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Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Football: Exploring the Construction of Ethnic Identities and Their Manifestations for Athletic Club Bilbao and Celtic Football Club

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ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM, AND FOOTBALL: EXPLORING THE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND THEIR MANIFESTATIONS FOR ATHLETIC CLUB BILBAO AND CELTIC FOOTBALL CLUB

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis centers on the construction of ethnic identities for fans of Athletic Club and Celtic F.C. and the two clubs' roles in evincing nationalism. Utilizing survey data from an online, anonymous survey posted to fan forums, the research aimed to determine which of the three leading theories of ethnicity—primordialism, instrumentalism, or social constructivism—was most applicable to the formation of identities for Basque Athletic Club fans and Irish Celtic fans. The results demonstrated that the theory of social constructivism most closely aligns with the case of Basque Athletic Club fans while the identities of Irish Celtic fans can best be explained by the theory of primordialism. The study then directs its efforts to the two clubs' purported roles in the promotion of nationalism, differentiating between ethnic and civic nationalism. Observing fans' opinions, the results have shown that that the two clubs do continue to bear relations with Basque and Irish nationalism, however, the ways in which this is done differs. Athletic Club upholds a relationship with Basque nationalism through a combination of both ethnic and civic nationalism, whereas Celtic sustains a connection to Irish nationalism through cultural means mirroring ethnic nationalism. These results suggest a correlation between the way in which fans' ethnicities are constructed and the club's continued catering to Basque/Irish nationalism.

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Introduction

Before I attended my first Athletic Club de Bilbao football game, I had been more often annoyed than excited when the team scored. I lived just a block away from San Mames, the stadium of Athletic Club. The roar of fans would completely distract me from my studies—or worse, my sleep. Attending my first match changed me into a lifelong Athletic Club fan.

Unlike my first time at church, I will never forget my first trip to *La Catedral*, the unofficial name of San Mames. There was an indescribable energy that radiated throughout the stadium. Studying at the University of Deusto, I had been learning about the Basque culture for weeks. Yet, despite my professors' great efforts, nothing came close to enhancing my appreciation for the Basques as this game did. I was immediately transported out of Spain. Banners in an obscure language filled the stands while Basque flags waved left and right. I thought that surely, this phenomenon is unique to Athletic Club. Further research proved this was far from the truth. Many sports teams across the world possess nationalistic affiliations. In these cases, the club acts as somewhat of a representative of the nation.

Engrossed in a rabbit hole of research, my attention was grabbed by one video: the March 26, 2011 friendly between Athletic Club and Celtic F.C. The nationalistic symbolism of this match paled in comparison to the Athletic Club game I attended. Countless photos showed fans of the two clubs in cheerful embraces, decorated in a

colorful mix of red, white, green, and orange. While ultimately the game ended in a 0-0 draw, neither fanbase seemed to care. That day, Basque and Irish flags were flying, but clearly, nationalistic spirits were flying higher.

How can two clubs from different cultures and countries share such a powerful bond? While their backgrounds and traditions vary drastically, the two clubs' histories demonstrate a significant commonality—their often-contested affiliations with the Basque and Irish nationalist movements. Although Athletic Club has never pledged its loyalty to any Basque nationalist political party, it has held many strong ties to the prolonged nationalist movement. In addition to sharing personnel with the club, many Basque nationalistic political parties have actively utilized Athletic Club as a mechanism to promote Basque independence. Nearly 900 miles away, Celtic demonstrates similar nationalistic affiliations. Originally formed in 1887 in Glasgow, Scotland as a tool to generate income to feed poor Irish immigrants in the community, Celtic's ties to the Irish diaspora seem to continue. From the Irish flag flying high above the stadium to the chants in support of the Irish Republican Army (or IRA), Irish nationalistic attitudes have been blatantly displayed for all who visit Glasgow's Celtic Park, the stadium of Celtic. However, like the case of Athletic Club, Mark Hayes (2006, 11-12) states that leaders of Celtic would be quick to denounce any connections between the club and Irish nationalism.

Similar philosophies concerning the preservation and promotion of Basque and Irish identities—two identities that have been continuously undermined by their respective states—have nurtured a sense of respect among fans. This explains the amiable

attitudes between Athletic Club and Celtic fans concerning the March 2011 match. Even though, to date, this friendly remains the only match between the two teams, the robust feelings have not been forgotten. Ten years later, Athletic Club reminisced about the well-known day on Twitter stating that "The atmosphere in Bilbao and The Cathedral was unforgettable, with fans from both teams enjoying the evening side by side" (@Athletic_en, March 26, 2021). Evidenced by the comment section of the post, sentiments of nostalgia are not limited to Athletic Club fans; many Celtic fans not only share their desires for a rematch, but their adoration and respect for Athletic Club in general.

For centuries, sports have held a large role in the expression of shared identities; "in modern societies, sport has come to be important in the identification of individuals with the collectivities to which they belong; that is, in the formation and expression of their 'we-feelings'" (Dunning 1991, 6). Unquestionably, football prevails as the most valued sport in both Spain and Scotland and Athletic Club and Celtic have sizable fan bases within their corresponding states. From enthusiastic chants to team flags, sports are often used to communicate communal ethnicities that, in the case of Athletic Club and Celtic, have historically had connections to nationalistic views. This enables the two clubs to serve as strong venues for the exploration of the vast landscape of ethnicity and nationalism. While past literature has certainly made strides in the understanding of Basque and Irish ethnicities and the ways in which Athletic Club and Celtic serve as catalysts for nationalism, a large gap exists in the exploration of the interplay between how ethnicity is created and how nationalism is expressed. This thesis aims to lessen this

gap by answering the following question: How can the nexus between ethnicity and nationalism be better understood by looking at it through the lens of the football teams Athletic Club and Celtic?

Research Design

This is a comparative study focusing on the ways in which ethnic identities of Basque fans of Athletic Club and Irish fans of Celtic are established as well as the ties of the two football clubs to Basque and Irish nationalism. Quantitative categorical data and qualitative data from a self-conducted survey will be included in the study. The primary research is split into two different chapters. The first part uses descriptive statistical analysis to explore how ethnicity is created for the two different fan bases by exploring its interrelatedness to five different categorical variables—religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference—determining which theory of ethnicity is most applicable to Basque and Irish fans. After gaining an advanced understanding of how ethnicity is created, the study will direct its efforts to the two clubs' roles in the promotion of nationalism—differentiating between ethnic and civic nationalism. The conclusion strives to address the connection between the creation of ethnic identities and the ways in which nationalism is manifested.

Case Selection

A comparative study of the Basque community in Spain and the Irish community in Scotland provides an enlightening outlook of how two distinct ethnic identities are

created and how nationalism is expressed through the means of football. In the Basque country, race served as the primary differentiating factor of the Basques until the massive influx of immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Now, the emphasis has largely shifted towards political action. Compared to the historically exclusive nature of Basque ethnicities, the Scotland's Irish diaspora are often discussed in a more cultural light. Permanent Irish immigrants began settling in Scotland in the 1840s, amid the Great Famine. Starting in the early 20th century, "most of the Catholic [and thus Irish] community in Scotland were native born, but they maintained fierce loyalties to both their religion and the land of their fathers" (Murray 2000, xiii). This speaks to the preeminence of culture in the creation of Irish identities. This study will further the understanding of ethnicities and nationalism for Athletic Club and Celtic by observing the relationship between the construction of ethnic identities and the ways in which nationalism is expressed.

Data

The study's data was derived from an anonymous online survey exempt by Institutional Review Board, IRB, under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(#2). It consisted of categorical, ranking, and short answer questions. A link to the survey was distributed through popular fan message boards for Athletic Club and Celtic, "Aupa Athletic" and "Kerrydale Street," respectively. As Spanish is the most common language within the Basque country, the survey for Athletic Club fans was translated to Spanish. The survey was kept active for a three-week period during the summer of 2022. Within this time

frame, there were 149 respondents for the Athletic Club Bilbao survey and 588 respondents for the Celtic survey.

Methodology

For the first part of this primary research, survey data was compiled into several cross tabulations. These tables highlight the interrelatedness of fans self-described ethnic identities and the categorical variables of religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference. Descriptive statistical analysis was then used, enhancing the understanding of how existing theories of ethnic identity formation serve to explain the two subject pools.

For the second part of the research, survey data was used to demonstrate fans' opinions regarding the two teams' current support of the Basque/Irish nationalist movements to better grasp the role of football in the dynamic landscape of nationalism. Fans that responded to "Do you think that your club supports nationalism?" affirmatively were given a text-entry follow-up question asking them to support their statement. Survey subjects' responses to the follow-up short answer question were coded using two codes: cultural or political. This was done to differentiate between ethnic and civic nationalism.

