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## ETA in Spain: Explaining Basque Violence

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ETA IN SPAIN: EXPLAINING BASQUE VIOLENCE

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By Jenny Kern

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion  
Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies  
Croft Institute for International Studies  
Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College  
The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi  
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## ABSTRACT

My thesis focuses on Euskadi ta Auzkatasuna (ETA), a terrorist group in País Vasco, Spain and attempts to determine the causes behind ETA's violence. I focus on three areas of study: the political situation of País Vasco, the public opinion, and the economic situation of País Vasco. Data is collected from the Basque government, the EuskoBarómetro, and World Bank, and showed in correlation with ETA attacks to discern patterns. Due to limited data, my area of study focuses mainly on ETA's later years, when they were less active. This allows me to focus on the periods of the ceasefires in contrast to active years, to determine if one factor played more of a role in violence than the others.

While the Basque case is unique in Spain, it has similarities to other cases of ethnic violence. As such, if the cause of Basque violence and their motivations towards reaching a ceasefire can be discovered, they may be implemented in other cases of ethnic violence, such as that of the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey.

Through my research, I concluded that neither nationalist representation in the Basque Parliament or public opinion correlates with ETA attacks; however, increased economic prosperity led to decreased violence. While I found that political representation and public opinion were not consequential, it is possible that they played a small role which I was not able to discern through my research. As such, my research is inconclusive and I suggest further study into looking into the causes of Basque violence and its demise. One such area for further study that I suggest is the internal structure of the group and how increased action from the state, including imprisoning leaders, may have led to the downfall of the group.

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## Introduction

My thesis focuses on Euskadi ta Auzkatasuna (ETA), a nationalist terrorist group in País Vasco, Spain active from 1959 to 2011. While I originally sought to explain how ETA was able to reach a ceasefire, this turned out to not be feasible, due to lack of available information. Instead, my topic evolved to explore possible causes for ETA's violence. To this extent, I focused on three main areas: the political situation, the role of public opinion, and economic conditions. To a lesser extent, I will also examine the relationship between these three factors. Learning the cause of Basque violence is important, as it could be used to predict the emergence of ethnic violence in other areas, as well as help to explain how ethnic violence initially emerges as a course of action.

The Basque case is significant as it is unique in its approach to nationalism. While Catalonia is another region similar to País Vasco in its desire for independence from Spain, how they have gone about achieving their goals is completely different. Both regions possess a distinct language, Catalan in Catalonia and Euskera in País Vasco, and specific cultural traditions. Catalonia emphasized its language and cultural ties in order to bring its people together. However, Euskera and Basque cultural traditions were not as prevalent as those of Catalonia, forcing Basques to find a different avenue towards unification. The Basques' radical form of nationalism relied on mobilization and violence. As a result, the Basque case is singular within Spain in its attempt to use of violence to inspire nationalist sentiment.

As the Basque case is unique within Spain, its lessons may not be universal. Although the Basque case is one of ethnic nationalism tied to violence, it is not linked to economic oppression, as the Basque region is wealthy and does not face economic pressures. This stands

in contrast to issues of violent ethnic nationalism in which violence is related to economic hardship. Since País Vasco, and ETA by extension, do not face this pressure, the reasons behind ETA's ceasefire are not likely to be able to be applied to cases in which economic oppression is present.

I analyze various sets of data, including election results, public opinion polls, and economic data, to try to determine other factors that were key in leading to a ceasefire. I use the incidence of violence, measured by deaths, injuries, and attacks, as a baseline from which to measure the other factors. Using public opinion data, I assess the opinion towards ETA, Basque independence, and the Spanish state. I then compare this with the voting data to examine the percentage of vote that each party received, and whether they have ties to ETA or the Spanish state. In regards to economic data, I examine the GDP per capita and compare it throughout the different regions of Spain. Ideally, I will explore data from the onset of ETA in 1939 to 2011, when the ceasefire was enacted. I will collect data from a wide variety of sources, including EuskoBarómetro and the World Bank.

The first chapter will provide an overview of the history of the Basque country, the rise of ETA, and the process of negotiating a ceasefire. This brief history of the situation is essential to understanding why ETA formed as well as why the Basque case is unique in using violence as a form of resistance. Additionally, it will provide a brief examination of ceasefire negotiations that failed, as well as the one that ultimately proved successful.

Nationalism portrayed through politics will be examined in the second chapter. A brief overview of the important nationalist and non-nationalist Basque political parties will be provided before examining the composition of the Basque Parliament from its beginning in 1980

to current times. Parties will be examined divided between nationalist and non-nationalist, with their representation compared to ETA activity to see if there is a correlation.

Public opinion of the Basques will be covered in the third chapter. In regards to identification and nationalist sentiment, preoccupation with violence, opinion on ETA, and views on ceasefire negotiations, this chapter will seek to discover links between various variables and the activity of ETA. However, as the EuskoBarómetro was not conducted until 1999, there is no data prior to this. As such, the conclusions will be relatively limited and focused more on the periods of peace. Due to this major limitation, a clear sense of public opinion regarding ETA, especially during their most active years, is not possible to obtain. This will severely limit this section, making the conclusions unable to be widely applicable.

The fourth chapter will cover the economy of País Vasco. By using the GDP per capita (PPP), the economic status of Euskadi will be compared to that of Spain. Additionally, the opinions of Basques regarding the economic climate will be taken into account and compared with the economic realities. ETA violence will be compared to the GDP per capita to see if attacks had any effect on the economic prosperity of the region.

Through my research, I have concluded there is not a correlation between ETA violence and nationalist political representation, Basque identity, desires for independence, or nationalist sentiment; however, the Basques preoccupation with violence and economic prosperity showed a correlation with ETA attacks.

## Ch. 1: The Basque Country and ETA

País Vasco, the community divided between Spain and France, has a long, unique history. It is said that “the Basques are one of the unique people-islands to be found on the face of the earth, completely different in every sense from the peoples around them, and their language... forms an island somehow comparable to those peaks which still surface above the water in a flood zone” (Kurlansky 1999, 1). As the Basque people possess their own language and culture, they are very proud of their heritage and singularity among the Spanish population. The history of the Basques helped lead to the formation of Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA), a terrorist organization formed to fight for Basque rights and independence.

From its formation in 1959, ETA has been responsible for approximately 832 deaths (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007, 292). Through violence, the Basques were able to advocate for Basque freedom from Spain. In order to accomplish this, ETA targeted political leaders and public figures in order to advance their cause. ETA reached their peak in the 1980’s during Spain’s transition to democracy, before beginning their decline in power and effectiveness.

Numerous attempts were made at negotiating a ceasefire with ETA; however, the majority only lasted a few months. In 2006, a ceasefire was seen as plausible, but crumbled when ETA attacked Madrid’s airport. Finally, in 2011, ETA called a ceasefire that was verifiable by international observers. This ceasefire has held to this day, effectively ending ETA’s terrorist activities.

## **Historical Background and Uniqueness of the Basque Region**

País Vasco and the Basque people have a history that is unique from the rest of Spain. From living in harmony with the Romans, to fighting off the Moors and Visigoths, the Basques have fought against outsiders and their influence to preserve their way of life. Even after they were incorporated into the Spanish monarchy, the Basques were able to preserve a degree of autonomy through their *fueros*, ancient laws that protected the right to self-rule by the traditional Basque laws (Collins, 1986, 256). However, this ability to self-rule was destroyed in the Civil War, when General Francisco Franco prevailed over the Republican forces. As a result, Basque culture was repressed, leading to backlash.

País Vasco is divided into seven provinces, four in Spain and three in France, and has been the home of the Basques for centuries, although the exact origins of the Basques are unknown. The singular defining trait of the Basques is their language: Euskera. Although the first texts written in Euskera only appear in the Middle Ages, references to the language predate the written form by at least a millennium (Collins 1986, 9). Euskera is the only surviving language in Europe that is not Indo-European, suggesting that Euskera may be the oldest European language (Collins 1986, 11-12). This provides evidence that Basques are among the oldest European cultures. Basques lived in a relatively remote part of the Iberian Peninsula, so were able to peacefully coexist with the Roman Empire, as evidenced by the lack of military conflict in the Basque region “up to the final collapse of centralized Roman government in the area in the early fifth century AD” (Collins 1986, 47). After the Roman Empire fell and the Visigoths invaded Spain, the Basques were forced to fight to preserve their way of life (Collins 1986, 69).

During the Middle Ages, the Visigoths and Franks fought for control of the regions. The Basque people resisted militarily and culturally, maintaining their own language and religion. Situated between the Visigoth and Frankish kingdoms, the Basques were a contested area claimed by both kingdoms (Collins 1986, 99), which forced the Basques to fight invaders from all sides in order to preserve their way of life. After the fall of the Visigoth rule due to the Arab expeditions, the Basques remained free from outside control. Although the Arab armies passed through the Pyrenees without resistance, the Basque region clashed with them when they invaded; the Basques successfully defended their land from invasion (Collins 1986, 117-119).

When the Basque region was incorporated into the Spanish kingdom of Castile, the Basques retained their *fueros*, ancient laws that protected the right to self-rule by the traditional Basque laws (Collins 1986, 259). The Basque *fueros* originated in the fourteenth century, when Don Juan, the Castilian King who united the provinces, swore that he and his successors would “maintain the ‘fueros, customs, franchises, and liberties’ of the land” (Strong 1893, 325-326). *Fueros* encompassed a variety of rules, both written and unwritten, but the major points included exemption from taxation by the state, import duties, and military services outside their province (Kurlansky 1999, 66). Each king or queen of Castile swore allegiance to upholding the Basque *fueros*, including Queen Isabel, who, along with King Ferdinand, united the Iberian provinces into modern day Spain (Strong 1893, 326).

Due to the *fueros*, the Basque claim for self-determination was stronger than that of other regions. Basque autonomy statutes were proposed in various instances throughout history, but were not granted until 1936. Formed in alliance with the Second Republic forces against General Francisco Franco, the Basque government only lasted during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); upon the Republic’s defeat, Franco abolished the Basque statute of autonomy.

Franco's repression of all expressions of Basque pride created the environment from which ETA was born. During Franco's regime, which began in 1939, Basque nationalism was fiercely repressed. With the goal of unifying Spain into one nation, Franco declared *Castellano*, Castilian Spanish, the official language and banned all minority languages, including Euskara, the Basque language. Additionally, nationalist symbols, such as the flag of Euskal Herria (the Basque World), and other elements of Basque culture were prohibited. Leaders of the Basque nationalist party (PNV) were either imprisoned or forced into exile; many fled into the Basque region of France. On July 31, 1959, the feast day of St. Ignacius Loyola, patron saint of País Vasco, Basque students formed Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Bilbao. Meaning Basque Homeland and Freedom, ETA struggled to define its ideology for roughly a decade, but members shared the common goal of creating an independent Basque state.

### **The Rise of ETA**

Due to the repressive policies that General Franco imposed on the Spanish section of the Basque country, ETA formed in the Spanish section, as the French portion did not face heavy repression. However, the Basque case is singular, as it is the only region that responded to repression with violence. By attacking mainly political figures, ETA showed that their grievance was with the Spanish state, both under General Franco and throughout the transition to democracy.

While other regions of Spain, such as Catalonia, were culturally repressed, the Basques were the only region that used violence as a form of resistance, making it a unique case. Due to the strong cultural and linguistic ties of the Catalans, they were able to avoid violence in their efforts for nationalism. However, in Euskal Herria, relatively few people spoke Euskera due to

the repression of language by Franco, the difficulty of the language, and various other factors. As a result, the Basque populace did not share strong cultural and linguistic ties, like the Catalans. The lack of cultural cohesion between the Basques made the use of continued violence by ETA necessary. Through violence, the people were able to band together to form a cohesive front. In describing the use of violence, Carr and Fusi stated, “It was [the Catalans’] cultural self-confidence that made terrorism superfluous, a terrorism that perhaps suited the more racist nationalism of the Basques and their emphasis on physical prowess and exuberant youth” (Conversi 1997, 2). Due to the lack of widespread culture throughout Euskal Herria, the Basques created an antagonistic identity, or an identity formed through the exclusion of those dissimilar, by focusing on borders instead of culture (Conversi 1997, 5). By pitting Euskal Herria against Spain, ETA was able to gain traction and support for its use of violence in order to form a Basque nation.

