A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTRACTABILITY OF THE BASQUE CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

Since the regime of dictator General Franco (1939-1975), the Spanish government has repressed or banned virtually all expressions of the Basque national identity and political expression. This failure to recognize the Basque culture within Spanish society has created a void in which the Basques have felt self-confined for generations. The conflict between the Basques and Spain has never found clear resolution, has often been punctuated by armed resistance, and has become virtually intractable. Spanish nationalism has prevailed over the indigenous group in the region, leaving resentment and frustration for those seeking to practice their traditions and cultural distinctions. The Spanish blend of fascist, traditionalist, and militarist responses has reinforced the deepfelt resentment of the Basque people in their pursuit of the civil liberties granted to all other citizens of the Spanish state.

The existence of the Basques has been problematic to the Spanish because cultural differences challenged Franco’s ideal of a unified Catholic state. Catholicism was the essence of the ‘nation’ and Castile was its ‘ethnic core,’ thus leaving little room for any opposing ideology and principles. Political, religious, and cultural autonomy for the Basques was regarded as a path to secession rather than a positive accommodation strategy. Since the end of the Second World War, the Basques have been fighting to
regain their homeland as well with a sense of self-character. The role of identity has played a significant part in the conflict, as the intensity of the antagonists’ hatred for each other lacks understanding and compassion.

This thesis will examine the Basque conflict as a particularly nettlesome example of a subset of internal conflicts that have been deemed intractable. Intractable conflicts have peculiar characteristics and can only be resolved under certain limited conditions. I will review the multidimensional history of this conflict to determine why it has been so entrenched, and why past efforts to resolve it have foundered. I will then undertake a comparative analysis of other intractable conflicts and their resolution status in order to discern what factors account for the success or failure of peacemaking efforts, and whether the Basque case can benefit from the lessons learned. In the end, I hope to offer a framework for bringing peace to this troubled region.

This thesis will be an interdisciplinary project that employs historical interpretation, comparative history, political science, and peace and conflict studies to analyze the Basque conflict and to propose promising ways to resolve it. This study identifies and analyses violent and nonviolent behaviors of the Basque and Spanish antagonists as well as the structural mechanisms attending to the social violence. Value issues will be evident throughout. In pursuit of my degree in International Affairs, I am interested in gaining a critical awareness of the historical and ethical issues that manifest in the Basque conflict, identifying the factors crucial to the successful resolution of other intractable conflicts, to then applying these lessons to this case and future endeavors.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Since the beginning of General Franco’s regime (1939-1975), the Spanish government has repressed or banned virtually all expressions of the Basque national identity and political expression. This failure to recognize the Basque culture within Spanish society has created a void in which the Basques have felt self-confined and oppressed for generations. The conflict between the Basques and Spain has never found clear resolution, has often been punctuated by armed resistance, and has become virtually inflexible toward resolution. In the course of this thesis, I will examine the Basque conflict as a particularly nettlesome example of a subset of internal disputes that have been deemed problematic in finding a suitable resolution. Intractable conflicts have peculiar characteristics and can only be resolved under certain limited conditions. I plan to review the multidimensional history of this conflict to determine why it has been so entrenched, and why past efforts to resolve it have foundered.

The core of the study will be a comparative analysis of a small number of other intractable conflicts, the extent to which they were similar and different from the Basque conflict, and whether the lessons learned from peace efforts can be applied profitably in this case. I intend to examine the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Palestine and Israel to track the characteristics of seemingly never-ending conflicts. I will then analyze the other intractable conflicts and their resolution status in order to discern what factors account for the success or failure of peacemaking efforts, and whether the Basque case can benefit from the lessons learned. Much of the
information and analyses offered to detail the events and causes of the Basque conflict within France and Spain has remained focused on the violence of this lingering affair.

Spanish intolerance has prevailed over the indigenous groups in the region, leaving resentment and frustration for those seeking to practice their traditions and cultural distinctions. Since the end of the Second World War, the Basques have been fighting to regain their homeland as well as a sense of self-character. The role of identity has played a significant part in the conflict, as the intensity of the antagonists’ hatred for each other lacks understanding and compassion. A great deal of the reporting of this conflict centers around the “terrorism” that has plagued the Basque region and the inability to find resolution. The case of the Basque insurgency has been a source of pain and frustration for all the players involved who have suffered interminable violence. Yet viewing violence as a chief factor in the problem does not allow for complete understanding of the elements that brought this conflict to fruition and the fundamental reasons for its intractability. The failure of the players to rationalize together (or apart), as well as their inability to come together with mutually agreeable conclusions continues to afflict Basque political existence. As noted by Dr. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, a professor in comparative politics at the University of Connecticut and a renowned expert in Western European social movements:

The pluralist interpretation of Spanish politics contributes to a negative characterization of Basque political violence. Because of the supposed openness of the system, the violence appears not only morally repugnant and economically irrational but also politically irresponsible.¹

While violence has been a major factor within the conflict, understanding its roots and course requires analysis of the history of the Basques and their social movement, as well as the themes and events that formed the psychological basis for its onset and continuation. In order to understand fully the dynamics of the Basque conflict and its intractable nature, the role of the Basque identity must be analyzed. It is my opinion that the conflict between France, Spain and the Basques involves a key concept of collective identity, thus the issues remain hard to resolve and the actors inflexible due to the ways in which the players view themselves as well as each other.

The Basque people managed to preserve their cultural distinctiveness for centuries, despite foreign infringements within their territory. Today the population shares a collective consciousness centered on the continued pursuit of acceptance and the possibility of further self-determination. This shared perception survives through the Basque peoples’ own unique culture, language and political past. Throughout its history, the Basque Country has been able to maintain various levels of political independence under different Spanish political frameworks, such as absolute monarchies, the first and second Spanish Republics, and the current democratic parliamentary system. As a result, the Basque territories have long been able to retain, among other things, their own monetary system and provincial parliaments.

In the vein of nationalist movements elsewhere, the Basques’ have cultivated a variety of nationalistic forms to sustain their struggle against the Spanish state, and vice-versa. The essence of this competition is the issue of cultural identity or, more specifically, a cultural distinctiveness for Basque patriotism. This lends support to the
idea that “intractable conflicts revolve around some of the more central dilemmas of human and social existence that are not resolvable in the traditional sense.” Historically, this has been a challenge for those in authority, both between competing factions within the Basque nationalist movement and between the wider domains of the Spanish and French states. The Basque authority has itself consistently competed for claims of representation to gain a seat within the Spanish political structure. Moreover, it has been marked by an ever-changing pattern of development and evolution, allowing Basque nationalism to assume a number of differing appearances throughout its history. “From the inception of the movement itself, the fluid nature of Basque nationalist cultural identity has allowed for the emergence of a potential strategy of political violence.”

Some theorists contend that incidents like culturally traditional politics arise through historical periods of unrest; this is to explain Basque nationalism as a response to the dislocating effects and deep-felt resentment of the Basque people in their pursuit of the civil liberties granted to all other citizens of the Spanish state.

The role of violence in the struggle for self-rule occupies an ambiguous place in Basque political nationalist culture. While some Basques’ advocated violent action to gain their independence, the Basque political affairs instead chose to rely on their cultural heritage and language, to maintain an impassive patience in the face of the Spanish

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rejection of their identity. This created a fracturing division in the Basque nationalistic movement as fervent youthful groups began to use violence as a means to command the attention of the Spanish government while the Basque aristocracy continued to find a course of action to encourage understanding and compassion from the Spanish. Violence has become the focal point of this conflict, as the Basque political goals and initiatives have become victims of the convoluted terroristic actions of the past 30 years.

Similarities to the Basque conflict can be seen in many other international conflicts of this type, where the problem has been passed down through successive generations that continue to harbor hatred of another group or race. It is also a characteristic of such identity conflicts and their intractability over generations that outside interventions are viewed in the same misleading context. The Basque conflict exemplifies the perception of commitment to a group ethno-identity, in addition to the loyal devotion to separatist ideals that inspire support for radical political policies. The goal of looking above and beyond the capacity of these self-beliefs and moving to produce a situation of peaceful, long-term coexistence that allows for societal and economic development is the aim of resolving such intractable conflicts. Reviewing and evaluating similar conflicts can draw conclusions drawn from the successes and failures to find sustainable peace in areas that have had generations of violence. Through looking at case studies, the historical events that drive ethnic sensitivity and the causes toward violent reaction can be interpreted to show where state actors can aid in solution tactics.
Article 2 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, declaring that the “Spanish state is an indivisible nation, has both united and divided the Spanish people.”

It is my intent to clarify the characterization and interpretation of intractable conflicts and to correlate the elements that entrench them. The lessons of the Basque conflict can be cross-examined through its historical events, and the contemporary stagnation of mediation toward a clear accord to unify or disassociate the Basque community. Through analysis of the causes of Basque resentment toward France and Spain and the importance of their cultural identity, the violent tactics of their political process can be understood. Utilizing the comparative case studies to correlate the elements that both create inflexibility and quell violence against opposing players, these examples can reveal ways in which intractable conflicts arise and persist, as well as strategies that help to resolve them.

One such case is the Sri Lankan civil war that swayed back and forth for nearly three decades due to ethnic unrest over power sharing. Beginning in 1983, Sri Lanka was caught in cyclical hostilities between the central government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, aka Tamil Tigers), which fought to create an independent Tamil state. This conflict arose much like that of the Basques, as its roots date back centuries. Migrating from northern India thousands of years ago, the Sinhalese suppressed the Tamil minority that had established a prospering monarchy on the island and laid claim to

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the rightful governing of their land. The Sinhalese created a “pattern of colonial-era exploitation, but with colonial rulers replaced by an indigenous ruling class”

As the newly formed country began to formulate its political structure and draft a constitution, the nationalist Sinhalese movement began to press upon the Tamil ethnic communities. “The forcible union of two ethnic communities with a history of rivalry was supposed to forge a national identity and create a productive, stable society. Instead, as in so many former colonies in Africa and Asia, it has wreaked havoc.” The disorder resulted in considerable damage to the environment and economy, and in the deaths of nearly one hundred thousand people. By the late 1970’s the Tamil Tigers were internationally branded as a terrorist organization, as their tactics for achieving recognition from the Sri Lankan government turned deadly. Some of the Tamil Tigers’ most successful attempts at creating disruption ended with hundreds of people being injured at one time, and the distinction of being the world’s only terrorist group to have killed two world leaders.

Over the decades of violence between the Sinhalese and the LTTE there were five failed attempts toward bringing reconciliation to this small island. Early into the war the Indian Army deployed a peacekeeping force (IPKF) to “remove obstacles to the implementation of the Agreement (Indo-Sri Lankan Accord), by ending the ethnic strife

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between the Sinhalese and the Tamils and thereby reestablish peace”. Thus after cycles of negotiation and military offensives, international mediation finally assisted in a near-permanent ceasefire in the spring of 2009. The Sri Lankan case is reminiscent of the Basque conflict as it demonstrates the significant and failed attempts at peaceful resolution through its distinctive trials. These two nationalist conflicts featured minority groups that felt it necessary to resort to violence in order to achieve their goals. Additionally, in both conflicts it was a splintering of a militarized youth faction that was the catalyst for the birth of a violent peoples’ movement. The Tamil Tigers closely relate to the Basque formation of ETA through the formation by impassioned youth, while providing evidence toward the reconciling and rehabilitation for the younger generations caught up within a civil war.

In addition to Sri Lanka and the examination of how civil wars can entrench ethno-cultural dissonance, the circumstances that led to the Bosnian War are fraught with misconceptions compounded by nationalized characteristics. After several months of hostility in the republics of Slovenia and Croatia, a civil war broke out in Bosnia that ushered in the bloodiest stage of Yugoslavia’s dissolution. Beginning early in 1992, the multiethnic republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, home to Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs, and Muslim Slavs, began to seek independence. To protect the Serb minority in Bosnia, Serbian leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic began to channel arms and military support to fight against the other groups in the area. The underlying tension between these groups

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11 Henry Morgenstern and Ophir Falk, Suicide Terror: Understanding and Confronting the Threat (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2009), 236.
is reminiscent of the Basque situation as its origins reach back to the six and seventh centuries A.D., as these ancient tribal groups clashed and fought for their own autonomy.  

Bosnian Serb militant groups carried out deadly campaigns that went “through the country expelling hundreds of thousands to create ethnically pure regions”. Attacks on civilians and international relief workers disrupted supplies brought to the area when it became most crucial, thus creating a massive evacuation of refugees seeking asylum. Contrary to the Spanish, the extent to which “terror squads” and police units carried out inhumane actions toward the minority allowed for scrutiny and support from the United Nations to aid the weaker Muslim element. This brings into question the extent to which international actors should intervene in the domestic conflicts characterized by nationalistic violence. “The intensity of emotions and perceived stakes of the struggle escalated as revelations of widespread abuses of civilians and charges of genocide made the brutal nature of the war apparent to all concerned. Complexity and emotion are the enemies of effective policy making, and Western policies toward Bosnia reflected this.”

This opinion directly correlates with the intensity of the feelings and roles of the Basques and the Spanish state, in addition to the way in which Western powers have influenced the situation over the history of the conflict. By drawing parallels between these

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situations, we can see the ways in which history and emerging political boundaries can spur modern cultural strife that may result in the hardship of war.

Commonalities with the Basque conflict can also be seen in other conflicts of similar design, where the problem has been passed down through the ages to continue the harbored hatred of another group or race. International intrusion into ancient ethnic complexities can possibly defer positive results, as the Israel-Palestinian conflict shows. The main parties involved and the international community have suffered through nearly a hundred years of attempts to intervene in the relationship between the indigenous population of Palestine and the Jewish population of Israel. It is a characteristic of this conflict and its intractability over generations that intervention from the outside is viewed in the same context with the existence of the conflict. As with the Basque situation, the conflict itself is parallel with the contemporary self-definitions of the identity of two nationalist movements to which each group demonstrates great loyalty.

The Palestine-Israeli conflict allows for interpretation by the way in which international mediation can slow the process of finding resolution to disputes. Just as the Basque situation evokes feelings of direct ownership of land and identity, the Israelis and Palestinians both believe they are entitled to the land both sides are fighting for. One of the most crucial elements that will enable unification or peaceful separation of these two groups is mutual recognition. I believe that even with the aid of foreign intervention the wounds of an intractable conflict cannot be fully healed until the players themselves take the other into consideration. In 1993, at a public ceremony the representatives of Palestine, Israel, Russia and the United States signed a set of agreements known as the
Oslo Accords to initiate future plans to calm their conflict and allow dialog for peaceful negotiations. However, the Oslo Accords couldn’t bring an end to the resentment that has been deeply rooted in this issue since the late 19th century: “the central issue of the accord, and in the conflict itself, is mutual recognition of national rights, and recognition was a key problem in nearly every aspect of the talks”.  