Hypothesis

For the first part of the research, I used descriptive statistical analysis to determine which of the three existing theories of ethnic identity formation—primordialism, instrumentalism, or social constructivism—most closely aligned with the Basque and

Irish-identifying fan bases. Using coded survey responses from fans concerning the clubs' promotion of nationalism, the second part of the study distinguishes between civic and ethnic nationalism. Combining the two focuses of the research, I strived to determine how Basque and Irish fans' ethnic identities relate to the clubs' promotion of either ethnic or civic nationalism. My three hypotheses are as follows:

1. If the club's fan base most closely aligns to the theory of primordialism, then the club will utilize ethnic nationalism.
2. If the club's fan base most closely aligns to the theory of instrumentalism, then the club will use civic nationalism.
3. If the club's fan base most closely aligns to the theory of social constructivism, then the club will employ a combination of civic and ethnic nationalism.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 highlights existing literature relevant to the study of ethnicities, nationalism, and sports. It also serves as the bedrock for the conceptual and theoretical components of this research. To better understand nationalism for Basque and Irish-identifying people, Chapter 3 discusses key events of each movement. Additionally, this chapter acts as a compendious overview of the two football clubs' formation and histories. Chapter 4 bases itself on the construction of ethnicity. It determines which of the three theories of ethnicity best explains the formation of Basque and Irish identities of fans. After enhancing the readers' understanding of how ethnicity is created for fans of

the two clubs, Chapter 5 will observe how this ethnicity is exhibited by discussing the clubs' ties to nationalism, distinguishing between ethnic and civic nationalism. The last chapter consists of the concluding remarks of the study which includes the findings, limitations, and implications.

Chapter 2

Football Fandom, Ethnicity, and Nationalism

As a result of decades of inaccurate usage, a conceptual haze surrounds many key concepts used in this thesis: ethnicity, nation, and nationalism. This section highlights the ambiguity of the terms and clarifies how they are employed in this paper. Additionally, it discusses the three different schools of thought that explain the formation of ethnic identities: primordialism, instrumentalism, and social constructivism. In finality, this chapter connects sports, ethnicity, and nationalism.

Key Concepts

Clearly defining *ethnicity, nation,* and *nationalism* is essential to this research. Unfortunately, the definition of each of these terms has changed drastically throughout the years and remains quite ambiguous to this day. The term *ethnicity* is used extensively in literature, often employing different meanings. Sometimes it is used synonymously with the term *race*, solely to describe physical characteristics of an individual, a clear one-sided use of the term. Other times, as is often the case of American sociologists, it is utilized to classify a certain subgroup. However, attributing *ethnicity* to the description of a subgroup is particularly harmful as it equates ethnicity to being a minority group (Connor 1978, 386). The definition of ethnicity as used within this study is the perceptible identity of a certain group. However, the ways in which this identity is formed can vary greatly. As will be explained in depth in the following section, there are

three primary schools of thought that contribute to the understanding of how ethnicities are formed: primordialism, instrumentalism, and social constructivism.

As the word *ethnicity* is derived from the Greek word *ethnos* which signifies "nation" (Connor 1978, 386), it is often difficult to distinguish between the terms *ethnicity* and *nation*. However, their relationship can best be explained as describing two different aspects of a certain identity: *ethnicity* being the manifestation of identity and *nation* being an ethnic group that is self-aware. While the term *nation* was first coined to refer to one's origin or descent, as it stems from the Latin word *nasci* which means "to be born," its definition has since expanded to include "a large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people" (Connor 1978, 381; "nation, n.1"). Individuals such as Daniele Conversi (1997, 7) argue that the *nation* acts as a conceptual tool used to establish spaces of action by certain ethnic groups who wish to have their own state. While this can be true, it is not always the case. This study will utilize the definition as used by Walker Connor (1978) in which he claims that nations are self-defined ethnic groups; nations are formed by a collective ethnicity that is cognizant of their ethnic groups' distinctiveness.

Starting in the seventeenth century, the word *nation* was being used erroneously to refer to the citizens of a country (Williams 1976, 178). This classification continues to prevail and can be demonstrated in the United States of America from its usage of the word in the pledge of allegiance ("One nation under God"). This likely has contributed to the common entanglement of the words *nation* and *state*. However, unlike nations, states

have clear geographical and political boundaries. Furthermore, states can be composed of several nations, while nations can span across states. In terms of ethnic identities, states are often composed of several different ethnicities, but each nation has only one ethnicity.

The role of nationalism in modern societies is immense; it "is the defining factor of our world: it defines the existential experience—the manner in which we envision, experience, and think about reality—within the monotheistic civilization and significantly influences it within others" (Greenfeld 2019, 131). Since many socio-cultural elements within the United States of America have remained relatively stagnant, the concept of *nationalism* is difficult for many Americans to grasp. In fact, America is exceptional in that its "population was *national* from its earliest origins. This can be said of no other society: populations of other societies went through numerous social (cultural) permutations before becoming populations of nations" (Greenfeld 2019, 11). With that said, developing a concrete definition of nationalism is essential for this research. The incorrect usage of *nation* has unequivocally resulted in some people inaccurately attributing the term *nationalism* to loyalty to a state. Because of this, many have sought to derive other words to refer to loyalty for a nation such as tribalism, regionalism, sub-nationalism, and even ethnicity (Connor 1978, 396). Even more detrimental to the study of nationalism is that many scholars believe that nationalism is a supportive force in state-integration, instead of what it truly is: a defeatist force (Connor 1978, 378). The imprecise usage of this word has led Peter Alter (1989) to argue that *nationalism* is perhaps one of the most ambiguous words in both political and analytical vocabulary (4).

In the context of this research, *nationalism* will be used solely in reference to an ethnic groups' devotion to their nation.

The study of nationalism can be further differentiated into two distinct subtypes: ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. Nineteenth century French scholar, Ernest Renan, first established the dichotomy between ethnic and civic nationalism. Following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, Renan argued that the Prussian/German exclusive ethnic nationalism strongly contrasted France's inclusive civic nationalism (Duerr 2017, 206). His original definition largely upholds today as the polarity of ethnic and civic nationalism is often delineated as being exclusive versus inclusive. As defined by Glen Duerr, ethnic nationalism entails the allegiance to a nation in which "a person must have a given ethnic background that is often defined in tandem with linguistic and/or religious unity" (2017, 206). Additionally, common descent is often a key aspect of ethnic nationalism. However, for civic nationalism, "the nation is defined in political rather than biological terms" (Nili 2009, 247). This nationalism is inclusive in nature, centering itself on shared citizenship. As opposed to ethnic nationalism in which membership in the nation is based on a historically shared culture, membership in the nation for civic nationalism is most heavily reliant on a shared political ideology.

As can easily be perceived, *ethnicity*, *nation*, and *nationalism* are concepts that are challenging to define. This is due to their interrelatedness and long history of inaccurate usages. However, in the wake of this thesis, *ethnicity* refers to a certain identity. *Nation* takes this concept a step further as it describes a collective group that is

aware of their uniqueness. Finally, *nationalism* is used to delineate support for a nation which can further be characterized as ethnic, civic nationalism, or a combination both.

Competing Models of Ethnic Identity Formation: Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Social Constructivism

Many theories aim to explain the formation of ethnic identities, however the theories of primordialism, instrumentalism, and social constructivism are arguably the three most prevalent theories in scholarly literature. These different approaches to ethnicity serve as the backbone of the first part of this research, and thus, are essential to understand.

The theory of primordialism is by far the oldest and most criticized of the three theories. There are several different approaches to this theory such as biological primordialism, cultural primordialism, and soft primordialism. Biological primordialists utilize scientific theories and approaches to observe the formation of ethnicity. Cultural primordialists, on the other hand, stress the role of institutions such as churches in the protection and dissemination of an ethnicity. Lastly, soft primordialists utilize psychological and emotional connections to describe the formation of ethnicities (Joireman 2003, 21-28). Despite the many approaches within the primordialist school of thought, some of the most heavily cited primordialists, (Geertz 1973; Connor 1978; Van Den Berghe 1981; Smith 1989) share the view that the origins of ethnicity are ancient and largely unchangeable. Clifford Geertz believes that it centers around the "givenness [of social existence] that stems from being born into a particular religious community,

speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social-practices" (1973, 259). As ethnicity is often defined by others, Anthony Smith (1989) further emphasizes the role that culture has in the formation of ethnic identities by identifying some of the most recognizable characteristics that distinguish an ethnic community: name, myths, historical memories, homeland, language, customs, religion, and solidarity (1989, 344-345). Connor is quick to denounce the use of the word "primordialism" in reference to nationalism, as he argues that it alludes to the idea that nationalism does not affect modern states (1978, 391). However, he holds many views that align with soft primordialism, as he believes that nationalism—and thus ethnicity—is "the intuitive conviction which can give to nations a psychological dimension of approximating that of the extended family, i.e., a feeling of common blood lineage" (Connor 1978 381). He maintains that perceived ancestry is more important than true ancestry; that is, an ethnic group does not need the capability to trace their blood lineage to a single person; they just need to believe that they are connected.