ETA began an armed struggle against those it viewed as the repressive symbols of the state in 1968. When the police killed a respected ETA leader, ETA retaliated by killing the police chief of San Sebastian. This, in turn, provoked a swift response from the government—the imprisonment, torture, and exile of thousands of Basques. However, ETA was not deterred and continued its fight by kidnapping and ransoming foreign officials, industrialists, and other prominent people.

While these acts increased ETA’s presence, ETA is most well-known for the assassination of Spain’s Prime Minister, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, who was Franco’s right hand man and chosen successor. By assassinating Franco’s successor, ETA inadvertently played a role in Spain’s transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, creating space for Juan Carlos de Borbon, the grandson of King Alfonso XIII, to come to power. Juan Carlos supported reforms,

such as the Constitution of 1978, that helped Spain transition to a constitutional monarchy. As Spain transitioned to democracy, ETA lost the sympathy of the international community. ETA “was no longer seen as a group of freedom fighters opposing a detested fascist regime, but a bona fide terrorist group attacking a fledgling democratic state” (Corrado 1997, 573). Hoping to regain public favor, ETA assassinated members of the Civil Guard and the military police, as well as their families. Although they expected a retaliation, one never came. Instead, the situation for the Basques gradually improved.

As democracy took hold in Spain, and the relationship between País Vasco and the central state improved, ETA began to split into political and violent factions. Spain released political prisoners, allowed many exiles—including ETA members—to return, and supported a more open relationship with País Vasco. This led to the Statute of Guernica, whereby the Spanish government gave the Basque regional parliament increased powers. Due to the agreement, ETA-PM, the political branch of ETA, negotiated an amnesty agreement with the government and, in return, renounced violence to pursue their goals politically; however, ETA-M, the branch of ETA that favored violent action, remained active.

Although ETA-M<sup>1</sup> continued its campaign, they had softened their demands. ETA demanded, “general amnesty for all Basque prisoners; substitution of Basque police for Spanish police in Basque regions; Basque government control of the Spanish army in the Basque country; and the right to self-determination of the Basque people” (Corrado 1997, 575). The Spanish government did not meet these demands, and the terrorist attacks continued, with ETA assassinating officials and bombing public places.

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<sup>1</sup> From this point forward, ETA-M will simply be referred to as ETA. ETA-PM negotiated a separate peace with the government and renounced violence, leaving ETA-M the only operating branch.

In the mid 1980s, the French and Spanish governments collaborated on an operation against ETA. The joint effort led to the arrest and imprisonment of 500 members, including the majority of the leaders. Following these massive arrests, ETA attacks became less frequent. During this time, ETA attacked Prime Minister José María Aznar, the leader of the *Partido Popular* (PP), a conservative party, that promoted the idea of a single, centralized Spain. In this 1995 attack, ETA bombed Aznar's car, destroying two nearby buildings, 15 cars, and injuring 16 people (Nash 1995). Aznar emerged from the attack with only minor head injuries, but, through this attack, ETA showed that politicians continued to be targets for terrorism.

All of Spain's main political parties, with the exception of ETA's political wing, spoke out against the attack, calling it an "threat to the country's young democracy" and stating that, had the attack succeeded, "we would have gone back to 1936," the start of the Civil War (Nash 1995). ETA continued violent attacks, despite public opposition; however, political parties began to work towards peace.

### **Efforts to Negotiate a Ceasefire**

Numerous attempts were made at negotiating a ceasefire with ETA; however, ETA proved to be untrustworthy in holding the ceasefires. After countless ceasefires that lasted only a few months, the ceasefire of 2006 seemed promising, until ETA attacked Madrid's airport due to postponed and unsuccessful negotiations. As the 2006 ceasefire did not hold, the Spanish government closed off all further attempts at negotiations with ETA. However, ETA leaders worked with international actors to call a ceasefire that was verifiable by an international committee. Called in 2011, this ceasefire has held until the present day.

The first attempts to reach a ceasefire with ETA were unsuccessful, with truces lasting only a month or two, as ETA was unwilling to compromise on core demands. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Prime Minister Aznar and the Spanish government cracked down on terrorism, increasing cooperation with France and the European Union. Police action against ETA strengthened and in 2002 Parliament outlawed Batasuna, the political wing of ETA. While the Spanish government was cracking down on ETA, other Basque political parties were searching for a route towards peace. Arnaldo Otegi, the spokesman of Batasuna, and Jesús Eguiguren, the president of the Basque Socialist Party, met in secret to discuss the failures of previous ceasefires and how to move forward politically.

As the Basques were willing to progress towards peace, Elkarri, a social group focused on the peaceful solution to the Basque conflict, invited international experts from the US and members of Sinn Fein who participated in the Northern Ireland peace process, to visit the Basque country and assist in the peace process (MacDonald and Bernardo 2006, 189). Seeing progress, in late 2003, the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), based in Geneva, Switzerland, offered its assistance. Nevertheless, Aznar and the Spanish state refused to begin talks with ETA and declared them responsible for the 11-M train bombings in Madrid in 2004, despite overwhelming evidence that the attacks were carried out by Islamic terrorists. Distrust of the government followed and Aznar and the PP were voted out of power. As the 11-M attack prompted a strong reaction against terrorist violence, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) were voted into power, as they were willing to negotiate with ETA to end violence (Esser and Bridges 2011, 64).

Zapatero's government advocated for dialogue with ETA, receiving approval from parliament in May 2005. The peace process was created around the proposals that Otegi, the

spokesperson of Batasuna, and Eguiguren, the president of the Basque Socialist Party, agreed on in their secret talks and presented to the Spanish state when the talks began in May 2005. Held in Geneva and Oslo with the assistance of the HD Centre, discussions allowed ETA to negotiate with the Spanish state about technical issues, including the return of prisoners and disarmament, while Batasuna and Basque political parties would negotiate on political issues (Esser and Bridges 2011, 65). Basque political parties, including the Basque Socialist Party (PSE), Batasuna, and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) met confidentially to further discuss the politics of an agreement and agreed on proposals that granted Basques the “‘right to decide’ their future” (Esser and Bridges 2011, 65). In light of future talks with the Spanish state, ETA announced a permanent ceasefire in March 2006.

While the 2006 negotiations presented an opportunity to end violence, the peace ultimately failed. During the peace process, there was distrust on both sides. While ETA began by offering a ceasefire, the Spanish state used this period to continue to pursue and prosecute ETA operatives instead of opening negotiations; additionally, weapon caches were discovered and seized (Esser and Bridges 2011, 69). By not reciprocating ETA’s goodwill gesture, the Spanish state put peace negotiations on an unsteady base. This led to an increase in violence, including *kale borroka*, street violence, and the attack on Madrid’s Barajas airport in December of 2006, which killed two. In the wake of the attack, the government declared that peace negotiations were finished. Nevertheless, ETA maintained that the ceasefire was still in effect until June 2007, when they officially ended it.

Although the Spanish government declared that no further negotiations with ETA would occur, some ETA leaders still hoped for peace. They realized that continued violence was contrary to public opinion. As the government was unwilling to negotiate, Otegi and later Rufi

Etxeberria, another prominent leader of Batasuna, worked with international actors who participated in the 2007 peace talks to reopen peace negotiations. Internally, Otegi and Etxeberria worked to obtain an alliance between the nonviolent, pro-independence Basque groups, while internationally the Brussels Declaration called on ETA to declare a “permanent and internationally verifiable cease-fire” (Woodworth 2010). In response, ETA halted its offensive armed actions in September 2010, and declared a permanent ceasefire in January 2011.

The following month, Batasuna presented statutes for a new political party, Sortu, that rejected violence of any kind, and, although the government was opposed to any party that held ETA’s goals, the Basque Country began to press Spain for recognition of the changes made. In May, the nationalist Left, made up of parties in favor of Basque nationalism and separatism, was allowed to return to politics and Bildu, a coalition of legal nationalist left political parties, won 25% of the Basque vote, a much higher percentage than before; Bildu’s success signified the resurgence of nationalism in politics (Whitfield 2015, 9). By July 2011, Batasuna concluded that no more could be achieved without the government’s involvement, as ETA demanded government guarantees to end violence, including the legalization of Sortu and measures to benefit its prisoners (Whitfield 2015, 9).

While direct talks between ETA and the government did not take place, a form of virtual peacemaking, between ETA, the nationalist Left, and the government, via international facilitators, occurred. Through these talks, an International Verification Commission (IVC), limited to verifying ETA’s ceasefire, was created. Finally, in October 2011, an international conference was held in San Sebastián, where international leaders issued a declaration for ETA to end all violence. Three days after the conference, ETA declared the “definitive end to its armed activity,” which Spanish and French security forces soon confirmed (Currin 2012, 30).

While ETA hoped to move forward from this point, the election of Mariano Rajoy and the PP in November 2011-- due to factors unrelated to relations with ETA-- prevented further progress. In June 2012, Sortu was legalized, but this was the only concession made. International contact with ETA was halted; ETA did not retaliate. Despite the Spanish government's lack of involvement, ETA continued to uphold its side of the deal by decommissioning or destroying caches of weapons. The IVC reported in February 2014 that ETA had destroyed arms, explosives, and ammunition, while ETA confirmed that it would continue to destroy its arms "to the end, to the last arsenal" (Whitfield 2015, 10). Although the peace process between ETA and the Spanish government would have been accomplished more quickly and more successfully had the ruling party not changed halfway through negotiations, Batasuna and the nationalist Left carried out the decommissioning of ETA with the assistance of international actors to verify the authenticity of disarmament. Despite skepticism among Spaniards and the Spanish government's refusal to acknowledge the ceasefire, the 2010 ceasefire that was internationally brokered has lasted until today, successfully ending the activities of a nationalist terrorist group. Furthermore, the last at large ETA leader, Mikel Irastorza, was arrested as of November 2016, effectively imprisoning all of ETA leadership.

## **Ch. 2: Political Situation**

The political situation in Spain inspired the formation of ETA during the dictatorship of General Franco. Due to regional repression, ETA fought against Franco, reaching a high point in public opinion with the assassination of Prime Minister Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, removing Franco's chosen successor from the picture. This led Franco to choose Juan Carlos as his successor, and Juan Carlos was responsible for the transition of Spain to democracy. As a result, the group helped to influence the future of the Spanish government. Thus, ETA's formation resulted from the political situation in Spain, and helped to influence the course of politics.

This section discusses the various political parties, both Basque nationalist and those aligned with the ruling national parties, including their formation and current standing in the Basque region as well as within Spain. Following the discussion of Basque political parties, I will examine election results from País Vasco, including the Basque Parliament elections from 1980 until the present. In examining the election results, I will focus on the representation of nationalist parties in key periods of time throughout the history of ETA.

### **Basque Nationalist Political Parties**

While ETA was indirectly involved in the political sphere through attacks on political figures, Basque political parties defended nationalist ideas within the political system. A variety of nationalist parties, both with and without ties to ETA, were present in Basque politics. This section provides a brief description of the nationalist parties discussed throughout this chapter. This includes the only pre- Civil War Basque nationalist party, the centrist Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and its splinter party Eusko Alkartasuna (EA); left wing opponents of ETA,

Euskadiko Eskerra (EE) and Aralar; the political wing of ETA, Herri Batasuna (HB), and its offshoot Euskal Herritarrok (EH); and, finally, Bildu, a far-left coalition. Understanding the background of the various nationalist political parties is important in understanding how they view issues, including violence. Despite all being nationalist parties, each takes a different position on topics, notably violence and ETA.