One central issue in the outcome of any conflict is the motivations of the contending parties. In recent years, it has become increasingly fashionable to use the peace process in Northern Ireland as a “model of conflict resolution.” The presumed “lessons of Ulster,” where the Irish Republican Army (IRA) ended its three-decade long campaign of violence, are now regularly deemed to be applicable to other areas of conflict around the world. To a great extent, this is both understandable and justifiable. In the same regard “the reasons why Northern Ireland is a popular case for politicians to invoke are fairly straightforward. Resolving conflict is a notoriously difficult task and examples of negotiated settlements that lead to a sustained period of (relative) peace, underpinned by durable and functioning new political institutions, are the exception rather than the norm.  

Northern Ireland has remained deeply scarred over a period of thirty years as ‘The Troubles’ claimed many lives. As in the case of the other conflicts discussed here, its origins go back centuries. Northern Ireland was a very flawed political entity prior to the


outbreak of violence in 1968, as the population was divided between two distinct
communal alliances: a Protestant-unionist majority which favored the preservation of
Northern Ireland’s status within the United Kingdom, and a Catholic-nationalist minority
which wished to see the six counties of Northern Ireland absorbed into an all-Ireland
state. The conflict in Northern Ireland is very relevant to the Basque situation as the
nationalists identified themselves as the “Irishmen of Spain” and provided what Pablo
Mendez refers to as a “formula for legitimating a similar negotiation between the Spanish
State and ETA. Through yielding to political reality, Northern Ireland represented more a
point of reference regarding the victimization of a minority, rather than the existing
political situation.”\textsuperscript{17} The similarities and lessons of Northern Ireland provide further
insight into the Basque situation. The Basque’s ETA movement took up arms like the
Irish Republican Army (IRA) and provided organizational direction to the uprising, and
the peaceful negotiations that eventually ended ‘The Troubles’ can also shed light on
what is needed to resolve the Basque conflict.

In the course of history during the transition from war to peace in Northern
Ireland, a comparison can be made with the violent discord in Basque Country over the
same period. Demonstrating how events have developed very differently than the
advocates of 'the Northern Ireland model' might presume, resolution of the Basque
conflict will require further solution-based strategies. Encompassing the mentioned
disputes will offer understanding of how intractable conflicts cultivate and the ways in

\textsuperscript{17} Luigi Sergio Germani and D. R. Kaarthikeyan, \textit{Pathways Out of Terrorism and Insurgency: The
which they either remain unsolvable or what tactics helped to bring peace. I plan to draw more comparisons between these distinctly nationalistic situations and use them to formulate a workable framework to apply to the Basques’ next course of action. The Basque situation arose from a culmination of events that shaped the history of the region and its people to produce one of Western Europe’s remaining armed conflicts. Not unlike the related cases, the Basques require understanding from the international community as well as tolerance from the Spanish government.

From the earliest discovery of the Basques and those who inhabit its region, the culture and distinctiveness of their identity has kept a strong element to what drives this controversy. The Basque community has become a divided between those who want total autonomy and those who are interested in settled peace with Spain. By first gaining insight to the origins of the Basques themselves, and the formation of the French and Spanish nations, the basis for the conflict can be formulated. In the following chapters the evolution of the violent escalation and political instability will be explained to then form a possible framework to offer closure to the turbulent events that have plagued this area for decades. The offered and failed attempts to bring peace allow for interpretation and investigation to what will aid future initiatives.

This work will employ both historical and comparative analysis to explain the intractable nature of the Basque conflict and to find potential answers to create an applicable resolution strategy. Within my research I have sought to create a rounded view of the early history of the Basques and their regional context to provide an understanding of the foundation for their self-interests, as well as the repressive response of the Spanish
state. In the context of relating the case studies, the likenesses portray the ways in which these conflicts emerge from the resentment that comes from early oppression upon the cultural individuality of a minority group. The roots of these conflicts stem from issues relating to objectification of an ethno-national identity, that resolves itself to aggression as the only remedy. The resulting militia groups propagate the radicalized youth into a cyclical pattern of violence, which binds these conflicts into expanded warfare. Drawing on the literature on resolving intractable conflicts and examining multiple intractable conflicts within a common analytical framework will allow for perspective and understanding of the “why and how” the Basque conflict has persisted. Among the factors to be examined and compared are goals, ideologies, strategies, and structure of the parties involved, the effects of changing dynamics in the conflict, and external factors including the nature of foreign intervention.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF BASQUE COUNTRY
AND ITS PEOPLE

Timing the early emergence of tribes living within Basque Country lends itself to speculation by many historians and researchers, though “most conservative interpretation places Basque precursors in the western Pyrenees well before the invasions of the Indo-European.”

Modern Basque thinking conveys the notion that the ancestry of the Basque populace traces back to the original inhabitants of the region and one of the oldest communities within modern Europe. This chapter will begin with an outline of the origins of the Basque people and the impressions that early influences of outside cultures placed on the community. One of the distinguishing elements of the Basque identity is the use and protection of their language as a means to maintain tradition. The language is thought to be one of the oldest in Europe, and “a tremendous symbolic and pragmatic value for Basque citizens today.”

When thinking about the origins of Basque Country and its people, the very essence of what it means to be Basque comes from their cultural identity. The identity of the Basques has in many respects retrained its distinction as one of the oldest identifiable communities in Europe.

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2 Mercedes Niño-Murcia and Jason Rothman, Bilingualism and identity: Spanish at the crossroads with other languages (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2008), 37.
The genesis of the Basque people has aroused speculation about the timeframe in which the territory was settled, as Robert Trask indicates:

On the whole, in spite of the regional differences, archaeologists are satisfied that the record of occupation in the Basque Country from the Paleolithic to the end of the Bronze Age is one of continuity: everything points to the uninterrupted presence of the same people, with their culture evolving in place and receiving influences, but not invasions, from elsewhere in Europe.\(^3\)

The Basque communities seem to idealize their homeland as an unspoiled nook nestled between two opposing states, Spain and France. The citizens within the Basque region refer to themselves as Euskaldunak or “speakers of Euskera,” the Basque language. To be considered Basque involves more than Basque ancestry, but a requisite to help nurture the cultural distinctiveness and language. The borders of the Basque region have helped to shelter it from the infiltration of other cultures, blocking opposing forces as well as aiding to keep its own character secure. Its most significant periphery is through the Bay of Biscay that provides a way for Basques to visit the rest of the world, yet return directly to their homeland.

From the earliest recordings of populations in Europe, it is established that the Basque region was formed before the Celts pressed upon it, as one of the “oldest inhabitants, in their respective districts, known to the historian.” Further research shows that, “while the Celts appear as invaders, pressing southwards… we may therefore be tolerably certain that the Basques held France and Spain before the invasion of the Celts.”\(^4\) During the period that the Celts moved through Gaul (France) into the Iberian

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Peninsula and Pyrenees originally from the area of what is now Great Britain, they discovered the Basques around 600 B.C.\(^5\) Being described as nothing short of the prevailing representatives of the original Iberian population, underscores that the Basque communities were organized and established far before the establishment of pressing influences:

> When at last the Romans conquered the country, the Latin language and civilization gradually spread over the peninsula, and effaced the national characteristics of the ancient population, except in the mountainous parts of the northeast, where the Basques maintained their ancient language and nationality. The native population of Spain is described as proud, cunning, and reserved; they were, moreover, very warlike and brave, and loved their liberty and independence above all things.\(^6\)

This fact emphasizes the point that the Basques feel that they have an ancient claim to their territory, their homeland, thus proving that they are owed what is rightfully theirs.

The Pyrenees Mountains have until modern times created natural barriers between the Basques and the outside world, separating the Northern and Southern provinces of Basque Country. The peak of the mountain range also creates a political wall, marking the international border following the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 between Kings Louis XIV of France and Philip IV of Spain.\(^7\) This contract fixed the territories of the Basque Country to be placed on either side of the French-Spanish frame to the greater

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advantage of bringing peace to these two states and Europe. Heated discussion and the ultimate occurrence of violent reaction to the treaty from the Basques led to a refinement of the Treaty in 1856, to legitimize the ‘Ornano line’ and confirm the lasting border linking France and Spain through the Basque territory. This act confirmed the official dissolution of Basque sovereignty within their land and the annexation of their resources and developments that had been manifestly the cultural identity of their region. It was these treaties that broke Basque Country for the benefit of the French and Spanish governments and created the enduring loss of unity among the indigenous people of the Iberian Peninsula.

Euskal Herria, or what translates as “natives of Basque Country,” today occupies four self-directed provinces in Spain known as Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, Alava and Navarre (Spanish names), an area of about 7,000 square miles. Within the northern area of Basque Country there are three provinces that make up the French portion known as Labourd, Basse-Navarre, and Soule (French names), adding another 1,000 square miles to total the Basque region. Even as these two territories have since been separated by the creation of France and Spain and “the bond between the Basques on the two slopes of the Pyrenees has ceased to exist except in memory, yet on both sides of the mountains the love of the soil and the pride of race persist, in spite of all political changes.” In consequence,

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Basque Country is the formulation by the political and existing communities in which the Basque language (Euskera) and culture have survived into modern times.

The second most geographically important aspect to Basque Country is its access to the Atlantic Ocean, through the Bay of Biscay. This outlet has historically, industrially and agriculturally been substantial in the way in which the Basque culture has influenced others and provided regional significance at home. As Basque Country accepted its new rulers, it began to expand its trade and culture to outside provinces well into the European Renaissance period. The Basques became highly skilled in whaling, shipbuilding and iron working in their coastal region as this was an opportunity to create positive relationships with foreign lands. The extent to which Basque notoriety for skilled labor was known is evidenced by their production of “some of the world’s most famous iron deposits.” In addition, “the rails explain why these provinces lead in the matter of Spanish railways, and the steel plates why Bilboa has become Spain’s chief shipbuilding center.”11 Skilled labor for marine techniques in the late Middle Ages was lacking and “often used an operation mounted with foreign capital that depended on a Basque crew with specialized expertise.”12 At this point in history the Basques began to reach out to other communities, while still guarding their ancient customs and traditions in the isolation of their homeland.


Gloria Pilar Totoricagüena indicates:

Significant numbers of Basques did not begin to leave the Basque Country permanently until the 1500’s, to participate in the colonial pursuits of the Crown of Castile and later Spain, and as part of the French colonization of North America and particularly of Newfoundland, where they worked in the fisheries and established a number of permanent settlements along the coast.\(^\text{13}\)

Thus, the geography of Basque Country is a major component in the identity of the Basque people and their culture, as the land has defined them and their contributions through the ages.

The formation of the collective identity that emerged from the Basque nationalist sentiment stems from their cultural uniqueness, skilled methods, and self-determination that have in many ways remained unchanged since the first millennium. Conversely, toward the end of the 18\(^\text{th}\) century, the industrialization of the Basque region was particularly important as it thrust their identity into the sweeping changes of European expansion. From a phenomenological perspective, all perceptions derive their meaning from the identity already in existence or the role already being acted. In this case, the Basques have tended to interpret all experiences in terms of the “feeling that they were a superior, unique people and that the fruits of their capitalist success were due to their unique ingenuity.”\(^\text{14}\) These concepts of group consciousness and of group identity are therefore necessary for the further development of the modern Basque cultural structure.


The Basque identity additionally was defined by their traditions, most importantly their language which creates a core element promoting Basque nationalism. It is the use of language that defines things and how we differ from one another, allowing humans to communicate and create connections of self-awareness. In the development of self and identity, we are constantly reviewing and reacting to the perceptions that we take from the environment around us. This psychological condition was nurtured by the Basques’ historical experience of relative isolation until their first interactions with the Celts, and from the conceptualization of identity coming from the retention of their traditional heritage. John Earl Joseph breaks down the Basque sense of self as follows:

In explaining why Basque identity is strongly opposed to the Spanish identity of the ‘nation-state’, it would be difficult not to have recourse to the fact that the Basque language is unrelated to the Romance dialects spoken throughout the Iberian Peninsula - a fact which lies behind Basque claims to form a wholly distinct people ethnically.\footnote{John Earl Joseph, \textit{Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 165.}

Euskera, the language of the Basques, is of unknown origin. It has no relation to any other language spoken in Europe, and for the most part is a unique linguistic phenomenon. In most understandings of provincial dialects it is often presumed that the language remains in remote areas within a region, though this isn’t the case relating to the use of Euskera. The Basque language was spoken throughout Basque Country and most distinctly in major cities and towns. By 1918, the Basque people wanted to protect and help maintain the use of their language by establishing the Society for Basque Studies-Eusko Ikaskuntza.\footnote{Stephen Barbour explains:}
As with Catalan, the nineteenth century saw an increased awareness of Basque culture and eventually a form of Basque nationalism; the Basque Country, unlike the rest of Spain, experienced major industrial and economic parallel with other parts of nineteenth-century Europe. But, besides these similarities, there are very many differences between the two regions, as their different histories already suggest… First, the role that language played in constructing their identity, and second, the very different reactions of the industrial bourgeoisie in the two regions. The contrasting levels of popular involvement in the two regional movements are also significant, with the Basque movement being backed by a very small group of committed intellectuals.\(^\text{17}\)

Though this is the official and ancient language of the Basque culture, Euskera is only fully spoken by about 20% of those who reside within the Basque Provinces today.\(^\text{18}\)

Basque history, as it will be explained in this analysis of Basque culture, will indicate how linguistics has played an integral and resurgent role in the formation of Basque nationalism. Though the language is still used in the area, it has gone through transformation and restoration. Julen Zabalo concludes:

> Basque political and legal peculiarities, friction with Spanish and French centralism, etc. are precisely part of the main arguments explaining the emergence of Basque nationalism. The existence of its own language, diverse ethnic peculiarities, or a strong literary tradition determined to demonstrate the ancestral nobility of the Basques, together with economic, political, etc., reasons, complete the arsenal of arguments that serve Basque nationalism.\(^\text{19}\)

The Basque language remains a unifying force that binds the people together, notwithstanding local variations, slang, and “to a lesser extent, syntactic differences


\(^{18}\) Trask, *The History of Basque*, 3.

among them. 20 Bearing in mind that the Basque community began to nationalize in the mid-nineteenth century and into present times, Euskera experienced a renewal among students, authors and in mainstream acts of communicating. 21

The beginning of a turning point in the Basque heritage and its relationship with the Spanish is recognized in the industrialization in the Basque territory, as well with gains that the Spanish authority began to react to. This shaped the way that the region was divided and ruled through the interference by the Spanish government. As Basque Country formerly sustained itself through agriculture and marine specialization, mining for iron was then thrust to the forefront of Spanish exportation to the world. Before 1900, Basque ore supported 20% of the world’s output, 45% of Spain’s merchant fleet, and the Basque region comprised and substantiated 30% of Spanish capital. With the massive boom of economy and workforce that flooded the region, there was a great wave of non-Basque laborers that challenged the culturally exclusive Basques and region.