Instrumentalism, on the other hand, views identities in a more flexible manner. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1963), Abner Cohen (1969), and Donald Horowitz (1985) are all supporters of the theory of instrumentalism, and thus, believe that ethnicity is created and utilized to achieve a political or economic end. The instrumentalist theory also stresses the importance of the benefits of the individual in that "it is self-interest that motivates ethnic identification, and ultimately nationalism" (Joireman 2003, 39). Although arguably a social constructivist himself, Eric Hobsbawm excels in emphasizing the role of the economy in the promotion of ethnicity, specifically

the economy of socialist and ex-socialist countries. In these countries, ethnicity has been used to fight for scarce resources (Hobsbawm 1992, 173-174). On the other hand, Cohen (1969) argues that ethnicity is a primarily political phenomenon. Glazer and Moynihan (1963) see the role that both politics and economics have in the realm of ethnicity stating that "Social and political institutions do not merely respond to ethnic interests; a great number of institutions exist for the specific purpose of serving ethnic interests. This in turn tends to perpetuate them" (310). While some scholars tend to favor one side of the spectrum (economics or politics) over the other, all view the pliability of ethnicity; ethnicity acts as a variable that can easily be created or destroyed in order to realize some specific goal. This theory aids in the explanation of Welsh identity which has "waxed and waned over time depending on economic and historical circumstances in England. When the English economy in England has declined, Welsh identity has become more popular" (Joireman 2003, 66).

The theory of social constructivism builds off instrumentalism as it occasionally acknowledges the role of politics and economic factors in the shaping of identities. Furthermore, as noted by social constructivist Joane Nagel (1994), "The location and meaning of the particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated, revised, and revitalized, both by ethnic group members themselves as well as by outside observers" (152-153). This upholds the instrumentalist idea that ethnicity is flexible. However, this theory diverges from instrumentalism in the fact that social constructivists (Barth 1969; Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1992; Nagel 1994; Hechter 2000) believe that inborn traits play a role as well in determining ethnic identities. It is a combination of ascribed traits

such as appearance, birthplace, religion, and language as well as social inputs such as ancestral myths and subjective beliefs that comes together to create one's ethnic identity (Joireman 2003, 54-55). Fredrik Barth (1969, 14-15, 38) links ethnicity to an "organizational vessel" in which a number of different cultural, religious, linguistic, etc. variables can be drawn from and placed within this vessel, displaying the "constructivist" aspect of this theory. A succinct explanation of each of the three theories is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: The Three Theories of Ethnicity

	Primordialism	Instrumentalism	Social Constructivism
Origin of Ethnicity	Innate and ancient	Social inputs	Combination of innate characteristics and social inputs
Goals of Ethnicity	None	Political or economic	Can be political or economic, but it is not necessary
Role of the Group or the Individual	Group	Individual's self-interest drives ethnicity	Group
Flexibility of Ethnicity	Largely immobile	Created or destroyed to achieve a goal	Continuously revised
Factors of Ethnicity	Religion, language, birthplace	Political preference	Religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, political preference

The Nation and The Stadium

Although it may seem unorthodox to discuss in the world of academia, the use of sports to observe both ethnic identities and nationalism is no new task. This is because sports serve as the perfect setting to explore collective identities. However, much of the existing research observes the nexus of nationalism and football through the lens of rivalries. In Scotland, many scholars (Bradley 1994; Murray 2000; Flint and Kelly 2013; Kelly and Bradley 2019) highlight "The Old Firm" rivalry between Celtic and Rangers. In Scotland, sectarianism is utilized to explain the current conflict between Celtic and Rangers fans with 94.92% of Celtic fans having witnessed sectarianism and 79.62% being the direct subject of it ("Scottish Football Supporters Survey 2019-20"). As most Celtic fans are Catholic, The Rangers' Anti-Catholic signing policy that it maintained throughout 1989 can help explain this strong, occasionally violent, rivalry. On the other hand, in Spain, nationalism is observed through the rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid, commonly referred to as "El Derbi." Jorge Tuñon (2012) furthers the understanding of nationalism by including Athletic Club to the often-discussed rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid. He makes a case for each of their roles in the advancement of Catalonian/Basque/Spanish identities. Comparing a football club whose motto is rooted in Catalan national identity (Barcelona), to a club whose hiring philosophy excludes all but Basque players (Athletic Club), to a club with a link to the national government (Real Madrid), serves as an excellent source to explore conflicting identities. Yet, despite the massive attention that football and nationalism draw, there exists a large gap in scholarly literature addressing how fans' ethnic identities are formed.

This is striking considering that ethnicity is the basis of which nationalism is derived from.

Hobsbawm (1992) perfectly encompasses the importance of sport in the realm of nationalism when he states, “What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings… is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by youth persons excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in life has wanted, to be good at. The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people” (143). Sports, and more specifically football, serve as a socially acceptable outlet to exhibit these collective identities. While it may seem idiosyncratic to paint a Basque/Irish flag on one’s face and go to a restaurant, hundreds of fans can be seen sporting this look at Athletic Club and Celtic games.

Football has held a place in the hearts of millions for decades, but the growing influence of the mass media has given wake to its societal dominance. This study will utilize the popular culture element of sport, determining how ethnicity is constructed by turning to the cases of Athletic Club and Celtic fans. The variables of religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference utilized in the survey have been carefully selected to represent the three prominent theories of ethnicity. As the primordialist theory views ethnicity as ancient and immobile, a significant number of Basque or Irish-identifying fans should share a common religion, language, and birthplace to support the theory of primordialism. Because the instrumentalist theory focuses on the Marxist view that ethnicity is manipulated to achieve a political or

economic goal, political affiliation should be the uniting factor amongst Basque or Irish-identifying fans. The last theory, social constructivism, emphasizes the role of both innate characteristics and social inputs. For this theory to hold true, it should be evident that a significant number of Basque or Irish-identifying fans share a common religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference. With a strong understanding of how ethnic identities are formed, the study will then observe the purported role of the respective football club in the promotion of nationalism and how this nationalism evinces itself by distinguishing between ethnic and civic nationalism.

Chapter 3

Nationalism and Football: A Historical Overview

To better understand the current state of nationalism for the Basques in Spain and the Irish in Scotland, it is essential to understand how the concept has evolved. This thesis explores the role of immigration, paramilitary groups, and government suppression concerning Basque and Irish nationalism. In this chapter, I summarize a centuries-long process. After establishing a basis to build from, I then turn my attention to the two teams, discussing their creation and past nationalist connections. I place particular attention on paramilitary groups, rivalries, and the impact of the commercialization of football.

Basque Nationalism

The roots of the current nationalistic movement within the Basque country begin at the end of the Second Carlist War, in which Basque self-government was demolished (Conversi 1997). However, the distinction of the Basque people and their sense of solidarity goes back much further than the 19th century. Mariann Vaczi (2013, 67) attributes the uniqueness of the Basques to two factors: customary laws and collective nobility. The customary laws (*fueros*) gave special privileges to the Basques, exempting them from military service and taxes, a privilege that they maintained until 1878 (Vaczi 2013, 68). Moreover, the policy of collective nobility automatically gave Basques born of other Basques the title of noble based on blood purity (Greenwood 1977, 86). This

policy, which can be traced to the early 11th century, inhibited those unable to prove purity of blood from being considered true inhabitants and therefore these people had restricted civic rights and duties (Conversi 1997, 178). Because of this, traceable ancestry served as one of the core elements that united the Basques for centuries.

With the aid of Sabino Arana providing an aesthetic to the movement, the abolition of the *fueros* and the increase of industrialization paved the way for Basque nationalism in its more modern sense in the late 19th century. The distinctness of Arana's nationalism lays in its secessionist, exclusive, and defensive nature (Sabanadze 2010). This nationalism had a two-pronged objective, as it was "Born of the intersection of traditionalism and modernization, and of the need to adjust to and achieve the latter while preserving as much as possible of the former" (Payne 1975, 64). Also spearheaded by Arana in 1895, the first Basque nationalistic political party, EAJ-PNV, which fought for Basque independence, was created shortly following the creation of Arana's modern-day Basque nationalism (Conversi 1997). An attempt to maintain racial and cultural purity, Arana condemned marriages between Basques and outsiders, prevented immigrants from learning the Basque language, and required that members have "at least four Basque surnames, or one grandparent who was a native Basque" (Conversi 1997, 60-61).

With a perplexing use of "k," "x," and "t," the Basque language, Euskera, is unique in the fact that it has no relative languages. Archeological evidence shows the existence of the language dating back to the Neolithic period, but Euskera's precise origins remain a mystery (Trask 1997). Many suggest that this is Europe's oldest language. Due to its idiosyncratic nature and the ways in which it stands as a symbol for

national identity, Euskera was reserved for true Basques. As quoted by Conversi (1990, 58-60), Arana highlights the way in which Euskera was used as an "ethnic border" separating the native Basque community from outsiders:

> **To an *euskeráfilo*** (= non-native speaker or learner of Euskara).
> Great damage can be done to the Fatherland by one hundred *maketos*, [Basque slang term used to refer to Spaniards], who do not know Euskera. Even worse is the damage that can be done by only one *maketo* who knows it.
> … In the heart of the Fatherland, every *euskeriano* who does not know Euskera is a thorn; every *euskeriano* who knows it and is not a patriot is two thorns; every Spaniard who speaks Euskara is three thorns (Conversi 1990, 60).