Formed in 1895, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV, Basque Nationalist Party), was created with the purpose of restoring *fueros* to País Vasco. As a centrist party, PNV attracted approximately one-third of the vote within País Vasco from the 1910s to the 1930s, electing several members to the Cortes in Madrid. Through joining forces with the Second Republic, PNV was successful in restoring political autonomy to the region in 1936. However, when the Second Republic lost the Spanish Civil War to General Franco, the statute of autonomy was revoked and Basque nationalism was repressed. This forced PNV to operate clandestinely within Spain or through exile in the Basque region of France. Once General Franco's dictatorship concluded and democracy was restored, PNV returned to activity in Spain; however, as a regional party, the PNV only operated within País Vasco. Despite its limited reach, PNV became the largest regional party within País Vasco (Pedahzur 2003, 82). While the PNV supports Basque nationalism, it condemns using violence to achieve goals, making the party an opponent of ETA's violent actions. Nevertheless, the party has dominated Basque politics from the granting of the regions autonomy statute until 2009, when the Basque Socialist Party (PSE) gained control. However, PNV returned to power in 2012, the year after ETA's ceasefire, and remains in power today.

While the PNV is the traditional Basque nationalist party, the majority of Basque, and Catalan, nationalist parties are leftist. As nationalist parties are usually rightist, this represents a

notable difference to the Basque and Catalan cases. Basque nationalist parties, the majority of which emerged during or immediately following Franco's rule, are grouped under the category of "abertzale left." However, within the abertzale left, there is a schism on the issue of violence, with some supporting ETA and others not. While Euskadiko Eskerra (EE) and Aralar are against ETA, Herri Batasuna (HB), Eusko Alkartasuna (EA), and EH Bildu are pro ETA.

Euskadiko Eskerra (EE), a left wing nationalist party opposed to ETA, was founded in 1977 as part of a coalition of Basque and Marxist parties. Many EE members eventually separated from the party to join Herri Batasuna (HB), after it adopted its non-violent stance. EE later formed coalitions with Eusko Alkartasuna (EA), a splinter party of the PNV. In 1991, part of EE merged with the Socialist Party of the Basque Country (PSE), to form PSE-EE, while the other segment joined with EA. This splinter effectively ended the party's original ideology of left wing nationalism, as the group changed its ideology to one of social democracy.

Founded in 2000, Aralar is another leftist party that supports Basque independence, although it is opposed to the violence of ETA. The party is a splinter group of HB that broke away when ETA broke the 2000 truce. Unlike many Basque separatist parties, Aralar has a presence in both País Vasco and Navarre. While Aralar has run independently, it has also joined in a coalition with Zutik, a party originally part of the EH coalition.

Herri Batasuna (HB), which became ETA's political wing, was formed in 1978 as a coalition of left, nationalistic parties who worked to further Basque independence. Originally brought together to advocate for "no" in the referendum held on the Spanish Constitution, the party did not achieve its goal, but continued to work for Basque independence. To further its fight, when the party won seats in the Cortes in Madrid, it would not take its seats, as a pledge to uphold the Spanish Constitution had to be made. As the government was concerned about ties

between HB and ETA, in 1998 HB helped to form Euskal Herritarrok (EH), a leftist coalition which HB became a part of. EH, Basque for “We, the Basque citizens,” absorbed HB, as well as including other leftist Basque parties including Zutik and Batzarre. However, Zutik and Batzarre left the coalition in 2000, after the end of the ETA truce of 1999. This meant that EH was essentially HB by a different name. For this reason, in 2001, the group changed its name once again to Batasuna. However, in 2003, HB, EH, and Batasuna were banned, as it was considered part of “the ‘terrorist network’ of the armed separatist group ETA;” HB was the first political party banned since the reign of General Franco (“Batasuna Banned Permanently” 2003). That same year, Batasuna, EH, and HB made it onto the U.S. list of terrorist organizations, as they have “supported ETA’s acts of terrorism” while the “leadership and membership have included a number of people convicted of ETA-related terrorist acts” (Boucher 2003).

Eusko Alkartasuna (EA), meaning Basque Solidarity, was created in 1986 when it split from PNV-EAJ. EA operates in both the Spanish and French Basque country working toward achieving the creation of an independent Basque state. Additionally, EA and the PNV formed a coalition in Navarre to maximize Basque nationalist interests.

Bildu, later changed to EH Bildu, was created in 2011 and is a coalition of Aralar, EA, Alternatiba, and Sortu. Viewed as a far-left party, the pro-independence party is active in País Vasco and Navarre. As a coalition, EH Bildu combined members of the center left, the far left, and independent members of the left wing, including many former supporters or members of Batasuna. While originally banned due to ties with Batasuna, the Constitutional Court of Spain lifted the ban in time for the 2011 campaigns, allowing Bildu to participate (Bourne 2010, 5-6).

## Non-Nationalist Parties

While Basque politics is dominated by nationalist parties, specifically PNV, non-nationalist parties have a presence in the region. The most important of these parties, the Popular Party (PP) and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), are discussed in this section. These non-nationalist parties are popular throughout Spain and have been the governing parties in Spain during negotiations with ETA.

Classified as a conservative, Christian democratic party the *Partido Popular* (PP, Popular Party), is one of the main political parties in Spain. Although PP was not founded until 1989, it was a splinter group of the 1976 People's Alliance, which joined the Democratic Coalition and, later, the People's Coalition (CP). As the party was closely aligned to Franco's ideology and regime, the group started to lose popularity, and they reformed as the Popular Party (PP) and rebranded as a typical conservative party. As the party continued to rebrand and paint itself as a centrist-right party against terrorism and exorbitant public spending and taxation, José María Aznar, a former Premier of Castile and León, became the chairman of the party. By 1996, PP was the largest party in Spain, and Aznar became Prime Minister, with the support of the Basque Nationalist Party. As PP transformed to a more centrist party that advocated harsher punishment for terrorism, the anti-violent PNV came to support PP. It was under Aznar's government that the first truce with ETA was met in 1998 when Aznar agreed to move ETA prisoners to prisons closer to the Basque region, easing the burden on Basque families who wished to visit relatives. Although the truce did not last much longer than a year, it was the first attempt at negotiating with the group. While PP remained in power in Spain until 2004, their loss was partially due to PP candidate Mariana Rajoy blaming ETA for the 11-M train attacks in Madrid prior to the elections, despite evidence that Al-Qaeda perpetrated the attacks. The PP did not return to power

until 2011, when Rajoy beat the Spanish Workers Party (PSOE) candidate. Rajoy and the People's Party are currently in power in Spain.

Founded in 1879, the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Workers Party), was formed as a typical European social democracy party. After being banned in 1939 by Franco, PSOE was re-legalized in 1977 after facing heavy persecution at the hands of Franco. PSOE abandoned its Marxist roots in 1979, similar to most European social democratic parties, and now is defined as center left, social democratic, and progressive. PSOE gained power in the 1982 general election and Felipe González remained Prime Minister until 1996, when PP took power due to a decrease in public support. This decrease was partially due to state terrorism against ETA. The PSOE government illegally formed *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* (GAL), or Antiterrorist Liberation Groups, to fight against ETA; however, PSOE officials never acknowledged responsibility for GAL or condemned the crimes they committed. The GAL issue plagued PSOE during the election, leading to PP winning control. PSOE and Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero regained power in 2004, after the 11-M attacks. The Zapatero government favored negotiations with ETA, which led to the 2006 ceasefire, ending with an ETA attack on Madrid's Barajas Airport. Despite the ceasefire failure, Zapatero remained in power until 2011, when PP defeated PSOE.

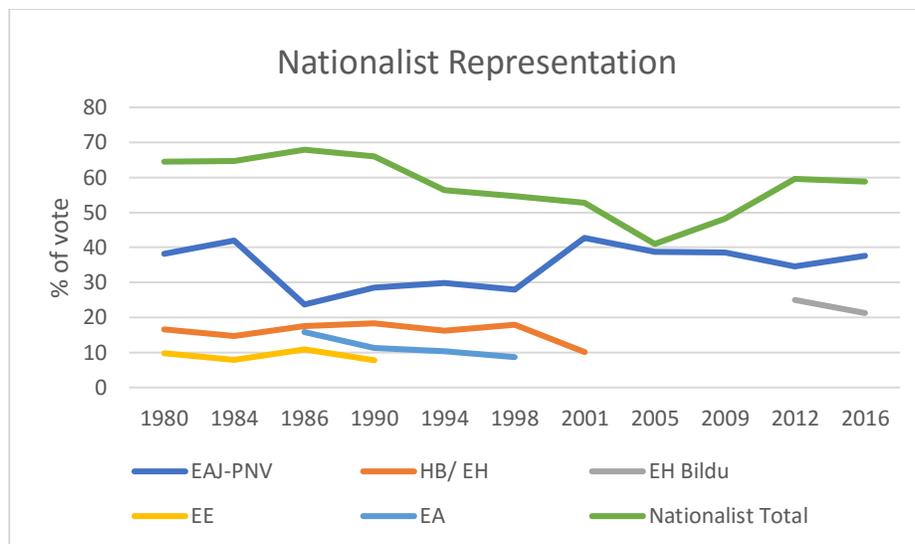
### **Basque Parliament Elections**

Established by the Statute of Basque Autonomy of 1979, the Basque Parliament, the legislative body of País Vasco, first met in 1980 and is composed of 75 members elected by the citizens of País Vasco. Each of the three provinces of País Vasco has 25 deputies, despite differences in the populations of each province. Elected deputies then vote to elect the

*lehendakari*, or president. According to the Basque Statute of Autonomy, Euskera, like Castellano, is recognized as an official language in Euskadi (“The Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country”). As such, Euskera is a language for governmental, academic, and cultural documents, proceedings, or correspondence. Due to this, sessions of the Basque Parliament are conducted in both Spanish and Euskera.

Within this section, I will examine the composition of the Basque Parliament, with special attention paid to the nationalist parties and how their presence has changed over time. I will focus specifically on key points in ETA’s history, including the 1980s when the group was most active, 2000 and 2006 when the group broke ceasefires, and 2011 when a permanent ceasefire was reached.

**Graph 2.1: Nationalist Representation in Basque Parliament (Total and by Party)**



Since the creation of the Basque Parliament, Basque nationalist parties have received a majority of the vote, with notable exceptions in 2005 and 2009, where they received 41% and 48% of the vote, respectively. It is interesting to note that within the 1980s, when ETA was the

most active, nationalist party representation was at its highest, gaining 64% of the vote in 1980 and 1984, 68% in 1986, and 66% in 1990 (Departamento de Seguridad). Additionally, within this period, PNV, the moderate nationalist party that condemns violence, received the highest proportion of the vote. However, Herri Batasuna, the political extension of ETA, received the second highest number of votes.

Nationalist representation in the Basque Parliament reached a peak in 1986, with 67.9% of seats belonging to nationalist parties. However, in 2005, nationalist representation reached a low of only 41%. While this corresponded with a decrease in ETA attacks due to ceasefire talks, generally, nationalist representation does not correspond with ETA actions. Representation for Basque nationalist parties in the Basque Parliament has typically remained above 50%.

**Graph 2.2: Basque Parliament: Number of Seats Held**

	1980	1984	1986	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2009	2012	2016
<b>Nationalist Parties</b>											
PNV/ EA							33	29			
PNV	25	32	17	22	22	21			30	27	28
EH Bildu										21	18
HB	11	11	13	13	11						
EH						14	7				
EE	6	6	9	6							
Aralar								1	4		
EA			13	9	8	6			1		
<b>Non- Nationalist Parties</b>											
PSE- PSOE	9	19	19	16							
PSEEE/ PSOE					12	14	13	18	25	16	9
PP				6	11	16	19	15	13	10	9
Other	9	7	4	3	11	4	3	12	2	1	11

Graph 2.2 shows the composition of the Basque Parliament by political party and how it has changed over time. Due to the amount of political parties and the frequency of renaming and dissolution, only the major Basque nationalist and nationwide parties are included in the table. The other category encompasses the seats that political parties not included in the chart held each year. Although parties have appeared and disappeared throughout the years, PNV has remained a constant presence in the Basque Parliament, steadily maintaining the largest number of seats. As a centrist party, PNV ensures that more radical nationalists, who support the use of violence, do not control País Vasco.