Marianne Heiberg further illustrates:

Although heavily bedecked with symbols of Basque rural culture and language, Basque nationalism was an urban product designed to deal with the social and economic developments inside the industrializing Basque Country… They felt themselves economically and politically trapped between and threatened by the two main protagonists of industrialization: the Spanish immigrant proletariat and the Basque financial oligarchy. 22

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These social strains took their toll on city centers across the provinces and most drastically within the city of Bilbao, thrusting it to become the largest and busiest area within Basque Country. Bilbao became the heart of Basque commerce as well with the center of cultural recoil. The ease of road, rail, and sea access to Bilbao provided the network for Basque and subsequently Spanish trade with the rest of Europe. This also brought strains on the two divided sections of Basque Country in France and Spain as money was allocated to each nation.

The city of Bilbao on the Spanish side of Basque Country “reaped the benefits” for the indulgence of Spain though it was hurt by the active and in many ways damaging effects of the concentrated business network. The materialization and ideological personality of Basque nationalism leading to the 19th century are a dramatic illustration of the conflict between modernity and continued custom. For centuries, Basques occupied a position of importance in both historical relevance and contemporary Spanish bureaucracy that was out of proportion for the population in the area that the Basques controlled. The Basque Provinces were also privileged within the Spanish state, as they were at one time economically more developed than Madrid. The inception and formation of Basque nationalism began for the most part in the last century, as “few other regions in Western Europe have a nationalist movement that yearns for the past more intensively than the Basque one.”

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While Bilbao was the industrial nucleus for the Basques, the town of Gernika (in Euskadi, Guernica in Spanish) had historically and politically been the capital for centuries. Gernika became the inspiration and focal point for radicalization toward the Spanish government during the civil war. While Mussolini and Hitler’s powers were well established by the mid 1930’s, General Francisco Franco turned to the Axis powers to aid his interests in ushering the Basques out of Spain. On 26 April, 1937, for over three hours the Nazi Luftwaffe experimented with saturation bombing of civilian targets and indiscriminate buildings of the traditional seat of Basque autonomy. More than half of the Basque capital’s population was killed or injured, and the Basque governmental operations were dismantled. Robin Evans further explains:

> It is also seen by many as epitomizing the brutality of the right against the ordinary people of the Spanish state and as a rallying call to the left for the defense of its people. For many historians the destruction of Gernika is the most significant event of the ‘Spanish Civil War’. The atrocity also inspired one of the truly great masterpieces of modern art. Pablo Picasso, a Catalan, began his initial sketches in Paris in May 1937 and by June his painting Guernica had been completed. To the world the painting signified a great human tragedy. But for one people it signified much more.  

By way of consideration to the amount of reverence for “Basque Resistance” toward the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Basque government was absent from the region and the movement lacked structure. At this time the Basque army had surrendered and the government of Euzkadi (Basque) was now operating out of France in secrecy as well with many other divisions of their former society. The ardent demand for

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Basque liberties and culture following the civil war electrified defeated attitudes in the Basque population and afforded a surge of nationalist fervor. As General Francisco Franco Bahamonde (1892-1975) ascended into power, it became his aim to erase all signs of distinctive Basque culture. In his pursuit to rid the country of anything in opposition to Spain, he portrayed Basques as separatists that had the intent to injure Spanish authority and culture.

The amount of persecution during the Franco dictatorship is a collective pain for the Basque Diasporas and the other resident minority groups, such as the Catalans within the Spanish state. Regime forces fell upon the Basque Country determined to erase all signs of a distinguishing Basque culture and any remnants of Basque self-identity. The Basque nationalists were ostracized to the extent that they were expelled from schools, churches, businesses and factories. The Spanish government “used all of the available public mechanisms” to trample Basque cultural strength. Basque elite classes faced imprisonment, deportation and execution as the prejudice spread further through the Spanish society. In attempts to expunge the core element, the persecution sank deeper toward eradication of their cultural identity. The Spanish marked Euskera linguistics as against the law of the Spanish State. Since Basque patriotism leaned so heavily on the linguistic identification for race, culture, and nation, General Franco placed special emphasis on the destruction of this central pillar of Basque significance. In spite of that, the generations of Basque elders guarded the monolinguals of their community with an interest in maintaining the language to be preserved and protected in secret. The symbolism of the Spanish suppression of Basque identity would create “the realization
that their ancestral language was in the process of disappearing”… which “led Basque nationalists to redefine national consciousness and place cultural and, especially, linguistic recovery at the very center of their political project.”27

Virtually all of the Basque refugees leaving Spain went into the provinces of France, where they were received by the well-organized Basque government agencies which established various community organizations in order to continue the Basque way of life and political actions against Spain. However, the German invasion of France, Belgium and the Netherlands in May 1940 left many Basques in an unstable position in finding refuge from Spain. As the government of France passed into the hands of the occupation, pro-Nazi French officials launched a vicious campaign to punish and discredit the Basques who had been exiled in their country for years at that point. The banished Basque community of France was then faced with the awareness that their neighbors could no longer sustain their operation to fight Spanish opposition. In this case, “the French Basque movement was confronted by three related obstacles: public suspicion and electoral indifference; government hostility; and rejection by many in the Spanish refugee population, a painful realization fraught with images of fratricide and abandonment.”28 Sandra Ott further explains:

In both towns and the countryside, the experience of occupation tested the resilience of local values and undermined accepted standards of human conduct. The uncertainties, anxieties and hardships of daily life often exacerbated existing tensions between longstanding rivals and enemies.29

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In attempts to gain support from the Allied powers to find protection against Franco, the Basques began clandestine military operations to aid the war effort. Throughout the Second World War, Basques helped secretly transport Jews, arms, supplies, and stranded Allied servicemen. Basque communities and those chosen to work for the FBI provided counterintelligence of Nazi activities within South America to establish a relationship and trust with the American government. However, this possibly fruitful relationship was to end with the war itself. The exiled Basque government was now positioned with the United States to maintain a delegation at the United Nations and draw support from the communities established in the American West. This allowed for the Basques to “internationalize” their struggle to overthrow the Spanish regime with foreign intervention. Franco’s association with the Axis powers during the Second World War had soured Spain’s international relations with world’s superpowers, and thus the dictator’s government was denied entrance into the United Nations.


30 Wayne H. Bowen, Spain during World War II (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 245.

As Senator and Representative to the United Nations, Tom Connally, addressed to the Political Security Committee on December 3, 1946:

The attitude of the United States toward the Franco regime is well known… Its fascist origins, nature and policies are completely alien to our way of life. We reaffirm the basic concept of the inherent worth of the individual, which such totalitarianism denies, and we advocate the establishment of effective democracy in all nations, where, through free elections, the people can select their governments and representatives. It is for these reasons that we are unalterably opposed to the Franco regime, its totalitarian character and its suppression of human rights and freedoms.\(^{32}\)

Basque sentiment was buoyed by the adoption of Basque communities throughout the world and by Spain’s suffering from international political separation. “The Basque government-in-exile immediately capitalized on the high status of Basques throughout Latin America and those in the New York and Washington D.C. elite circles, espousing Basque democratic and republican values, and persuading Western leaders to shun the dictatorship of Francisco Franco.”\(^{33}\)

However, as the Soviet Union began to emerge as a global player, Western powers were now concerned about the associations that Franco could forge from his lack of inclusion in the international community. William Douglass further points out:

In retrospect, the Basques suffered a second defeat in their attempts to internationalize their cause. As the Western world settled into a cold war with the Soviet bloc it accommodated Franco’s Spain. The pleas and agendas of Western Europe’s ethno-nationalist minorities, including the Basques, were largely ignored.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{34}\) Douglass, et al., *Basque Politics and Nationalism on the Eve of the Millennium*, 211.
The failure of the democracies to support the Basques, especially Great Britain and the United States, beginning in the 1950’s, led the Basques to conclude that they could not depend on external assistance and that they would have to achieve their liberation alone. The U.S. then began to demonstrate caution and patience toward Franco even with pressure from France to provide harsher measures against Spain authoritarianism. As the Cold War began to take form and US-Russian relations worsened in Europe, the American concern over the dictatorial nature of the Spanish regime diminished.

President Truman delivered his “Truman Doctrine” speech, in 1947, to the U.S. Congress, asking for aid to the governments of Greece, Turkey and Spain to combat insurgencies and commit his administration to assist anti-communist regimes that may resist the Soviet Union. It was at this time that the U.S. public opinion and government policy then shifted from opposition and criticism of Franco, to support and aid to keep communism out of Western Europe. “While it was acknowledged that possible objections by France and Britain could not be ignored, every effort was made to overcome these and to help Spain improve her relations with other European countries.”35 The pro-Spanish policy then focused on finding a suitable link between Spain and the interests of the United States. The eventual answer lay in the arrangement for United States military bases in Spain and increasing reintegration of Spain into the Western alliance composition. As Dana Facaros points out, the Basques were “waiting for Franco to wither

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away, ostracized from the world community… They didn’t count on the Cold War, and Franco playing the anti-Communist card.”

All of these momentous developments in world politics would have been quite irrelevant to the Basque nationalist situation were it not for the Basque government-in-exile and the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV) trust that had been placed in the United States to overthrow Franco and provide support for their return to their land. The PNV strategy was still to remain in close contact with all the various anti-Franco elements in the Spanish underground, without including the communists and the anarchists. This was to keep the network politically organized and prepare their plan for the emergence of a democratic political order in Spain once Franco was gone. The PNV’s approach was to wait for Franco’s demise, maintain the strength and vigor of the Basque culture and language, as well as a sense of Basque nationalism in their homeland and abroad. The Basque government felt that they were most likely to achieve their independence if Spain were governed by a democratic regime, as they could more easily navigate the politics and gain support for their cause. However, this strategy still included many obstacles as “political instability and confrontation affect institutional relations between central and autonomous governments, creating more and more practical problems in social and economic aspects.” In addition, “there is not very much room to

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36 Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls, Bilbao and the Basque Lands (Middlesex: Cadogan Guides, 2006), 33.

maneuver in creating new powers for the autonomous institutions without taking them from the basic core powers of the state.”

Covert groups of students began organize the distribution of publications of magazines and newspapers in an effort to provide another outlet for the Basque Diaspora cultural resurgence. In time these student groups formed a covert organization known as Ekin, which in Basque means “to act.” This younger faction was disillusioned with the PNV’s unrequited political advances, as it “had never received any concessions from Madrid that they had not fought for and that any deal made with Madrid or Spanish interests would result in the betrayal of Basque interests.”

In addition, their argument was that the Euskera language should be one of the most important commitments of the return of Basque nationalism, and not lost in the struggle to regain a presence in the region. The dedication of the resilient new group was to bring the use of the nearly extinct language back into practice as a means to defy the growing number of Spaniards living in Basque Country. Loyalists to the Ekin believed that a true Basque patriot should not be content until an independent state of all seven provinces was achieved and that the use of Euskera was paramount to this goal. In some cases, within the Basque aristocracy there was a feeling that this would alienate their cause and lose any assistance granted to them by Spanish, French, or other international allies. At this time the Basque government-in-exile and the leaders of the youth-led Ekin split from the nationalist party in 1959, and created a new movement referred to as Euskadi ‘ta Askatasuna (ETA,


“Basque Homeland and Liberty”). ETA would then usher in a fresh resurgence of support from the Basque people, though “the group was created as an extreme, radical expression of the Basques’ profound pride in their own unique identity and culture and their determination to their own right as a nation.”

Educating the etarras (members of ETA) in revolutionary authors aligned the Basque language and customs with leftist ideologies. ETA leaders maintained the position that this was a “Basque Revolutionary Movement of National Liberation” and not a political party. Their purpose was to promote political and cultural liberty for Basques in all provinces and to change the existing society. The process in which to achieve success was through mass propaganda, labor activism, internal publications, paramilitary preparation, grassroots agitation, and popular demonstrations. The initial activities that ETA undertook were “rather naïve: graffiti, the hoisting of Basque Flags (which were forbidden), and the destruction of Francoist symbols.” After the group was able to gain support and strength, ETA performed its first act of violence onboard a train carrying veterans and supporters of Franco’s revolution during the civil war. The explosion of a bomb on July 18, 1961 marked a turning point for Basque politics and the opinion of the international community.

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In its “Statement of Principles,” ETA anticipated the creation of an independent, democratically selected political command for the provinces, not subjugated by any one party but by the people in cooperation. This new governing body would reinstall human rights that had been relinquished during Franco’s regime. Freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly as recognized by the international community would now be allowed following further pursuit of their natural privileges. Cyrus Ernesto Sirakzadeh notes:

Ideally there would be changes in the region’s economy to accompany the protection of human rights and decentralization of political authority… It appears that the etarras were advocating a modified market economy, in which inequality in personal wealth and income would be limited, “basic” sectors and resources would be government owned and or managed, and producer cooperatives would be encouraged.43

The Basques at this time were centered on promoting a reawakening of their demands and interests in finding an autonomous solution. Against this background, the different “fronts” of ETA began to take shape and allegiance was aligned with sentiments on how the struggle should continue. There was the militarized faction that was responsible for “direct action” by committing armed attacks, and a political wing that was inspiring popular support for labor organizations. The political division criticized the military side for engaging in unnecessarily risky and violent acts against those whose support was needed; the military force argued that the politicos were not accepting some of the risk that was involved. It was after many negotiations that a formal split was enacted at the close of the 1960’s, yet was still argued over and the subject of scrutiny for the coming years. The military splinter group became the ETA-militar, or ETA (m) and the political

43 Zirakzadeh, A Rebellious People: Basques, Protests, and Politics, 151-152.
division became known as ETA-politico-militar, or ETA (p-m).44 “These two groups symbolized the evolving strategy debate that intensified with the death of Franco in 1975 and the unexpected quick initiation of a transition to a liberal democratic multi-political party system, which continues today.”45

The dynamic of ETA’s inner politics was frequently the conflict between these competing groups. One of the foremost experts on the Basque conflict Robert P. Clark clarifies:

The original ETA, founded in 1959 no longer exists, having split into smaller groups some half dozen times since the 1960’s. Some of these schisms have resulted from clashes between members favoring a “cultural” struggle based on Marxist ideology. Another source of division involved the relative merits of continuing armed struggle versus organizing for competition in the electoral arena.46

The role of violence began to take form throughout these two decades in a strong approach. “The Basque clandestine groups constitute an organized body that believes that direct action is the only path left open to them.” As to why Basque youth joined the ranks of ETA with the interest of utilizing violence, it must be understood that ETA was the reaction of the people to make their voices heard. In addition to the political objectives that ETA dedicated themselves to, youth were drawn to becoming active, as it would

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“offer a sense of adventure, brotherhood, clarity of purpose, motivation, and meaning in life, although at personal risk.”