While language certainly played a vital role in the promotion of Basque identities, it took a backseat to race. Early nationalist Padre Evangelista de Ibero discussed several essential elements such as origin, history, and aspirations that proved crucial to the formation of nationalism (Coversi 1990). Yet, as Padre Evangelista de Ibero stated, "... of all those properties, which one constitutes essentially a nationalist? *In the first place, the blood, race or origin: in the second place, the language.* The other qualities are nothing but consequences of the first two, *most specifically of the first one*" (Conversi 1990, 58).

With industrialization came immigration. Between 1877 and 1900, the city of Bilbao had more than doubled its population; by 1900, 80% of Bilbao's population were immigrants (Conversi 1997, 197). For several decades, Basque nationalists were able to maintain the stance that "being Basque" meant having Basque ancestry. However, the Basques soon determined that they could no longer rely on the badge of collective nobility ("race" in the modernized sense) to achieve an independent Basque country. Starting during the Franco regime, political action overtook the role of race in being the uniting factor of the Basques.

Born in 1959, to preserve Basque culture under a regime that was continuously trying to suppress it, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), a radical Basque separatist group, directly countered Arana's views of race. Conversi (1997, 107), who attributes Federico Krutwig to the writing of ETA's main ideological text, claims that Krutwig "has castigated his predecessor Arana as being 'more racist than Hitler'." The role of Basque immigrants shifted greatly with the creation of ETA as many of its founding members came from immigrant families (Jáuregui 1981, 135). This further cemented the current view that Basque nationalism is heavily reliant on the fight for more political autonomy.

History of Athletic Club

Athletic Club was born concomitantly with Arana's Basque nationalism, during the age of industrialization. In the late nineteenth century, British workers were extracting resources from Bilbao to take back to Great Britain. However, their contribution of football to the city was worth much more than these resources ever were (psychologically, if not economically). The team was officially established in 1898 and by 1902, game day attendance had already reached 3,000 (Vaczi 2013, 16). From its start, Athletic Club shared many personnel with EAJ-PNV.

Like the rest of La Liga, Athletic Club was suspended for the duration of the Spanish Civil War. However, throughout the late 1930s, some friendly matches were played with local teams who shared sympathy for EAJ-PNV (Unzueta 1994, 164). To raise money for the Basque militia, the Basque government decided to create a football team—team Eusakdi—and send it on a global tour (Vaczi 2013, 26). The team,

composed of mostly Athletic Club players, enjoyed enormous success, going on to win the Mexican first division (Vaczi 2013, 26-27). In Latin America, support for the team was often in a political nature, as the team's Latin American fan base was strongly composed of anti-fascists and Spanish exiles. Following the end of the war, only two of team Euskadi's players returned to Spain, most chose to remain in exile in Mexico and Argentina (Ashton 2009, 58)

The defeat of the Republicans at the hands of Franco's Nationalists led to powerful attempts to promote a unified Spanish identity. This objective entailed active suppression of conflicting ethnic identities, including that of the Basques. The effort to eliminate Basque identities is easily discernible by looking at the case of Athletic Club. According to Vaczi, in 1939, 40% of Athletic Club members who held an ideological conflict with the rising regime had been erased from the club's records (2013, 27). Moreover, in an effort to aggrandize Spain, the regime forced the club to change its official name from the English "Athletic Club" to the Spanish "Atlético de Bilbao" (Vaczi 2013, 49). Faced with the Franco regime's aggressive efforts to silence Basque nationalism, support for Athletic Club served as one of the limited institutions to demonstrate Basque identity.

The growing globalization and commercialization of football throughout the middle of the 20th century is what made the Basque localist hiring philosophy truly exceptional. Aware of their uniqueness, Athletic Club started highlighting their "*limpia tradición*" during this time. Ironically enough, Athletic Club prevailed as the most favored football team of the Franco regime because it was the only team in La Liga,

Spain's football league, that had a fully Spanish roster (Castro-Ramos 2008, 703). Although Athletic Club's localist policies have changed throughout the years concerning what it means to "be Basque" and be eligible to play for the club (these ranged from blood purity to civic citizenship), during the Franco regime, players had to have been born in the Basque country (Tuñón and Brey 2012, 16).

Following Franco's death and the subsequent fall of the dictatorship, unrest grew within the Basque country as ETA's violence had reached its peak (Conversi 1997, 141). Coincidentally, Athletic Club's growing success directly aligned with this period of escalating nationalistic violence. As Vaczi (2013, 53) states, "the most turbulent social-political years coincided with the second Golden Age of Basque soccer. Athletic won two league titles in two successive seasons (1982-83, 1983-84), and a *doblete*, the double championship title of cup and league in 1983-84." Connections have been drawn between ETA's terroristic demonstrations and football. In 2000, ETA sought to extort money from former Athletic Club football player, Bixente Lizarazu, using death threats. At the time, Lizarazu was playing for Bayern Munich. ETA viewed Lizarazu's decision to play for a German team as a rejection of his Basque identity (Malek, n.d.). They deemed this maneuver worthy of a revolutionary tax—the terrorist groups' attempt to extort money. In 2002, ETA exploded a car bomb outside of Real Madrid's stadium, Santiago Bernabéu, hours before a match. Although nothing transpired, another bomb threat targeting Santiago Bernabéu occured in 2004. Despite its 2011 dissolution, ETA banners have found ways to continue making their way into San Mames stadium.

In place of ETA's use of violence, other less radical nationalistic political parties have utilized Athletic Club as a form of propaganda to support their fight for Basque independence. For example, while the rest of Spain was enthusiastically supporting *La Roja* (the Spanish national football team) in the Euro 2016 soccer championship, EAJ-PNV tweeted a political cartoon containing four EAJ-PNV politicians all of whom were wearing Basque national team jerseys while attempting to prevent the Spanish team from scoring a goal. The Spanish team includes the leaders of PP, PSOE, Ciudadanos, and Podemos, all centralist supporting parties. (Zákravský 2018, 40). This political cartoon uses football in the wake of the Euro soccer championship to symbolically characterize the zeal of Basque nationalism. Despite the plethora of ties between the club and the nationalism movement, Vaczi (2013, 25) quotes Andoni Ortuzar, the president of EAJ-PNV, stating that "Athletic has never been openly politicized." Yet he continues by saying, "The humanistic values of the Basque Nationalist Party are very similar to the ideals of Athletic... To be a real Bilbaino… you have to be *aficionado* to three things: Athletic, the Virgin of Begoña, and the PNV" (Vaczi 2013, 25).

Although Athletic Club's political connection is debated, the team's resistance to the growing pressures of globalization in the football industry is clear. As Giulianotti (2002) expresses, the 1980s brought a hyper-commodification of football, one that continues to this day. A result of globalization, this hyper-commodification is powered by growing wealth stemming from new outlets such as satellite television, public relations, and stocks in football clubs (Giulianotti 2002, 29). Yet Athletic Club has made every lasting attempt to defy the hyper-commodification of football. Accentuating this is the

fact that Athletic Club was the last Spanish football team to allow advertisements on its players' jerseys. In 2008, when it finally did allow this, Petronor, a Basque fuel company known for its allegiance to Basque nationalism, was selected (Nili 2009, 263). This tradition continues to this day with the Kutxabank sponsorship, another Basque company with strong historical ties to the Basque national movement. Similarly, it was the last Spanish club to allow advertisements in its stadium (Nili 2009, 264).

Another unique feature of the football club, defying the odds of globalization, is Athletic Club's perpetuation of its Basque only hiring philosophy. Although Athletic Club remains the fourth most successful club in La Liga and is one of only three teams within the league to have never been relegated, it has not won a La Liga championship trophy nor Copa del Rey trophy since 1984. Despite the team's diminishing success, many fans and players alike show unwavering support for Athletic Club's unique hiring philosophy. A 1990 survey conducted by *El Mundo* revealed that 76% of fans would rather see Athletic Club drop to Segunda División than to get rid of its localist hiring policy (Nili 2009, 261). Facing prolonged troubles, Unai Bustinza, former Athletic Club player, stated more recently, "I would prefer to see Athletic in the second division than to see them change the philosophy" (Lowe 2018). As globalization and the commodification of football have deemed this policy anachronistic, its perpetuation serves to demonstrate the tremendous value that the Basques place on tradition and identity.

