosperous Basque families who were aware of and sympathetic to nationalist and revolutionary movements in Europe and enlightenment ideology. Basque scholar Daniele Conversi argues that in order to understand the Basque separatist movement in Spain, it is
necessary to look at the role of the intelligentsia. He contends it was the intellectuals who “set the agenda of nationalist mobilization.” (Conversi 1997, p. 7)

While strong loyalty to the Basque community had existed for decades, as noted above, the community was politically and culturally divided. There is a widespread belief that Basque nationalism was essentially the creation of one man - Sabino Arana y Goiri. However, it could also be argued that Arana merely radicalized an already existing sentiment. Although he is responsible for creating cultural symbols around which nationalism was to be centered, some scholars have argued he simply re-interpreted the fuerismo movement as a “nationalist” independence movement rather than a quest for political autonomy within the Spanish State. (Mees 2001, p. 802)

Two Carlist wars were fought in the 1800s over the Spanish throne. Isabella II had inherited the throne at the death of her father, Ferdinand VII, in 1833. The king’s brother, Carlos also laid claim to the throne. Isabella II was considered the liberal/modernist candidate and Carlos the champion of tradition and the Catholic Church. The Carlist wars were the traditionalists’ attempt to capture the throne from Isabella. Arana, (1865-1903), witnessed the persecution of his father, a wealthy industrialist and Carlist supporter. Because of his father’s political affiliations, Arana was forced into exile with his mother and siblings for several years until the end of the Second Carlist war. As a youth Arana developed intense loyalty to the Basque community and attempted to provide all the trappings of a nationalist movement he perceived were missing. He was responsible for coining a name for the Basque country (Euskadi), setting the first political agenda, defining the boundaries of the Basque territory, designing a flag (the ikurrina) and composing a national anthem (Gora ta Gora).
Arana’s nationalism was based on a reaffirmation of historical Basque racial, cultural and linguistic purity and a rejection of all perceived external or diluting influences on the Basque community. (Kurlansky 1999, pp. 144, 161-176) However, in a community that had already experienced significant dissolution of racial purity through immigration and inter-marriage and had linguistically assimilated into the larger state, significant aspects of ethnic identity had to be re-invented.

Arana’s agenda was a confusing mélange of ideas pulled from other political movements, Catholicism and ethno-centricism. He also emphasized the economic hardships the Basques had experienced under Spanish rule, even though the Basque territory was then the most prosperous in Spain. This increased the appeal of his message to those parts of Basque society that had suffered under modernization - the pensioners, peasants, clergy and local landed gentry. Its lack of clarity allowed for self-interpretation by individuals and groups with diverse political agendas. Arana’s message appealed to the Basque lower classes at a time when the region was experiencing an increase of immigration from other areas of Spain and was still resentful of the recent loss of the fueros. (Mees 2001, p. 803/Kurlansky 1999, pp. 161-176/Medrano 1995, p. 2) As will be discussed later, immigration has continued to be one of the most important factors in the Basque conflict. Arana’s nationalism also appealed to a new commercial class resentful of the power of the old industrial bourgeoisie and appealed to peasants and fishermen who resented the old system of Caciquismo and were resisting the modernization of the fishing industry. (Mees 2001, p. 803)

Arana’s arguments appealed to “elites” in the early nationalist movement, the landed gentry (jauntxos) and the church who acted as one to maintain political and
socioeconomic power over the peasantry. These “elites”, traditionally loyal to the Spanish state, supported nationalism as a means to restore their former political and economic powers rather than as a means to sever ties with the state. (Beramendi 1999, p. 82-85) In other words, Basque nationalism became a rallying point for very different sectors of Basque society as a means to achieve very different economic and political ends.

Thus, it was when the intellectual “elites” were able to gain the support of the agrarian and religious “elites,” and through them the influence over the peasantry, the icons of the “mythical” racially, culturally and linguistically “pure” ancient Basque peoples, that nationalism began to gain wider acceptance. This set the stage for the next phase discussed below when oppression of Basque culture and forced immigration solidified and deepened nationalist sentiment in Basque country. (Beramendi 1999, p. 82-83, 94-95)

A fourth elite group, the high bourgeoisie consisted of a small number of families comprising an industrial oligarchy who were in control of commercial interests, manufacturing and banking since the late 1800’s. They profited from the transfer of control over iron ore and lumber from municipal to private control when the fueros were eliminated. The interests and culture of the high bourgeoisie were inseparable from Castilian interests and their ascendency caused a great deal of resentment among the jauntxos who had previously controlled Basque government and economy under the fueros system. (Shafir 1995, pp. 90-96)

The Franco Period: 1936-1975
Increasing political success at the polls for Basque nationalists and cooperation between the latter and Basque and Spanish socialists led to the Statute of 1936 which re-instituted a measure of autonomy for the Basques. Spain became mired in a civil war from 1936-1939 and General Francisco Franco revoked Basque autonomy in 1937 when he came to power and the newly formed Basque government went into exile. (Mees 2001, p. 807)


“The Francoists imposed a narrow ‘image’ of Spain emphasizing national unity and condemned all forms of cultural or political diversity. This variant of state nationalism was a reaction to modern ideologies, especially socialism and anarchism, which were held to threaten traditional socio-political structures. As such, Francoism imposed a form of nationalism that was conservative, Catholic, centralist and Castilian as a brake on the modernization begun in the early decades of the century by the Republic.” Guibernau 2000, p. 58)

In response to state repression, the ETA (Euzkadi ta Azkatazuna) was formed in 1959 by younger nationalists from within the PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) who were frustrated by the lack of progress in the party. They felt the PNV was passively waiting for Franco to die or the Americans, to whom the Basques had provided help in WWII, to come to their aid. While the former was inevitable and eventually came to pass, the latter scenario has never occurred. Although more will be said about the ETA later on in this study, at this point it will merely be noted that at its inception, the ETA
was not a violent organization and, in fact, “the pacifism of Gandhi held a certain attraction for the more idealistic elements within the new organisation.” (Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 3) However, in 1968 it began a violent campaign of resistance against the state that continued and in fact grew more intense after Franco’s death in 1975. (Kurlansky 1999, 234-241) Ideological differences have been important in this conflict and will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

**Post-Franco Period - 1975 Through Present**

Today, the Basque community enjoys a large degree of administrative and political autonomy. It elects its own parliament and government, it administers its own education system which includes the option of education in Euskera, it has its own police force and legal system and levies and collects its own taxes. The Spanish state retains control of economic planning, international affairs, defense and administration of justice. (Mees 2001, p. 808/Thcakik 1996/Guibernau 2000, p. 62)

Franco’s death led to a political opening for the more moderate Basque nationalists who were seeking first a restoration of political autonomy under the Spanish state. The new Spanish constitution recognized the cultural diversity and right to political and administrative autonomy of Spanish minorities while asserting the state’s ultimate authority over all its citizens. The constitution was immediately rejected by Basque nationalists who largely abstained from voting on it in 1978. However, the Statute of Autonomy was eventually approved by Basque voters in a referendum vote in 1979. The Basque President in exile returned to Euskadi and parliamentary elections were held in the autonomous territory in 1980. The ETA, however, continued to reject the state’s efforts to placate Basque nationalist aspirations and commenced a spree of

The economies of Spain and the Basque Country have historically been mutually dependent. In 1983, exports to the rest of Spain made up 76% of Basque exports and imports from Spain represented 54% of the Basque country GDP. (Medrano 1995, p. 122) Since the oil crisis in the early 1970’s the Basque Country as a whole no longer enjoys a higher level of economic prosperity than the other regions in Spain. A second wave of industrialization in the late 1950s increased the development of other regions of Spain, however individual Basque Provinces are still some of the most prosperous in Spain. The region has experienced significant increases in unemployment in the last 30 years as well as significant emigration out of the territory. (Shafir 1995, p. 35-36, 41-42) Inclusion in the European Union can be expected to reduce some of the economic interdependence between the Basque Country and Spain as can continued modernization of Spain's other industrial centers. It is not clear whether or not political independence would benefit the Basque Country economically or the reverse. In a poll taken in 1991, Basque respondents were almost equally split between those who thought that independence would improve economic conditions (approximately 33%) and those who thought that independence would make economic conditions worse (approximately 31%) and those that did not know (approximately 33%). (Medrano 1995, p. 177)

The following chapters all provide more detail on the most recent episode in Basque history and include an in-depth discussion of some of the topics touched on here, i.e., class, immigration, ideology and regionalism. In addition, I continue my discussion of the ETA and offer suggestions for resolving the problem of violent conflict, the origins
of which were discussed above. Finally, I discuss the evolution of present day attitudes of various members of Basque society towards nationalism as reflected in interviews, opinion polls and political publications.
CHAPTER THREE: DIVISIONS IN BASQUE SOCIETY

Class differences, immigration, regionalism and political ideology have all affected the Basque nationalist movement. I have touched on each of these factors in the brief history included in Chapter Two above. In this section, I will discuss class differences in Basque society, but I will focus in greater depth on the roles of immigration, regionalism and political ideology. Although I originally intended to focus exclusively on class divisions in the Basque nationalist movement, my research indicates that, although important in the emergence of nationalism in the 1800’s, class is not the most important dividing line in this debate today. Additionally, I am unconvinced that modern Basque society can be broken down into meaningful classifications along socio-economic lines, or, if it could, that variations in nationalist sentiment relate predominantly to class. While there is clearly an elite class of business owners, it is not clear where the dividing line would fall between the business oligarchy and a prosperous bourgeoisie. Eduardo Jorge Glas writes that historically,

“The idea that industry and trade did not degrade a person’s social status was widely held in the Basque region ... Economic and social conditions in the Basque region assured that what could be called a gentry of urban and rural proprietors maintained close links with the local business elite. Sometimes the two groups were hard to distinguish, as many retired merchants became part of the gentry, and often the latter helped the business world by financing commercial and industrial enterprises. Moreover, given the practice of passing on family land to only one heir, many sons of the gentry had to earn a living in the business world.” (Glas 1997, p. 213)

There is a large population of industrial workers but it is not clear how or whether one should differentiate this group along class lines from other salaried workers or agricultural workers. Where class is important, it is in the way political parties and
organizations have used class struggle as part of their political platform. I will discuss that more later on.

Other scholars have argued that intra-class conflict increases the level of support for nationalism and sometimes separatism within an ethno-nationalist group:

“Formulating and supporting nationalist programs are strategies that individuals can adopt to express their ethnocultural identity and to attain various material and nonmaterial objectives. These political choices are shaped by socialization experiences and economic interests that are closely related to people’s social origins and current class status. To understand political behavior in peripheral regions, one accordingly needs to focus on the class structures of these regions.” (Medrano 1995, p. 11)

Medrano adds that class conflict increases because classes first address their concerns to the central government and when this strategy fails to achieve desired changes, they turn to separatism as a way to achieve the kind of political control over their affairs that will lead to a solution to their class struggles. In the case of the Basques, this inter-class conflict was augmented by an intense conflict in the post-civil war period through 1975 between the central state and the Basque community over freedom of cultural expression and an even longer struggle, dating back to the 1870s over the reinstatement of regional administrative autonomy.

However, a study done in the late 1990s by Guerin found the emergence of “cultural nationalism”, (a form of nationalism that emphasizes individual rights, cultural heritage, and regional political autonomy) in the Basque community is “increasingly cross-class in its social configuration. In a study using data from the 1995-1997 World Values Survey, Guerin found that when class was introduced as an independent variable on the level of “cultural nationalism” it had no significant effect. This finding is in
keeping with one of the conclusions that stood out from the study of nationalist identity in Spain by Herranz de Rafael, asserting, “the nationalist consciousness has an unclear profile from the social point of view.” (Guerin 2000, pp. 1,13) This would indicate that Basque nationalists since the late 1970’s have been increasingly successful in promoting their agenda without regard to social class.