After the organized Basques’ attempt to derail the train carrying civil war veterans in 1961, ETA began a long span of violent acts against government and police officials. Since the inception of violence as a tactic within the Basque conflict Robert P. Clark further describes:

The total number of people killed by ETA since 1968 is between 550 and 600, or about three-fourths of all people killed by terrorist acts in Spain. My own estimate is that through the end of 1988, 568 people lost their lives through ETA attacks. These casualties were inflicted in six fairly clearly defined phases: 1959-1967, a formative period free from killings; 1968-1973, a period of tentative attacks, during which killings never exceeded 3 per year; 1974-1977, a period of cautious expansion, when killings ranged between 9 and 17 annually; 1978-1980, ETA’s most intense phase, when killings soared to between 67 and 88 each year; 1981-1987.

As the conflict passed through its bloodiest phase and into the 1990’s the Spanish government began to take action. In time, this would foster a large backlash of protest and anti-terrorist sentiment from within the Basque community. Spanish and Basque citizens created NGO’s such as Gesto por la Paz and Elkarri alike, to produce social movements dedicated to creating the conditions for a peace process in the Basque Country as well with the Spanish society. This is not to say that violence wasn’t still prevalent, as ETA managed to maintain a range of targets to include politicians and civilian employees of the central and regional Spanish governments.

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Legitimization by way of the continued use of violence by ETA has remained inflexible due to the way in which it has evolved over time. As the conflict passed into the contemporary times, there have been attempts to find resolution to the use of violent behavior. Though as the inner core of Basque nationalism continues to feel that their perceived cultural identity has yet to be reinstalled, the pursuit of full autonomy still remains on the list of items creating a stalemate and violence will carry on. “Under the dictatorship ETA enjoyed considerable prestige, not merely among nationalists but also among opponents of the regime throughout Spain. However, acceptance of the new constitutional order, and revulsion at the indiscriminate use of violence, increasingly restricted sympathy for ETA to its own diehard supporters.”

Nonetheless, each alliance in its own way over time came to favor some form of oppression to enact against its opposition. The real intractability began with the retaliation of the Spanish government to Basque political activism. The political culture behind the nationalist fervor was now the target of the Spanish to suppress the strength of ETA.

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CHAPTER 3
THE BASQUE CONFLICT & REASONS FOR ITS INTRACTABILITY

As the Spanish authority grew increasingly weary of the presence and violent behavior from insurgent groups, new anti-terrorist policies were tested within the Basque region. Spain’s political system and human rights initiatives began a shift in the 1970’s, as the public reaction to the Basque question came at a cost to their platform. Social backlash to the violence, peace movements, arrests and deportations began to restrict the impact of ETA. The government in Madrid began to enact programs to deal with the anger and resentment that were central to the Basque political values. Following ETA’s successful assassination of the Spanish premier and successor to the dictator Luis Carrero Blanco in 1973, then the death of Franco in 1976 and the acceptance of democracy, the war for Basque autonomy began a tumultuous new beginning. Armed robberies, bombings of personal, commercial, military properties, kidnappings and assassinations were defended as necessary acts in the Basque struggle against Spanish oppression. The conflict in Spain became a “conflict resolution laboratory,”\(^1\) as many local and international actors tried to intervene in the pursuit of a process of resolve. The intractability of the Basque condition continues to harbor intolerance and resentment as the various sides to this multifaceted conflict that remains strong willed to present day.

Surrounded by an evolving Spanish political structure moving beyond dictatorship, a new approach was needed to maintain a cautious relationship with the Basque community and to acknowledge ETA’s new tactics. “The democratic transition that followed Franco’s death in 1975 meant that the most straightforward understanding of instrumental violence (action-repression-action, leading to the withdrawal of the Spanish state from the Basque Country) was no longer adequate.”\(^2\) The Spanish parliament set forth provisions in defining terrorism and related crimes to establish the legal status and rights for those suspected of terrorist acts. These laws were put into place in order to outline the illegality of various levels of association with illicit groups, including giving them aid or assistance or any other reason to allude to terrorist act sympathies.

As Spain sought to include the Basques’ within the folds of their emerging political configuration; the first advance in the Basque struggle was achieved. The end of the 1970’s and into the next decade saw a rise of the bloody conflict, as the Spanish government began to enact strategies to counter ETA’s actions against civilians. Even as the death toll mounted, Basque nationalism began to reach the goals that were initially sought and strengthened by the violent measures. “Whether this was part of ETA’s strategy or not, the flurry of killings served to strengthen the PNV, which could argue that its ‘moderate’ demands needed to be satisfied to avoid chaos and a failure of the democratic transition.”\(^3\) This led to the Basques’ interest in the formation of the new

Spanish constitution by formulating five points as the minimum conditions to be met by the Spanish government in exchange for ETA’s rejection of political violence. As the noose tightened around ETA’s behavior, the first peace negotiations were laid out in an effort to be included in the new state government. On February 1, 1978, Basque newspapers published the demands from the nationalists in order to negotiate a cease-fire agreement with the Spanish government. These five requirements, referred to as the KAS Alternative, had to be met in order to discuss the laying down of arms, and were the first conditions ever offered by the organization to end their fight. The requirements affirmed:

1. “Total amnesty.”

2. “Legalization of all political parties, including those whose program includes the creation of an independent Basque state without having to reduce their statutes.”

3. “Expulsion from Euskadi of the Guardia Civil, the Policia Armada and the General Police Corps.”

4. “Improvement of the living and working conditions for the popular classes and especially for the working class, satisfaction of their immediate social and economic aspirations as expressed by their representative associations.”

5. “An autonomy statute that, as a minimum, recognizes the national sovereignty of Euskadi, authorizes Euskera as the principal official language of the country, provides for Basque government control over all law enforcement authorities and all military units garrisoned in the Basque country, and endows the Basque people with adequate power to adopt whatever political, economic or social structures they deem appropriate for their own progress and welfare”

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\^3 \text{Ibid.}

\text{Clark,} \text{Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles To Peace In The Basque Country, 1975-1988,} 82.
The PNV and ETA began to work together in order to offer a peaceful resolution toward their common goal. “The Basque demand for autonomy-independence was even more fundamental. This cause was strong in the minds of many of the Basque Provinces, and was intermixed with the idea of ending Francoist authoritarianism and achieving democratic and civil liberties.”\(^5\) The creation of the new Spanish government that was accepting of all autonomous communities was based on concrete principles that looked to bring the people together in a unified state. The circumstances that beleaguered the Spanish aristocracy in the challenge of a reforming government to allow other parties’ participation can be further explained:

To devise a set of institutions sufficiently democratic to satisfy the country’s demand for greater freed and participation, to force the Cortes (Cortes Generales, "General Courts") and other bodies held over from the Franco period to accept them, to keep the armed forces from blocking them, and to convince the opposition, or at least the public at large, that they were genuine enough to participate in.\(^6\)

The Spanish formulated their new Constitution of 1978, which would mainly be taken up by representatives from both houses of the Spanish government, “with all parties represented except the Basque Nationalist Party. The two largest parties (the Union of the Democratic Center, UDC and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, PSOE) favored and succeeded in getting a constructive motion of censure into the constitution over the vigorous opposition of the smaller parties.”\(^7\)

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While this may seem like a defeat for Basque nationalism, it can be understood that one of the central issues that plagues the Basque conflict is the unrelenting violence that continues during negotiations concerning a possible cease-fire. It is one of the fundamental issues for this conflict’s intractability that makes it impossible for the Basque and Spanish governments to cooperate while provocative violent attacks are still being undertaken. The KAS Alternative became the Basques’ first attempt at offering a truce in the interest of inclusion into representation within Madrid’s political framework. The new Spanish constitution “explicitly acknowledged the multinational and multilingual character of Spanish society and established the principle of regional autonomy on which the transformation of the highly centralized would be based.” But at the same time, Spanish law enforcement organizations were also reorganized to include anti-terrorism divisions to deal with the prolonged ETA rebellion. The development of specialized counterinsurgent units, and the procedures to deal with the members, their families and communities were priorities for the Spanish government trying to address the problem.

In 1978, after the new constitution was enacted, “few (Spanish) people blamed the nationalists for the violence, although a significant number (38 percent) attributed responsibility to the extreme left.” An aspect that aided Spain’s antiterrorism policies was the ability to receive international cooperation and support against ETA as time progressed. While France initially turned a blind eye toward the reorganization of Basque


nationalists within their borders, Spain saw this as allowing an ETA “refuge” across its border. Due to negotiations between the two countries, French policies were tightened to facilitate arrests of known ETA participants, and extradition was utilized to try and slow the snowballing amount of violence. As ETA broke off another concealed group known as the Autonomous Anti-capitalist Commandos (Comandos Autonomos Anticapitalistas, CAA) that grew in strength at this time to target “police, army, companies, banks, youth courts, UDC politicians, local employers societies, and labor unions,”¹⁰ a new strategy was utilized to organize a radical and revitalized political wing. This new Basque faction was to be known as, Herri Batasuna (‘The Unity,’ HB) was to become the new political arm of the ETA to cause further disruption in the formation of the new Spanish government and keep an aggressive push on party values. “ETA’s relationship with Herri Batasuna (HB) may be compared to that of the IRA’s relationship with Sinn Fein. ETA and HB reject any political status of the Basque region other than forming an independent state.”¹¹

These actions culminated in the first victory for the Basque people with the declaration and implementation of autonomy being granted to the Basque Country in 1979. Recognized as the Estatuto de Autonomía del País Vasco, this new law allowed the Basques to regulate their own parliament and control their original provinces, education and taxes, healthcare, agriculture, police protection and the promotion of Euskadi within


regional schools. Upon the advent of these discussions, the Spanish tried to change the Basque perception of the revolutionary issue by instilling the idea that democracy in Spain was now achieved in the new formation. On this basis, the Basques’ had no justifiable reason to use violence to gain their goals with the entitled Basque Autonomous Community (BAC). By means of a cross-border partnership between Spain and the BAC, the two governments would control trials in court and suppression of the militant group. However, when France was slow to respond and react to the anticipated autonomous community, the Spanish performed a direct intervention across the French border.

Violence erupted into the bloodiest era to date, the conflict raged into another decade as political discourse faltered. The Spanish authority unleashed a ‘dirty war’ against the Basque insurgent groups using unofficial military organizations referred to as Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberacion (‘Antiterrorist Liberation Groups’, GAL) to “carry out extra-judicial assassinations and torture against known and suspected ETA members and sympathizers.” As the 1980’s saw the highest spike in violent attacks, the French as well enacted antiterrorist measures culminating in the establishment of the Anti-Terrorist Operations Coordination Unit of France (Unité de coordination de la lutte anti-terroriste, UCLAT), and strengthened ties between law enforcement agencies to provide a wider allotment of special task forces. These would include the French Secret Service (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire, DST), the General Intelligence Service (Renseignement Generaux, RG) and the National Anti-terrorism Division (Division

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Nationale Anti-Terroriste, DNAT). Under the new laws, authorities were able to ban political parties and other groups led by convicted insurgents, close down print media that supported terrorist ideologies, and hold suspected terror group members for up to two years before trial.

The punishment for acts of terrorism was drastically increased, as ETA shaped a new class of crime through violence against the Spanish armed forces. People who encouraged, supported, or attempted violence for political purposes were to be penalized to the same extent as those who committed them. The regulations also revised Spain’s existing criminal code to make it possible to indict Spanish citizens for crimes they committed in other countries, which included those in the BAC as they still held Spanish citizenship. Additionally, Spain urged the French government to follow the guidelines of the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) of 1959 that denied refugee status to persons who had committed serious crimes outside the country of refuge. Extradition was used as a process to utilize the ability to track down ETA members in order to face criminal proceedings, both in the Spanish and French court systems.

As the French thoroughly strengthened their anti-terrorism tactics into the 1990’s, the Spanish government continued to monitor ETA members crossing the border to seek out protection among their supporters across the Pyrenees. The collaboration between the two state policing agencies became effective, limiting the resources and mobility of rebel groups within France and creating a net in which to catch ETA members fleeing Spain.

14 Wright-Neville, *Dictionary of Terrorism*, 33.
“In 1991, 40 ETA members, Spanish and French, were arrested in France and the following year the French and Spanish police arrested three terrorist leaders and 199 terrorists and collaborators, thereby totally disrupting ETA’s financial and logistic support.”

When raids and extradition began to correspond between the French and Spanish authorities, the radical Basque organizations felt increasingly stronger resentment from the public and European community as contrasted to the affection they once relished. Stemming from the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which was enacted in 1977, Spain utilized “a list of prohibited acts, often committed by terrorists (but not exclusively), for the purposes of facilitating the extradition of perpetrators of such serious criminal offences.”