Irish Nationalism

In contrast to Basque nationalism that has a long history of immigrant exclusionary practices, Irish nationalism in Scotland was centered around Irish immigrants. Immigrants started coming to the United Kingdom in the early 1800s, however, this immigration was largely temporary. Permanent settlement did not begin until the 1840s amid the Great Famine (the Potato Famine). Between 1845 and 1851, Ireland lost a quarter of its population—half to death and the other half to emigration. From 1841 to 1851, the Irish population in Scotland increased by 90% (Library Museum Archive Archeology, 2). These immigrants typically settled by ports, elucidating the strong Irish community in the port city of Glasgow, the home of Celtic. In fact, nearly 29% of Irish migrants settled in Glasgow (Library Museum Archive Archeology, 3).

Following the Irish famine, the connection between Irish nationalism and Catholicism rapidly expanded. This can be partially attributed to the revival of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland led by Cardinal Paul Cullen. This is somewhat ironic given Cardinal Cullen's strong aversion to nationalism; his understanding of nationalism was "essentially irreligious, the product of secret societies bent on the destruction of the church; a concomitant belief that violent resistance to legitimate authority was illicit, no matter the pretext; a horror of the human consequences of war, which he believed no cause could justify; and a distrust of secular education and its consequences" (Barr 2016, 43).

Widespread violent resistance did indeed unveil itself several decades following Cullen's death. Bespeaking this was the birth of the IRA. The IRA, created in 1919, was

a paramilitary organization promoting a united Ireland using violence and terrorism. In the organization's first three years of existence, the IRA killed 436 police and 277 civilians (Hughes 2017, 19-20). By September of 1919, Glasgow had its own IRA battalion, a group of 3,000 members (Gallagher 1987, 90). Tom Gallagher states that the Irish community in Glasgow made a "substantial contribution to the establishment of a self-governing Irish Free state" (1987, 90). Despite its 1994 ceasefire, traces of the IRA remain in the city of Glasgow. Pro-IRA street graffiti and Celtic's connection to the IRA suggests this. However, regardless of loyalist bombings that targeted Catholic pubs in Glasgow as well as loyalist safehouses in Glasgow and Stirling, the IRA never targeted anywhere in Scotland (Mackay 2019). Willie Carlin, a British intelligence agent who worked as a mole inside Sinn Féin (an Irish republican party fighting for Irish reunification), discussed a conversation he had while working undercover with IRA commander Martin McGuinness. Carlin recalls that McGuinness said that IRA action in Scotland "would certainly go against the grain. The Scots were disenfranchised, just the same as the Irish. The English took away their language and killed off their culture, so I think it's more a principle than a policy" (Mackay 2019).

Today, many members of the Irish community in Scotland have dual identities representing the country of their ancestors (Ireland) and their home (Scotland). However, Joseph Bradley (1994) notes that their Irish identity has "become privatized and is 'reduced' in many cases to support for Celtic, St Patrick's celebrations, calling children by Irish forenames and retaining suppressed political feelings on the 'Irish' problem." This privatization is due in part to the lack of channels to display their Irish ethnicity.

Also, a likely catalyst for privatization is Britain's attempts to suppress this conflicting identity. This bears striking resemblance to the radical efforts made during the Franco regime to repress the Basque identity. Mary Hickman (1990) argues that many British government policies were aimed to "de-Irishize" the community. In parallel with these policies, the British school curriculum scarcely, if at all, addresses Ireland (Bradley 1994).

History of Celtic

The creation of Celtic can be attributed to Irish immigrant Andrew Kerins, commonly referred to as his religious name, Brother Walfrid. Seeing the rising popularity of the sport of football in Scotland, he created his own team to capitalize on. His goal was to use profits consolidated through the club to support the poor immigrant Irish Catholics in the St. Mary's, Sacred Heart, and St. Michael's missions (Kelly and Bradley 2019, 5). John Kelly and Joseph Bradley (2019, 6) state that by the end of its first year, the team had raised more than £400. However, as time went on and Celtic's success grew, donations were not limited to Scotland's Catholic community; aid was given to support the Evicted Tenant's Fund (Hayes 2006, 7). Moreover, that club officials and players supported Irish Home Rule, campaigned for the release of Irish political prisoners, and opposed Britain's role in the Boer War of South Africa (Bradley 1995, 35).

The philanthropic roots of Celtic have seemed to waver throughout the years. This can be seen by fans' blatant support of the IRA. The support of this paramilitary group remains a persistent problem that has quite literally cost the team. In 2013, Celtic was

fined €50,000 by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) for displaying banners depicting William Wallace, a fighter for Scottish independence, and Bobby Sands, an IRA hunger striker. Text was also included on the banners stating "The terrorist or the dreamer the savage or the brave? Depends whose vote you're trying to catch" (*The Irish Times* 2013). A short four years later, the team received another fine of €23,000 by UEFA and 12 fans were arrested over a similar banner demonstrating paramilitary support (BBC News 2017). Moreover, supporters can be caught singing chants such as "Boys of the Old Brigade" and "Roll of Honor," both songs possessing clear pro-IRA undertones (Flint and Kelly 2013, 9).

Tensions across Scotland concerning the Irish community have been long-lasting. W.J. Murray argues that "the most obvious and understandable aspect of some Scots' dislike of Celtic supporters is their association of the colours of the IRA with Celtic" (2000, 187). Other such tensions are directly reflected in the "Old Firm" rivalry between Celtic and Glasgow Rangers. Rangers maintained a Protestant only hiring policy for over a century, only ending such practices in 1989 (Flint and Kelly 2013, 6). Rangers' undeclared anti-Catholic (and thus anti-Irish) policy can be seen throughout much of the 20th century, but most evidence of it is just now surfacing. For instance, Danny McGrain was rejected from Rangers due to his presumed Catholicism for having an Irish last name (Bradley 1994). Moreover, former players Alex Ferguson, Bobby Russell, Graham Fyfe, and Gordon Dalziel were all ostracized for marrying Catholic girls (Bradley 1994).

Despite the termination of this policy, the rivalry between Celtic and Rangers prevails, flourishing on the dichotomy between Celtic's Catholic connection and the

Ranger's Protestant one. A recent study demonstrates that 94.92% of Celtic fans have witnessed sectarianism, while 79.62% have been the direct subjects of it ("Scottish Football Supporters Survey" 2020). This statistic is relatively unsurprising concerning many Rangers fans' participation in the singing of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic chants. One such chant, "Billy Boys," bears an obvious anti-Catholic nature due the line "Up to our knees in Fenian blood." Even Craig Brown, former manager of the Rangers, was recorded singing this chant in 1999. Faced with plenty of backlash and calls for his resignation, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) continued to defend Brown (O'Sullivan 1999). Since then, sectarian violence has only increased. From a 2016-2017 period to a 2017-2018 period, the number of charges of religious aggravation associated with football in Scotland increased 61% (Scottish Government 2018). Moreover, between 2017 and 2018, 18% of all police reported religious aggravation charges bore some relation to football (Scottish Government 2018). Despite the more recent attempts by the SFA, UEFA, and Scottish government to combat sectarianism in the football sphere, it persists.

Similar to efforts made by the SFA, UEFA, and the government of Scotland, Celtic club officials themselves, have attempted to curtail the association between the team and Irish nationalism. Hayes (2006, 11) attributes this drastic change to Fergus McCann's takeover as owner of the club in the 1990's. Under his leadership, the 'Bhoys against Bigotry' campaign was created, containing several initiatives to combat Celtic's harboring of sectarian tensions (Hayes 2006, 11). Reilly (2004, 206) claims that McMann called Celtic fans 'customers' and his critics 'Catholic bigots' (Murray 2003, 127).

Driven by the increasingly globalized world of sports, McCann put capital above customs.

Chapter 4

The Formation of Ethnic Identities for Fans of Athletic Club and Celtic

This first part of the study centers on the construction of ethnicity by exploring its interrelatedness to the categorical variables of religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference. The descriptive statistical analysis offered in this chapter delineates the ways in which Basque and Irish identities are formed for Athletic Club and Celtic fans.

Research Design

The variables of religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference have been chosen to aid in the application of the three theories of ethnic identity—primordialism, instrumentalism, and social constructivism—to the cases of Athletic Club and Celtic fans. To gauge ethnicity, Athletic Club and Celtic fans were asked to value their sense of Basqueness/Irishness in terms of "Strongly Agree," "Somewhat Agree," "Neither Agree nor Disagree," "Somewhat Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." For greater comprehension, these questions were later bucketed; "Strongly Agree" and "Somewhat Agree" were combined to "Agree" while "Somewhat Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" were combined to "Disagree." The "Neither Agree nor Disagree" responses were excluded. Cross tabulations were then created to individually examine the relationship between fans' sense of Basque/Irish identity and the different

categorical variables of religion, language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference.