The lack of clear class divisions may stem from the Basque history. Some scholars (Loyer, Glas, Shafir and Laxalt) have argued that the Basque territories had a different social makeup than Spain and other European territories where there was a history of aristocracy and large royal estates. They point out that, as far back as the sixteenth century, special “nobility” status termed “hidalgo” was accorded to the Basques by the Spanish crown. All Basques were considered “noble” by blood and this traditional “noble” designation was an impediment to the consolidation of power by elites in Basque society. Another impediment was the fact that Basques were, by historical European standards, an egalitarian people with a democratic tradition. They were, at one time, a land of small independent farmers descended from tribal people for whom family and kinship ties were highly important. (Loyer 1995, p. 96-99/Glas 1997, p. 212-213/Shafir 1995, p. 89) One Basque writer noted in the 1960s “In the Basque Country, there is an equality between master and servant that dates back to feudal times. When the rest of Europe was caught up in serfdom, a Basque had to be paid for his work.” (Laxalt 2000, p. 117) Although the existence of master/servant relationships would appear to imply an inherent social inequality, Basques apparently viewed it more as inequality of circumstances rather than inequality of personal merit.

However, Shafir and Loyer have also noted that class divisions did exist in
Basque society and by the middle of the 18th century a class of rural landowners had developed which was akin to the English gentry. These “juantxos” gradually took over ownership of about half of the land formerly owned by the peasant class and rented it back to them as tenants. They also owned the small iron foundries and mills. Through this economic dominance, the juantxos eventually also took control over the political system. Running for office in the provinces required an expensive guarantee of bloodlines, property ownership and literacy, and a relatively small number of families held political power. (Loyer 1995, p. 96-99/Shafir 1995, p. 90-91)

Although the discussion below includes many references to class, I will focus mainly on three other divisions in the Basque nationalist movement that I consider more important today than class: immigration, ideology and regionalism. They are more important because they have all continued to influence, in various degrees, the political orientation and behavior of Basques and non-Basques living in Basque country in terms of voting, membership in Basque nationalist organizations and support of or opposition to Basque nationalism and separatism. They are also inextricably linked together in such a way that it is difficult to determine which factor carries the most weight. However, overall, I believe immigration has had the greatest impact in terms of both fueling and moderating the nationalist movement.

Immigrants

Immigration has been an important component in the Basque movement for over one hundred and fifty years. Historically, the vast majority of immigrants into the Basque territory have come from other, poorer, regions of Spain. While the immigrants spoke a common language, (although not the language of the Basques) and shared a
common religion with the Basques, the perception on the part of the Basques that they were interlopers is important. As early as the mid-19th century Basques were becoming concerned about the number of immigrants coming to their territories to work in the iron-ore industry. However, the difference between the Spanish immigrants and native Basques was more a difference of "caste" than "class" because, as noted above, cultural differences were not that pronounced. Basque and Spanish workers were both increasingly drawn to urban centers to work side by side in industrial centers where they earned the same wage and thus enjoyed the same level of prosperity.

Gershon Shafir argues that the most important aspect of immigration is the perceived threat it poses to the “way of life and privileges” of tradition elites and to the “privileged position” (economically, politically and culturally) of modern elites. The framework for social inequalities, such as religion and tradition, which work to elites’ benefit are not transferable to economic benefits in the process of modernization. He claims that these groups are not able to protect their advantageous positions in the face of modernization and, in order to protect their spheres of influence and power, they work to turn cultural awareness into political awareness in the form of a strongly anti-modernization nationalist movement. In his view, resentment of immigrants is based more on cultural differences than on economic factors because, usually, the host nation is more economically advanced and immigration does not cause economic dislocation. (Shafir 1995, p. 2-6, 20)

The two phenomena, cultural change and economics, are sometimes confused. Traditionalists, who resist social, economic and political change, fail to recognize that immigrants normally are the result of economic progress and modernization not the cause
of it. They are attracted to jobs in societies already more advanced and prosperous than their own. (Ibid.) However, they present an easy target for anti-modernization nationalists. It may be easier to accuse a foreigner of changing one’s lifestyle than to accuse a prosperous, progress-oriented and possibly well-respected member of one’s own society of destroying traditional norms. It may be easier to garner support for a return to a traditional society than to garner support for class struggle. In the Basque case, early nationalists targeted immigrants as the principle threat to their lifestyle while some later nationalist targeted the capitalist upper classes. However, support for the latter argument has remained fairly low. This reflects the changing nature of Basque society from a rural/agrarian society to an urban society as well as the, previously discussed, tendency of Basques to reject the notion of class stratification, i.e., all Basques being “noble“.

In the Basque case, immigration played a large part in attracting widespread support to the early nationalist movement. Early Basque nationalists capitalized on the inherent distrust ordinary Basque’s traditionally had of outsiders and emphasized the danger immigrants played to Basque culture and the morality of their children. Arana claimed that the loss of Basque language and history and “enslavement” by the Spaniards was nothing “compared with the rubbing of our people with the Spanish people, which immediately and necessarily causes in our race ignorance and loss of reason, weakness and corruption of the heart, that is an absolute deviation from the goal of all human society.” (Shafir 1995, p. 97) While inter-marriage and immigration into Basque territories had been going on for centuries, Arana castigated Basque’s who “confounded themselves with the most vile and despicable race in Europe.” (Ibid. p.98)

In early nationalist organizations and trade unions, members had to provide proof
that both they, and their parents, had Basque surnames and in the late 1800’s the PNV advocated expelling most non-Basques from Euskadi and denying citizenship to those of non-Basque parentage. However, in the early 1900’s the party modified its stance to make it easier for those of mixed parentage to participate in the party and advocated allowing naturalization of immigrants after a residence period of ten years. (Ibid. 98, 112) Although many immigrants were Catholic, as were the Basques, they also faced opposition from the Church that was anti-socialist and anti-modernist in outlook. (Ibid. 99)

It was under Franco’s regime, in the 1950’s and 1960’s that the greatest increases in immigration occurred. Statistics vary on the actual number of immigrants into the Basque territory. The numbers from two different sources are shown below. The variation may be due to a difference in which provinces are included. Shafir’s survey includes only the provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa and Alava. Medrano’s survey does not indicate which provinces are included. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below demonstrate the dramatic increase in immigration into Basque territory during the last twenty years of the Franco regime.
Table 3.1
Net in-migration rates in the Basque Country, 1900-1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Medrano</th>
<th>Shafir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-1910</td>
<td>22,700</td>
<td>-6,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1920</td>
<td>44,500</td>
<td>19,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-1930</td>
<td>31,100</td>
<td>25,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-1940</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>11,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1950</td>
<td>25,600</td>
<td>25,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1960</td>
<td>174,000</td>
<td>152,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1970</td>
<td>159,600</td>
<td>256,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>1971-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1975-1981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Medrano 1995, p. 120, Shafir 1995, p. 42)

Shafir also notes that the Basque territory in Spain experienced significant immigration between 1880 and 1900, however does not give figures for those years citing a lack of reliable data. Additionally, he notes that if one subtracts the number of Basques who are children of one or both parents whom are former immigrants, second generation Basques make up only 51% of inhabitants of the Basque Country. (Shafir 1995, pp. 41-43)

Industrialization not only brought immigrants to the Basque country from other poorer parts of Spain, it hastened the transformation of Euskadi from a rural agrarian society to an urban industrialized society and created a very large class of wage and salaried workers comprised of both indigenous Basques and immigrants from other parts of Spain. The following survey shows the growth in wage and salaried jobs from 1955 to 1981:
Table 3.2
Percentage of workers earning a wage or salary* in the Basque Country, 1955-1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Medrano 1995, p. 126)
*(wages typically refer to per hour pay rates that vary based on hours worked and salaries to pay rates based on fixed weekly, monthly or annual periods)

Table 3.1 above shows that immigration patterns reversed in the late 1970's. As Basque industry felt the effects of the worldwide oil crisis and unemployment rose, there was an exodus from the Basque Country. However, while many Spanish (and presumably Basque) workers emigrated out of the country or migrated to other areas of Spain in search of work, or a more favorable business climate, there is a lack of evidence to support the idea that mass emigration has had a significant effect on the nationalist movement. Immigrants and children of immigrants still comprise a large portion of the population in Basque Country and still affect the trajectory of the nationalist movement. Nationalism scholar Stephen Van Evera notes that: “Intermingling raises the risk of communal conflict during the struggle for national freedom, as groups that would be trapped as minorities in a new national state oppose its reach for freedom.” (Van Evera 1994, p. 17)

Van Evera also addresses the notion of diaspora and nationalist’s drive to “in-
gather” their population back into the territorial homeland or conversely to expand the borders of the homeland to incorporate areas where members of the ethnic group now reside. Although Basque communities exist in the American Northwest and presumably elsewhere, the Basque's are not in diaspora, they are essentially territorially intact, albeit divided by provincial and national borders. The discussion on regionalism will address the tension between the desire of Basque nationalists who live in the Basque autonomous territory in Spain to incorporate other provinces into a separate Basque state, and the ambivalence on the part of the populations of French Basque provinces and Navarra towards the idea of incorporation in a Basque state.

It should be noted that Medrano argues that a very particular type of emigration affected the nationalist movement. He contends the political influence of the wealthy business class was diminished "partly" by the exodus of some of their numbers following the oil crisis. (Medrano 1995, p. 181) However, it is not clear how large this exodus was, who was involved and/or exactly how their departure directly affected Basque society.

Immigrants and the ETA

Zirakzadeh writes that many immigrants and children of immigrants who were labor activists during the late 1960s and 1970s became sympathizers of communism, the early ETA and regional autonomy (although not of territorial independence). However, the Basque labor movement at this time was also deeply divided over who exactly were the “oppressed workers” in need of liberation: only Basque workers, all workers, or immigrants. (Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 79)
While, the social composition of the ETA is difficult to determine, scholars have theorized that, after its initial formation by young men from the lower middle class, it began to attract disaffected young industrial workers with rural backgrounds, primarily from the province of Guipuzcoa where the majority of its violent attacks have taken place. In addition, the ETA’s Marxist/socialist political agenda has replaced the emphasis on ethnic/cultural divisions with an emphasis on class divisions and opened the way for inclusion of immigrants into the Basque nationalist movement. The PNV also eventually rejected Arana’s racist platform and shifted its emphasis to language as the litmus test for membership in the new civicly oriented Basque nationalist movement, thus opening the way for immigrants who were willing to go through the arduous task of acquiring the language. Shafir refers to this shift in the nationalist parties outlook as evidence of a new “primordialist socialism”. This seemingly incompatible marriage of ethnic exclusivity with ideological inclusivity reflects generational change. Older nationalist still tend to see nationalism in the context of racial purity and younger Basques tend to view nationalism in the context of class and civic identity. The political center of the nationalist movement has moved from promoting an ethnic to a civic concept of citizenship. (Shafir 1995, pp. 17, 125-126) The political left of the nationalist movement has moved from an ethnic to a class concept of citizenship.

**Immigration and Language**

Immigrants to Basque territories tended to be Spanish speaking, fairly well educated and loyal to the Spanish Socialist Party and its trade union UGT. Thus, they have not been completely susceptible to assimilation into the Basque community. In addition, the emphasis on Euskera as the rallying point for Basque nationalism was
detrimental to incorporating large numbers of immigrants into the struggle. Few urban Basques still spoke Euskera in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and Spanish was the official language in schools and used in larger factories and workplaces. (Shafir 1995, p. 95-97)

Arana and other intellectuals were the first to emphasize the importance of reviving Euskera, although he insisted maintaining and protecting the racial purity of the Basques was the most important element of Basque nationalism. In spite of the language’s near disappearance by the late 1800’s when Arana sought to ignite a nationalist movement; it eventually became a symbol of Basque unity. Several theories explain the importance of Euskera: (1) nationalism could not continue to be centered around racial characteristics because massive immigration into Basque territory made it impossible to maintain racial purity, (2) traditional Basque society and practices were eclipsed by modern practices and lifestyles introduced with industrialization, (3) Euskera was one of the few symbols of “Basqueness” to survive modernization, and (4) use of Euskera was prohibited by the State for several decades in the 20th century and thus became a rallying point for the ethnic community.