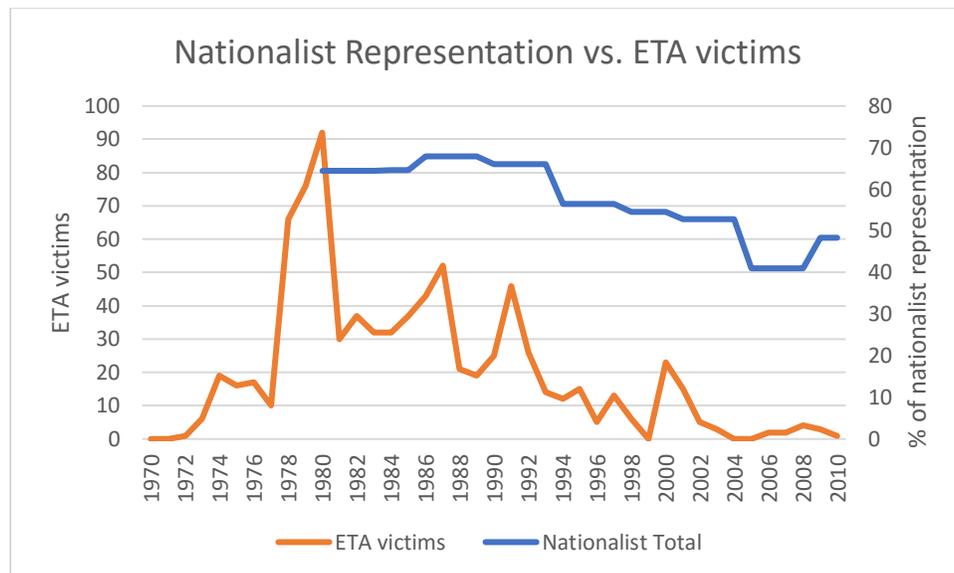
Another notable portion of this chart is the popularity of Herri Batasuna (HB). HB and its subsequent party, EH, steadily received the second highest number of seats in Parliament when looking at the nationalist parties. As the political wing of ETA, this stands in sharp contrast to PNV, which condemns the use of violence. This implies that a significant segment of the Basque population supported ETA's violent tactics to achieve their goals, as representatives of the group steadily composed about 15% of Parliament. Until the groups were banned from politics, they fought to further the interests of ETA politically, while ETA continued its violent attacks.

However, the popular nationwide party PSOE maintained higher representation in Parliament than all nationalist parties, with the exception of PNV. Although, in 1986, PSOE gained control of Parliament for the first and only time, with 19 seats as opposed to the 17 seats held by PNV. During 1987-1990, the Basque Parliament president was from PSE-PSOE. This is significant because during the reign of PSOE, nationalist parties received roughly 67% of the overall vote. Although ETA was active at this point, in the 1986-1990 period, ETA only maintained an average of 32 victims per year, down from its most violent period of 1978-1982 where they achieved an average of 60 victims per year (Ministerio del Interior). Despite the

decrease in ETA attacks, HB representation remained constant while PNV representation fell to PSE-PSOE.

The reign of PNV was only interrupted by PSOE from 1987-1990 until 2009-2012, when a PP candidate became president. These are the only two periods in the history of the Basque Parliament that a party other than PNV held power. However, in 2009 when PP won control, the nationalist parties combined only won 48% of the vote. This was also during a period of low attacks from ETA, with only three victims in 2009 and one the following year (Ministerio del Interior).

**Graph 2.3: Nationalist Representation in Basque Parliament vs ETA victims**



## Conclusions

Overall, nationalist representation in Parliament does align with periods of high ETA violence. However, once HB and EH were banned as political parties in 2003, the number of ETA victims almost disappears, with only 15 victims from 2003-2010. This represents the lowest

period of ETA activity since their formation, when they only had 4 victims between 1968-1972 (Ministerio del Interior). However, this period was before the transition to democracy, so it was not considered in this analysis.

While I hypothesized that increased nationalist representation in the Basque Parliament would lead to decreased violence, this turned out to be incorrect. There could be various explanations for the lack of correlation between nationalist representation and violence. Not all nationalist parties promote violence by ETA, or any group, to reach their goals. PNV is a prime example of this. As the controlling and largest party in País Vasco, PNV does not support the use of violence and would not help ETA to achieve their goals. It is plausible that ETA may have cut back on its violent attacks if it believed that it would be able to accomplish its goals politically. However, since most nationalist parties did not represent their specific interests, and the ones that did, namely HB, only controlled about 15% of Parliament, it makes sense that violence did not decrease as nationalist representation in Parliament increased. In fact, nationalist representation was highest while ETA was still very active.

The amount of nationalist representation during ceasefire negotiations is intriguing. During efforts to reach a 2006 ceasefire, nationalist parties only received 41% of the vote, while when the 2011 ceasefire was achieved, nationalists received 59% of the vote in 2012 (Departamento de Seguridad). It is possible that representation for the nationalist parties decreased immediately before the 2006 ceasefire, as the populace did not believe it was likely that ceasefire negotiations would be successful with the PSOE government, as they had been with the PP government. However, nationalist representation may have risen in the aftermath of the 2011 ceasefire, as a peaceful solution had been reached, and ETA and their violence was no longer an issue that nationalist parties had to defend or revoke during elections.

Over time, there appears to have been little if any correlation between nationalist representation and ETA violence. Nationalist representation has remained relatively constant in the Basque Parliament despite highs and lows in ETA victims.

While looking at the data is important, it is also vital to examine the ideological positions of each party. As a rightist party, PP continues to be the political party most associated with the Franco regime, while PSOE, a social democrat party, represents a continuation of the Second Republic. Within this context, the Basque nationalist parties have fallen into an awkward position as to whether or not they were going to cooperate with a democratic, Spanish government. While the majority took the seats that they won in the Cortes, some parties, such as Herri Batasuna (HB) and its subsequent rebirths, would not take their seats, as an allegiance to the Spanish Constitution had to be pledged. As a centrist party, PNV was willing to cooperate with the Spanish governments, especially PP, as it was also a centrist-right party. However, as evidenced by the actions of HB, the position that the abertzale left held was more precarious. While the abertzale left was frequently more willing to work with the PSOE government, due to their leftist ideology, this did not always function well. Nevertheless, it was during Zapatero's PSOE government that a ceasefire between ETA and the Spanish state was closest to being reached. Similarities in ideology lent the PNV to supporting PP and the abertzale left to supporting PSOE, while the ruling parties' relations with ETA have prompted change in power, as evidenced by the GAL situation and 11-M attacks.

Currently in País Vasco, nationalist parties do not face the same support that they enjoyed in the 1980s. However, nationalist representation has continued to increase since 2005. This may be a result of diminished ETA activity. As the group is now in a permanent ceasefire, Basques can profess a more nationalist sentiment without fear of being grouped with the ETA terrorists.

As such, I believe that nationalist parties in Basque Parliament will continue to hold a minimum of half the seats, but likely more. Additionally, the pacifist position among the abertzale left will continue to grow, as the main supporters of violence have been illegalized and using violence to meet goals is no longer a trend since ETA's ceasefire. While the centrist PNV is likely to remain in the majority, the abertzale left will continue to have a presence in the Basque Parliament.

### Ch. 3: Public Opinion of ETA

Maintaining public support is vital to both terrorist groups and the governments that combat them. If either group has public support on its side, it is able to justify its actions as the will of the people. Public support for ETA has risen and fallen over time, reaching a high point after the assassination of General Franco's chosen successor, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco. However, public opinion towards ETA later fell, as it was attacking a young democratic state.

Within this section, I will use the EuskoBarómetro, a study on Basque public opinion, to examine opinions related to ETA and their use of violence. Conducted by the University of País Vasco, the EuskoBarómetro surveys Vizcaya, the Basque region of Spain, while leaving out Navarre and the Basque region of France. However, as Navarre is its own autonomous community, these limitations will not be detrimental to conclusions drawn from this data. The EuskoBarómetro survey began in 1999 and is conducted twice a year, except for 2015, when it was only conducted once. While this does not measure public opinion during the peak years of ETA, it is possible to see public opinions from the time when ETA began negotiating its first unsuccessful ceasefire.

Within this chapter, I examine various EuskoBarómetro surveys to evaluate public opinion towards ETA, violence, the possibility of a ceasefire, and the possibility of independence for Vizcaya. I examine the data from 1999-2016 to see how trends changed over time. The year 1999 marks the year in which ETA attacks was at its lowest point since the formation of the group and provides a baseline on opinion of ETA, violence, and ceasefire negotiations. Furthermore, I examine current surveys to see how Basque opinions towards violence and independence have changed since ETA's ceasefire and disarmament.

### Nationalist Sentiment of The Basques

This section discusses how the Basques define themselves, their opinion regarding nationalist sentiment, as well as their desire for independence. I focus on averages based on the 18 years included in the EuskoBarómetro and use specific years only as reference points of noticeable highs and lows, as the overall sentiment does not vary considerably between years.

**Graph 3. 1: National Identity of Basques (1999-2016)**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Only Basque	30.56	2.7	25	35
More Basque Than Spanish	21.3	1.89	18	25
Equally Basque and Spanish	34.5	1.98	31	38
More Spanish than Basque	4.3	1.45	2	7
Only Spanish	5.3	1.45	3	8
No Answer	3.9	1.54	2	8

In each EuskoBarómetro Survey, the Basque participants were asked which national identity they identified with the most. Instead of being asked to choose between Basque and Spanish, this survey allowed for nuanced categories, which is out of the norm. As expected, a large portion of the surveyed population identified as either completely Basque (31%) or more Basque than Spanish (21%). However, the importance of a duality as both Basque and Spanish represents the largest percentage of the population (35%). When added to the people who self-identify as primarily or completely Basque (52%), the percentage of people who identify as Basque climbs to 87% of the population. This stands in sharp contrast to the 9% of the population that identify as primarily Spanish. In fact, even when Spanish sentiment was at its highest (2000), only 14% of Basques identified as completely or mostly Spanish. Thus, from this graph, it is obvious that most Basques feel a special connection with their Basque roots and feel their Basqueness is important to note. However, regional identity throughout Spain is very

strong, so this is not necessarily a unique aspect. As this is true, it would seem plausible to assume that nationalist sentiment among Basques would also run high; however, this is not the case.

Although the majority of inhabitants of Euskadi identify as Basque, nationalist sentiment is not high. In fact, on average, only 43% of Basques self-identify as possessing nationalist sentiment, with 51% reporting none, while 6% abstained from answering. Within this context, nationalist sentiment was not necessarily defined as pro violence; rather, the majority of those who said they were nationalist were affiliated with the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) with a smaller proportion reporting association with EH Bildu (EHB). Nationalist sentiment among Basques reached its peak in 1999, 2013, 2015, and 2016 with 46% of Basques representing nationalist views.<sup>2</sup> Within these dates, 1999 is the only year in which ETA was active and nationalist sentiment was high. This could mean that nationalism could not flourish while ETA was active; however, this does not hold. While nationalism increased during the 2006 ceasefire (to 43% as opposed to 40% the previous year), and the 2011 ceasefire (to 45%, up from 39% in 2010), nationalist sentiment increased in other years when a ceasefire was not in effect. This is noticeable in 2001 (to 45% from 42%) and 2009 (from 39% to 44%), when ceasefires were not in effect, so ETA activity did not decrease. While an increase in nationalist sentiment in times of high ETA activity would seem plausible, as ETA embraced their Basque heritage and fought for independence for País Vasco, this was not the case. Conversely, periods of ETA inactivity are correlated with an increase in nationalist sentiment. However, ETA inactivity is not the only cause for increased nationalist sentiment, as evidenced by periods where nationalist sentiment increased but ETA activity did not decrease.

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<sup>2</sup> As the survey did not explicitly define what it meant by “nationalistic” sentiment, I assume that they use the standard definition of advocating political independence for País Vasco.