In the interests of peace, and noted by authors well-versed in this issue, there have been close to thirty independent but distinct attempts to reach a peaceful resolution since late 1975. Some of these attempts were futile and failed to lead even to preliminary meetings; a few would lead to a face-to-face exchange that would last only a matter of hours; others would last for months, but discussions between the two sides resulted in little compromise and continued fighting. All of these instances in the history of this controversy have led to one unswerving conclusion: nothing thus far has been a success with lasting accomplishments. This issue remains today an ongoing battle of two opposing belief systems and cultures. On the surface these hindrances to peace may appear to be nothing more than a challenge of timing, yet the difficulties are more deeply

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embedded in the very disposition of armed resistance. Questions have been proposed about the stalemate that has ensnared the conflict and requires insight into its current intractability:

Why, in the very years when Spain adopted a democratic constitution, and a majority of the Basque electorate voted in favor of the region’s statute of autonomy, should ETA have escalated its violent campaign in this way? Why had a total amnesty for ETA prisoners failed to bring a single day’s peace? Most critically, why did up to 20 per cent of the Basque voters still support ETA’s various political fronts?\textsuperscript{17}

Massive demonstrations and peace rallies sprouted within Spain and the BAC in an attempt to end the abuse that these neighbors suffered. “A groundbreaking agreement was concluded in November 2003, providing for the creation of joint Spanish-French units in both countries. Police from both sides of the border would be able to make arrests and carry out investigations on the other side of their borders. This deal went well beyond the existing agreements in Europe, tolerating national forces to continue pursuing criminals over open borders.”\textsuperscript{18} In the years to follow, many residents were growing weary of the violence that was spilling into the streets inside the Basque region. Leaving behind the most devastating period to the conflict, the destruction of public transport in Basque cities totaled €11.5 million.\textsuperscript{19} The Spanish government concluded that, “it is materially impossible to determine the exact number of ‘urban terrorist’ acts perpetrated in the Basque Country. The figure of 630 terrorist acts during the year 2000 can,


\textsuperscript{18} Bertil Duner, \textit{The World Community and the “Other” Terrorism} (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 60.

however, be extrapolated from information received from the State’s Security Forces; a figure far surpassing the approximately 350 street violence attacks registered in 1999.”

After the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US, the world began a revamped approach to security and the fight against terrorism. Within Spain at that time, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar fully united himself with President George W. Bush’s “War on Terror,” using this slogan and strategy domestically to fight Basque nationalism. Though Spain already had constitutionally regulated statutes about terrorism to deal with ETA and other extremist organizations, the 9/11 attacks led to new legislative efforts in dealing with procedure. Spain then contributed troops and military equipment to the US coalitions fighting in Afghanistan, in addition to a medical detachment serving at the Bagram Air Base near Kabul, and heading a naval task force off the Horn of Africa to “disrupt terrorist movements in the region.” Spain wanted to participate in the global response to the actions of terrorists in order to portray that Spanish government was active in the new millennium, as it would take a renewed position to fight actions by extremists both internally and internationally. Jean Baudrillard argues that the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center represented “the absolute event, the ‘mother’ of all events, the pure event uniting within itself all the events that have never taken place.” This in my opinion speaks toward the way in which this experience brought the

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international community together in an effort to bring justice to those who use violence as a means to express their views.

Spain at this time made stronger efforts to repress any terrorist organizations and activities, and structured its police authority to deal with a difference between international and national task forces to combat this new war. Spanish police coordination domestically is thus controlled with three distinct levels, beginning with the Civil Guard (Guardia Civil) that is mainly in command of law enforcement in rural and regional districts. The National Police Corps (Cuerpo national de Policía) is accountable for urban centers and appointed to take on detective and investigative activities concerning security. Then the third level pertains to the Municipal Police (Policia Municiple), which is organized locally and regulates largely with secondary offences.²³ “Spanish criminal law considers any terrorist act as universally prosecutable…. Moreover, under the Spanish Penal Code, in all cases of terrorist offences, a sentence handed down by foreign courts is treated like an equivalent Spanish sentence when the judge must determine whether the accused has repeatedly committed crimes so that aggravating circumstances exist.”²⁴ The bombs that were set off within the area of Madrid’s Atocha station on March 11, 2004 which killed 191 people and wounded nearly 1,500, was first believed to be organized by ETA. However, these attacks were “executed by 13 Islamic ‘terrorists’ 911 days after the 9/11 attacks whose modus operandi was

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²³ Mathieu Deflem, The Policing of Terrorism: Organizational and Global Perspectives (New York: Routledge, 2010), 98.

imitated (four trains, four planes). “This event had an enormous emotional impact on the Spanish population, as evidenced by the massively attended demonstrations that took place in the days following the attacks.” Statements about the responsibility were issued to the effect that ETA orchestrated the attack, though no official evidence could corroborate the accusation. It was later thought to be the work of an al-Qaeda terrorist sect, though all alleged suspects upon being arrested took their own lives. The resulting controversy regarding the investigation and subsequent accusations of Spain’s two main political parties, the PSOE and PP accusing each other of obscuring or altering evidence to gain an electoral advantage. The bombing took place three days before the state’s general election, where the PP could use the Basque blame to entice support through Spanish distaste for homegrown terrorism.

In the wake of these two tragic and horrific events, ETA withheld from any major violent attacks. There was speculation that Basque nationalism didn’t want to get caught up in being associated with al-Qaeda, and the heightened security measures in Spain, Europe, and the rest of Western allies could have deterred the organization from receiving any public favor from political action. This sentiment could have strongly played a role in the release of a taped message that was delivered on local radio and


television stations in March 2006. The “permanent ceasefire” which was addressed by three hooded ETA members declared:

The aim of this decision is to launch a democratic process in the Basque country as to build a new framework in which the rights that belong to us as a People would be acknowledged and as to ensure for the future the possibility of a development of all political options.\(^{29}\)

This event, while monumental in the struggle for peace within Spain and the Basque community lacked conviction from either side, as it did not concretely dictate the procedures that either side would implement. ETA’s declaration of a ceasefire never detailed whether the group would lay down its arms or that this action would prompt another faction of Basque activists to take up the cause. Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero promoted that “any peace process after so many years of horror will be long and difficult.” In addition, the deputy to the PM, Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega, stated that this was “good news for Spaniards,” but alluded to the fact that “the government must be more cautious than ever. It is our desire that this should be the beginning of the end.”\(^{30}\)

In recent years, ETA has declared ceasefires as late as January 2011, which Spanish government officials have disregarded as “inadequate” and without validation. Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, the current Spanish interior minister and deputy prime minister, charged “the terrorist group” of pompously trying to enforce conditions and


having a “distorted vision of reality.” The mistrust of the current occupation of the Spanish government stems from the events on December 30, 2006, when a massive bomb explosion devastated Barajas International Airport, Spain’s most utilized and the capital airport in Madrid. With the deaths of two immigrants and dozens of other travelers injured, ETA ended a ceasefire declared nine months prior.

Determining the future prospects for a resumption of serious dialogue between the Spanish and Basque leadership is difficult. With the erosion of ETA and Basque nationalist political authority, there ought to be agreement for and an acknowledgement of the terrorist organization to allow for a complete decision process. The question whether to recognize a terrorist organization as a pertinent element to a political program is one of the major issues for this conflict. The Spanish have marginalized Basque politics in an effort to silence the tactics of ETA, thus deteriorating the abilities and initiatives of productive Basque activists. Spain’s ruling People’s Party (Partido Popular, PP) “has attempted to use alternative channels, rather than the traditional way through the security forces, to deal with ETA. Judicial investigations into its political wing, media branches, youth organizations and other entities with suspected associations with ETA have been targeted in recent years.”

While these methods are nonviolent in nature, the

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32 Wayne C. Thompson, Western Europe 2008 (Blue Ridge Summit: Stryker Post Publications, 2008), 375.

disassociation from any form of Basque nationalist expression and their political party disallows the further expression and negotiation of cooperating terms.

As Basque political opinions between the PNV and the use of ETA continue without solution, it is conceivable that the intractability of the conflict will remain. The Spanish government understands that as long as Basque nationalism keeps within its company a terrorist organization, there can be little trust given the pragmatic evidence that violence can reemerge. ETA’s resurging efforts to disrupt negotiations between the Spanish government and the various political entities of the Basque community only deter the belief that this conflict can find resolution. A study on the initiatives and responses to the declaration of a ceasefire, without the full disbandment of the militant organization reported:

An opinion poll conducted shortly after the cease-fire offered some interesting data concerning the viability of different political options, particularly since the findings differentiated between responses of Basques (people living in Euskadi) as follows:

- Only 29% of Basques saw the nationalist demand for the right to ‘self-determination’ as a matter to be decided just by the Basques; 62% felt it was a matter all Spaniards to decide.

- 25% of Basques regarded the Statute of Gernika (the existing autonomy statute) as having failed, whereas 51% saw it was valid.

- Asked what changes of basic legislation they would be prepared to accept if this were required to bring a definitive end to the conflict, the responses were:
  - Reform of the Statute of Gernika: acceptable to 50% in the Basque Country and 52% in the rest of Spain;

  - Reform of the Spanish Constitution to include the right to self-determination: acceptable to 59% in the Basque Country and 38% in the rest of Spain (where 41% were against).
- Political independence for the Basque Country: acceptable to 39% of Basques (unacceptable to 38%), and to 26% in the rest of Spain (unacceptable to 58%).

- The idea of granting a general amnesty to ETA members was opposed strongly both within Euskadi (by 38%, while 39% supported it) and in the rest of Spain (by 73%, while only 15% accepted the idea).  

The frustration felt by the Basque political system remains concurrent as the Spanish authority maintains an anti-terrorist policy toward their organization. The continued presence of ETA within the fold of Basque nationalism will condemn this conflict to prolonged stagnation.

Leading the conflict into the last decade, the turmoil between the clashing directions of the Basque initiative and the tightened scrutiny from French-Spanish efforts to repress ETA’s support has inflamed a sense of retribution. “This policy clearly demonstrates a will to prevent the political arm of ETA from having any political role in Spain. Although all these decisions are legal, they seem very contrary to the freedom of political participation.”  

While this may seem to be unrelenting suppression by the Spanish to thwart the nationalist party from having a role within the government, it was merely a further attempt at withholding ETA’s power structure.

As the Spanish government sought to demonize ETA and Basque nationalism further, it would only legitimize the continued abuses from the insurgents trying to fight back against the suppression. “The history of conflict and negotiation attempts between ETA and the Madrid government shows that an excess of violence leads to a reversal of

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35 Van Engeland and Rudolph, *From Terrorism to Politics*, 76.
positioning over potential negotiations. Anticipation that the demonstration of harmful power, by increasing attacks and so forth, will lead to an equal position between the illegal, violent organization and a public authority is based on unrealistic assumptions.”

The resulting resentment and retaliation will continue on all sides of the cultural and political boundaries. As long as the French-Spanish coalitions seek to stifle any Basque opportunity to rationalize their tactics through a political forum, violence will remain the only outlet for expression. The intractability of this conflict encourages both sides’ need to understand the resourcefulness of disarmament, as the cyclical pattern of cause and effect will continue to ensnare this discord without a solid foundation of a peace settlement.

The PNV and ETA come to an understanding that their shared objectives will not be met unless the militarized element of their political agenda has been disbanded to allow negotiations to resume. The narrative of this conflict has entered a new chapter with the renewed ceasefire in January 2011, though the same resentment is still an aspect of the Spanish government’s unwavering opinion regarding disarmament of ETA. “It is a conflict in which movement towards a resolution is to be measured in inches.” In a statement regarding the most recent development in this saga, Prime Minister Zapatero stated, "The only thing we are waiting for from ETA is a statement on its definitive dissolution…. We are without any doubt on the horizon of seeing that end to violence but it will take time." Additionally he added, "we must remain united, with strength and

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intelligence and defending the democratic state. That way we will achieve it. I have no doubt.”

By understanding the fundamentals of conflict resolution in its various forms, Basque nationalism could find the alternatives to gain strength and popularity. The Spanish authority maintains a sense of mistrust for the two branches of the Basque political system, as it understands that to rely fully on diplomacy and inclusion into their government ETA must lay down its arms “ETA’s unrealistic expectations, based on a decommissioning-free version of the Belfast Agreement, stopped negotiations in Spain at the front door and sent ETA back to terror.” The issues hindering the Basque situation compared with other conflicts throughout the world show many parallels to its resistance to a resolution. In the next chapter I will analyze the remaining issues as well as recent and ongoing peace efforts that have so far proven elusive. This will isolate the issues that need closer inspection, setting the stage for a comparative analysis of other intractable conflicts to identify the sources that prolong them as well as elements that aided peace efforts. In the final chapter I will apply what has been learned to the Basque conflict and propose a strategy for its peaceful resolution.

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CHAPTER 4

REMAINING ISSUES
& MOVES TOWARD PEACE

The Basque community today is working to transition from a history of hostility to a future of reconciling the discord of its violent heritage. The necessary cohesion and consistency required to build a new political strategy require refreshed dialogue to allow for a peace-guiding principle. The various political divisions and government organizations of all players, however, have ensnared this conflict and thus created a bastion for violent retaliation in the face of proposed negotiations. On December 30, 2006, a massive explosion detonated from a car placed at Madrid’s Barajas Airport ended a nine-month ceasefire that had been enacted in March earlier that year by ETA representatives.¹ This violent act became one of the principal catalysts for upgrading security for Spanish citizens, and resulted in a loss of trust in ETA’s intentions. This mistrust has shaken the ruling Spanish authority and permeated through its newly proposed negotiations with the Basque political parties and their association with ETA. Even with the newly-stated cessation in fighting, the Spanish government will tread cautiously as it moves forward with acceptance of the Basque population.

The stalemate that plagued the Spanish and Basque political order was expanded in the wake of the tragic event in 2006, as the question of conflict resolution became vital in the struggle against terrorism. Most recently, representatives from ETA affirmed they had “decided to declare a permanent and general cease-fire, which will be verifiable by

the international community," as was stated through Spanish national television and radio on January 10, 2011. The group further indicated, "this is ETA's firm commitment towards a process to achieve a lasting resolution and towards an end to the armed confrontation." While these announcements could lead to an end of the violence within Spain and the Basque Autonomous Community, the declaration of peace and disarmament of the militant arm of Basque politics has not been assured. In a press conference the same day as the statement was delivered by ETA, Spain’s Interior Minister Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba emphasized, as reported by Radio France Internationale, "If you ask me if I am calmer today, honestly I would say 'yes.' If you ask me if it is the end, I would say 'no'. If you ask me if this statement is what Spanish society was hoping for, I would say 'absolutely no'.'"

The uncertainty of the outcome for this new venture regarding ETA’s restructuring its political as well with militant divisions is based on the history of this conflict and the legacy of distrust. The continued declarations from the Basque administration about a termination of hostilities while still allowing the terrorist operations of ETA to continue its violence lacks any credibility in the eyes of the Spanish people and authority.