At one time the use of Euskera was considered the mark of a peasant background. As early as the 12th century, elites in the Basque cities were speaking Spanish, French and Latin rather than Euskera, which was the language of the countryside. (Shafir 1995, p. 88-89, 96-98) However, in 1975, Euskera was deemed the “co-official” language of the Basque region. (Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 2) It has regained popularity and thousands of people are attempting to learn the difficult language as adults and sending their children to Euskera language schools called ikastolas. (Kurlansky 1999, p.
Nevertheless, even now, only around 20% of Spanish Basques and a slightly higher percentage of French Basques speak Euskera. The following survey completed in 1996 and outlined in Table 3.3 below, examines the distribution of Euskera speakers by territory within the Basque Country.
Table 3.3  
Percentage of Basques Speakers in Euskadi - 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% Basque-Speaking</th>
<th>% Almost Basque-Speaking</th>
<th>% Non-Basque Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alava</td>
<td>271,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vizcaya</td>
<td>1,143,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guipuzkoa</td>
<td>670,000</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Separate province not included in Basque Country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navarra</td>
<td>519,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(French Territories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourd</td>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basse Navarre</td>
<td>34,700</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soule</td>
<td>15,800</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>2,084,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>237,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>2,603,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euskal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herria</td>
<td>2,846,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Population data: 1991. Language data are from 1996 (source: EKB), except for partial data of the Northern BC provinces (these are from 1991). At the same time, the totals for BAC and Southern BC are from 1991, not based on the partial data of 1996.

Initials used:  BAC: Basque Autonomous Community, formed by Alava, Vizcaya and Guipuzkoa.  
Northern BC: Three provinces (Labourd, Basse Navarre and Soule), under the French State.  
Southern BC: Four provinces (the 3 of BAC and Navarra) under the Spanish State.  
Euskal Herria: the whole Basque Country.

“Almost Basque Speaking” is a term coined by Basque sociolinguists to name those who understand Basque but do not speak it, or have poor command of the language.

(geoNative 2001)

The language emphasis of the Basque Nationalist movement has had two very
contradictory effects. On the one hand, an emphasis on acquisition of language rather than race as a qualification for membership in the Basque community means that anyone, including immigrants, willing to go to the trouble of acquiring Euskera proficiency can, theoretically, acquire social acceptance. On the other hand many ethnic Basque’s, including some Basque political leaders do not speak the language. (Shafir 1995, p. 118)

One can function successfully in Basque Country socially and economically without speaking any Euskera so there is very little incentive for immigrants or youth to master a language they may not use on a daily basis at work or at home. In spite of the fact that it is once again being taught in schools, without widespread use of the language, it could be relegated to a static role like other cultural symbols such as traditional costumes, foods, folk dancing and festivals that are important but largely ignored in everyday life.

At present, education in Euskera is optional. Ikastolas are private schools, which offer a curriculum in Euskera-only education. The first was created in 1917, however, they did not take hold until the Franco regime when they become clandestine purveyors of Euskera language education in an alternative educational setting that emphasized equality of sexes, development of children's individual personalities and teaching children a respect for the natural world. Although not part of the public education system, since 1975 they have received some support from the government. There are also public schools that now offer full-day instruction in Euskera, partial-day instruction in Euskera and Spanish only instruction. Although percentages vary greatly by province and by regions within each province, there is a general trend toward more students choosing curriculums solely in Euskera and more students choosing bi-lingual Euskera/Spanish curriculums and fewer students choosing Spanish only curriculums. (Loyer 1997, pp.
However, an attempt to further institutionalize the language could risk alienating immigrant parents who do not wish their children to grow up speaking a different language than themselves and those inhabitants of regions that feel more cultural affinity with Madrid than the Basque Country - two important voting blocks already less supportive of Basque nationalism and Basque separatism.

Based on my understanding of ethnic migration, assimilation (the social, political and economic integration of individuals into the host society) of immigrants typically occurs over time as the second generation learns the new language of the host nation in addition to the language of their parents. The third generation then often speaks only the language of the host nation and is (in the absence of marked racial differences) well on the way to complete assimilation. The Basque case presents a slightly different twist. Nationalist groups present the acquisition of a little used language as the entry to citizenship but the language of the immigrants is the dominant language. A study of this case indicates that immigration has hastened the assimilation of Basques into Spain as much as the reverse. Inasmuch as knowledge of Euskera is not necessary for social or professional advancement and most immigrants to the Basque territories come from backgrounds to which they have strong cultural ties themselves, there is not a great incentive to assimilate. Instead of full assimilation, what has occurred is the development of dual identities.

In a study done in the early-1980’s, of those surveyed who indicated that they considered themselves equally Basque and Spanish about 46% were immigrants. Of those who considered themselves more Basque than Spanish about 24 were immigrants and of those who considered themselves solely Basque about 10% were immigrants.
In a similar study done in 1998, around 45% of immigrants surveyed considered themselves equally Basque and Spanish, about 14% considered themselves more Basque than Spanish but only 4.5% considered themselves solely Basque. In Tables 3.4 and 3.5 below, which report the survey results from 1985 and 1998, one can clearly see the changes in self-identification over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective National Identification of Basque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natives and Immigrants, 1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both Parents</th>
<th>One Parent</th>
<th>Born in Euskadi of Immigrant Parents</th>
<th>Immigrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in Euskadi</td>
<td>Born in Euskadi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (and More Spanish Than Basque)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Basque as Spanish</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Basque than Spanish</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = (438) (92) (92) (351)

(Shafir 1995, p.122)
Table 3.5
Subjective National Identification of Basque Natives and Immigrants, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>Immigrants*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Only</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Spanish Than Basque</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque and Spanish</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Basque than Spanish</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Only</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/NA</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 839 550 1,389

*Including the children of immigrants
(Llera 1999, p. 103)

It is important to note that over time fewer people self-identify themselves as exclusively Basque or exclusively Spanish. There is a growing tendency to view oneself as a hybrid of the two. (Ibid. p. 103) These polls also seem to indicate that immigrants are slowly becoming integrated into Basque society, but a Basque society that is more pluralistic than communal. Llera writes that:

“The nationalist hegemony, however, has shifted to a more ‘voluntaristic’ model, implying the predominance of assimilationist attitudes towards immigrants and those natives who do not regard themselves as nationalists. The linguistic question, which has found a solution in the education system and the national policy of ‘positive discrimination (affirmative action)’ a way for its solution, has moderated tensions in political terms, but it remains alive.” (Llera 1999, p. 117)

What the polls above fail to define is what being “Basque” or “more Basque than
Spanish” for example, means to immigrants, and, how those feelings translate into political support for a Basque nationalist agenda. On the one hand, the Spanish Socialist Party still enjoys strong support among Spanish immigrants who live in the Basque Country. On the other hand, Spanish immigrants have also been active in the ETA. The fact that immigrants claim to be both Spanish and Basque indicates weak nationalistic sentiment towards either community.

The Spaniards may be importing their own historically weak sense of Spanish nationalism. As discussed earlier, Spanish nationalism reflected a sense of being more Spanish than any other broad classification available such as Portuguese, French or Moroccan and did not imply patriotism or strong loyalty to a Spanish state. If this is the case, assimilation of Spanish immigrants could dilute the strength of Basque nationalism. If individuals do not perceive themselves to be “distinct” from others on the basis of shared history, culture, race, etc. then one could argue that “nationalism” has been replaced with “regionalism” – a much less deeply held sense of preference for or loyalty to a particular geographic space which is not necessarily perceived as one’s “homeland.”

My interpretation of Tables 3.4 and 3.5 is as follows. Since Spaniards are obviously not ethnically Basque, they could merely be expressing a sense of regional solidarity with the citizens of their adopted homeland. That is, the intention to permanently relocate to the Basque Country, e.g., “this is where I have chosen to live, raise my children, die, etc.” However it also indicates that immigrants are becoming integrated into Basque society rather than simply living in isolated enclaves of Spanish immigrants surrounded by hostile natives. Additionally, though, it means that immigrants and children of immigrants who intend to live permanently in the Basque
region are not relinquishing their social and political ties to Spain either and would thus not be receptive to Basque separatist projects.

The fact that native Basques are increasingly identifying themselves as both Basque and Spanish indicates there is less a sense of “us” versus “them” than there was, for example, under Franco. This could be important to the future of Basque nationalism as well. In some ethno-nationalist societies, such as the Basques or the Afghans, where there are historically strong loyalties to sub-national groups such as clan, family or tribe, nationalist sentiment has deepened during periods of external oppression. In the absence of an enemy or oppressor, nationalist sentiment is significantly weaker. Therefore, a sense of “us” as separate from “them” can be essential to maintaining support for a nationalist agenda. The polls above indicate that this sense is slowly eroding.

The ambiguity of both wings of the nationalist movement, the far left and the centrists, may be the reason why neither has attracted significant membership from immigrants. Although nationalists have drawn some electoral support from the working-class immigrant community, the Spanish socialist party still obtains a fairly high percentage of the vote. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, studies showed that most supporters of the SSP (Spanish Socialist Party) were not Basque-born and most supporters of the nationalist parties HB (Herrie Batasuna), EE (Euskadi Ezkerra) and PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) were Basque-born. (Shafir 1995, 103-104, 112-115, 118-119)

Other Groups With Influence on Basque Nationalism

The Spanish State
Aside from Basque responses to elimination of the fueros in the 19th century and the repression of Franco in the twentieth century discussed above, central government policies have affected the cohesion or fragmentation of the Basque community in the last 30 years in more subtle ways. Government policies may have both contributed to the solidification of nationalist sentiment across a large number of the population as well as weakened the strength of the separatist movement. Gurr has argued that “limited autonomy agreements tend to undermine the political cohesion of the communal groups and reduce its fighting capacity” (Gurr 1993, p. 303) In giving groups the opportunity to govern themselves, attention is refocused on intra-group divisions and power struggles. This has proven to be the case with the Basques. With the exception of the far left HB parties and the ETA, administrative autonomy appears to have weakened support for separatism and fostered political pluralism within the Basque territory.

However, Gorenburg, in his work on ethno-nationalist groups in Russia found that when autonomous governments are created, institutional factors contribute to cohesion among the ethno-nationalist group. He argues that separate education systems and institutions foster a trust among members of ethnic communities and allow elites to pass on nationalist sentiments to children they teach and to members of rural communities. (Gorenburg 2000, p. 122)

Spain’s semi-federal governmental structure may have been one of the contributing factors to the development of the seemingly contradictory dual identities discussed above, with some citizens of Basque Country now indicating they are both Basque and Spanish. Autonomous arrangements have thus both contributed to support for regional nationalist movements and facilitated the assimilation of immigrants into
local cultures which has somewhat mitigated the strength of separatist movements that seek to sever ties with the Spanish state. They have strengthened regional identification by creating separate political institutions but have also weakened the nationalist movement by partly satisfying political aspirations of the ethnic community. Nationalist sentiment has thus become more widespread but weaker as it spans more social groups and is adopted by a pluralistic society. (Beramendi 1999, p. 93-95)

The Role of Ideology and Political Movements

The history of the Basque nationalist movement is one of fragmentation: political groups forming, splitting and realigning. Since the emergence of Basque nationalism in the late 1800’s, support for nationalism and separatism has waxed and waned among groups with different agendas, i.e., economic, political, and cultural.