**Graph 3.2: Average Desire for Independence (1999-2016)**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Large	33.06	3.19	29	40
Small	26.1	4.08	20	33
None	27.61	5.21	17	37
Indifferent	7.89	2.98	2	14
No Answer	5.33	2.54	1	12

Although less than half of the Basque population held nationalist sentiments, those who possessed a desire for independence were greater. Of those surveyed, 33% had a great desire for Basque independence, while an additional 26% had small desires for independence, making 59% of Basques holding a degree of desire for independence. In contrast, only 28% of Basques have no desire for independence. Desire for independence was highest in 1999, when 73% of Basques had had some desire for independence- 40% large and 33% small. Consequently, this was also the year in which desire to remain a part of Spain was the smallest at only 17%. Other than 1999, the wish to separate from Spain was highest in 2005 and 2006 at 68% and 62% respectively. Interestingly, this was the period of an ETA ceasefire. However, after the permanent ETA ceasefire of 2011, the desire for a Basque state did not rise, remaining at an average of only 54% from 2011 to the present. It can therefore be concluded that ETA actions did not influence the Basques desire for statehood, as the 2005-2006 ceasefire resulted in increased demand for independence while the permanent 2011 lessened this demand.

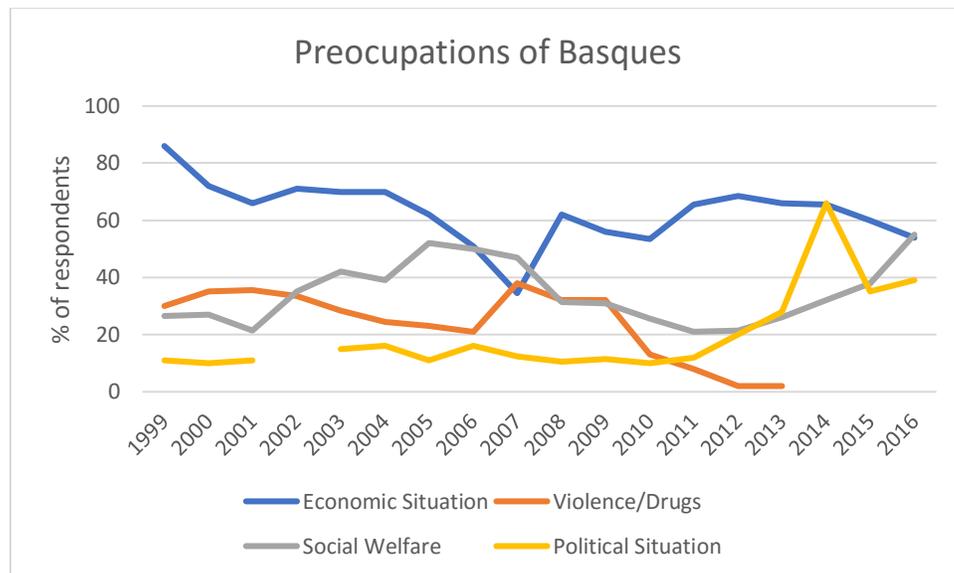
However, while many people desired independence, a much smaller percentage actually believed that independence was possible to achieve. Only four percent of Basques thought that independence was certain while 27% thought that there was a high probability of Vizcaya gaining independence; however, 45% thought there was a slight possibility. While this figure was only available in the 1999 EuskoBarómetro, it is not possible to determine how it changed

over time, especially in the periods where the push for independence was greatest. As such, while Basques were in favor of independence, they realized that chances of actually achieving independence were small and unlikely to occur.

### Basque Preoccupations and Opinions on Violence

As an autonomous region, the principal problems of Euskadi were not always the same as the rest of Spain. This section examines the preoccupations of the Basque populace as well as their opinion on the problem of violence.

**Graph 3.3: Principal Preoccupations of the Basques (1999-2016)**

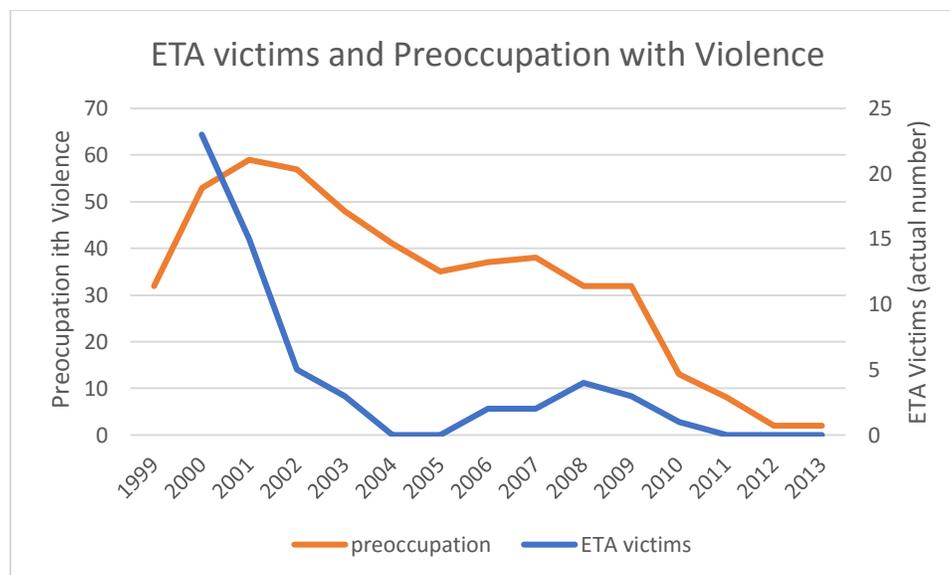


This survey had the most changes in answer choices from year to year; in order to account for these changes, I have grouped the various options into four main categories: economic situation, violence/drugs, social welfare, and the political situation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Economic situation includes unemployment and overall economic health. Social welfare includes living, health, education, inequality, and overall welfare. Political situation includes data on immigration, peace attempts, and the overall political situation.

It is noteworthy to point out that violence has never been the main preoccupation of the Basques. The economic situation, mainly unemployment, has always held the top spot, throughout 1999-2016. While violence was consistently second, in the periods of 2005-2007 and 2009-2013, inequality and welfare were considered more worrisome. Within these time periods, ETA activity was low due to the 2006 and 2011 ceasefires.

**Graph 3.4: ETA Victims and Basque Preoccupation with Violence (1999-2013)<sup>4</sup>**



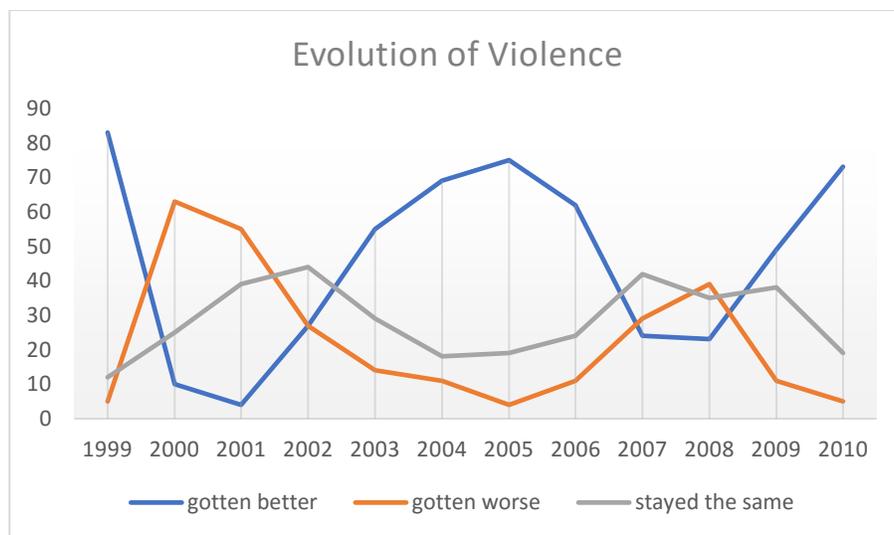
Graph 4 shows the relationship between the number of ETA victims and the Basque preoccupation with violence. While Graph 3 showed the average percentage of Basques listing violence as a worry, Graph 4 shows the breakdown by year. From this graph, it is evident that Basque preoccupation with violence rose and fell in comparison to ETA victims. The 2005 ceasefire has zero ETA victims and only 35% of Basques listed violence as a concern. This represents a low point in concern for violence that is not reached again until 2008. From this

<sup>4</sup> The first data point for ETA victims is part of a larger trend of high numbers of ETA victims. It was during the period shown that ETA victims were in decline. I began the graph in 1999 as that was when the EuskoBarómetro data was first available.

point, violence continues to diminish as a primary concern. By the time of the 2011 ceasefire, only eight percent of Basques listed violence as a concern, and further dropped to only two percent in the following years.

This same trend is evidenced when the EuskoBarómetro survey asked respondents if they believed the issue of violence had improved or worsened from the previous years.

**Graph 3.5: The Evolution of the Problem of Violence from the Previous Year (1999-2010)**



The evolution of violence in a large way depended on the actions of ETA. As the number of victims of ETA fell, respondents believed that the problem of violence was lessening. This is specifically evidenced from 2001 to 2005, when an ETA ceasefire was called. However, when the ceasefire was called off, this corresponded with the populace believing that the problem of violence was more severe. Nevertheless, people never believed that the problem was worse than in 2000, when the number of ETA victims was the highest within this selection of data at 23. This is a limited conclusion, as data from earlier periods, where ETA was more active, is not available. It is plausible to assume that Basques would have considered violence to have

continually worsened through ETA's peak in the 1980's. This graph represents the period of ETA's decline where they were no longer as imminent of a threat as they had previously been.

### Opinion of ETA

Within this section, I present how the Basque people viewed both ETA and ETA operatives. The portion of the EuskoBarómetro that deals with views on operatives was only conducted in 1999; however, it includes references to 1996, so it is possible to show how opinion changed over time. Nevertheless, this data is limited, as it only represents the opinions of Basques regarding ETA in a time when ETA was already in decline.

**Graph 3.6: Basque Attitudes Toward ETA (1999-2016)**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Total Rejection	58.5	6.77	35	66
Fear	3.83	1.07	2	6
Indifference	4.39	2.16	1	8
Support but now rejection	14.89	3.6	7	20
Support ends, not means	11.5	1.77	7	15
Critical justification	3.06	1.87	1	9
Total support	0.94	0.7	0	3
No answer	2.89	1.63	0	7

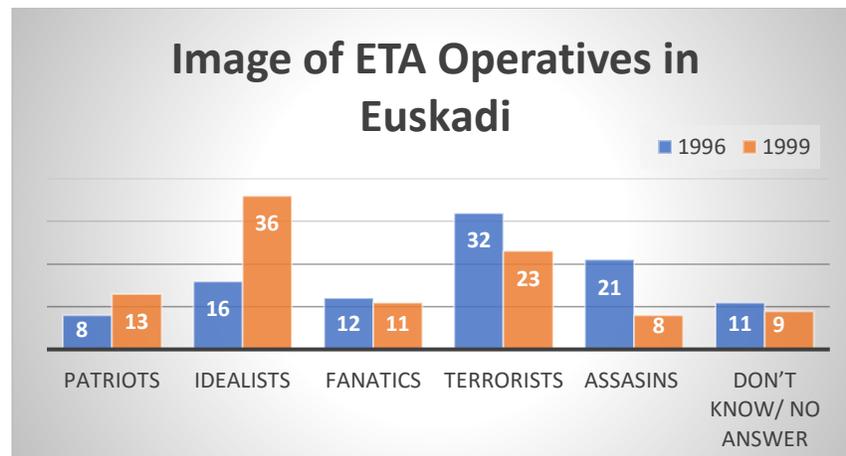
Overall, the Basque reaction towards ETA is one of complete rejection (58.5%). After this significant portion of the population, it is important to note that additional 15% of the population that formerly supported ETA now rejects the group, while 12% support the goals of ETA but not the means to which they went to achieve them. Only one percent of the population of Euskadi totally supported ETA in 1999. However, it is interesting that only four percent of Basques admitted to fearing ETA. While the averages help to present a tidy image of Basque public opinion, it is important to look at the various years to see trends.