Results

In total, 81.1% of Athletic Club fans identified as Basque. Of fans that identified as Basque, only 26.7% also identified as being Spanish. In Scotland, the percentage of Irish versus non-Irish Celtic fans was more closely split. Overall, 43.9% of Celtic fans identified as Irish, while 42.9% did not identify as Irish. Unlike Basque fans, most Irish fans expressed dual identities with 65.3% identifying as Scottish as well. Interestingly, this dual identity expression did not extend to British; only 7.1% of Irish fans identified as British.

The following section contains ten different cross-tabulation tables containing the findings most pertinent to this study. Each table provides the percentage of self-identifying Basque/Irish fans and Non-Basque/Non-Irish fans that belong to each category.

Religion

Prior to the question about religious preferences, fans of both teams were asked if they identify with a religion. For Athletic Club fans that identified as Basque, only 31.1% identified with a religion while 36.4% of non-Basque fans identify with a religion. This demonstrates that religion does not play a major role in the lives of most Athletic fans regardless Basque identification (see table 2). For fans that identified with a religion,

Catholicism was by far the most popular religion for both Basque and non-Basque fans. Except for two respondents who put "Other" and "Prefer Not to Say," all Athletic Club fans that identified with a religion were Catholic. Interestingly, for Celtic fans, most Irish-identifying fans (59.7%) identified with a religion while most non-Irish fans (54.8%) were irreligious. One hundred twenty-nine Irish Celtic fans were Catholic, making it the most common religious affiliation. While Catholicism is also the most popular religion for non-Irish Celtic fans, the percentage is significantly lower (see Table 3).

Table 2: Percentage of Basque and Non-Basque Athletic Club Fans That Identify with Each Religion

	Catholic	Don't Identify with a Religion
Basque Fans	30.0	61.1
Non-Basque Fans	36.3	63.6

Table 3: Percentage of Irish and Non-Irish Celtic Fans That Identify with Each Religion

	Catholicism	Islam	Judaism	Protestant	Buddhism	Other	Don't Identify with a Religion
Irish Fans	57.1	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	39.4
Non-Irish Fans	38.5	0.5	0	4.1	0	0.9	54.8

Language

The survey results show that a majority of Basque-identifying fans speak Euskera. However, Spanish remains the most popular language for Basque fans. Moreover, Euskera remains the third most popular language for non-Basque fans, following Spanish and English (see Table 4). The role of language for Irish-identifying Celtic fans is much weaker. Even though thirty times more Irish Celtic fans can speak the Irish language compared to non-Irish fans, the number of Irish-speaking Irish fans is very low. In fact, only thirty-six Irish fans speak the Irish language (see Table 5).

Table 4: Percentage of Basque and Non-Basque Athletic Club Fans that Speak Each Language

	Euskera	Spanish	French	English	Other
Basque Fans	71.1	86.7	15.6	50	36.4
Non-Basque Fans	45.5	72.7	0	54.5	36.4

Table 5: Percentage of Irish and Non-Irish Celtic Fans that Speak Each Language

	English	Scots	Scottish Gaelic	Irish	Other
Irish Fans	97.8	22.1	2.7	15.9	13.3
Non-Irish Fans	97.3	33.5	2.3	0.5	11.3

Birthplace

Unsurprisingly, of the fans that identified as Basque, 93.3% were born in Spain's Basque region. In fact, only six of the ninety fans that identified as Basque were born outside of the Basque region. The Basque region was also a common birthplace for non-Basque fans with 36.4% of non-Basque survey respondents having been born there. Others were born in Spain's regions of Asturias, Madrid, Castilla la Mancha, Catalonia, Navarra, and Murcia (see Table 6). In contrast, the relationship between Irish identity and birthplace was less prominent; only 19% of fans that identified as Irish were born in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. The results demonstrate that Celtic's Irish fan base is predominantly Scotland born (see Table 7).

Table 6: Percentage of Basque and Non-Basque Athletic Club Fans That Were Born in Each Spanish Region

	Basque fans	Non-Basque fans
Asturias	0	9.1
Madrid	0	9.1
Valencia	1.1	0
Castilla la Mancha	0	9.1
Catalonia	0	9.1
Galicia	2.2	0
La Rioja	1.1	0
Navarra	1.1	9.1

Basque Country	93.3	36.4
Murcia	0	18.2
Outside of Spain	1.1	0

Table 7: Percentage of Irish and Non-Irish Celtic Fans that Were Born in Each Country

	Irish Fans	Non-Irish Fans
Scotland	69.5	92.3
England	5.8	4.1
Wales	0	1.4
Northern Ireland	10.2	0
Republic of Ireland	8.8	0
Other	5.8	2.3

Place of Residence

Compared to the 93.3% of Basque-identifying Athletic Club fans that were born in the Basque country, only 77.8% currently reside in the Basque region. Yet, the Basque region is also home to a surprising 45.5% of non-Basque fans (see Table 8). For Irish-identifying Celtic fans, only 13.7% currently live in Ireland; most Irish-identifying Celtic fans reside in Scotland (see Table 9).

Table 8: Percentage of Basque and Non-Basque Athletic Club Fans that Live in Each Spanish Region

	Basque fans	Non-Basque fans
Andalusia	1.1	0
Asturias	0	9.1
Cantabria	1.1	0
Madrid	4.4	18.2
Valencia	2.2	9.1
Catalonia	3.3	0
Galicia	1.1	0
La Rioja	1.1	0
Navarra	2.2	9.1
Basque Country	77.8	45.5
Murcia	0	9.1
Outside of Spain	5.6	0

Table 9: Percentage of Irish and Non-Irish Celtic Fans that Live in Each Country

	Irish Fans	Non-Irish Fans
Scotland	60.6	72.4
England	11.1	13.1
Wales	0.4	0.9

Northern Ireland	7.1	0.5
Republic of Ireland	6.6	1.8
Other	13.7	11.3

Political Preference

The relationship between political preference and ethnicity demonstrates a strong relationship among Athletic Club fans. The majority of Athletic Club fans that identify as Basque voted for one of two political parties (EAJ-PNV and EH Bildu) in the general election of 2019. As discussed in the literature review, EAJ-PNV has notorious connections with the Basque nationalistic movement. Founded in 2012, EH Bildu also supports and promotes a more autonomous Basque region. Due to their nationalistic affiliations, it is evident why many Basque-identifying fans supported these two parties (see Table 10). In contrast, the results from Celtic's fan base do not suggest as strong of a relationship between ethnicity and political preference. The political party with the strongest support is the same for Irish as well as non-Irish Celtic fans. However, there exists a greater distribution of parties supported by Irish Celtic fans compared to non-Irish fans (see Table 11).

Table 10: Percentage of Basque and Non-Basque Athletic Club Fans that Voted for Each Political Party in the Most Recent Election

	Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ-PNV)	Basque Country Unite (EH Bildu)	United We Can	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	People's Party (PP)	Citizens	Other/Prefer not to Say

Basque Fans	24.7	33.7	11.2	1.1	2.2	2.2	24.7
Non-Basque Fans	0	18.2	9.1	18.2	9.1	0	45.5

Table 11: Percentage of Irish and Non-Irish Celtic Fans that Voted for Each Political Party in the Most Recent Election

	Scottish National Party	Conservative	Labour	Green	Liberal Democrat	Other/Prefer not to Say
Irish Fans	40.9	1.8	14.1	10.9	1.4	30.9
Non-Irish Fans	56.8	4.5	10.9	8.6	1.4	17.7

Discussion

The impetus of this part of the study was to better understand ethnicity by observing its interrelatedness to various categorical variables to determine which of the three theories of ethnicity most closely aligned to the two distinct sample groups.

Regarding Athletic Club fans, the variables of language, birthplace, place of residence, and political preference proved to hold a relationship with ethnicity while the variable of religion did not. Overall, 93.3% of Basque fans were born in the Basque country, making this the strongest variable. The variable of place of residence follows with 77.8% of Basque fans currently living in the Basque country. While more Basque fans spoke Spanish than Euskera, a strong 71.1% of Basque Athletic fans spoke Euskera. Political preference proves the fourth most powerful variable for Basque fans as 58.4% voted for the Basque nationalist political parties EAJ-PNV and EH Bildu. Religion did

not prove a uniting variable for Basque fans as a majority were irreligious. Further cementing this idea, when asked what the most important variables are in defining what it means to be Basque, fans responded with, in order of greatest to least importance: place of birth, language, and political action. This largely parallels the survey results.

These findings suggest that the profiles of Basque fans most closely fit the expectations of the theory of social constructivism. As discussed earlier, the theory of social constructivism centers upon the idea that both innate characteristics and social inputs combine to form one's ethnicity. Birthplace is an example of an innate characteristic as it is unchangeable while place of origin and political preference serve as social inputs. Language can be constituted as either an innate characteristic or social input. As the theory of primordialism views ethnicity in somewhat of a dated view, it fails to explain why so many Basque-identifying fans voted for the same two political parties. Although the theory of instrumentalism can easily explain the connection between ethnicity and political preference, it does not address the strong relationship between birthplace and ethnicity that Basque fans possessed. Social constructivism is the only theory that successfully illuminates why both acquired characteristics such as birthplace and language and ascribed traits such as language, place of residence, and political preference hold a relationship with the Basque ethnicity for Athletic Club fans. Interestingly, many connections can be drawn from the clubs' historical operations to these social constructivist aspects such as the clubs' early association with EAJ-PNV. The fact that the theory of social constructivism holds true for Athletic Club fans suggests

that ethnicity is a vacillating phenomenon for the Basque. It is not necessarily given at birth. It can be changed.