Since the late 19th century, arguments for Basque nationalism have been presented in several different ways; (1) territorial claims, i.e., the Basques have been colonized by Spain and should be liberated, (2) class, i.e., as a movement to champion the rights of the oppressed workers, (3) ethnicity or race - focusing on the revival of Euskera as a product and symbol of ethnicity. (Clark 1984, pp. 32-34, 40)

However, the most important split in the nationalist movement today is between moderate, although still separatist, political parties supported by a majority of Basques and the violent Marxist-Leninist paramilitary group, the ETA which is supported by the coalition of political parties formed in the late 1970s and dubbed Herrie Batasuna (HB). (Mees 2001, p. 805, 810, 811/Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 3) Today, in the words of Llera:

“In the aftermath of these last regional elections [in October, 1998], the party system could be regarded as consisting of seven partisan
groups: three are Basque nationalist (PNV, HB/EH and EA), three others are statewide parties (PP, PSE-EE and IU), and one is provincialist (UA). Examined from a different perspective, partisan politics within the region is dominated by four parties on the right (PNV, PP and UA), one on the centre (EA), and the other three on the left (HB/EH, PSE-EE and IU). Finally, it is important to note that one of them, HB (with a new denomination after these elections, Euskal Herritarrok or ‘we the citizens of Euskal Herria’), is an anti-system party.” (Llera 1999, p. 114)

The following is a list of party acronyms for principle political parties in Euskadi. See page “vi” for a more detailed listing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA*</td>
<td>Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity Political Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE*</td>
<td>Euskadi Ezkerra (Basque Country Left Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB*</td>
<td>Herrie Batasuna (People United Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCE/IU</td>
<td>Partido Comunista de Euskadi/Izquierda Unida (Communist Party of Euskadi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNV*</td>
<td>Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Partido Popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSOE-PSE</td>
<td>Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol-Partido Socialista de Euskadi (Spanish socialist party)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PNV, EE, HB and EA - all political parties that are in support of Basque Nationalism

There is no consensus within the political community about what degree of political independence needs to be achieved and there is still violent resistance to the presence of the Spanish government. The ETA has killed around 800 people in terrorist actions since 1968 and is still, in 2002 pursuing a campaign of terror against its political opponents. (Mees 2001, p. 805, 810, 811/Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 3)

The split between the HB, the political party coalition that supports the ETA and moderate Basque parties was formalized in 1988 when all Basque parties except the HB signed the “Agreement for the Pacification and Normalization of Euskadi” which

49
explicitly rejected the use of violent means to achieve political goals. (Mees 2001, p. 805, 810, 811/Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 3) The ETA has continued to use violence and coercion, directed at both agents of the Spanish state and members of Basque society who are uncooperative or unsympathetic with the ETA agenda, to keep national and international attention focused on their cause.

The ETA claims it will accept nothing less than full independence for the Basques and violence continues, although not at the level of the late 1970s and 1980s. The ETA declared a unilateral ceasefire in September of 1998 that lasted for over a year, but rescinded the ceasefire on November 28, 1999 and has since returned to violent political activism. Today, the tactics, if not the goals of the ETA, have been rejected by the majority of Basques who themselves feel threatened by the ETA and its violent methods. (Minahan 1996, p. 170/Mees 2001, pp. 798, 814)

Some of the main themes in the Basque conflict have been modernization, industrialization, immigration, economic cycles, state repression of cultural expression, political ideology, and the role of language. Each one of these themes has a class component and each one is entangled with others in a nationalist/separatist knot that is impossible to completely disentangle. Neo-Marxists argue that nationalism is the result of the suffering caused by the uneven economic development arising out of the capitalist system. (Shafir 1995, p. 15) They emphasize the roles of unemployment, dislocation of families from rural to urban settings and the exploitation of the working class by capitalist owners.

Further complicating this picture is the fact that, in the case of Basque ethno-nationalism, nationalist sentiment often does not equate with support for a separatist
agenda, or at least with an immediate desire for a separate state. While separatism is actively and aggressively pursued by some sectors of the political far left, the depth of support is less clear in the moderate realm. As noted above, there is also a wide array of choice available to Basque voters in the form of multiple political parties. This political pluralism makes it more difficult to determine if voters are supporting nationalism, separatism or some other plank of a party platform dealing with the economy, taxes, education, or strictly local issues. In the words of Gershon Shafir:

“Basque nationalism, in short, is fragmented between moderate and radical wings that disagree over the goal of the nationalist movement, autonomy or independence, as well as over social goals, a market economy or some form of socialism or communism.” (Shafir 1995, p 108)

Tables 3.6 and 3.7 below provide further evidence for Shafir’s findings:
Table 3.6
Popular Votes in Basque Regional Elections, 1980-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNV</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSE/EE</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCE/IU</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB/EH</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCD/CDS</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP/CP/PP</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalists</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculations by Francisco J. Llera  (Llera1999, p. 112-113)

Table 3.7
Seats in Basque Parliament, 1980-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNV</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSE/EE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCE/IU</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB/EH</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCD/CDS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP/CP/PP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculations by Francisco J. Llera  (Llera1999, p. 112-113)
Over time, what began as a politically conservative, ethno-centric, nationalist movement has been adopted by a wide spectrum of political parties from Marxist to socialist to moderate that have largely abandoned an emphasis on racial purity and now emphasize class struggle (far left parties) and cross-class membership (centrist parties).

Robert Clark has emphasized the role of economics and class in the Basque nationalist debate. The Spanish Basques, unlike many other ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, have generally enjoyed a higher standard of living than other Spaniards. Clark argues that Basque nationalism has primarily advanced during periods of economic hardship and cultural repression. (Clark 1984, p. 16) This argument reflects the belief that both freedom to prosper and freedom to practice culture have been of paramount importance to the Basque peoples and that nationalism is a vehicle to achieve these two goals rather than an end in itself.

Today, while class is not the primary factor in determining whether a Basque is or is not a nationalist, the strength of nationalist sentiment has historically varied among social classes. The more prosperous business classes have favored a less radical program of nationalism, focusing on administrative autonomy and freedom to practice culture. They have been content to defer separatist claims until later. This is hardly surprising when exports to the other Spanish territories comprise the bulk of the Basque Country’s GDP and a large percentage of the population is employed in sectors that are export-intensive.
Table 3.8

Distribution by employment sector of the active population of the Basque Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Medrano 1995, p. 125)

(See also Table 3.11 - External trade for the Basque Country (1983)

Ernesto Zirakzadeh contends that a rise in nationalist sentiment was a bi-product of economic insecurity felt by the Basque population following the worldwide recession of the 1970s. Zirakzadeh employs a world systems approach to the study of Basque nationalism. He emphasizes the global economic position of the Basque territory in the world economy as the primary factor in the increase in nationalism as follows: The Basque economy was heavily geared toward foreign exports (about 20% of the economy was based on exports to countries outside of Spain and a large percentage of GDP was based on goods “exported” to other parts of Spain) and was also dependent on oil imports and suffered from the worldwide oil shortages of 1973-74 and 1980-81. Thus, while the Basque society was fairly advanced, it shared an export emphasis not unlike less developed countries in the periphery. Consequently, he argues the economy can be properly classified as semi-peripheral and that like other peripheral economies, it suffered greatly in the world economic recession. Therefore, political leaders were able to exploit
the rising unemployment by emphasizing the need to gain greater local control over an economy buffeted by outside economic forces. (Zirakzadeh 1989, pp. 318-339/Medrano 1995, pp. 118-119)

Zirakzadeh argues that Basque nationalist parties were successful in linking economic issues to independence and thereby increasing their share of the popular vote in Basque Country. He found that during the recession period, nationalist parties emphasized the economy in their party platforms by as much as 50%. While acknowledging the existence of other factors in the nationalist movement, he finds a direct link between each percentage point increase in unemployment and a corresponding rise in the percentage share of the vote garnered by the nationalist parties. In support of his argument, Zirakzadeh cites the works of Seymour Martin Lipset, Immanuel Wallerstein and others who observed that dramatic changes in demand for limited specialized export products can result in equally dramatic regional changes in voting patterns that favor political projects aimed at protecting the home market or providing alternative economic and political arrangements to stabilize the local economy. (Zirakzadeh 1989, p. 323)

In 1979, Basque citizens were polled regarding "the most important problem facing Spain." The results are reported in Table 3.9 below and demonstrate that citizens were far more concerned about unemployment (56-80%) than regional autonomy (1-2%) or terrorism (9-19%).
Table 3.9
Basque Responses to the Question: “What Do You Think Is the Most Important Problem Facing Spain?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of Sample</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Response:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Crisis</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Inequalities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Moral Traditions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Order</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Autonomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation (not include in July and September surveys)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know/No Response</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Zirakzadeh 1989, p. 329)

Zirakzadeh notes that the level of nationalist voting was higher in Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa, the two provinces that also had the highest unemployment. (Ibid. p. 329) They are also the most urban, contain the most Euskera speakers and are the most remote from other Spanish provinces. However, Zirakzadeh contends that the unemployment in these two provinces was a stronger indicator of nationalist voting than language or region. (Ibid. pp. 329-332)

As noted above, economic self-determination continues to be a theme in the
political rhetoric of some nationalist leaders, however, the reality of economic
interdependency with Spain has caused others to temper their arguments for separatism.
In order to confirm Zirakzadeh’s theory, a second study would need to be conducted
using the period 1990-1995 which involved another global recession to see if the
campaign rhetoric and voting results were consistent with the findings in 1989.

The Basque Nationalist Party

Ernesto Zirakzadeh noted that scholars are divided on who supports the PNV and
why. He writes that some scholars (Fusi, Linz and Payne) argue the PNV has had an
anti-modernist stance appealing to traditionalists who support religious and family values
but alienating business classes. He cites others, (Jean-Claude Larronde, Joseph Harrison,
Antonio Elorza and Jesus de Sarria) as arguing that large numbers of the commercial
class support the PNV and its nationalist platform and have as far back as the late 1800’s.
(Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 102-103) Zirakzadeh himself describes the party as both: an
ideologically contradictory mix of “(1) a theocratic and anti-capitalist tradition that
tended to be highly critical of large-scale production and of capitalists’ exploitation of
employees, and (2) a more typically “Western” or “modernist” tradition that favored
rapid industrialization and private entrepreneurship as a way to organize society.”
(Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 111)

The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), begun by Sabino Arana on St Ignatius Day,
July 30, 1895, retained an anti-capitalist, messianic and strongly separatist tone until the
Spanish Civil War but eventually expanded as more pragmatic concerns of local
bourgeoisie were incorporated. The party’s ambiguous stance on independence and its
centrist position on the ideological scale, has also allowed political space for groups with
differing agendas and from different classes, some of who do not desire independence from Spain. Gregorio Moran claims “The Basque Nationalist party includes all: from the radical and progressive to the ancient and troglodytic.” (Zirakzadeh 1991, p.144/Kurlansky 1999, p. 166) Although strongly nationalist, it has presented statehood as a rather vague long-term goal that would be the natural culmination of a series of steps toward independence of which political autonomy would be the most immediate important goal. (Mees 2001, p. 807/Medrano 1995, p. 2/Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 3/Beramendi 1999, p. 93/Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 101-102)

However, the Basque Nationalist Party began as more than just a political movement. The PNV sought nothing less than the complete integration of the individual into the party through creation of youth programs, women’s groups, cultural activities such as courses in Basque language, music, traditional dancing, football, mountaineering, etc. At one time, early in the 20th century the word “party” was even replaced with the word “community” to differentiate the PNV from other strictly political movements. It was originally, above all, an attempt to create or recreate a unified Basque society based on a romanticized historical theme. (Mees 2001, pp. 803-804)

The differences between the ETA and the PNV are important. Although they both profess a desire for independence from Spain and re-unification with French Basques, the ETA is more than just a more radical version of the PNV. The ETA is specifically anti-capitalist in its orientation and committed to the use of violence as a legitimate political tool.