Basque attitudes towards ETA in 1999 represented a high of support between 1999-2016; however, a decline in overall opinion towards ETA is evident. Only two percent of Basques totally supported ETA, and although this is the highest amount of support for ETA in the given range, except for 2002, it is likely that support for ETA was higher previously. Twenty percent of Basques who formerly supported ETA now does not accept the group, while 15% support the goals of ETA but not the methods used to achieve them. Both represent the highest level of support for ETA between 1999 to 2016. However, what is most telling of 1999 is that only 35% of Basques completely rejected the group. This is the lowest level of rejection that the EuskoBarómetro reports. Nevertheless, while 1999 represented the highest amount of support for ETA, it is also the year in which the highest percentage of Basques (6%) reporting fearing the group. Thus, while ETA was most popular in 1999, its high level of fear corresponds with the high in the victim count between 1999-2016. While it is not surprising that the group was most feared when it had the most attacks, it is interesting that support for the group was also highest then, during the high point of attacks.

The two ETA ceasefires, in 2006 and 2011, represent another interesting time. In 2006, only half of Basques totally rejected ETA, the lowest since 1999. While total support remained constant (1%), 14% supported the ends but not the means of ETA and 19% of former supporters now rejected the group. The numbers in 2011 are similar to those in 2006, with the exception of the percentage of Basques who rejected ETA completely (60%) and the former advocates of ETA (13%). Only 12% supported the ends of the group; however, in both years only four percent of Basques reported feared the group. This low amount of fear is likely due to the ceasefire negotiations and tentative peace which occurred in both 2006 and 2011.

In regards to the Basques opinions surrounding ETA, it would be more beneficial to have data from the years of ETA's main activities to see how reactions varied during periods of high activity and relative quiet. In the EuskoBarómetro data set, the only year of relative activity for ETA is in 1999. The rest of the data provides data on periods of low activity and peace. However, it can be concluded that fear of ETA was highest when the group was most active and remained relatively steady the rest of the time. Additionally, while ETA was moderately active (in 1999) it received the least amount of total rejection, although other forms of rejection were higher (former supporters and those who support the ends, not the means).

**Graph 3.7: Image of ETA Operatives in Euskadi**



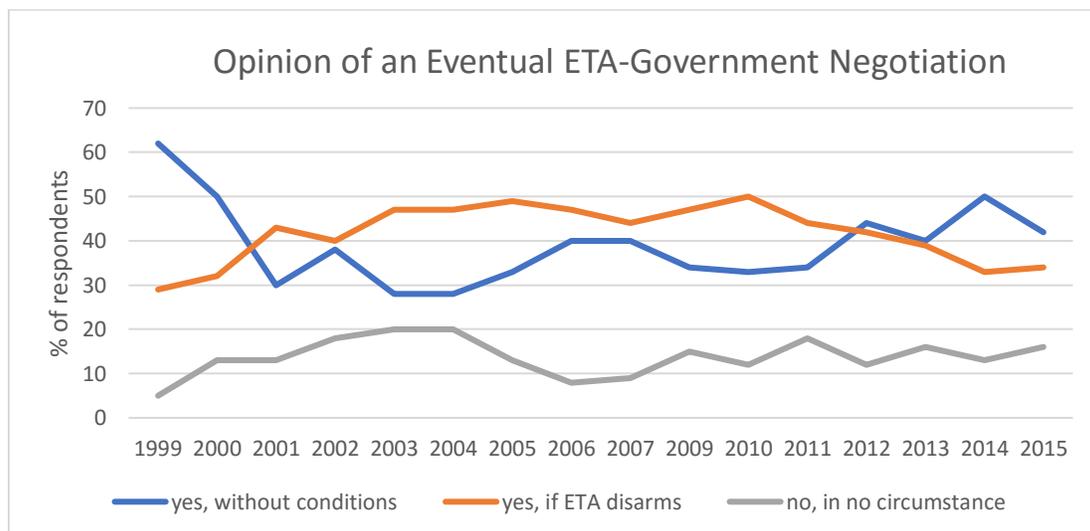
Although support for ETA decreased, the Basque populace also began to see it in a new, better light. Between 1996 and 1999, the public came to see ETA as patriots and idealists instead of terrorists and assassins. Graph 7 shows that the image of ETA activists as idealists more than doubled, from 16% in 1996 to 36% in 1999. As the positive image grew, the negative shrank. In 1996, 32% of Basques saw ETA as terrorists and 21% saw the group as assassins. This stands in remarkable contrast to the figures from 1999 that show that 23% saw the group as terrorists, while only 8% saw them as assassins. Thus, while support for ETA and their actions declined,

their overall image transformed from one of terrorism and violence to one of patriotism and freedom-fighters. It is unknown how ceasefire attempts affected its image throughout Euskadi, as data on how ETA was viewed was only available in the 1999 EuskoBarómetro. However, it is likely that the image of operatives as terrorists continued to decline, as large scale terror activities were discontinued. The possible exception to this is in 2006 when the group attacked the Madrid Barajas Airport in the midst of negotiations, effectively ending the 2006 peace.

### Opinion on an ETA Ceasefire

This portion of the paper focuses on people's opinion towards an eventual negotiation between the Spanish state and ETA. Despite ETA's successful attempt at negotiating a ceasefire, it is not recognized by the Spanish state, which still considers ETA an active terrorist group. The ceasefire was brokered by international actors, who continue to hold ETA to the agreed upon standards. Nevertheless, I examine Basque public opinion toward a government recognized ceasefire, as well as opinion towards the continued use of violence to reach political ideals.

**Graph 3.8: Opinion on an Eventual ETA-Government Ceasefire Negotiation (1999-2015)**



In regards to attempts at negotiating with ETA to reach a ceasefire, Basques were overwhelmingly in favor and expected ceasefire negotiations to begin between ETA and the Spanish government in 1999. Sixty-two percent of Basques believed that negotiations would begin without any conditions being met. However, 29% admitted that negotiations would not commence until ETA laid down their arms. Only five percent of Basques did not expect negotiations to occur in 1999. While peace talks did begin in 1999 between ETA and the government, there would need to be conditions. Ceasefires only lasted a month or two at the beginning, as ETA was unwilling to compromise on its core demands, leading negotiations to be unsuccessful.

Basque sentiment towards negotiations continued to be positive, with only an average of 14% of Basques believing that negotiations would not occur under any circumstance. While for those in favor of eventual negotiations, more believed that negotiations would only occur if ETA disarmed (42%) in contrast to those who thought talks would begin without conditions (39%).

Those who believed that the government would only negotiate if ETA disarmed were highest a year before ceasefires were called, 49% in 2005 and 50% in 2010. Additionally, in these years, 33% of Basques believed that negotiations would occur without conditions, with only 12-13% believing that negotiations would not occur.

In looking at the actual years of the ceasefires, 2006 and 2011, there is great difference in how Basques perceived negotiations. In 2006, those who believed that negotiations would not occur was only 8%, the lowest except for 1999. This is likely due the fact that negotiations between ETA and the government were already in session, and it was assumed they would continue. In contrast, in 2011, 18% thought that negotiations would not occur, likely a result of

the government's stance on not negotiating with ETA and negotiations with international actors that were ongoing.

Opinion regarding ETA-government peace talks has always been overwhelmingly in support of peace, regardless of the level of violence. However, when violence was more prevalent (1999), more Basques believed that they would only occur if ETA disarmed.

It is important to note that an average of 13% of Basques did not believe negotiations would occur in any case. While it may be assumed that this percentage of the population were diehard ETA supporters, that is not the case. Nationalists made up part of this number, however, members of the Partido Popular (PP) composed the majority.

Despite the fact that a negotiation between the Spanish state and ETA has not occurred, the ceasefire holds. As such, from 2011 on, EuskoBarómetro survey participants were asked if they believed that it was possible to defend all political ideas without the need for reoccurring violence. The answer to this question was a resounding yes. An average of 83% of Basques agreed that this was likely in the coming years. Only seven percent disagreed while a further seven percent remained neutral.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has covered public opinion of the Basques regarding a variety of topics, including nationalist sentiment, opinions on violence, views on ETA, and thoughts on ceasefire negotiations. While some analysis was possible, the conclusions are limited as data was not available for the peak years of ETA activity. As such, the comparisons made only apply to the periods of relative peace in Euskadi, with 1999 representing the only year where violence was at a moderate level.

ETA activity did not influence how Basques regarded their identity, nationalist sentiment, or desire for independence. Most Basques identify themselves as either completely Basque or more Basque than Spanish. However, while 52% characterize themselves as Basque, only 43% of Basques admit to feeling a nationalist sentiment. While most Basques expressed desire for an independent Basque state, this was not influenced by ETA actions. This is evidenced by the ceasefire attempts; while 2006 resulted in an increased demand for independence, the 2011 peace led to a decrease. Despite a desire for independence, Basques were more realistic about the ability to actually achieve independence. Only roughly a third of Basques believed that Basque independence was certain or highly probable. ETA actions proved to be uncorrelated with how the Basques identified themselves, expressed nationalist sentiment, or influenced independence demands.

Basque opinions on violence were slightly more correlated to ETA actions, even though violence was never the principal concern of Basques. The evolution of violence depended on ETA actions and was correlated to Basque worry. As ETA violence decreased, the preoccupation with violence decreased; however, due to the unreliability of ETA ceasefires, a degree of worry always remained until the present, now that the 2011 ceasefire has been held and attacks stopped. Thus, ETA attacks and the Basques perception of violence are correlated, as expected.

Public opinion on ETA was vastly negative in the studied period. A majority of the population (60%) rejected the group while only 1% supported ETA. The portion of the Basque population that regarded ETA with fear corresponded with ETA violence. In the years in which ETA was more active, a greater percentage reported fear toward ETA, while peaceful periods resulted in fewer fearful individuals. However, other than this category, the other perceptions of ETA did not correlate with ETA actions.

Finally, the Basque public was overwhelmingly in support of negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government; however, the conditions needed to negotiate were debatable. Opinions regarding ceasefires were not correlated with ETA activity, except for 2006, when ETA and the government were in the middle of negotiations. As the final 2011 ceasefire was not brokered with the Spanish state, this did not affect results regarding a government negotiation, which Basques are still in favor of. However, in light of the 2011 ceasefire, Basques began to be asked if they believed it was possible to defend political ideas without the use of violence. Basques responded with a vehement yes, clearly showing their opposition to ETA tactics.

#### Ch. 4: Economy of País Vasco

País Vasco is typically considered one of the more affluent regions of Spain, along with Catalonia. In 2014, the most recent year on record, the GDP per capita (PPP) of Euskal Herria was €31,600 (this number includes all seven Basque territories); this exceeded Spain, at €25,000, and the European Union rate of €27,500 (“Economy”). The Basque economy first gained prominence through its industrial capacity, but it later changed to a service based economy, which remains today. Currently, services make up 58.8% of GDP; industry is responsible for 24.66% (21.14% manufacturing, 7.03% construction, 0.65% agriculture and fisheries (“Basque Country”). Through the evolution of the economy, Basque society also changed, through early industrialization and immigration.

Basques have a strong history of industry, which dominated its economy until the recent shift to a service based economy. An abundance of iron ore was present in Euskadi and, while used in Euskadi, was also transported to Britain for industrial processing; this fueled the economy and the development of industry at home. Mining, steel, and shipbuilding industries came to dominate Euskadi, especially Bilbao. The developing economy required a large work force, drawing immigrants from around Spain and other countries, notably from France. This influx of foreigners led to an expansion of cultural difference and languages. Immigration to Euskadi to fuel industrialization continued throughout Franco’s regime. It was not until recently that Euskadi moved away from industrialization.

In the 1980s, Bilbao officials began to see tourism as a solution for the declining industrial market. While travel to the industrialized center for business was common, there was a shift towards appealing to leisure tourism. In an effort to appeal to leisure travelers, the city began

development of new transportation systems, notably a metro system and airport, parks, apartment complexes, and stores. The Guggenheim Museum is considered the crowning jewel of this period of revamping (Plaza 2000, 267). The region, already transitioning to a service based economy, increased the number of hotels, restaurants, bars, and shops to accommodate the growing number of tourists that the Guggenheim attracted. From the opening of the museum in 1997, attendance was higher than anticipated. In the first year alone, a million visitors patronized the museum, a figure which the Guggenheim has maintained since; this allowed for the museum to pay for itself within five years (Franklin 2016, 80). By embracing tourism as a growing outlet for economic growth, Euskadi was able to revitalize their economy, largely due the success of the Guggenheim museum.