The survey results have demonstrated that most Irish-identifying Celtic fans share a common birthplace, place of residence, language, and religion. However, it's important to note that most Irish Celtic fans (69.5%) were born in Scotland, not Northern Ireland nor the Republic of Ireland. Most also live in Scotland (60.6%). Moreover, English was the most common language with 97.8% of Irish-identifying Celtic fans speaking it. As English is the most popular language in the United Kingdom, this was expected; what was unexpected was the very small percentage of Irish fans that speak Irish (15.9%). In fact, the Scots language was more popular than the Irish language. For religion, 57.1% of Irish fans are Catholic. Of the four variables in which Irish Celtic fans demonstrated commonalities, religion is the only variable that unites them to Ireland and their Irish ancestors. Contrasting the observed commonalities of Irish-identifying fans, Celtic fans ranked race/descent as the most important variable in defining "Irishness" with birthplace and political action as second and third, respectively.

While the theory of social constructivism was able to best explain the case of Basque Athletic Club fans, the theory of primordialism applies more strongly to the ethnic identity for Celtic fans as it demonstrates the importance religion in ethnic identity formation. Unlike instrumentalism or social constructivism, the theory of primordialism emphasizes the role of unchangeable aspects and antiquated traditions—such as customs, myths, and religion—in the shaping of identities. While most Irish Celtic fans don't speak Irish Gaelic nor were born in the same country nor live in the same country as their

Irish ancestors, the majority remain loyal to the Catholic church. Clearly, religion serves as a uniting factor, powerful enough to transmit communal identities across generations. Speaking to football in particular, Celtic's inception was based on providing aid to the struggling immigrant Irish Catholics. Because of this, the primordialist element of religion has historically played a major role for the club. The following section will more strongly delve into the two clubs' purported promotion of Basque/Irish nationalism.

Chapter 5

Nationalism and Its Relationship with Athletic Club and Celtic

Whereas Chapter 4 served as an illuminating look at ethnic identities for fans of Athletic Club and Celtic, this chapter aids in the understanding of the manifestation of these ethnicities, focusing on football fandom for Athletic Club and Celtic and how it relates to nationalism. The previously discussed literature indicates that both teams share explicit historical ties to the nationalistic movements of the Basque and the Irish, but have time, globalization, and paramilitary groups severed these relationships? Furthermore, if connections do still exist, does nationalism evince itself as ethnic or civic nationalism?

Research Design

The following section utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Fans were asked about their opinions concerning their clubs' support for the respective nationalist movement. Fans that thought their club supported nationalism were asked to provide further comment about their statement. These short answer responses were later coded using two codes—cultural or political—to determine if the club promoted ethnic or civic nationalism. Culturally coded responses had to demonstrate some ethnic nationalism element such as heritage, religion, customs, language, etc. Politically coded responses contained references to political figures, nationalistic parties, a nation's right to sovereignty, or other political aspects. Overall, forty-two responses were coded for

Athletic Club respondents while two hundred responses were coded using this method for Celtic respondents. Several responses contained both cultural and political references and, thus, were coded as both.

Results

Table 12 illustrates the views of Athletic Club and Celtic fans regarding each of their respective football club's role in the support of the Basque/Irish nationalist movement. As demonstrated in Table 12, most fans that answered with "Yes" or "No" answers do agree that their football club supports nationalism. However, it is important to note that a greater percentage of Athletic Club fans share this viewpoint than Celtic fans; 62.6% of Athletic Club fans agree that the club supports nationalism while only 46.1% of Celtic fans answered affirmatively. Based on this finding, that a large percentage of both teams' fans believe that the two football clubs still share some connection with nationalism, it is important to determine how this nationalism embodies itself—through the expression of either ethnic nationalism or civic nationalism.

Table 12: Percentage of Athletic Club and Celtic Fans that Think Their Club Supports/Doesn't Support Nationalism

	Yes	Unsure/Prefer not to say	No
Athletic Club fans	62.6	20.6	16.8
Celtic fans	46.1	24.4	29.5

Athletic Club Bilbao

As discussed earlier, fans that believe their club supports Basque/Irish nationalism were given a follow-up question asking them why they feel this way. For Athletic Club, 47.6% of all "Yes" responses were coded as being cultural while 40.5% were coded as political.

The bulk of the culturally coded responses discuss Athletic Club's unique hiring philosophy and the fact that the team often uses Euskera. Several fans also made note of Athletic Club's traditions, values, and symbols in defending their stance that the club supports nationalism. One respondent ever so greatly encapsulates the importance of football in the representation of the Basques as they commented: "Por la filosofia, el apoyo al euskera y la cultura vasca y por ofrecer la posibilidad de disfrutar simbolicamente de una pequeña fantasía donde los equipos representan a nuestra nación, cuando ésta está invisibilizada fuera de EH" [For the philosophy, the support of Euskera and the Basque culture and for offering the possibility to symbolically enjoy a small fantasy where the teams represent our nation, when this is invisible outside of EH] (my translation).

For the responses denoting political affiliations, many Athletic Club survey respondents discussed the role that nationalistic political parties and paramilitary groups have had and currently have in the club. As one respondent stated: "Permite la entrada al estadio de grupos ultras de ideologia nacionalista. Nunca ha condenado actos terroristas de ETA" (It allows the entrance to the stadium of ultras groups of nationalist ideology. It never has condemned terrorist acts of ETA] (my translation). Another respondent argued

that “El PNV siempre intenta que el Presidente sea simpatizante de este partido, y porque el futbol es un altavoz para sus causas” [The PNV always tries to make the President sympathize with this game, and because soccer is a loudspeaker for its causes] (my translation). This reaffirms the power that the sport of football possesses in the political realm.

Celtic

Compared to the Athletic Club short answer responses, Celtic respondents demonstrated an exceptionally larger amount of cultural codified responses than politically coded responses. Of responses, 56% were coded as cultural whereas 23% were coded as political.

Many responses that have been culturally coded discussed the role of Irish immigration, the founders, Irish diaspora, Catholicism, and the clubs’ values to vindicate their claim that the club supports nationalism. One fan highlighted many of these recurring themes, stating that “Without the Irish diaspora in Scotland there would be no Celtic FC. Naturally Irish nationalism (culture) is supported; hence the Irish flags and Irish nationalist/folk and republican songs are heard at Celtic games/matches. Celtic FC, its foundations, culture (Irish nationalism) represent Celtic FC.” Arguably some of the more passionate responses, reinforcing the view that the club supports nationalism, concern the oppression of the Irish. As one respondent pointed out, this can easily be seen with the fact that Celtic included a special emblem on their jerseys in remembrance of the Famine. Although many of these responses addressed historical inequities of the Irish

such as the Famine and the Troubles, several fans describe prolonged prejudices. One fan spoke of their personal relationship with the club stating that "Many Celtic fans are descended from families of Irish immigrants who came to Scotland in search of a better life. Celtic was formed to feed the poor amongst this community - a community that is still despised and discriminated against in Scotland in 2022. I was born in Glasgow and I have lived here my whole life but I have never felt that I belong in Scotland. I feel that I belong as a Celtic fan." For this respondent, and many others, Celtic serves as somewhat of a haven, where Irish fans are free to express their true ethnicity.

Celtic responses that demonstrate political elements largely discussed the presence of Irish Nationalists and Irish Republicans from the club's birth to its present. While the means of achieving their goal varies, both Irish Nationalists and Irish Republicans want a united Ireland. Michael Davitt, an Irish Nationalist who laid sod from Donegal's turf in Celtic's new stadium, was cited multiple times. Several respondents also argued that supporters of Celtic are predominantly Irish Nationalists themselves. Furthermore, a number of fans discussed the political symbolism present at Celtic Park. In addition to politically oriented chants and banners, one of these symbols is the club's controversial flying of the Irish Tricolor flag—a robust representative of Irish unity. One fan notes the symbolic, albeit controversial, importance of this gesture; they commented that "The club has always had a close relationship to the ethos and symbolism of Irish nationalism. The flying of the Irish tricolour under intense opposition - Celtic were threatened with expulsion from the league in 1952 - is an example."

Discussion

Based on the survey, an appreciable number of fans of both Athletic Club and Celtic reinforce the idea that their teams support Basque and Irish nationalism. However, a lower percentage of Celtic respondents agreed with this statement than Athletic Club respondents. This is likely due to the increasing commodification of football and changes in Celtic's leadership. Many respondents support this idea, stating that Celtic's continued catering to the Irish diaspora is primarily for economic purposes. Moreover, others stated that at the executive level, the club is largely apolitical. The evidently evolving relationship between Celtic and its nationalistic connection should prove interesting to follow over the coming years as sports become increasingly commercialized.