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Gerhard Besier explains further:

The correct historical explanation of the ‘Basque question’ requires an analytical separation of what might be considered the political conflict on the one hand and the current problem of terrorist violence on the other. The latter is, in fact, a very contemporary matter that has gained its own dimensions and can no longer be understood as a mere derivative of the former—despite Basque nationalist efforts to the contrary.³

Within this section, I aim to analyze the causes of the remaining hostility that fuels this conflict and identify the factors that are hindering trust of those involved. In addition, I will examine contemporary peace initiatives that have been tested outside and within the Basque case with further understanding of the cultural resentment that remains toward the Spanish elite.

The political powers within the Spanish and Basque systems began a cooperative relationship with the emergence of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) in the newly formed Spanish Constitution of 1978,⁴ yielding a relatively available political crossing point of alternatives to the past structure. This development occurred in the context of significant political changes occurring within Spain:

An analysis of the Basque case underlines the challenge terrorism poses to transitioning democracies. ETA increased its violent activities during the Spanish transition, seeking political advantage against a vulnerable, fledgling regime. One lesson of the Spanish transition is that the quality of political leadership is a crucial variable in determining the outcome of efforts at democratization. In the Spanish case, significant and timely political reforms bolstered the regime’s legitimacy vis-à-vis ETA.⁵

³ Gerhard Besier and Katarzna Stoklosa, Geschichtsbilder in den Postdiktatorischen Ländern Europas (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), 133.

ETA has, thus, maintained a course favoring the disruption of the Spanish government despite the shift from the rule of Franco to the present democracy. “In Spain, which had a negotiated transition, constitutional arrangements for regional autonomy agreed upon before a transfer of power helped marginalize the national terrorist organization (ETA) in the Basque electorate.” The main obstacles burdening peace in northern Spain and prolonging the political resolution to the conflict are discussed in the sections that follow.

Suspicion In The Face of Reform

The issue of mistrust between the Basque government, the Spanish authority and the persistence of the ETA remains a constant element in the intractability of this conflict. In regards to the caution that certainly remains, Tore Bjørgo offers insight into the rhetoric that is so easily used today within a complex concern pertaining to the Basque conflict as the matter of the violence is questioned:

Consider, for example, how using abundantly positive terms such as ‘peace’ and ‘dialogue’, a predisposition was sought towards certain thinking that would redefine the context of negotiations with ETA despite its noncompliance with the conditions set forth by the prime minister himself in the resolution of May 2005, when the Spanish Congress agreed a clear willingness to put an end to terrorism. Such prerequisites clearly were not met. Thus, while the continued acts of violence by the terrorist group were being overlooked, language went to work for politics, with insistence in the public discourse on the incompatibility between violence and dialogue despite the fact that negotiations with ETA carried on even though the group continued to threaten and extort.  

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While there have been statutes within Spanish laws to protect the BAC from retaliation from excessive nationalism and to enhance political representation, much grey area surrounds the reconciliation. By accepting a home-rule system the Basque government was additionally obedient to the supreme command of the Spanish Constitution, this would in turn give up the right to any contest or amendment to the Spanish political structure. To further detail, “the only serious obstacles to its consolidation were the violent actions of the anti-systemic movements of the extreme Right, extreme Left and the paramilitaries of ETA.”

Historic emotions of displacement and modern biases hinder factions of the Basque populace from renouncing violence against the Spanish. While there are generations of the Basques and Spanish that remember the hardships of a transitioning state and government, scores of young people are motivated to continue an insurgency to move the political agenda further. Mónica Threlfall further exemplifies:

The current state of Spanish consensus politics that emerges from these accounts is one of unresolved tension. The possibility is being envisaged that the end of the post-authoritarian consensus has been reached, but the idea that the foundational settlement faces re-negotiation arouses deep misgivings. The feeling as it emerges from these accounts is, in a nutshell, ‘let sleeping dogs lie’. Having got the historic dogs of dissent to sleep, not a single one should be woken, lest it should bark. For bark it will, and even bite.

By examination of the ceasefire statement, one can discern that ETA did not express remorse for the use of terrorist methods or violent tactics that it continued to utilize during previous peace agreements. As the message was spoken and a written copy

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released to various news agencies, the settlement remained vague in the aspect of relinquishing their arms. To gauge the reaction from the Spanish government today, an understanding can be drawn from the events that preceded the previous ETA negotiating period. While there is far to go in achieving a definitive end to the ETA problem, the ceasefire announcement constitutes a reverberating political success for Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero. From 2006 to the present break in fighting, the Spanish government has held a firm grasp on the activities of ETA as well with other terrorist groups in Spain. “In the atmosphere of parliamentary aggression and tension, Zapatero argued for principled politics based on civic republicanism. His republicanism supported the dialogue that he pursued with ETA and the centralization of power that increased regional autonomy would provide.”

Uncertain Political Reform

The most significant facet to the political negotiations between the Zapatero administration and the BAC involves addressing the fundamental compliance of the nationalists and agreeing on a procedure for unqualified support for nonviolence. Edurne Uriarte Bengoechea, a political science professor at King Juan Carlos University in Madrid, commented on attempts to minimize ETA’s strength by stating, "I think the government will continue to take these isolated measures, but without a fundamental change of attitude," which furthered the notion that Mr. Zapatero has still not clearly

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ruled out future negotiations.\textsuperscript{11} Within the contemporary political and legal structure, the Basques hold the key to further discussions or a referendum. According to the ETA’s statement of peace, “The Spanish and French states must recognize the results of this democratic process, without interference or limitations of any kind. The decision we Basque citizens make on our future will have to be respected.” This hurdle could be conquered if a new agreement were to allow the Basque Parliament the power to engage in accepted participatory conferences, relying on the assumption that the majority of the political parties in the Basque territories collectively petition for this process. To further illustrate the concerns that obstruct this endeavor, “from a ‘morality’ point of view, one might object that the Spanish government has never taken the ‘self-determination’ issue into consideration.” Jan Mansvelt Beck additionally argues:

By contrast, on the radical nationalist side, the call for self-determination suffers from a lack of transparency of procedure of one-municipality-one-vote or a one-man-one-vote referendum. In addition there is no definite idea on whether each of the seven territories has the right of exit, let alone under what conditions. Batasuna, for instance, claims self-determination as a tool for peace, but does not provide any information about the procedures to be followed.\textsuperscript{12}

At present, Batasuna, which was outlawed by the Spanish Supreme Court in April 2003 for its links to ETA, cannot conduct its activities with any normalcy. Further, its political representatives face a variety of judicial processes that are placing them in a position punishable by law.


András Sajó explains the complexities of the Spanish directive to enact a law with the intention to disrupt the Basque political process as noted further:

The fact that Batasuna was clearly the target of the law has two paradoxical consequences. At one point it was argued that the law was not sufficiently precise when it defined the types of political parties that could be outlawed. Such lack of precision prevents political parties from knowing in advance whether or not they will be outlawed…. Another issue that arose was whether the statute is constitutional to the extent that it is, de facto, a statute that targets a single party, even if it speaks through clauses that are formally general and abstract.13

At a time when visionary political leaders from all sides are needed, the exclusion of one of the principal parties and its leaders from any peace process presents a major obstacle to meaningful advancement. Additionally, the legalization of this party would make it possible for ETA to designate Batasuna as its political representative within the democratic arena allowing for an intermediary channel to structure its response.

Dynamics of Conflict Resolution and Nonviolence

The study of conflict resolution and how it pertains to the Basque conflict sheds light on the bare fundamentals of resolution theory and how reconciliation in this case should be analyzed. The amount of grey area that allows both political sides to navigate through the recurring violence is one of the chief issues that plague any steps toward reconciliation.

The Norwegian sociologist and principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, Johan Galtung, describes what is necessary for change to take place in the composition of a conflict as follows:

Situations arise in societies because of some mismatch between social values and the social structure of that society, particularly the distribution of political, economic and social “goods.” The formation of a situation of goal incompatibility (a conflict situation) gives rise to adversaries’ conflict behavior in order to achieve their (apparently incompatible) goals, plus a related set of perceptions and attitudes about themselves, the Other(s) and “third” parties affected or affecting the relationship of a conflict.14

As the history of the Basque conflict has been detailed, the state of affairs has been a cause-and-effect interplay between the Spanish and Basque officials. The components above give clarification to the way in which the conflict has remained intractable between France, Spain and the Basques.

“Cultural violence” as it pertains to this conflict that identifies the shared beliefs and principles of a group within a “symbolic sphere” that will validate the use of aggression for the sake of self-preservation.15 The Basque Country has formed and maintained its sense of cultural identity for thousands of years and one can be aware of the rationale for Basque nationalism to press toward its preservation. “The violence of the ETA, stimulated by the changing institutional and cultural context, gave Basque nationalist demands exceptional weight in the democratic political debate.”16

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brutality by the Basque community has come at the cost of many lives. The seemingly
continued dilemma of political dissent and a cultural code of beliefs for the legitimization
of this conflict sustain an “us against them” mentality. Since the inception of a
democracy in Spain, the rule of either Spanish political party has maintained a guiding
principle that it would refrain from participating in a truce with the Basque as long as
ETA is active. As Omar Guillermo Encarnacion explains:

This understanding had been at the heart of the PP-PSOE anti-terrorist pact of the
late 1990’s. In the view of the PP, talks with ETA were tantamount to “betraying
the dead,” a reference to the nearly 1,000 deaths attributed to ETA since it
embraced a strategy of terrorism in the late 1960’s.

After agreeing to a cease-fire in March 2006, a prerequisite for negotiations with
the government, ETA renewed its killing campaign on December 2006, leaving
the Zapatero government vulnerable to charges of being naïve in its approach to
handling ETA. “Are we not better off now with a permanent cease-fire or when
we had bombs and explosions? This time next year, we will be better off than we
are today,” remarked Zapatero in his end-of-the-year press conference on
December 28, 2006…. Following the return of ETA terrorism and heavy
criticisms from the PP, Zapatero ended talks with ETA, declaring that “with
violence there is no negotiation, any type of dialogue.”

Political Impediments

The issue that besieges this conflict even now is the same argument that has
remained through the decades of uneasy hostility in the search for a workable resolution
policy. There is interest in the process of choosing whether power sharing between the
Spanish and Basque governments can sustain itself. Is a total and decisive detachment
from the BAC still an option for negotiation? What will happen to the many Basques’

16 Fernando Molina, “The Historical Dynamics of Ethnic Conflicts: Confrontational Nationalisms,
Democracy and the Basques in Contemporary Spain,” Nations and Nationalism, February 16, 2010, final
edition.

17 Omar Guillermo Encarnacion, Spanish Politics: Democracy After Dictatorship (Cambridge:
held in Spanish prisons? Concerning the idea of partition of the BAC, the resulting economic and cultural ramifications will have to be concluded. The peripheral nationalism defined by Michael Hechter tries “to bring about national self determination by separating the nation from its host state.”\(^\text{18}\) To this degree, the concept of finding a common political relationship structure of mutual control, without the undivided ownership of territory complicates this political structure. “While affirming that states’ territories are indivisible, this legal doctrine constantly ignores the fact that ethnic homelands within an internationally recognized state can be indivisible as well. Ethnic groups may be desperate to control their territory and reluctant to recognize the legitimacy of the central authorities especially when communal security issues are at stake.”\(^\text{19}\)

Further analysis of the Basque-Spanish conflict reveals the causes of opposition between these two politically and ethnically motivated groups, in particular the clash of relentless character seclusion. The Basque populations within Bilbao among other cities within the BAC have a sustained a sense of self and cultural distinctiveness throughout its history that advocates for a separation. “For Basque identity is based in the end on a personal decision and not only on the circumstances where the primary socialization takes place.”\(^\text{20}\) The psychosocial processes that remain constant within Basque distinction


haven’t changed as the governments bring new ingenuity to understanding across the border. Ramon Zallo explains:

Due to the range of origins and sentiments, the bases of modern Basque identity have yet to be agreed, and the risks derived from the diglossic situation of the Basque language (also known as *Euskara*) remain present. Thus there are still problems concerning social delimitation and identification and also with regard to viable construction of Basque culture.21

As the Basque community has gained some sense of cultural and legally recognized independence from the Spanish state, there remains a rift in the healing of past grievances. “Identity is more zealously husbanded by the quest for a lost heritage than by its nurture when regained.”22

Attempts at Bringing Peace to the Conflict

Many actors have played a role in the peace process by listening to both sides in attempts to bring peace to the heated conflict. Since the Basque Normalization Law was introduced in 1982, providing a basis for the cultural items of Basque tradition to have a legal right to be spoken, displayed and practiced beyond private procedure, there has been some reconciliation. In the extreme event of acceptance and advance in Basque rights within the Constitution, the enactment of the Normalization Law provided an opportunity for the Basque way of life to be acknowledged from within the BAC and Spain. Under this type of legislation, the Basque language could be considered standardized and restructured to be used to satisfy the needs of a contemporary society. A decade later, to a greater extent, the Council of Europe (1992) nominated the Charter for

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Regional or Minority Languages “To protect and promote regional and minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe’s cultural heritage and on the other hand to enable speakers of a regional or minority language to use it in private and public life.”

These developments in societal readiness by both the Basque and Spanish were an open and progressive triumph for the inclusion of Basque character acceptance in modern politics.

With the aid of political endorsement, Basque credibility for peace within the community became strengthened by the use of acceptance through language and culture acquisition. “As Basque residents gain trust in their local and regional governments, they would have less tolerance for extremist groups and actions that seek to disrupt these productive governmental channels.” The attempt in which the Basque population has portrayed a new support system for peace initiatives is further detailed by Scott A. Bollens:

Another positive feature of the Basque Country in terms of its ability to build a peace culture is the high degree of citizen involvement. Indeed, studies have found the (Basque) region highest among all Spanish regions in the degree of social and political capital. Among the pro-peace, antiviolence organizations is the Association of Peace in the Basque Country, a civil, pacifist, plural movement that is independent from any political party and institution.

This allows the PNV to align itself more with the processes of incorporating peace programs within their platform to enhance relationships with the Spanish authority. The PNV can’t turn away from its original and historic ambition of further separation from

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the Spanish state, though it can distance itself from the more radical and politically violent left as its strives toward sovereignty.