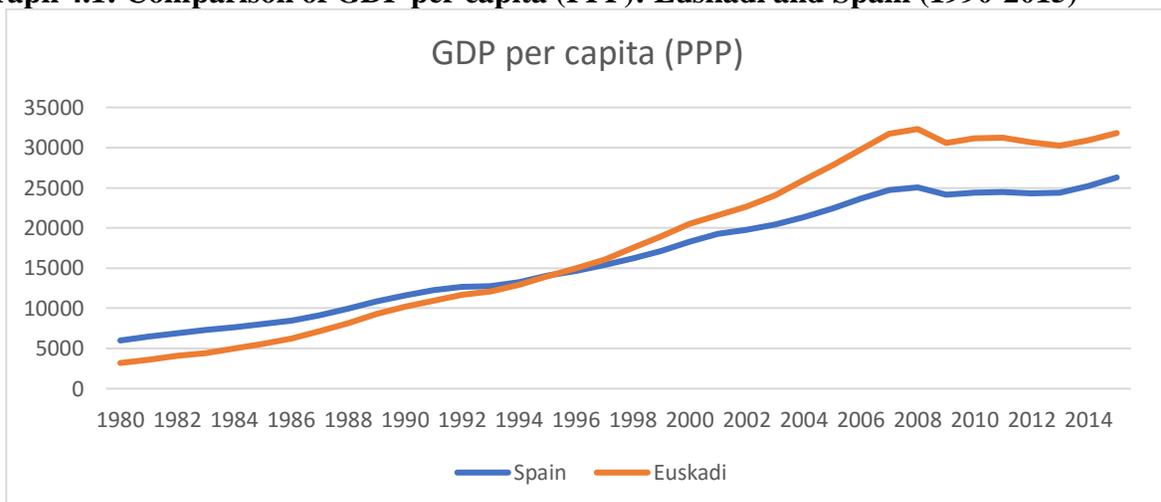
As an autonomous community, País Vasco has more control of its finances, as it retains control of its tax system. Instead of the Spanish state levying taxes, the process of levying taxes is held by Basque regional tax authorities. As such, Basques have the power to levy various taxes, including direct income tax, company tax, wealth taxes, inheritance taxes, gift tax (Ruiz Almendral 2008, 58). Furthermore, Basques are in charge of indirect taxes such as VAT, property transfer taxes, special taxes, and regulate local taxes. While the Basque authorities are responsible for levying taxes, País Vasco still pays taxes to the Spanish state, as it provides services such as defense, the armed forces, international relations, customs and tariff agreements, and other similar services (Ruiz Almendral 2008, 59). Through a complicated system, the amount of taxes that País Vasco pays to the state is determined; however, this amount is generally small, less than one percent of total taxes collected in Euskadi (Ruiz Almendral 2008, 47). The computation method for determining taxes owed to the state is controversial, as opponents feel it favors the Basque regional government (Ruiz Almendral 2008, 49).

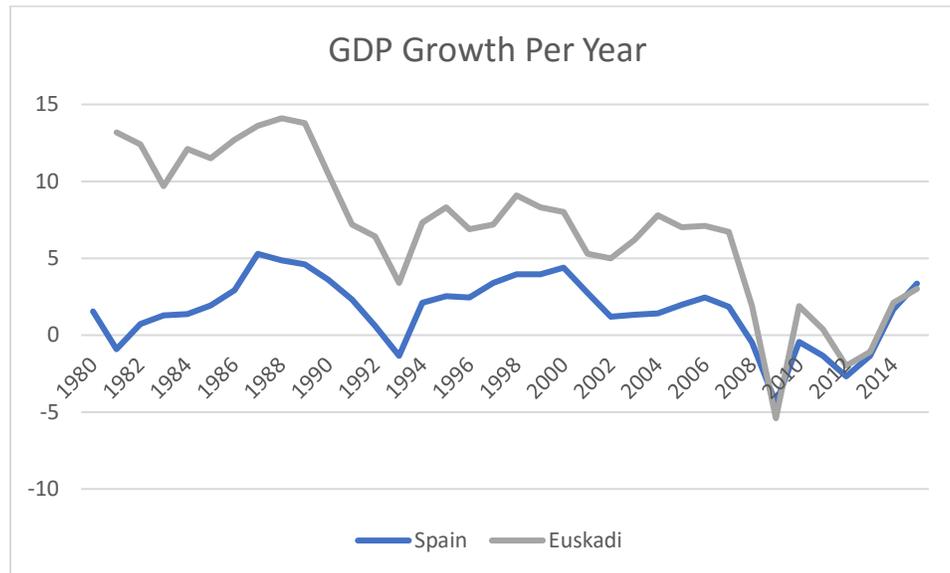
Within this chapter, I explore the economy of País Vasco. My primary standard for this measurement will be GDP per capita (PPP). I will compare the GDP per capita (PPP) of País Vasco with that of Spain to determine if economic trends within Spain in general impacted that of País Vasco. Next, I will compare the GDP per capita of each region to the number of ETA victims to look for a relationship. Then, I look at the Basque peoples' view of the economy, both within País Vasco and Spain as a whole. By doing this, I seek to determine if there is a relationship between ETA violence and economic conditions. I hypothesize that the economy lagged when ETA was most active, as well as if the people's perception of the economy matched with how it actually performed.

### País Vasco Economic Performance

Within this section, I discuss the actual performance of the economy of País Vasco, measured in GDP per capita (PPP) in euros. I compare País Vasco with Spain and the European Union, and, later, with the record of ETA incidents.

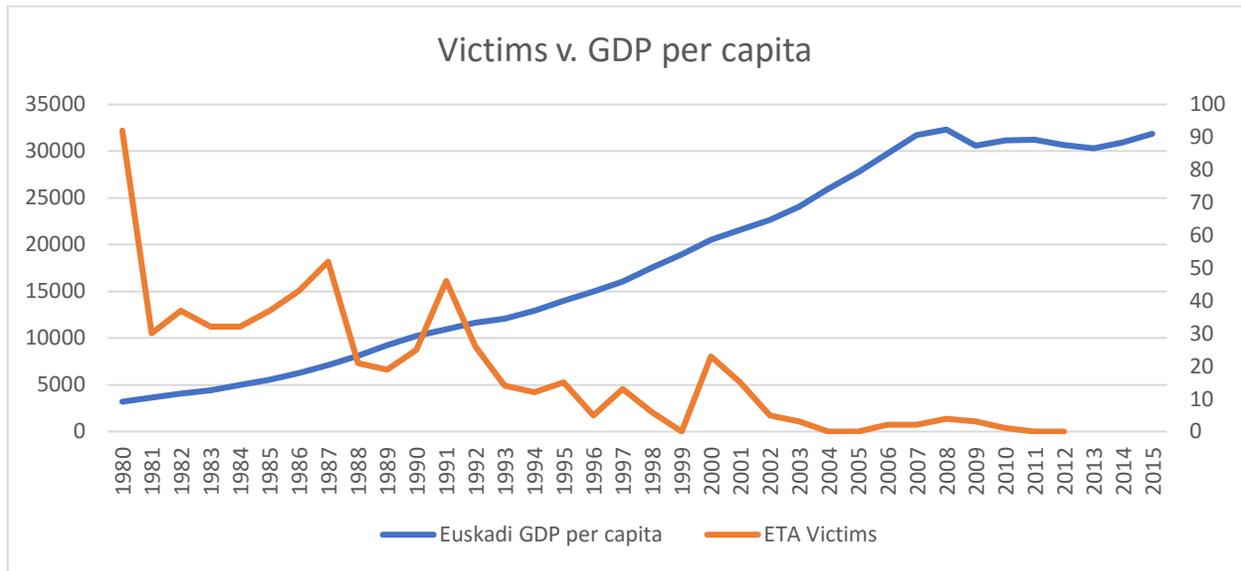
**Graph 4.1: Comparison of GDP per capita (PPP): Euskadi and Spain (1990-2015)**



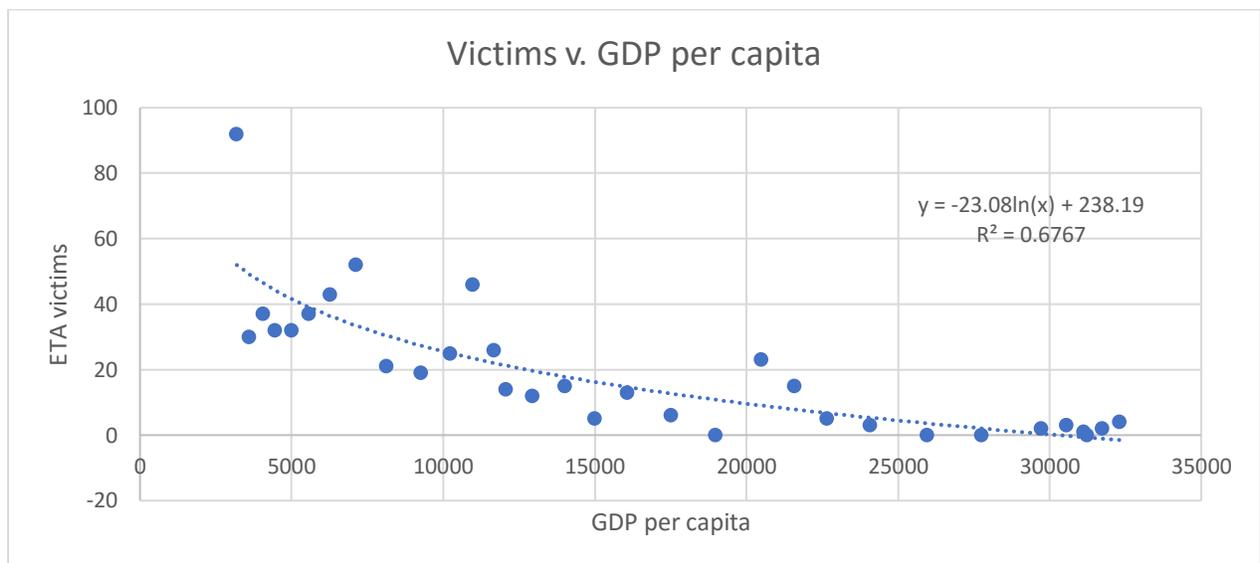
**Graph 4.2: GDP Growth Per Year: Euskadi and Spain (1980-2015)**

For Euskadi and Spain, the net GDP per capita (PPP) steadily increases from 1990-2016, with the exception of the 2008 economic crisis. Examining the recovery from the 2008 crisis is interesting, as it shows that País Vasco's economy bounced back from the crisis quicker than that of Spain. While both regions experienced a decline, Spain's decline began in 2008 and lasted through 2013, with 2014 showing the first net increase. Meanwhile, Euskadi's economy declined in 2009, showed a short recovery, and an additional drop from 2012-2013. Nevertheless, Euskadi's initial decline in 2009 (-5.4) was greater than that of Spain (-4.4). However, the reverse is true in 2012, when Spain's decline of -2.7 exceeded that of Euskadi's -2.0. While this supports that the 2008 economic crisis did not affect Euskadi as much as Spain or the EU, this could be because Euskadi's economy is based in services and industry. As such, it was not as affected by the burst of the housing bubble as regions with a strong basis in construction or as affected as regions that depended on tourism, which was also greatly affected. This allowed the economy to recover quicker than that of Spain as a whole.