Concerning the ways in which nationalism manifests itself, the responses for Athletic Club survey participants revealed that the club promotes a combination of ethnic and civic nationalism. While more responses were coded as cultural (47.6%) than political (40.5%), there is not a strong enough disparity to suggest that the club relies more heavily on ethnic or civic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism, as cited by fans, includes the club's use of Euskera, the Basque-only hiring policy, and the display of the Basque flag. Fans highlight Athletic club's promotion of civic nationalism by discussing the club's connection to both Bildu and EAJ-PNV as well as its permittance of ETA into the stadium.

Contrary to this, Celtic respondents offered a significantly higher percentage of culturally coded responses (56%) than politically coded responses (23%). These results signify that the club caters more so to the promotion of ethnic nationalism. This has been

demonstrated by fans' recounts of the club's use of the tri-color flag, Irish folk songs sung at the stadium, the club's inception and relationship with the Catholic church, and the fact that most fans have Irish heritage.

While the ways in which the two clubs demonstrate nationalism varies, fans from both sides expressed that they often face discrimination which is important to note. One Athletic Club respondent illustrated the idea that the club provides succor to the region, serving as a powerful representation of the Basque people despite Spain's attempts to silence them. As the fan stated, "En España todo lo relacionado con lo vasco lo toman como ofensivo y lo atacan sin piedad, y el Athletic sirve como estandarte e imagen de nuestra cultura en el mundo" [In Spain, everything related to the Basque is taken as offensive and attacked without mercy, and Athletic serves as a standard image of our culture in the world] (my translation). Similarly, a Celtic respondent stated that their club "represents the community of irish people in scotland to the world and has historically provided a rallying point for wider irish community [support] and action as a counter to wider anti-irish political and social actions." Athletic Club fans and Celtic fans alike show that the two clubs serve as a powerful outlet to express Basque and Irish nationalism in a society that so often marginalizes them.

Chapter 6

Final Remarks

The thrust of this research project was to better understand the nexus of ethnicity and nationalism through the lens of Athletic Club and Celtic. The first part of the research sought to determine which of the three theories of ethnicity most closely relates to each fan base by observing the interrelatedness of ethnicity to five categorical variables. With most Basque Athletic Club fans sharing a common language, birthplace, place of residence, and nationalistic political party preference, the results demonstrate that social constructivism is the theory of ethnicity that most successfully explains the formation of Basque identities of Athletic Club fans. For Celtic fans, the variable of religion was revealed to most strongly connect Irish fans to their Irish ancestors. These results suggest that the theory primordialism is most relevant to Irish identities of Celtic fans.

While the first part of the thesis centers on ethnicity, the second part transfers its focus to nationalism. As past literature evinces, both Athletic Club and Celtic have significant historical ties to the Basque and Irish nationalist movements. Despite the growing commercialization of football, survey results for both clubs have indicated a perpetuation the two clubs' promotion of nationalism. However, the ways in which Athletic Club and Celtic support Basque/Irish nationalism differ. Athletic Club survey respondents discussed a combination of cultural and political ways in which the team supports Basque nationalism. By using the language of Euskera in official platforms, waving the Basque flag, and sharing personnel with Basque nationalist political parties,

Athletic Club fans have demonstrated that the club relies on a combination of ethnic and civic nationalism. On the other hand, Celtic respondents primarily cited cultural aspects—such as symbolism through songs and flags and the Catholic religion—in the explanation of how the club continues to promote Irish nationalism. This illustrates that nationalism promoted by Celtic largely manifests itself as ethnic nationalism.

Connecting the two overarching foci of this research, the results suggest a correlation between the construction of ethnicity and the ways in which nationalism evinces itself. I hypothesized that if the club's fan base most closely aligns to the theory of primordialism, then the club will utilize ethnic nationalism. The survey results hold true to my original hypothesis. As the results have shown, the identities of Irish Celtic fans can best be described by the theory of primordialism. Likewise, Celtic fans' opinions revealed that nationalism, as promoted by the club, can predominately be classified as ethnic nationalism. Another hypothesis that the survey results have proved true was that if the club's fan base most closely aligns to the theory of social constructivism, then the club will employ a combination of civic and ethnic nationalism. This hypothesis was realized by the Athletic Club survey as the ethnicities of Basque fans most closely aligned with the theory of social constructivism and the nationalism promoted by the club is a combination of ethnic and civic nationalism.

Enlightened by this relationship, it can be said that nationalism promoted by the two clubs essentially acts as a mirror, reflecting the way that Basque/Irish ethnic identities are created. As indicated by the survey, the theory of social constructivism is most applicable to Basque Athletic Club fans. With that said, several parallels can be

drawn between defining aspects of this theory and the ways in which the club continues to promote both ethnic and civic nationalism—such as the clubs' use of Euskera and its ongoing connection with Basque nationalist political party politicians. The theory of primordialism was most applicable to Irish-identifying Celtic fans and the clubs' promotion of ethnic nationalism aligns with many primordialist characteristics. This is suggested by the club's connection to the Catholic church as well as the perpetuation of Irish traditions.

Limitations

While measures were taken to address possible limitations in this study, several should be acknowledged. First, it is important to address the difference in sample sizes for Athletic Club and Celtic respondents. The initial goal was to obtain at least one hundred respondents. While both surveys greatly surpassed this number, there were over four hundred more respondents for the Celtic survey than the Athletic Club survey. This may reflect less fan involvement and activity in the Aupa Athletic forum where the Athletic Club survey was posted.

Language has a powerful role in the promotion of nationalism. As Spanish is the primary language of Spain, some strong Basque nationalists choose not to speak it at all. Due to this, it is expected and likely that some Basque Athletic Club fans refused to complete the survey as it was written in Spanish. Diction boasts a similar importance. As discussed in the literature section, the term *nationalism* is quite abstract. Some understand it as the broad support for a nation while others interpret it as the explicit advocacy of a

nation's independence. Historically, being an Irish nationalist means the unequivocal support for Irish independence which may have led some fans to disagree to the question asking if their club supports nationalism.

Lastly, many Celtic respondents noted difficulty in determining what exactly *Celtic* means in the question "Do you think Celtic F.C. supports nationalism?" Some interpreted this question as solely referring to the executive level, while others answered with the view that Celtic is an all-encompassing entity—a combination of the boardroom, shareholders, sponsors, and the team itself. The latter is what was intended. This may have drawn more fans to answer "No" to the aforementioned question. This could potentially account for the lower percentage of Celtic fans than Athletic Club fans that think that their club supports nationalism.

Several changes could be made in the future to mitigate these potential limitations. Although it would prove daunting, two Athletic Club surveys could be created, one in Spanish and another in either Euskera or English. The results of the two surveys could later be combined and treated as one. Additionally, it may prove useful to post the surveys on more than just the fan forums, utilizing other social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram fan groups. Lastly, the question regarding the two club's connections to nationalism could be altered making it more descriptive with less room for interpretation.

Conclusion

San Mames and Celtic Park stadiums have proved that they are home to much more than turf and trophies—they accommodate a sense of community for the Basques and Irish. In a society that has historically worked to undermine them, the two clubs act as a venue for fans to express their unique identities. For Athletic Club, this is expressed by the 81.1% of Athletic Club fans identifying as Basque and the club's prolonged promotion of a combination of ethnic and civic nationalism. For Celtic, the 42.9% of Celtic fans identifying as Irish and the manifestation of civic nationalism explain the club's role in the fostering of the Irish ethnicity.

While the bulk of this research has discussed the disparity between Athletic Club and Celtic, the ability for each team to foster nationalism serves as a potent uniting factor. Neil Lennon, former Celtic manager, once said "Both clubs share a similar philosophy, tradition and history" (*Bilbao-Glasgow Connection* 2020). Many Celtic fans' personal opinions reflect Lennon's statement, discussing their eagerness to support other nations in their fight for independence. As one Celtic survey respondent stated: "We support a country's right to self-determination - many of us will support Scotland's fight for Independence - and due to our Irish roots and relationships, we want the same for Ireland. To be honest, we'd want the same for all countries: to be free from oppression or control." Athletic Club shares a similar affinity for Celtic as can be seen with the 2019 presentation of their One Club Man award to Billy McNeill, former Celtic player and manager. The two clubs act as mechanisms to preserve Basque and Irish identities.

In countries in which nationalism cannot always be openly displayed, sports serve as a powerful substitute for traditional methods of identity promotion.

This research serves as a basis for further studies concerning sports and its relationship to both ethnicity and nationalism. Nationalistic sentiments are by no means limited to Athletic Club nor Celtic. A replication of this study expanding the focus to different football clubs or alternative sports may further shed light upon the connection between the construction of ethnicities and the manifestation of nationalism in the sphere of sports.

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