Current Initiatives by ETA Representatives Toward Nonviolence

Thus in 2002, the leader of the PNV and BAC President, Juan José Ibarretxe, delivered a scheme to combat the Spanish government’s nullification of the ETA’s political wing in an attempt to rally the Basque cause around the promotion of the nonviolent party. As the controversial Batasuna party was banned from regional politics due to its support for ETA, Ibarretxe countered with a referendum to the BAC’s right to separation and its previous constitution through peaceful conciliation. The Basque government at that time floated the proposition of independence in a poll:

The vast majority of Basques (87%) agree that Basque society has the right to decide its own future, and that four out of five Basques believe the Spanish government should respect whatever decision is made in the referendum. However, the vast majority of respondents (89%), including 80% of respondents supporting Batasuna, consider a ceasefire to be essential before a referendum can be held….

This opinion that has evolved amongst the Basque community has helped to change the perception of the use of violence within a political agenda. As leaders of the PNV gain endorsement from the BAC, there can be a unified effort to reach out to the Spanish government, as well with seeking peace in the streets of their cities.
The poll continues to assert:

44% (of Basques) believe that if the Spanish government were to recognize the right to self-determination for the Basque Country, this would achieve the pacification of the region. Among those who identified themselves as predominantly Basque (rather than both Basque and Spanish or predominately Spanish), 65% believe that recognition of the right will bring peace to the Basque Country.\textsuperscript{25}

As previously mentioned by Scott A. Bollens, the Association of Peace in the Basque Country is an initiative by the PNV to allow the political institution of the BAC to press upon peace legislation programs. The association Elkarri (Together) believed that “peace is only possible through negotiation and among the ‘parties in dispute’ and greater sovereignty concessions. With this aim, Elkarri has adopted an intermediate position between the ETA and the democratic political forces in a so-called ‘third space’.”\textsuperscript{26} The ability for an outside entity to provide a vehicle for peace studies and action became a strong bridge between the pro-Basque sections of the population and the Spanish public that wanted to move toward a solution to the encumbering bloodshed and violence. The Association of Peace in the Basque Country was an endeavor to build a “whole society based on the concepts such as equity, solidarity, plurality, non-violence, non-conformism, respect for others, antimilitarism, and tolerance.”\textsuperscript{27} From its formation in 1994, Elkarri has been able give voice to the people of the BAC from a non-legislative platform and use its grassroots strategy to hold silent demonstrations and protest rallies to portray the vast support for a violent-free Basque culture.


\textsuperscript{26} Sabastian Balfour, \textit{The Politics of Contemporary Spain} (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 88.

\textsuperscript{27} Harry Kawilarang, \textit{Quotations on Terrorism} (Victoria, Trafford Publishing, 2004), 139.
Basque Democratic Strategies for Acceptance & Compliance

The Basque Department of the Interior is the judicial branch of their formed government that is responsible for the security and organization of policing efforts within the BAC that directly associates itself with Spanish legal review. Founded in 1936 and reinstituted after the Franco-era in 1980, the Department of the Interior has been active in partnership with the Spanish, French and European law enforcement strategies to aid anti-terrorist campaigns. After 1990, the Basque Parliament enacted a resolution that was passed by the Spanish government, providing that “The Autonomous Police Force shall be governed by the Basque institutions which, consequently, may administrate it as a body for the protection of persons and property and for maintaining public security on Basque territory.” With the cooperation of the Spanish and Basque judicial bureaus and law enforcement, strength is utilized in the effort to bring an end to violent acts on either side of the political divide.

With these agencies, the Spanish central government and the Basque police force, Ertzaintza (People’s Guard) have been able to participate with the European Law Enforcement Organization (Europol) on greater security measures for all the parties involved. “The heightened resolve to fight terrorism in the EU was viewed by some as a political victory for Spain, which had been pushing for more common European action in this area as it continued to deal with violence perpetrated by the ETA.” As Lawrence Freedman determined: “December 2001, the EU agreed on a common definition of acts

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of terrorism. Most member states did not have a specific law outlawing terrorism, which meant that they could not easily prosecute people for incitement to terrorist violence, raising funds for terrorists or membership of a terrorist group.”

As the Basque and Spanish authorities, in conjunction with the rest of modern European anti-terrorist organizations, worked together to bring members of the violent Basque insurgency to justice, the political aspects of Basque nationalists still needed to be addressed in order to find a lasting solution. After the 9/11 attacks within the United States, the European Union began to tighten their cooperation against terrorism and create “multi-national police investigation teams” to cast a net for those seeking aggression. Using the term coined by President George W. Bush, Spain began its “war on terror” after the attacks and tightened its measures to bring to justice the Basque insurgents. The counterterrorism efforts by the state government weren’t without personal gain, while trying to calm the fears of the population and bring a resolution to the conflict. Zapatero was able to use the campaign of eradicating Basque radicalism as a vehicle to boost his party into office through proposed nonviolent laws that could promote social integration of the Basque population.

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The new regulation details as follows:

After months of negotiation and controversy, the new Organic Law of Political Parties (Ley Organica de Partidos Politicos 6/2002 of June 2002) was approved by an overwhelming majority in the Congress of Deputies and the Senate…. The new law explicitly forbids parties which promote or support racism, xenophobia and violence. The new law was a joint endeavor of the PP and the Socialist Party. It allowed for the subsequent illegalization of People’s Union (Herri Batasuna – HB) which changed its name in 2001 to Basque Nation (Eusko Herritarrok – EH). The main reason for this illegalization was that according to the PP Herri Batasuna used its formal status as a political party to create a vast network of formal Basque firms which were designed to finance Basque terrorism.32

Regarding the Spanish stance toward antiterrorism, the Basque political system has had to take a defensive position against the new regime to retain its right to be active within the bureaucratic forum. As Basque leaders began to reshape their platform of objectives to seek inclusion into the Spanish antiterrorism policies, there had to be a distinctive line created to maintain a divide between the Basque initiatives for autonomy and association with the ETA. The opinion of the political culture is verified:

Since Zapatero was catapulted to power in 2004 by the 3/11 attacks, it is not unreasonable to expect that socialist success or failure would be determined by its response to terrorism. The socialists’ reelection on 9 March 2008 might suggest their strategy succeeded. This, however, is far from the truth. For two years, the government’s strategy has veered from its original design and goals. This change is striking in the Basque case, with the government breaking off negotiations with ETA. Police prosecution of the terrorist group and harassment of its civilian political and business support network have exclusively defined Zapatero’s recent counterterrorism approach.33

Thus to gain the support of the government in Madrid to aid the interests of the Basque people, there has to be a definitive exclusion of violence within the Basque political

32 José María Magone, Contemporary Spanish Politics (Abington: Routledge, 2004.), 148.

agenda. ETA’s tactics will only hinder peace between Spain and the BAC in modern times, until there is definitive end to the violence.

As seen in other intractable conflicts, trust and resolution are gained through the understanding that while maintaining an armed force within their dissident factions there can be little room for a peace initiative. For the Basque cause to be fully accepted into negotiations with the Spanish government, the time has come for an end to the cycle of aggression that plagues this conflict. President Zapatero unmistakably outlines:

Terrorism is, in my opinion, the negation of democracy, terrorism is the negation of progress, terrorism is the negation of freedom, terrorism is the negation of speech which has made human beings, society and civilization stronger…. There is no reason in terrorism; there is no sense in terrorism; there is no politics in terrorism. There is only terror, death, blackmail. There is only the will to control, to subjugate, to destroy the morality of men, to eliminate their convictions.\(^\text{34}\)

This could have helped spur the culmination of actions ending the Basque conflict when a ceasefire was again enacted on September 5\(^{th}\), 2011. When submitting a video of three masked men sitting in front of rebel flags and banners, the ETA representatives declared that the cessation of hostilities was permanent and confirmed by the international community.

Present Strides in Promise to Disband ETA

Intermediaries including former United Nation Secretary General Kofi Annan, Jonathan Powell, Bertie Ahern, Pierre Joxe, Gro Harland Bruntland, and most notably Gerry Adams of Northern Irelands Sinn Féin party began to meet in order to discuss bringing peace to the Spanish and Basque region on October 17, 2011. This event marked

the latest attempt to end the bloodshed in Spain and bring peace to the Basque and Spanish people. The New York Times reported:

By issuing their declaration 72 hours after the peace negotiators met in San Sebastián, the ETA commanders appeared to have found a face-saving formula for acknowledging the harsh realities confronting them if they sought to continue their armed confrontation.

By issuing their demand for peace in the Basque heartland, and effectively dictating to ETA the words of its concession by calling for “the definitive cessation of all armed action,” the negotiators effectively made it possible for ETA’s leaders to present themselves as responding to an international push for peace, rather than to the French and Spanish security crackdowns.35

Thus, terrorism is an element that has served its purpose within the Basque conflict and is required to be reexamined in a context of its usefulness to the discord. The Basque political order must continue to make strides in reorganizing itself to meet the demands for peace by both parties within the tension. By investigating similar intractable conflicts, the successes and failures of key players will aid the advancement to resolution for the Spanish and Basque people and help sustain peace. While there isn’t a standardized formula for disentangling intractable conflicts, elements of a workable nonviolent outcome can be envisioned.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PARALLEL INTRACTABILITY

The conflict within Spain is not unlike other departures from peaceful coexistence that have plagued countries and populations throughout history. Intractable conflicts can arise for many reasons and remain a longstanding discord for the local territory, religion and politics as well with many other “practical reasoning” that may give cause for its validation.¹ As the Basque conflict has remained a complex structure of emotion and retaliation over its timeline, the power of orderly thought toward its resolution continues to be the subject of trial and error. However, an examination of similarly problematic conflicts in other areas can provide the basis of argument to create a workable framework for a peaceful resolution of this one. Specifically, the conflicts within Sri Lanka, Bosnia, Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland portray both the active principles that have hindered negotiation within their own contexts as well as the foundations that advanced reconciliation.

A comparative analysis of what brought about their struggle and the achievements that different peace strategies helped to gain will enable application of that learning to the Basque case:

While all disputes are an amalgam of parties embattled over issues in distinct social systems, not all conflicts have the same genesis. Embedded within a conflict’s genesis are clues as to the source of its intractability. Discerning this source can provide insights into why it is intractable and can reveal potential strategies for making it more tractable. A comparison of the different types of intractable conflicts highlights dissimilar explanations of causes and particular strategies for intervention.²

The case studies will give evidence for the ways in which conflicts can arise and maintain a cycle of intractability. Through understanding the reasons why these models share likenesses, with the intention of characterizing the nature that differentiates intractable conflicts from tractable ones. The disposition of “hopelessness, intense emotionality, pervasiveness, and complexity” all contribute to the elements that perpetuate these situations.³ By studying the contextual basis for the emotive stimulus of these cases, the apparent roadmap toward violence can be learned and ultimately what abilities if any were utilized to find a way out. “Many of these conflicts are rooted in a history of colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, or human rights abuses in the relations between the disputants. These legacies manifest in ideologies and practices at the cultural, structural, and relational levels of these conflicts, which act to maintain

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hierarchical relations and injustices and thereby perpetuate conflict.” Daniel J. Christie additionally asserts:

In sum, parties involved in intractable conflict cannot win and do not perceive a possibility of resolving it peacefully, but continue the confrontation for many decades until intractability eventually is overturned – that is, either one side wins eventually, or both sides decide to resolve it peacefully. There is no doubt that peaceful resolution of intractable conflict is preferable in most cases. It is one of the preconditions for establishing lasting peaceful relations that eventually lead to cessation of the bloodshed and suffering and to the acceleration of the prosperity and tranquility that benefit both societies.

Finding the shared characteristics of the Basque conflict and the following case studies will aid in supplying a paradigm for potential resolution of the former.

The Case of Northern Ireland

The conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country are easily comparable through their origins within nationalist movements and the intent to achieve autonomy by any means available to the cause. Violence became a mainstay to both of the dissenting minority groups; using terror tactics interchanged and shared, these factions left many civilians wounded or dead. These two conflicts are concerned with an area or province believed to be their own within the jurisdiction of a federal government and nation state. The political movements in the respective conflicts are mutually split between a radical Basque National Liberation Movement (Batasuna) and its counterpart Irish Republican party (Sinn Fein) on the one hand, and moderate Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) on the other. With such similarities in

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character, political strategies, and eventually paths to reconciliation, these examples are the proper beginning to this analysis. “Both the Basque and the Irish problems defied easy solutions. Force failed in both cases. Nor was the Spanish or the British government able to develop a viable political remedy.”

The history of the conflict within Northern Ireland can be traced back far earlier than the violent attacks by militant action groups and fierce political debates within the parliamentary system. James Dingley explains:

Although Irish Republicanism can trace its political roots back to the ‘United Irishmen’ of the late eighteenth century and theoretically even traces its roots back to the beginnings of Irish resistance against Crown rule of Ireland as early as the twelfth century when England first claimed sovereignty over the entire country, it was not until Wolfe Tone’s United Irishmen in the 1780s-1790s that an organized insurgent campaign against British interests first began to see fruition. The triggering factor in this was the seventeenth-century plantation of Ireland when ‘the British Crown sponsored England and Scottish Protestants to settle in the north-eastern part of Ireland.’ The Irish Republican Brotherhood (an evolution of the United Irishmen) was the vanguard of Irish Nationalist force since the mid-1800s, and in the early twentieth century joined the newly formed Irish Volunteers. This Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and Irish Volunteers alliance was to later call itself the ‘Irish Republican Army’

The two communities that clashed in what would be known as the ‘Troubles’ of Northern Ireland were the pro-British Protestants and the Irish-nationalist Catholics. Amid the split of the Irish Republic in 1949, “the Parliament at Westminster reaffirmed the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom and said that every part of it would remain so for as long as the Parliament of Northern Ireland so desired.”

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6 Richard Cooper Hall, Consumed By War: European Conflict In The 20th Century (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 219.

7 James Dingley, Combating Terrorism in Northern Ireland (Abington: Routledge, 2009), 228.
Tensions began to arise in the decades following the division for the groups living in Northern Ireland, with connection to the emerging power struggle, especially the growing “welfare state, the expansion of multinational capitalism, and the declining power of Ulster’s industry.”

Following with what would create internal strife, the two religious communities and the affairs of state policy in Northern Ireland were principally based on sectarianism, creating further division along with the growing economic contention that would eventually boil over and lead to the violence that would entrench this conflict. With regards to the politically fueled separatist action, Jonathan Tonge further asserts:

Nationalist demands for reform of Northern Ireland were met by insecure and at times hostile unionist response. Partly as a consequence of the failure to reform Northern Ireland, the IRA rose, phoenix-like, in 1970, to create what was supposed to become a ‘final’ outcome to the problem of Northern Ireland: its abolition and establishment of an independent, united Ireland free from British sovereign claims.