**Graph 4.3: Number of ETA victims and GDP per capita in Euskadi (1980-2015)**



**Graph 4.4: Correlation Between ETA victims and GDP per capita (1980-2012)**



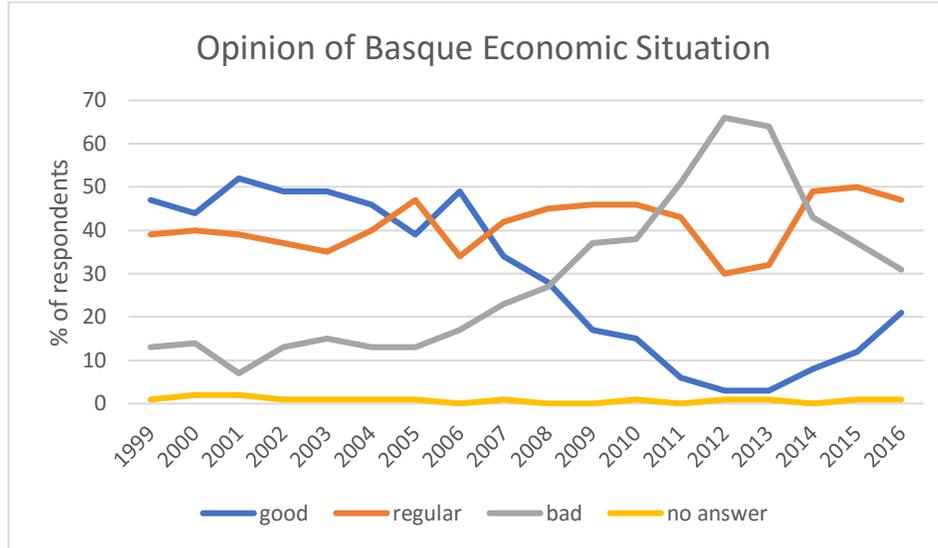
From 1996 onwards, Euskadi surpassed Spain in terms of GDP per capita (PPP). Even in periods of economic decline, País Vasco maintained a higher economic status than Spain. ETA violence does not appear to affect the Basque region, as it remained affluent, despite attacks. In

fact, Euskadi faced some of its largest growth during high periods of ETA violence. The highest growth rate of 14.1% was in 1988 when there were 21 victims attributed to ETA. Throughout the 1980s, when ETA violence was at its peak, País Vasco had its highest amounts of economic growth. Growth continued throughout ceasefires, although at a slower rate: 8.3% in 1999, 7% in 2005-2006, and 0.4% in 2011.

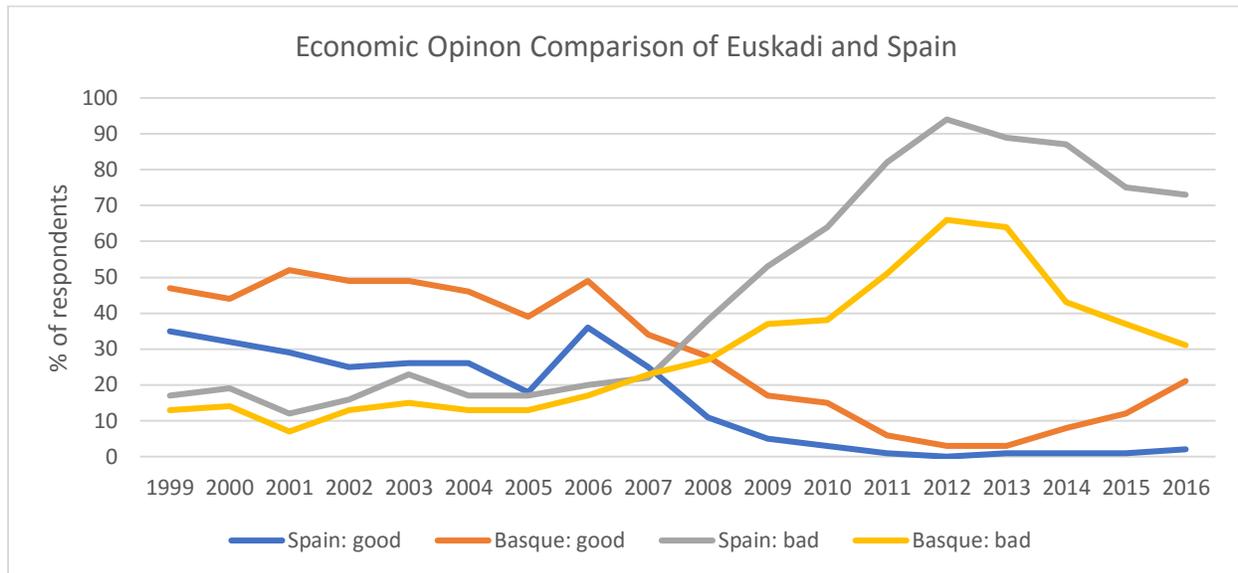
While this suggests that ETA violence and GDP per capita are not related, Graph 4.4 shows an inverse relationship between the two variables. Pearson's R shows a value of 0.76, showing that there is a relatively strong relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the trend line, produced by a logarithmic function, provides an R squared value of .6767, meaning that approximately 68% of the number of deaths by ETA can be explained by looking at the GDP per capita of Euskadi. This shows a strong relationship between the two variables.

### **Opinion of Economy**

In the EuskoBarómetro surveys from 1999-2016, participants were asked to evaluate the economic climate in both País Vasco and the whole of Spain. Respondents were given four choices: good, regular, bad, and no answer. This section examines the responses regarding País Vasco and compare them to the answers regarding Spain. As ETA activity was relatively low in this period, it is not correlated to the number of ETA victims; however, the times of the ceasefires are discussed.

**Graph 4.5: Opinion of the Basque Economic Situation**

Until immediately before the 2008 economic crisis, most Basques believed that the economic situation they occupied in País Vasco was good. Beginning in 2007, however, the number of Basques who believed their economic situation dropped and stayed low until recently. While those who believed the economic situation to be normal remained relatively constant, the classifications of good and bad are inversely related. In 2012-2013, the most people classified the economy as bad, contrasting with the low of the good category. This matches the period when the GDP per capita (PPP) of Euskadi was at its lowest in recent times, 30,627 and 30,289 respectively. As such, it is clear that perception of the economic situation in País Vasco matched actual occurrences.

**Graph 4.6: Comparison of Economic opinion of Euskadi and Spain (1999-2016)**

While the Basques were able to correctly judge their economic situation, they always viewed the situation in País Vasco to be better than that of Spain as a whole. The opinions regarding the economic situation in País Vasco and Spain have the same highs and lows, but to a different extent. Bad economic times in País Vasco were always slightly better than the bad times for Spain, while the good times were better in País Vasco than for Spain. For example, in 2012, the year where economic opinion was lowest, in País Vasco 66% of respondents thought that the economic situation was poor, in contrast to 94% saying Spain's situation was bad. As ETA's ceasefire was already in effect by this time, the economic downturn was in no way correlated with ETA violence. Similarly, the best economic time in País Vasco does not correspond in any way with violence. In 2001, 52% of Basques thought that the economic situation was good; however, in this year, there were 15 victims of ETA attacks.

## Conclusions

The economic situation in País Vasco is one of the best in Spain, surpassing the GDP per capita (PPP) of Spain in every year beginning with 1996. Additionally, due to the fact that the Basque economy is not dependent on construction, the 2008 economic crisis did not affect País Vasco as much as the rest of Spain and they were able to recover quicker. People's perceptions of the economic situation more or less mirrored the actual progression of the economy for both País Vasco and Spain; however, Basques consistently viewed their own situation as better than that of Spain, even if the actual data does not fully support their perceptions.

I expected to find an increase in violence during times of economic hardship, and this was found to be true. Within the studies' time period, there was a correlation between the GDP per capita (PPP) and violence contributed to ETA, higher GDP per capita led to lower violence. However, the Basques were not a poor people revolting against their wealthy oppressors, suggesting that their violence was not expressly related to economic conditions.

Despite this correlation, the economy was not explicitly tied to violence. While ETA targeted businessmen to hold for ransom, violent actions were not the deciding factor as to whether the economy would be good or bad. The largest impact on the economy was from the burst of the housing bubble that resulted in the economic crisis of 2008. Thus, while decreased violence was linked to increased economic conditions, factors outside the realm of violence impacted the economy in a more direct fashion.

## Ch. 5: Conclusion

My thesis examined whether political, public opinion, or economic factors were related to increases or decreases in ETA violence. Through my research, I concluded that neither nationalist representation in the Basque Parliament or public opinion correlates with ETA attacks; however, the economic situation and violence show a correlation.

At no point does ETA violence correlate with high periods of nationalist representation. The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) has controlled the Basque parliament since 1980, with the exception of 1987-1990 and 2009-2012. Even in these periods, nationalist representation remained high. This may be because not all nationalist parties represented the interests of ETA, or supported violence. Only Herri Batasuna (HB) and Euskal Herritarrok (EH) were closely aligned with ETA, and both were both banned in 2003. As pro-ETA parties only controlled 15 percent of parliament at their peak, ETA likely did not believe that it could achieve its goals politically. Because most nationalist parties did not support ETA, it follows that nationalist representation and ETA violence would have little to no correlation. ETA's ceasefire makes it now likely that admitting nationalist sentiment is more acceptable, as it is no longer tied to violence. Nationalist parties are likely to continue to maintain control of the Basque Parliament, especially the moderate, non-violent parties, such as PNV.

ETA activity during 1999-present also was not influenced by public opinion regarding identity, nationalist sentiment, and desire for independence. Although most Basques identified as either completely Basque or as more Basque than Spanish, less than half professed a nationalist sentiment, regardless of ETA attacks. Similarly, Basque desires for independence were not affected by violence, as evidenced by increased desire for independence during 2006 ceasefire

negotiations and decreases during the 2011 peace. Basque perceptions of violence were related to the actions of ETA: when ETA was more active, the public reported violence as a major preoccupation, while in times of peace, the opposite was true. Finally, the public rejected ETA while supporting peace negotiations between ETA and the government. The public also overwhelmingly supported negotiations, but disagreed on the conditions needed to negotiate. There was little correlation between activity and the need to negotiate, with the exception of 2006, when ETA and the Spanish state were in the midst of ceasefire talks.

País Vasco surpassed Spain's GDP per capita (PPP) in every year; the wealth of the region showed an inverse relationship with ETA activity. However, as the Basques remained relatively wealthy throughout, the economic situation likely was not a large contributor to violence. The economy was affected by global events, such as the bursting of the housing bubble. While ETA targeted businessmen as subjects for kidnapping, ransom, and, occasionally, assassination, these activities did not affect Euskadi's overall economy.

After conducting research, I learned that ETA's violence was not affected by the political climate or public opinion of Euskadi, and, while economic conditions were inversely related with violence, they are likely not a driving force, as Euskadi remained wealthy. Instead, I propose that the cause of ETA's violence lies outside of structural and institutional factors, or even public opinion. Further research is needed to determine what factors, internal or otherwise, led ETA to violence and contributed to their eventual ceasefire.

Failures in leadership and thinning ranks are likely to have had more to do with the dissolution of the group, although disappearance of public support and lack of political representation may have played a small role. Internal issues are likely to provide further insight into the true reasons that ETA violence slowed and the group finally agreed to a ceasefire.

This shows that external factors and institutions are not always the cause for ethnic violence. Other factors, such as repression of ethnic culture, are likely to lead to the outbreak of violence, while internal factors of the group may lead to their continued use of violence. Similar to the Basques, the Kurds are unified by a distinct culture and language. Although there is a semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region in Iraq, the Kurds do not possess their own state; instead, their population is spread throughout five nations: Turkey, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Brutally repressed by their host countries, the Kurdish language, culture, and identity was restricted. This led the Kurds to establish the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to advocate for an independent state; an armed struggle ensued. After breaking a ceasefire, the struggle between the PKK and the Turkish state continues today. The story of the Kurds is eerily similar to that of the Basques, showing the same roots of ethnic repression, provoking the outbreak of violence, and breaking of ceasefires. If the lessons regarding ETA's use of violence are to be applied, it can be assumed that the cause of Kurdish violence is not tied to the political condition, public opinion, or the economic climate. While they may play a small role, it is more likely that internal factors within the group led to the perpetuance of violence, and will to the group's eventual end.

Although my thesis suggests that the political situation, public opinion, and economic situation of País Vasco did not correlate with ETA violence, there can be further study conducted regarding the reasoning behind continued use of violence and the eventual decline. I propose that internal structures of the group may play a role. Due to similarities regarding the outbreak of violence among ethnic groups, particularly the Kurds, the causes of violence in ETA may be applied to other groups who find themselves in similar situations.

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