THE ETA
The ETA (Euzkadi ‘ta Askatasuna -Basque Homeland and Liberty) objects to the supremacy of the Spanish state over the Basques and the continued territorial separation of the French and Spanish Basque communities (which actually occurred centuries ago in 1659 under the Treaty of the Pyrenees which settled the border between France and Spain). (Mees 2001, p. 800) The ETA has, at times, used the French Basque territories as a “safe house” where activists can hide out from Spanish police and there have been fewer terrorist acts carried out in France. This may, in part, be due to the fact that French authorities allowed ETA activists to take refuge in French Basqueland during the Franco regime and even for some time after Franco died. The election of a conservative majority in France in 1986 marked the beginning of the French government taking a harder line towards the ETA and the beginning of more cooperation with Spanish authorities. It may also be due to the fact that the Basque provinces in southern France are still mostly rural. Although French Basque provinces attract retirees and tourists to famous beach resorts such as Biarritz, they have not experienced the same industrialization, and accompanying immigration, as the Spanish Basque territories because industrial development in France has been centered in the north and east. (Kurlansky 1999, pp. 308-325/Jacob 1994, pp. 326-328)

Mees argues that it is the ETA’s primordialist view of Basque nationalism that has prevented it from recognizing the diverse nature of modern Basque society. This outlook has kept it locked in a strategy of violent resistance to the Spanish state in spite of waning political support on the part of a population it is bent on liberating. At present the HB parties that support the ETA only garner about 15% of the vote in elections. (Mees 2001, p. 809)
However, this does not explain why the ETA, under the cloak of the HB, still enjoys some support, even by those who do not vote for the HB – it may be because in a very crude sense - they keep the traditionally powerful political interests in check and level the political playing field. In studies tracking Basque attitudes toward the ETA from 1978 to 1996, respondents agreeing with the statement “ETA activists are patriots or idealists” dropped from 48 percent in 1978 to 24 percent in 1996. Those agreeing with the statements “ETA activists are Crazy/Terrorists or Criminal/Killers” rose from 18 percent in 1976 to 33 percent in 1996. (Llera 1999, p. 110-111) However, the twenty four percent cited above that show support for the ETA is still relatively high.

In surveys taken in the late 1980’s, between 40 and 60 percent of Basques indicated they believed the upper classes had been more supportive of the Franco regime than regional Basque interests. It was, in part, the ETA that created a political space for the lesser bourgeoisie and other supporters of Basque nationalism by terrorizing business elites into supporting their cause by paying revolutionary taxes or being assassinated. (Medrano 1995, p. 182) However, it is important to note that most of the ETA assassinations, at least up until the mid-1980s were of military personnel and law enforcement personnel as well as the deaths of innocent bystanders. There were few businessmen actually killed by the ETA, although between 1972 and 1983 Basque industrialists were the target of nearly 500 ETA attacks in the form of kidnappings, personal attacks or attacks on property. Apparently, the threat of violence carefully cultivated through very specific, often symbolic violent acts, has been enough to successfully coerce the business community into paying the “revolutionary tax” thus avoiding the unpleasant alternative. Although attacks on the Basque business elite do
reinforce the “ETA’s position as defender of the Basque working class,” it is not clear whether the anti-capitalist rhetoric of the ETA is as important as their argument that Basque territory is “occupied” by Spain. (Moxone-Browne 1987, p. 7/Llera 1999, p. 108)

The ETA attacks affected the local bourgeoisie as well. They were eager to avoid being associated with Spanish nationalism lest they succumb to the same fate. Thus, in a society in which upper classes could potentially wield a great deal of political power, radical nationalists were able to isolate the elite and make way for traditionally less politically influential classes to occupy a larger space in the nationalist debate.

Zirakzadeh emphasizes the role of modernization in fomenting anti-capitalist feeling among fishermen, family farmers, sharecroppers, and farmhands. He writes that many ETA supporters came from among Basques workers who had grown up in rural settings and whose families had either lost farms to competition from industrial farming operations in the southern Basque country or to other pressures brought on by industrialization in general. (Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 50)

Early in its development, the ETA was fragmented among groups with many competing revolutionary visions. The same traditionalist, ethnic, linguistic purity movement that influenced the early PNV, influenced the ETA. The Marxist proletarian-centered ideology of the New Left as well as foreign guerilla and revolutionary movements in Algeria, Angola and Cuba and elsewhere also influenced the organization. (Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 183/Guibernau 2000, p. 59) These various influences have resulted in an unusual combination of a Marxist egalitarian ideal of class struggle between the workers and owners of means of production (an “inclusive” view of the Basques which
includes immigrants), nationalism based on a primordial view of the Basque peoples (an “exclusive” view of the Basques) and political violence directed at political adversaries including both Basques and Spaniards.

Regional Divisions in Basque Society

Scholars David Kaplan and Guntram Herb write, “Territory is so inextricably linked to national identity that it cannot be separated out. Neither the identity, or consciousness, shared by members of a nation nor the physical territory of the nation itself can be viewed in isolation.” (Kaplan 1999, p. 2) Other scholars, however, view territory more as a fixed point for locating the social entity known as the nation rather than central to nationalist identity. (Ibid.) Some scholars argue that the Basque nationalist debate is primarily about “territory and political power.” They claim that Basque society is culturally, economically and politically divided primarily along geographic lines, and should be so studied in order to understand how the local intersects with the regional in Basque nationalism. (Raento 2000, p. 232-234/Voutat 2000, pp. 287-288)

French scholar Barbara Loyer writes:

“L’histoire des provinces basques est parallèle à celle des royaumes de la péninsule ibérique depuis au moins dix siècles: dès la Reconquête et l’apparition des premiers royaumes chrétiens d’Espagne, elles ont fait partie, ensemble ou séparément, de ces royaumes, asturien, navarrais, puis castillan même si, à l’intérieur de ces plus ensembles, chaque province gardait ses coutumes et son individualité. ... pour comprendre la situation locale, [il faut] prendre en compte la diversité du territoire basque.” (Loyer, 1997, p. 53)

(Translation: “For at least the six centuries, the history of the Basque provinces paralleled that of the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. Since
the *Reconquista* (Christian struggle to drive out the Muslims) and the appearance of the first Christian kingdoms in Spain they have been part, together or separate of the Asturien, Navarras and then Castilian kingdoms, however, inside of those kingdoms each province kept its customs and individuality. ... in order to understand the local situation, one must take into consideration the diversity of the Basque territory.”)

Basque territories (see Figures 1 and 2, pp. v, vi) never formed a homogenous political or social unit and remained independent from each other until well into the mid-1800s. Provinces were further divided by the creation by Castilian and Navarrese kings of protected urban enclaves of Spanish, French and Latin speakers called *villas*. The kings retained control over the villas, which received special royal charters granting them economic and political privileges. Meanwhile, the general assemblies and municipal councils that embodied a more democratic tradition governed the Basque countryside. Thus, Basque culture, economic development and political development all varied greatly not only between the coastal provinces of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya and the inland provinces of Alava and Navarra, but between cities and rural areas as well. (Shafir 1995, p. 88-89)

The Basque provinces also took separate sides during the Spanish civil war. Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa supported the Republic, in spite of its leftist, anti-church position, and Alava and Navarra supported Franco. (Shafir 1995, p. 101)

Raento divides the Basques into three categories according to their political views: (1) the “non-nationalists” - those Basques who believe that the Basque nation should remain a part of Spain, albeit with its own autonomous government; (2) the “moderate Basque nationalists” who see autonomy as a step towards eventual independence from the Spanish state. The Basque parliament is made of these parties,
including the PNV, the EA and the PSOE (Spanish socialist), which are committed to non-violence; and, (3) the “radical nationalists,” consisting of the MNLV (coalition of civic/political organizations) and the coalition HB and other organizations like the ETA and the KAS (Socialist Patriotic Coordinator - another coalition of civic/political organizations). These groups pursue an agenda of reunification of French and Spanish Basque territories in an independent, linguistically pure state. (Raento 2000, pp. 221-224)

Raento argues that the divisions discussed above can be linked to region and that voting patterns confirm this division. The urban Basques (approximately half of the population or 1.3 million individuals living in the 10 largest cities with inhabitants of 40,000 or more) are more likely to live in the provinces of Vizcaya or Guipuzcoa on the coast, the area most removed from the other Spanish provinces and insulated by a range of mountains, some of which exceed 1500 meters in height. Passage through the mountains from Alava to Guipuscoa and Vizcaya is often blocked by snow in the winter. Thus it is easier for Alavese to travel to Madrid than to other parts of the Basque Country. (Raento 2000, pp. 224-225/Loyer 1997, p. 24/Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 20)

Zirakzadeh writes that, in terms of labor politics: “The region’s physical geography, in particular the central location of the Cantabrian Mountains, has long affected its labor politics. For a century, the mountains have impeded communication and coordinated actions throughout the region and within the mountains organized movements for the improvement of conditions almost always have been splintered, with workers in each manufacturing town pursuing their own priorities and plans of action” (Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 54)
The weather and vegetation in northern provinces, is very different from the southern Basque Country. The mountainous, lush, green north has almost twice as much rainfall as the south, which is flat, treeless and dry. This has led to different types of agricultural practices, i.e., small, owner-operated farms in the north and large-scale commercial farming in the south that uses immigrant labor. Also Alava and Navarra are more rural than other Spanish Basque territories where, large non-Euskera speaking immigrant populations, unsympathetic to nationalist causes are islands of non-nationalist voting in the sea of the strongly nationalist Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa provinces. It is in these urban centers that non-nationalist sentiment butts up against a radical urban nationalist sentiment and violence is most pronounced. Van Evera writes that “local intermingling” can have a moderating effect on inter-ethnic conflict, as groups intermarry or develop friendships but it can also be dangerous when elements of one group instigate a cycle of violence. (Van Evera 1994, p. 19) In the urban areas of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa there is a higher percentage of non-nationalist voting. However, these provinces also claim the highest numbers of Euskera speakers - 17% in Vizcaya and 44% in Guipuzcoa. (Raento 2000, pp. 224-225/Loyer 1997, p. 24/Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 20)

The rural areas are divided among those mountainous regions in the north which are insular, have maintained traditional cultures and strongly support nationalism and those rural areas that lie on the edge of Basque territory close other Spanish provinces and are more sympathetic with the central state. Within these two provinces there is also a lower number of Euskera speakers - 7% in Alava and 10% in Navarra. (Ibid.)

Navarra, although claimed by the Basques as an important part of their territorial homeland, is not part of the Basque autonomous region and is also claimed by the
Spanish state as a historically significant site of Spanish nationalism. The Navarrese are themselves divided, as indicated above, with Basque nationalism popular in the north and Spanish nationalism popular in the south. The two parties representing Spanish unity - UPN (Union del Peueblo Navarro) and CDN (Convergencia de Democratas Navarros) combined get almost 50% of the vote in the region. (Raento 2000, pp. 226)

A similar, anti-Basque separatist movement has evolved in Alava among Alavese who resent what they perceive to be the inflation of Bilboan political influence on Basque governance and what they see as an attempt to introduce cultural elements into their society that are not traditionally Alavese. Only 7% of the Alavese population is Euskera speaking. It is also economically driven. In 1994, Alavese party Unidad Alavesa (UA) leader Pablo Mosquera has emphasized that his party is attempting to, in effect, create an autonomous arrangement for the Alavese similar to, but separate from, the Basque autonomy arrangement. He explains: “Self-government in this context means the possibility to decide how to develop the territory and how to invest the money produced.” In elections that same year, his party garnered 18% of the Alavese vote. (Raento 2000, pp. 226-227)

The Basques are further divided territorially by the French/Spanish border that isolates three provinces: Basse-Navarre, Soule and Labourd on the French side. French Basques have been less prosperous than the Spanish Basques and have thus been less important economically to the state. They were spared the oppression of the Franco regime, but living in a highly centralized state, have also not enjoyed the administrative autonomy granted to the Spanish Basques in the 1970's. The French Basques have a high percentage of Basque speakers (refer to Table 3.3) which would otherwise indicate a
strong nationalist sentiment, however, the majority has not been as openly supportive of Basque separatism, although, many have covertly supported the resistance movement by sheltering ETA fugitives from Spain. The French government, which appeared sympathetic to the Basque resistance under Franco has recently become concerned enough with Basque nationalism within its territory to take a more aggressive stance on extraditing suspected ETA activists to Spain. This policy has met with resistance in the French Basque territories.

The most important aspects of regional divisions in the Basque nationalist movement are:

1) Language – Nationalist sentiment is stronger in Spanish provinces that have a maintained some use of Euskera (Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa). (See Table 3.3)

2) Relative Location – Nationalist sentiment is stronger in areas that are geographically isolated from the rest of Spain by the mountains (Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa vs. Alava and Navarra).

3) Urban/Rural – In urban areas that have experienced a great deal of immigration there is a clash between immigrant non-nationalists and ultra-nationalists who are sometimes migrating from the rural nationalist strongholds in order to find jobs (urban centers of Bilboa and San Sebastian located in Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa).

4) French/Spanish – The border that divides these provinces also marks a difference in public support for Basque separatism.

Conclusion: There are seven provinces that are considered "Basque." Only three are included in the Spanish Basque autonomous territory referred to as Basque Country:
Alava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa. The Navarese elected not to join the autonomous territory at its creation. Geographically isolated rural communities in Spain that have maintained traditional practices and urban communities that have experienced an influx of displaced rural families are both strongholds for nationalist movements. The two Spanish Basque provinces that are most supportive of Basque nationalism are Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa. The French Basque provinces of Basse Navarre, Soule and Labourd and the Spanish Basque provinces of Alava and Navarra are less supportive, on the whole, of the nationalist movement.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Basque community is not only an interesting case study from the perspective of relating theories of ethno-nationalism to actual Basque Nationalist movements, it is also important in that the Basques are currently experiencing a wave of politically inspired violence emanating out of a struggle for independence that has gone on for decades.

It is reported that since its inception in 1959, the ETA has been responsible for 768 deaths, most of them government officials, security and military forces, politicians, and judicial figures. (Basque Homeland and Freedom 2002) After years of sporadic violence, people are still being killed and injured as a result of violence carried out by the ETA. After the breakdown of a unilateral cease-fire on the part of the ETA, which began in 1998 and lasted almost a year and half, “No week-end passes without threats or arson attacks against conservative or socialist politicians. The Basque political system is more polarized than ever before; the Spanish government, strengthened by its overall majority in the March 2000 general elections, is not willing or able to take any further steps to de-escalate the situation. In short, no such thing as a peace process now exists.” (Mees 2001, p. 799) Mees goes on to argue that from a conflict resolution perspective, it is important to analyze the Basque conflict to determine “Which kind of political settlement can obtain a minimum of consent from each of the political communities and cultural identities involved in the conflict?” (Ibid.)

The existence of the three divisions in the Basque nationalist movement discussed above; ethnic, regional and ideological, makes it more difficult to find a solution to this conflict that will satisfy all parties. My reading of the literature suggests that this
conflict is influenced by the following factors:

**Immigrants:** The fact that almost 50% of people living in the Basque Country today are immigrants or children of immigrants affects the conflict in the following ways:

1) It weakens the overall support for nationalist/separatist programs. Immigrant voters tend to vote for the Spanish socialist party, which does not support Basque separatism. Immigrants do not appear unhappy with the administrative autonomy in place in Euskadi today; however, they also do not appear to support any further steps toward separatism.

2) While, the Basque administrative autonomy facilitates the incorporation and eventual assimilation of immigrants into Basque society through education and other forms of socialization, the presence of immigrants also makes it more difficult to implement more aggressive Euskera language requirements in schools and government agencies, thus checking the spread of the Euskera language throughout the Basque Country, a central theme in the nationalist cause.

3) The ties that Spanish immigrants maintain with other parts of Spain make a separatist agenda more difficult to promote. Also, the desire on the part of mainstream parties to attract immigrant votes has probably had a moderating affect on nationalist political agendas.

4) The presence of, and inter-marriage with, immigrants hastens the breakdown in Basque traditions and the spread of Spanish culture into the Basque country.

In sum, immigration appears to have slowed the spread of Basque nationalism but does not appear to contribute to the current violence, unless one believes that without immigrants the Basque separatist movement would have advanced further. This is
unlikely since, as noted in Chapter Three, deep widespread support for a separatist agenda or for reunification of all seven provinces appears weak. Additionally, it is unlikely either the French or Spanish would have agreed to a separate Basque state regardless of the presence of immigrants.

**Regional:** A continuing problem in this debate is borders. The border through the middle of their territory dividing the Basques into French and Spanish states, as well as inclusion within these states borders has been an ongoing source of discontent for the Basques. They claim these borders are as artificial as those drawn across Africa by European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries that bisected tribal societies and resulted in ethnic tensions that have continued to plague modern Africa. (Kurlansky 1999, p. 350)

Modern Europe, as well, is still coping with the fall-out from artificially drawn borders in the former Yugoslavia. In Europe this problem may be resolved by the dwindling importance of borders in economic affairs but Pan-African movements have been less successful and borders are still a major source of ethnic discontent. Any widespread recognition that the “natural” borders of the social/cultural entities we call “nations” are more legitimate than “artificial” borders of the legal entities we know of as “states” would require such a radical change in political attitudes that it is unthinkable in the near future. Since the catastrophic events of World Wars I and II, modern liberals have relied on law over culture to provide order in a disorderly world. Modern culturally and ethnically inclusive liberal states are conceived as a means to dilute ethnic passions that could otherwise lead to anarchic struggles over ethnic dominance. The fact that modern states have failed to suppress ethno-nationalist movements and violent struggles
continue has done little to lessen the belief that a system of sovereign states is inherently more stable than a system of sovereign nations.

Out of the seven “Basque” provinces, four are currently outside of the autonomous Basque territory in Spain. While Basque nationalists and separatists both support reunification of all the territories, the majority of people living in the three French provinces (Basse-Navarre, Labourd and Soule) and the one Spanish province (Navarre) outside the Basque territory do not appear to desire reunification at this time. The French provinces and Navarese identify more with their own provinces or with the Spanish and French governments than the Basque autonomous government. This may reflect their geographic location – they are less isolated from the central states in which they reside because they are on the periphery of Basque territory. At any rate, in order to satisfy the conditions of the ETA and the “official” position of the PNV, it would be necessary to incorporate territories into Euskadi that contain an opposition majority. This would create a new conflict.

In order to satisfy the demand for an independent Basque state, it would be necessary to convince both Spain and France to cede sovereignty over portions of their territory to the new state. While the French provinces are not economically important to France they are politically important. The Spanish provinces are both economically and politically important to Spain. Both countries contain other ethnic minorities such as the Corsicans and the Catalans that could attempt to succeed as well if the Basques were allowed to succeed.

Scholars have also noted that there is also a regional component to the violent resistance movement – with political mobilization and state repression being centered in
the urban coastal regions of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya where the MNLV is strong. (Raento 1999, p. 227-229)

**Ideological:** Ideological differences, along with the reunification issue mentioned above, are another seemingly intractable aspect of this conflict. The ETA’s insistence upon characterizing this conflict as a class conflict, in spite of a lack of evidence that class is an important factor in the nationalist debate today, neutralizes the immigration issue for the far left. However, as scholars have pointed out, ETA violence has assumed a life and momentum of its own quite separate from political demands. (Raento 2000, p. 230) It is quite possible that even if Basque national independence and unification of all Basque territories were achieved, violence would continue as a means to achieve a Marxist revolution within the new state or under the guise of some other political goal. Like other corporate structures, the activist organization would be difficult to dismantle given that it provides a raison d’être for a significant number of individuals.

The most difficult problem in this conflict is addressing the demands of the ETA. Succession and reunification are not legitimate programs when a majority of those involved are not supportive of either. It appears the ETA is losing support for its cause and sympathy for its actions; however, there is enough popular support to keep it in existence. Neither police actions, nor amnesties, nor negotiations have changed ETA tactics. If one were to simply re-classify the ETA as a criminal organization rather than a political one, one could consider the conflict to be, if not resolved, then certainly reduced to a tolerable level of dispute. However, the ETA does have political support from political parties (HB) that receive votes from a loyal constituency and from social organization such as the MNLV and KAS. The argument has even been made that ETA
violence (not language) was a unifying element that was missing in the very diverse Basque community in the absence of language, race and culture. (Mees 2001, p. 818) Casquette argues that there is tacit approval on the part of society for ETA actions. He contends that the ETA continues to function because its members are fully integrated in a society from which they derive monetary, moral and political support. If this were not the case it would have disappeared as have other modern European urban guerilla-type movements such as the Red Brigade in Italy or the Red Army in Germany. (Casquette 2001, p. 241)

In the beginning, many in the Basque community disapproved of the methods the ETA used to fund their operations - bank robberies and targeted killings. However, since the early 1970s the ETA and the Spanish police have been locked in a cycle of violence which began with state oppression and continues in a pattern of violence - response - violence - response ..., not unlike the current struggle between the Israeli state and the Palestinian people. Each violent act is followed by a brutal military response. Citizens who are shocked and dismayed by the violent acts are also angered by the vicious reprisals. While both sides vie for the moral high ground, neither is willing to stop the cycle of violence. (Kurlansky 1999, p. 283-303)

The ETA has killed about 800 people since its first murder in the late 1960’s. It is estimated that since 1977, the Spanish government has imprisoned at least 8,000 Basques for political reasons, most without trial. In the struggle between Franco and later the democratic government of Spain and the Basques, thousands of Basques have been killed or disappeared, sometimes while being “questioned”, sometimes with the help of the Germans, sometimes with the help of state-funded assassins. The Spanish police
continue to use torture and imprisonment without trial decades after the death of Franco.

A law passed in 1982 allows police to hold prisoners incommunicado for up to ten days. Consequently, detainees have been held, tortured and released without being charged. (Ibid.)

One of the problems facing the modern democracy has been the fact that the police apparatus that existed under the Francoist dictatorship continued virtually unchecked without interruption or revision under the new democracy. Eva Forest, a Basque human rights activist who served time in Spanish prisons said “The prisons are worse now than under Franco. Torture is more directed, more institutionalized. The Franquistas (Francoists) were not only not purged from the system, they have been promoted.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 296) (Ibid.)

Mark Kurlansky suggests that the fact that the government ignored the ETA's unilateral ceasefire in 1998 may be because the military, police and Guardia Civil needs the ETA to justify its existence. The Basque country has the highest per capita police presence in Spain - about 15,000 uniformed officers for 2.1 million people. This includes the Basque police who have also been accused of using torture. Spain has proven impervious to pressure from human rights groups and does not deny the use of torture. European governments have decided to downplay their criticism of Spain’s treatment of the Basques since their inclusion in the European Union. (Ibid.)

The continuation of repressive institutions under new democratic regimes is not a unique problem. Elected officials are cognizant of their precarious position vis-à-vis long entrenched institutions that hold military power in a state. The Guardia Civil were created in 1844 by the Spanish government and has been a traditional occupation for sons
in certain families for generations. (Kurlansky 1999, p. 152/Euskadi film) Military and police organizations, like the Guardia Civil, that have enjoyed privileged status under authoritarian regimes are not necessarily anxious or willing to cede power to newly elected democratic authorities. They are the tools with which political leaders have carried out repression of ethnic minorities. They have their own institutional culture than may be based in part on shared ethnic hatred.

The cumulative effect of all the divisions in Basque society noted above; immigration, regional, ideological may also contribute to the use of violence on the part of the ETA. The traditionally independent minded Basques have historically found unity in response to an oppressive outsider. The Spanish state has continued to respond harshly to what it perceives to be terrorist organizations. However, since the transition to democracy and the reinstatement of administrative autonomy, another historical pattern has re-emerged, that of living in peace with a ruling authority that is willing to allow Basques to manage their own affairs. This pattern is not in the best interests of separatists who require the presence of an “enemy” to unify the culturally heterogeneous Basque people. Therefore, violent acts, carried out in the expectation of harsh responses are one means of focusing resentment on the Spanish government.

Suggestions for Future Conflict Resolution Efforts:

Many conflict resolution techniques have already been employed to resolve this dispute: the Basques have been granted administrative autonomy, a general amnesty was extended to Basque political activists, the Spanish and Basque governments have deployed large numbers of armed forces and police to try to prevent ETA violence, the Spanish government has imprisoned the leaders of the coalition of political parties (HB)
supporting the ETA and the Spanish and Basque governments have sporadically attempted to dialogue with the ETA. None of these tactics have resulted in a permanent end to violent resistance. Based on my research on the Basque conflict, I believe the following approaches are warranted.

First, there should be an attempt to distance political parties in support of the ETA from violent actors by offering them a greater role in the Basque government. Neither the Basque nor Spanish governments should negotiate directly with the ETA, they should focus on the legitimate political parties and the social organizations, such as the MNLV and KAS that provide support to the ETA. In order to do that, they must refrain from imprisoning political leaders that are not specifically linked to violent acts. The Basque and Spanish governments should try to convince members of those organizations supporting the ETA that their needs are more likely to be met through participation in the political process than through affiliation with an organization that operates outside the generally accepted norms of political behavior. This is a long-term strategy that could take years to succeed. However, none of the other tactics have so far had long-term success in eliminating ETA violence. Although this tactic may not be the first choice of states attempting to resolve ethnic conflict because the government fears losing face or legitimizing the use of violence it should be given consideration in light of the fact that nothing else has worked so far.

Second, both the Basque and Spanish governments should conform to internationally accepted practices in their treatment of political prisoners, including "terrorists." The use of torture, incarceration without being charged and imprisonment of political, non-violent actors all fuel continued support for violent resistance.
Third, the Basque and Spanish government need to address economic conditions in Euskadi. Under Franco, technically outdated and uncompetitive Basque industries were propped up by the State as part of a broader political plan to flood Basque territories with Spanish workers. After the death of Franco and the recession of the 1970’s many industries such as shipbuilding and steel have virtually disappeared leaving hundreds of empty factories and large numbers of unemployed on government assistance. (Kurlansky 1999, p. 342-343) High rates of unemployment and poverty often provide a backdrop for violent resistance movements. Unemployment and especially youth unemployment may well be one of the contributing factors to this conflict. However, inasmuch as the ETA originated in a relatively prosperous era and in a relatively prosperous community, it is unlikely that solely addressing economic concerns would eliminate ETA violence. Social problems must be addressed as well. The Basque Country has one of the highest rates of drug use in Europe. (Garza 2001, p. 1) It is not clear this is related to violent resistance, but along with the economic problems experienced in the region, it adds to an environment of discontent that can produce prospective converts to the violent resistance movement.

Peaceful co-existence under a new government requires a very difficult act of corporate forgetting on the part of both the repressed and the repressors. In spite of the horrors visited on their people in the last 100 years, the Basques have historically shown themselves to be capable of such corporate amnesia. They have shown less desire for revenge than they have for simply being left alone and allowed to be Basque. They do not have the traditional blood-feud mentality that has so confounded peacemakers in Eastern Europe. They are not in diaspora as are the Palestinian people, nor is religion a
complicating factor as it is in many Islamic ethno-nationalist disputes. In short, the prognosis for a peaceful resolution should be good.

General Observations on Conflict in Heterogeneous Societies:

The, to date, intractable nature of the Basque conflict involves both of the two dominant theories of nationalism: pri-mordialism and constructivism. Radical nationalists continue to base their claims on a pri-mordialist concept of the Basque nation. They adhere to the mythical concept of a Basque nation that has existed since pre-history and continues to exist albeit under the domination (and colonization) of the French and Spanish states. It is this insistence on the essential nature of the Basque nation that keeps violent resistance alive. Radical activists find it impossible to compromise – to accept a Basque nation with smaller borders - without abandoning their deeply held belief that another, larger nation exists and without independence is under occupation by foreigners. Yet, at the same time, they reject the ethnic/cultural criterion for belonging and replace it with an ideological (Marxist) criterion. The Basque nation becomes a territorial vessel, the contents of which can change without affecting the essential integrity of the vessel itself.

Moderate Basque Nationalists offer nationalism as something that one can ascribe to through one’s own efforts: adoption of the native language and civic involvement in the “adopted” nation. Their platform acknowledges the essential nature of the Basque nation as well, but emphasizes the possibility of “constructing” a new, more diverse nation on the foundation of the historic Basque nation. Again, the metaphor of the vessel applies, however, in this case the contents assume more importance. One must attempt to become culturally “Basque” to be part of the nation.
The grafting of the constructivist concept of nationality onto the primordialist concept by both groups reflects the social and ethnic plurality of modern Basque society. Contemporary politics are defined by a plurality of interests, ideologies and identities. Richard Bellamy argues that this plurality makes politics both necessary and difficult. “...differences have to be continually and democratically negotiated with compromise not consensus as a goal. ... Many find the endless negotiation that accompanies pluralism tiresome. For good or ill, however, it is the price one pays for liberty and diversity.” (Bellamy 2000, p. 198, 216) However, one problem in the case of the Basque conflict is who to negotiate with.

Mees, believes that “No peace process is possible without the (active or passive) consent of those who have the capacity to terminate the process. These veto-holders are normally the paramilitaries and the government ... neither ETA nor the conservative government seem to have been willing or able to embark upon a peace process.” (Mees 2001, p. 815) Herein lies the problem, the ETA sees relinquishing armed struggle as diluting nationalist aspirations and will not consider anything less than complete independence. The Spanish government sometimes arrests its negotiating partners from the ETA and the HB. The moderate parties and government negotiate directly with ETA instead of insisting on negotiating with the political factions supporting them - the HB, thus giving the ETA legitimacy they do not have. (Mees, 2001, p. 816) Kurlansky, on the other hand, argues that the Spanish state defends its ruthless military tactics used against the Basque by convincing other European states that the ETA refuses to negotiate, in spite of the fact that the ETA lists negotiation as one of its primary demands. (Kurlansky 1999, p. 298-299)
Another factor affecting this regional conflict is the influence of global mass media. In traditional societies “the truth” was handed down face to face by someone known and trusted or in print in a local language. “The enemy” was also generally known and geographically not very far removed. However, television and the Internet introduce (especially to young people - the future recruits to radical movements) a vision of society that is geographically non-specific - political messages that are subtle and appear to be void of regional bias couched as they are in advertising, sitcoms and serial television dramas. The “enemy” of rural Basque traditions is no longer a repressive Franco government or even a modern Spanish state it is “The Simpsons” and “Baywatch.” (Raento 2000, p. 231-232)

Reduced Levels of Conflict in the Last Twenty Years

As noted above, the Basque nationalist movement is divided along ethnic, territorial and ideological lines. These divisions affect the width and depth of support for nationalist and separatist programs. However, for the majority of Basques, differences in outlook do not result in support for violent political tactics. Most members of this community appear to value peace, stability, autonomy and economic prosperity over the success of future political projects centered on specific ethnic, regional or ideological agendas.

In recent years, in spite of sporadic acts of violence and a high unemployment rate, support for radical separatist movements has gradually withered. The restoration in 1983 of administrative autonomy appears to have, at least partly, satisfied many Basques. However, nationalism and even separatism are not dead. Since 1980, all regional Basque presidents have been nationalists, a nationalist majority has held the regional parliament,
moderate nationalists control the media and are influential in industry, education and the Catholic Church. (Tkacik 1996/Mees 2001, p. 808)

In the words of PNV leader Xabier Arzalluz, “today we have a significant degree of power, and that requires pragmatism. We are not less pro-independence. But to be a David against Goliath requires intelligence. The economy is the first problem. How to build an economy that works within Europe.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 341) Basque scholar and historian Mark Kurlansky writes:

“In the idealized new Europe, economies are merged, citizenship is merged. But those who support the idea deny that countries will be eliminated. There will simply be a new idea of a nation that maintains its own culture and identity while being economically linked and politically loyal to a larger state. Some 1,800 years ago, the Basques told the Roman Empire that this was what they wanted. Four centuries ago, they told it to Ferdinand of Aragon. They have told it to Francois Mitterrand and Felipe Gonzalez and King Juan Carlos.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 351)

Kurlansky claims, “The Basques are not isolationists. They never wanted to leave Europe. They only wanted to be Basque.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 351)

Clark and Kurlansky both argue that in periods of relative prosperity, administrative autonomy appears to satisfy the desires of the larger Basque community. In periods of cultural repression, (e.g., under the regime of General Franco) and periods of economic distress nationalist programs have received more support. However, community opinion as evidenced in voting patterns and support of the State varies widely. Clark notes that there appears to be stronger support for the nationalist program in provinces that have a higher percentage of Euskera speakers. (Clark 1987, p. 445) However, since these provinces also have specific economic and geographic profiles any theory of ethno-nationalism focusing on a particular aspect of society such as language,
class or economy by definition downplays other perhaps equally important factors.

Although not independent, Basques now are relatively free to pursue economic prosperity and limited forms of democratic government, i.e., elect representatives to a local legislature, collect taxes and administer their own schools, police and justice system. However, all rights are at the sufferance of the Spanish government that retains the right to intervene in areas that conflict with the agenda of the larger stage. (Tkacik 1996/Mees 2001, p. 808)

In surveys taken in 1987, 1993 and 1998, the percentage of Basque respondents indicating that they are “fully satisfied” with the State of Autonomy rose 15%, from 28% in 1987 to 43% in 1998. These survey results are reported in Table 4.1 below and show that the numbers of Basques remaining "partially satisfied” versus "dissatisfied" were fairly constant over time. The results show that while satisfaction with the autonomous arrangement may be increasing, over half of those responding are still not fully satisfied with the present state of affairs. However, they also indicate that over 70% are at least partly satisfied. (Llera 1999, p. 106)
Table 4.1

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N= 1,800 1,400 1,400

(Llera 1999, p. 106)

A quote from Basque writer Ramon Saizarbitoria illustrates the difficulty in trying to pin down specific Basques attitudes. He claims that “like almost everyone” he supports the ETA. However, he adds, “when I am with nationalists I am against them, but when I am with others I am a nationalist.” (Kurlansky 1999, p. 330) Saizarbitoria bears out the truth of an old Basque saying: “Take three Basques who have agreed on a common goal. Two will work toward that goal. One will work against it out of principle. They hate unanimity.” (Laxalt 2000, p. 17)

Jonathan Fox and Michelle Boomgaard have noted that “while most (Basques) would prefer full independence, many are willing to settle for more limited forms of autonomy and other measures that will help to preserve their culture.” (Fox/Boomgaard 1999, p. 1, 6) This does in fact appear to be the case. Also, some Basques may believe the emerging European Union will result in a gradual transfer of power from the
European states to the European Union and could present an opportunity for the Basques to achieve autonomy within greater Europe without becoming a sovereign state. They may believe the intermediary roles of Spain and France between the Basques and the EU will wither away in time. In fact, in 1993, moderate nationalists put forward a plan for separate representation for the French and Spanish Basques within the European Union. (Minahan 1996, p. 70) However, Medrano points out that the European Union may not develop into a federalist system that would benefit an independent Basque Country:

“In the future, trade interdependence will probably diminish as European economic integration proceeds. The advantages and disadvantages of independence will start to depend on other issues, such as the power of EU institutions to decide on economic and political policies, and the relative political clout of EU states of different sizes. For instance, if decision-making power and representation at the European Parliament continue to be biased toward small countries, then the costs of independence for the Basque Country and Catalonia will be lower than if, as some suggest, more populated states are able to increase their representation in EU institutions and increase their power share. In this case, the Basque Country and Catalonia could potentially benefit from continuing membership in Spain, which as of 1994 is the fifth largest European country.” (Medrano 1995, p.124)

Radicals and many moderate nationalists generally do not believe that acceptance into the European Union with the status of an autonomous territory but still as a part of Spain will satisfy their need for independence. They would still lack final authority over certain matters (such as fishing) within their territory. Some also perceive internationalism as strengthening states’ tendency to protect self-interest rather than weakening it. They fear international borders are not likely to loosen Spain’s power over the Basque territory. (Raento 1999, p. 231)

The creation of a single European economic bloc and the subsequent diminution
of the economic importance of borders undermine the argument of radicals that Spain and France are “colonizing” the Basque territories. However, it has also increased divisions within the Basque political arena over how to deal with the EU and these disputes have affected EU development projects in the Basque territory. (Ibid.)

The official website of the Basque government published the President’s Manifest titled “A Commitment to Non-violence and Dialogue: An avenue toward resolution” on February 8, 2001. Citizens were asked to fill out a confidential support sheet and e-mail it back to the government. It was noteworthy that the Manifest did not include any resolution supporting an independent state but merely called for “respecting the Basque society’s right to be consulted so that it may exercise its right to determine its own future freely, peacefully and democratically.” (Institutional Declaration 2001, p. 1)

Basque traditions such as folk dancing, traditional sports and festivals enjoy widespread popularity. Many adults are also attempting to learn Euskera and more students are opting for Euskera studies. However, traditional “lifestyles” from which traditional practices naturally evolve are becoming more and more anachronistic and it is not clear what will be the next phase of Basque development. The Basques have been an innovative, commercially oriented society for centuries. However, most of the Basque traditional occupations have gradually faded into history in the face of political change, global competition, ecological change or modernization. Basque mercenaries, whalers, seafarers, salt cod fishermen, shepherds, small farmers, shipbuilders, steelworkers and even smugglers have seen their occupations become largely obsolete. Some predict a return to small farming but it is unlikely many modern Basques would voluntarily adopt the hardships of a peasant lifestyle. (Kurlansky 1999)
The fate of the Basques is uncertain. As I have also tried to illustrate, being Basque means something very different to different members of this society. However, the people who individually and collectively call themselves Basque, have proven themselves to be among the most resilient societies in the history of mankind. Part of this resiliency has been based on a willingness to make peace with other politically dominant groups and an ability to create or adapt to new technologies in commercial enterprises.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Research Findings

Deep divisions exist and have existed in the Basque nationalist movement throughout the period under study. Divisions along class lines and by region were most important during the emergence of Basque nationalism - late 1800s through mid-1940s. In the second half of the 20th century the three most important divisions in Basque society have been:

1) ethnic: between native Basques and Spanish immigrants

2) regional: between the southern provinces closest to the rest of Spain and the northern, more isolated provinces and between rural areas and urban centers.

3) ideological: between politically moderate nationalist parties and left-wing Marxist nationalist parties and activists

The first division appears to be diminishing in importance at the beginning of the twenty first century, as democratization and modernization slowly erode inter-group animosities and cultural differences. The second and third divisions still contribute to violent conflict.

It is important to identify the divisions within ethno-nationalist societies in order to understand why conflicts continue and to develop strategies for their resolution. Two of the internal divisions identified in this study reflect the same divisions that often exist between ethno-nationalist groups and external societies; ethnic differences and regional/cultural differences. The third, ideology, mirrors the political conflicts inherent in many developed societies. Thus, it is logical to assume that diversity rather than uniformity is the norm in ethno-nationalist movements and it is important to find ways to
address that diversity.

General Observations on the Study of Ethno-Nationalist Movements

The question arises “What does it mean to be Basque?” The picture presented here is of a ethnically/culturally and ideologically diverse society that inhabits a geographic territory divided not strictly along the official borders of each province but rather where shades of nationalist and anti-nationalist Basque sentiment lighten and darken gradually across the landscape. It is also a picture of extremes thrown together in close contact in urban areas and of a wide spectrum of political opinions existing alongside one another even in the most traditional environments. This is reflected by the number of options available to Basque voters in the form of a confusing array of apparently similar political parties. (Voutat 2000, p. 289). Also interesting is the fact that those at different points along the ideological spectrum may have similar official party platforms: independence, unification with French Basques, state sponsorship of the spread of Basque language and culture, but carry out those platforms in very different ways.

In light of the above, it is difficult to discern unity or consensus among the Basque community. It is even difficult to speak with any accuracy of “Basque sentiment” or a “Basque community.” While many Basques obviously have a strong sense of being more Basque than Spanish, they have an equally strong sense of being a particular type of Basque, e.g., Navarese, Alavese, coastal Basque, Spanish immigrant. While promoting a romanticized traditional Basque culture and language as the defining persona of the Basque community may be successful in urban Basque communities that have experienced an influence of “the other” (non-Basque immigrants), many of those
who are actually living the imagined, romanticized rural Basque lifestyle now do not support the nationalist movement and feel more connection to Madrid than Bilboa.

The Basque case study above reveals the inherent weakness of broad-based theories in accurately explaining ethno-nationalist movements. The intersection of “random” historical political events such as the Franco dictatorship (an event that did not conform to broader political trends in mid-twentieth century Europe) with unique economic development resulting from the also geographically random allocation of certain types of natural resources, produced effects on a society with a very particular social and political history that resulted in a unique nationalist movement. This exploration of multiple, competing intra-group differences in Basque society also sheds light on Walker Connor's question, "When is a Nation?" i.e., when has nationalism taken hold of a society to the extent that it is an "effective force for mobilizing the masses?" (Connor 1994, p. 210)

Each of the theories examined in the course of this research explains part of the Basque nationalist movement. None of the theories is broad enough to encompass all of the factors that go into this very unique case. Theories based on economic factors such as the Basque position in the global economy or the effects of unemployment on nationalist sentiment fail to adequately take into consideration class, language and the influence of regional identity. Theories based on regionalism and language fail to take into consideration the effect of the economy. It stands to reason that if the Basque case can be used, as it has been, to prove many different theories on nationalism, then by definition it proves none.

Does all this mean, as Medrano argues, that apart from explaining the “emergence
of the idea” nationalism does not require or conform to “theory”? (Medrano 1995, p. 197) Is the Basque case evidence of the particular and idiosyncratic nature of ethno-nationalist movements? Can ethno-nationalism be explained by theory, or as Michael Hechter says:

“There is nothing about ethnic and race relations per se that warrants a special theory. Indeed the subject concerns phenomena – like group formation, solidarity, assimilation, and collective action – that also occur among many other kinds of groups, be they based on class, religion, or territory. Ethnic and race relations therefore constitute instances of more general kinds of inter-group processes.” (Hechter 1986, p. 265)

While other case studies may on the surface appear less complicated than this modern European example, there is no reason to believe they are more easily explained by existing theories. Like the Basques of the 19th and 20th century, the cohesion of modern ethno-nationalist groups in Europe as well as other parts of the world may also be affected by the latest phase of global immigration northward and westward. Shafir writes that

“The new international migration waves are part of a transnational transformation that is reordering many societies and their politics around the globe. Increased immigration will undoubtedly continue into the developed societies and transform their demographic compositions and social structures and, by increasing their heterogeneity, lead to a crisis and reevaluation of their collective identities.” (Shafir 1995, p. 2)

Ethno-nationalist groups will also be affected by continuing economic and social modernization and globalization, and by strong regional identities that are vestiges of former tribal or kinship societies. Additionally, there are likely to be class, gender and age components that further divide the society and affect the strength of nationalist/separatist sentiment.
Ethnic communities were probably never as homogenous as history has portrayed them. Historically, allegiances in what are now called ethnic communities were often divided into clans or tribes that either fought bitterly amongst themselves or developed political solutions to regulate inter-clan conflict. The presentation of ethno-nationalist communities as homogenous cultural, ethnic, and political units has necessitated blotting out the process by which diverse groups were homogenized through the suppression of local identities. (Shafir 1995, p. 1)

Today, modernization and immigration have both contributed to greater plurality. Historical accounts of ancient people reveal that advances in technology and mass immigration have been changing societies for thousands of years. What is remarkable is that core ethnic identities have survived at all in societies that are racially or linguistically distinct. However, to speak of the Basques, the Albanians or the Inuits in terms of a cohesive political and social unit is to employ a kind of reductionist characterization that does not explain anything meaningful about any individual member of those societies or even the society as a whole.

Nor do theories centered on primordialist or constructivist arguments fully explain modern ethno-nationalist movements. The case study set out above reveals a strong drive for self-determination based, at least in part, on an inherent sense of being ethnically or at least culturally distinct. However, historically, the cultural and political unit (the province) at the heart of that drive was much smaller than what we now think of as a nation. If there is evidence here of any essential human drive for organizing ourselves into ethnically distinct political/economic and social units, it is at a much more intimate level than the “nation” primordialists have envisioned.
On the other hand, there is also ample evidence in the Basque case to support the constructivist argument that ethno-nationalism is an accident of history, the consequence of liberal ideology and modernization. There is little doubt that the Basque’s are a historically unique people, but some of the symbols and “traditions” emphasized by modern Basque nationalists are either heavily amended or, in some cases, completely contrived. The use of a near-dead language as a rallying point in the Basque case points out the weakness of other cultural attributes in holding this community together.

What these findings point to is the need for researchers to approach each ethno-nationalist movement as a unique organic phenomenon. While it is certainly possible to approach the study of nationalist movements through a specific theoretical lens such as world systems analysis or essentialist/constructivist theories, theory that is drawn from a study of similarities between ethno-nationalist movements will miss the important differences in the ways that different ethnic groups have constructed their arguments for self-determination based on their cultural, regional and ethnic differences. It will also miss the different ways that various sectors of those ethnic societies have influenced the nationalist movements.

Ernesto Zirakzadeh notes, “all systematic theories about politics and society inevitably and inescapably oversimplify and exaggerate. Simplification is one of the purposes (and values) of a coherent theory. ” He continues by asking the question “...are there ways to build upon and extend current theoretical frameworks so as to have a richer, more rounded understanding of political reality?” (Zirakzadeh 1991, p. 202) Yes, there are, but it requires a tolerance for the ambiguity that results from examining the dynamic intersection of politics, culture, geography and economy.
This brings us full circle to the quote by Robert Clark included in the introduction to this study: “In spite of its essential unity as a species, the human race has discovered an amazing number of criteria for dividing itself into countless subspecies.” (Clark 1984, p. 4) It is this human tendency to divide and differentiate that creates the challenge to scholars of ethno-nationalism as well as to those who seek to resolve ethno-nationalist conflicts. It is this same tendency that emerges in this study of the Basque ethno-nationalist movement and renders the application of broad-based theories of nationalism inadequate.

Suggestions for Future Research

Yuval-Davis argues, "Gender, sexuality, age and ability as well as ethnicity and class are important factors in determining the relationship of people to their communities and states." (Yuval-Davis 2000, p. 84) It is interesting to note that there is relatively little written about the affect of youth or aging on this nationalist movement. Although some scholars have noted that urban guerilla bands socialize teenagers with the use of violence before they join the ETA they fail to link the violence with high youth unemployment rates. (Mees 2001, p. 822) Others have presented statistics on high youth unemployment without linking it to political mobilization. For example one survey showed that in workers under 25 years old, unemployment increased a startling 47% from 1976 to 1986, rising from 12.0% to 59.2% in ten years. (Medrano 1995, p. 122) These numbers indicate that more research is needed into the relative effects of aging and youth unemployment in this nationalist debate.

Likewise, there is a conspicuous absence of work on the role of women in the Basque nationalist movement. I found nothing in my research that dealt directly or even
indirectly with gender roles in this debate. In fact my correspondence addressed to a
female Basque scholar requesting sources and information on women’s role in the
Basque nationalist movement went unanswered. This is curious, because although part
of a larger patriarchal society, Basque culture has some traditions, such as passing
property down through the eldest child, be it male or female, that ensure a certain amount
of influence to women. Also, women have been active in politics and have been tortured
and jailed for the nationalist cause. (Kurlansky 1999, pp. 296-298/Euskadi Film)

It should also focus on the effects of a new era of immigration referred to above
by Gershon Shafir that is moving people north and west through the hemisphere. It
should examine how ethno-nationalist societies are affected by emigration as well as
immigration.

Finally, more research is also needed into how modernization is affecting ethno-
nationalist movements. Is modernization diminishing traditional practices or
highlighting them? Are people abandoning tradition and ethnic ties or holding to them in
an attempt to anchor themselves in the modern world? These and other issues
surrounding modernization are relevant to ethno-nationalist research.
Bibliography


Written Euskaldun Culture “The Beautiful Art of Euskara”


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AREAS OF RESEARCH INTEREST:

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Globalization and Nationalism
Immigration and Nationalism

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