These issues led to the viciousness that erupted from the 1970s into three decades of a bloody battle. “The IRA’s campaign of violence included beatings, bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, and armed assaults.” The subtle manipulative behavior by the Irish-republican militia was driven by emotions relating to anxiety, resentment and

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patterns of constant suffering. These emotions give rise to what enables an “ethnopolitical division,” fostering what becomes a societal condition of cyclical aggression. Protestant response used municipally-organized militias toward the Catholic opposition, thus further fueling the desire for the minority to push for detachment. Allen Feldman explains:

Militarism had a popular sectarian and anti-Catholic dimension promoted by the state. The state did not rarify the command of violence. The repressive apparatuses consisted of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and citizens’ militia known as the B Specials. These organizations, which were overwhelmingly Protestant in their makeup, were in turn supported by public safety legislation that severely short-circuited civil liberties for Catholics.

While British soldiers were dispatched to safeguard the Catholic communities, the surging influence of the IRA’s potency was able to assert a “view that only the reunification of the island could protect them.” In comparison to the Basque defiance of authority, the Catholic community was acting to gain lawful rights that the Protestant majority maintained with a constitutional advantage. Only with the separation from British authority and the Protestant supported hierarchy would there be an ability to find cultural recovery and self-improvement.

The peace efforts that were interspersed throughout ‘The Troubles’ timeline in many regards have become the basis of debate within social sciences involving conflict resolution theory. The use of internal and international mediators and nonpartisan

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representatives at different periods yielded steps toward a diplomatic cultivated position. “A compromise did not come about because the attachment of republicans to a united Ireland or unionists to the United Kingdom weakened. Rather agreement was reached…“[w]hen the SDLP leader sought to convince Sinn Fein that its strategy of violence was counter-productive, alienating not just unionists, but Britain and potential supporters in Irish America.” An attitude for concession did not come about due to a fading loyalty in the pursuit of a separated and unified Ireland or retained ties to the British Crown, rather through the understanding that their primary aim was unachievable. As a result, the Irish Republican Army made a declaration toward ending its violent activity on August 31, 1994, thus allowing a commission from Sinn Fein to begin negotiations with the opposition from Ulster Unionist, SDLP, and loyalist parties.

Owing to the aid of many intermediaries from inside the conflict as well with special interest from the Clinton administration, Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams met early in the 1990s to find a suitable outcome between the two political divides within Northern Ireland. Conversely, as the talks began to falter on their own, outside mediation was introduced to help move the stagnation forward. “The governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of


17 Ibid.

Ireland invited former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, to chair the peace negotiations.”

This initiative would allow for external ingenuity to the proposal of parallel decommissioning of all paramilitary groups and counseling that would employ resourcefulness in unraveling the principles of a settlement. In a greater formal statement of British assurance, the support for a partnership framework clarifies:

The British Government once again affirmed its commitment to legislate for a united Ireland if the Irish people – subject to the consent of the people of Northern Ireland – agreed to this. It also acknowledged the right of nationalists in Northern Ireland to regard themselves as Irish and recognized the legitimacy of this.

The outcome of this settlement allowed for the two disputants to live within the same territory, yet have the ability to retain their own self-importance. The broad principles affecting the perception of identity carry with them the characteristics of a group’s political legitimacy, by which I believe the Northern Ireland case advances our understanding of the interplaying cultural protective qualities. “The British-Irish Agreement of 1999, jointly comprise an exemplary collective constitutional design for the ethno-nationally divided territory with rival claims to its sovereignty. The word ‘design’ is appropriate because the Belfast Agreement’s makers knew they were effectively engaged in constitutional crafting, even if they disagreed over whether they were making a transitional, durable, or permanent settlement.”

19 James Patrick Byrne, Philip Coleman, Jason Francis King, Ireland and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, INC., 2008), 601.


The Good Friday Agreement (also known as the Belfast Agreement) and the Stormont Agreement, was signed on April 10, 1998 and went into effect December 2, 1999; as a result, it presented strength of adherence to a devoted legislative authority of the British, Irish, and Northern Ireland. The formation of two new sanctioned and administrative alliances gave validity for leaders of the various sides working toward common goals. The British-Irish Council and the Intergovernmental Conference in their efforts “to promote bilateral cooperation on matters of mutual interest” demonstrate the value of executive power supporting “views and proposals on nondevolved Northern Ireland matters (i.e., those matters that are not within the competency of the Northern Ireland Assembly).”

The source of precedent and principle determining the affairs relating to the significant dialogue of the conflict are now shared among the equal players, therefore, allowing balanced negotiation to move toward further nonviolent outcomes. In spite of this, the assets of these provisions are not without weakness with regards to all the elements that have plagued ‘The Troubles’ history. Prerequisites of disarmament and the dismantling of paramilitary groups were not implicitly stressed in the outset of the Agreement, as this “remained the greatest obstacle to the peace process.” To this extent, “the Northern Irish bodies were unable to function and they were temporarily suspended by the British government with effect from 14 October 2002.”

The lessons that offer interpretation toward the intractability of Northern Ireland and its multinational conflict, reveals the gains of allowing a degree of intercession from

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outside the dispute. However, this case also exposes real weakness in advancement of resolution by way of the threatening potential for political digression, coupled with resurgence of radical division from the formally decommissioned militia groups. Responding to legitimization efforts from the Spanish government to continue its allowance of the Basque people to regain their heritage and rebuild their culture pacifies the dissident Basque component, in the direction of finding trust among the Spanish authority. “Basque separatists in Spain might also be encouraged by European leaders to cease revolt and place their distinct culture peacefully within Spain and the EU. That, in essence, is what Northern Ireland’s Celtic Catholics and Protestants will be gaining, with links to both Britain and Ireland within the larger realm of trade, travel, labor and culture.” 24 Therefore, Basque revolutionaries could find through peace building and reconciliation that their ultimate goals could be achieved and furthered with greater benefits for all.

In regard to the Northern Ireland conflict and the way in which it has reached a low level of agitation, the model of its resolvability depicting mutual empathy is most applicable to the Basque conflict. “In Northern Ireland’s case, the cessation of violence by the main paramilitary groups and two gestures towards decommissioning by the IRA, offers an opportunity to pursue peace while not under duress.” 25 The relationship that the dissident groups in Northern Ireland forged with the governments involved in the negotiation process is one that is paramount to combating the intractability of the Basque


conflict. For any advances reminiscent of the outcomes in Northern Ireland to be made there should be trust and the ability to work with the Spanish central government to fulfill an outcome much like that of the Good Friday Agreement. On the other hand, the Basque government still has much to fear from Spain, as “I don’t think the government in Madrid has come to the conclusion that it needs to negotiate with the Basques,” implies Christopher Mitchell of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, “They still think they can win.”

In reviewing the pattern in which intractable conflicts arise, maintain, and in some cases find workable resolutions, there is the necessity to be aware of the responsibility the central government bears in overcoming uncertainty. The wavering position of resolution based engagement that the Spanish displays is attributed by a line of reasoning affected by ETA’s various unfulfilled ceasefires in the past implies:

Anti-terrorist measures by the Madrid government have varied from the harsh punishments of Franco’s Spain to the less effective blow-hot, blow-cold policies of democratic Spain since 1975. Of course, any democratic government working within constitutional limits has to balance along that fine line of acting too severely or too inconsistently.

As witnessed in the Northern Ireland conflict, “the British government acknowledged and accepted the principle of self-determination of the people in both parts of the island of Ireland, together with the principle of consent for any change being made.” Without the cooperation between the development of a solution-based framework by future political


27 David J. Whittaker, Terrorists and Terrorism in the Contemporary World (London: Routledg, 2004), 45.

initiatives and negotiation with the central government, a certainly different outcome can take the conflict in a starkly altered course. To expand on this idea, guidance full of initiatives at solving violent behavior can be more acutely rendered to the dissident groups that propagate distrust, hatred and aggression.

The knowledge as well as skill at negotiation acquired through being involved in political interchange, as well as exposure to channels of communication for the dissident groups and their political representatives, can lead to serious advances toward peaceful resolution. Unlike the Northern Ireland case, the Basque community has been at the mercy of the government’s “much greater reliance on harsh public-order policies to confront the problem.” In addition, “there does not seem to be a connection between state policies and levels of support for radical nationalist groups, for these have remained relatively stable throughout the period or changed for reasons that are independent of state policies.”

The involvement of the trusted external actors that played a part in the negotiation chapter of the Northern Ireland conflict depicts an effective process toward the parties finding a relational balance while still remaining politically independent.

The Case of Sri Lanka

In connection with tragic events relating to deliberate brutality generated by the electoral majority vis-à-vis an ethnic minority, Sri Lanka showcases the ways in which a centuries-old land dispute can lead to a contemporary intractable conflict and portrays the

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ways in which mediation can go awry. The magnitude of prejudice and disadvantage stemming from the Sri Lankan political disconnection emphasizes:

The conflict has moved far from the causes that originally produced it; rather, it is the consequences that carry the conflict forward. The consequences of the fifteen-year war have been so overwhelming that influential forces in both Sinhala and Tamil polities appear to believe that the continuation of the war would be less of an evil than a settlement.\(^\text{30}\)

The difference in the Sri Lankan ethno-political struggle exposes the faults, due to a loss of concession and the defense of the state, to render a solution to save the lives of a conflicted unyielding culture of Tamil nationalism. As former President of the World Peace Foundation and director of the Program on Intrastate Conflict, Conflict Prevention, and Conflict Resolution at Harvard University, Robert I. Rotberg, further describes:

The fear of a settlement – compromise seen as both evil and politically immoral – felt by direct as well as indirect parties to the conflict has become a psychological factor in Sri Lanka’s crisis. This fear helps to define the atypicality as the intractability of the Sri Lankan crisis.\(^\text{31}\)

Similar to the other cases examined in this thesis, the history of the Sri Lankan conflict has many key groups of actors, a colonial context, and mutually impassioned religiosity. As Basque Country was infiltrated and conquered by European nations in the interest of its valuable geography, Sri Lanka enticed the interest of European powers to exploit its distinguishing features. Such injustices are detailed in ancient sacred stories known as the Mahavamsa that have been preserved in Buddhist monastic libraries since the sixth century, giving rise to the assertion of the Sinhalese being the original


\(^{31}\) Ibid.
inhabitants of the South Asian island and divine entitlement to their homeland.\textsuperscript{32} It was within this same time period that movement of the early Tamils permeated through the region from the Indian mainland, bringing new influences and tribulations. Owing to the disharmony of these rival cultures, the societal identities therein were formed upon the contrast of their differing languages as well with beliefs and principles compounding the divergence. Sensitive religious aversion between Sinhala Buddhism and Tamil Hinduism became the basis for distinction between the “pacific Sinhalese v. aggressive Tamil” that complicates the extremely intricate disagreement today.\textsuperscript{33} To take it one step further, the Sinhalese have maintained a perception that they are “the chosen guardians of Buddhism, and of Sri Lanka itself,” and there rests a responsibility to protect both of these entities against opposition.\textsuperscript{34}

As European influence began to expand, Sri Lanka became one of the strategic areas to which Portugal could strengthen its empire. “The entry of the Portuguese in 1505 A.D., heralded a new era of western domination over the island which was hitherto dominated by the Indian influence…. Possession of Sri Lanka was considered essential for the defense and safety of India by the Western powers.”\textsuperscript{35} Taking into account that the geographic location of Sri Lanka occupies the farthest southern position of the Indian

\textsuperscript{32} Peebles, \textit{The History of Sri Lanka}, 14.


peninsula, it is also separated from the mainland giving it an ideal opportunity to preserve a sense of disconnection. While Sri Lanka is fundamentally a unit of South Asian territory, the further dynamic of insularity upholds its awareness of distinction. With regards to this perception, “colonialism integrated the previously separated regions of the island within a highly centralized colonial state.”

Asoka Banderage further identifies:

After three centuries of colonization, first under the Portuguese and then the Dutch, the coastal lowlands of Sri Lanka came under the control of Great Britain in 1796 when the Dutch territory was relinquished. The fault lines between the Sinhala and Tamil communities that show up in the modern Sri Lankan conflict were drawn during the period of British colonization from 1815 to 1948.\textsuperscript{36}

While the provinces within Sri Lanka then referred as Ceylon were wholly unified under British rule, the Sinhalese and Tamil populations felt ecological tension. The division between the two nationalist factions very early pertained to the allocation of political and representative competition within the Donoughmore Constitution (1931-1947). As the British noted the struggle for power between the ethnic groups, this pragmatic system would empower supervisory committees to oversee all government departments within the established colony. “Representatives of minority opinion complained that while a significant measure of political power had been transferred to Sri Lankans, safeguards for protecting the interests of minorities were surprisingly inadequate.”\textsuperscript{37} This rupture in the native parliamentary political system of Sri Lanka was completed by the refusal to accept a biased establishment as dictated by the British elite. During this period, the Sinhalese


enjoyed a greater ability to govern and thus thrust the Tamil population into a more repressed position both politically and socially.

It was at the 1931 elections of the State Council under the Donoughmore Constitution that the Tamil political opposition refused to participate due to the growing superiority that the Sinhalese had achieved. “The epoch of the Donoughmore Constitution established forcefully the reality of the Sinhalese majoritarian rule and the Sinhalese monopoly, especially from 1936 to 1942, on the office of ministers of the executive committees, which, except for finance, defense, and external affairs, ran the business of the country.”38 Subsequent to Sri Lanka gaining its independence on February 4, 1948 after an arduous anti-colonial and pro ethno-nationalist campaign, the newly established government became very one-sided toward the Sinhalese The politically advantaged Sinhalese continued to hold the majority control of the new administration and state institutions, which profoundly depended on the very profitable exportation of plantation-produced goods to support the British war effort. By means of the completion of the Second World War and shifting world markets, Sri Lanka had relied immensely on commodities that were essential abroad and had little reason to change their industrial strategy.39 The Tamil labor force became victim to the Sinhalese order to sustain the new nation, due to the inadequate sway the political minority had within state affairs. “The abrogation of pacts made by successive Sri Lankan governments with the leadership of the Federal Party, the principal vehicle of constitutional Tamil nationalism between the


1950’s and 1970’s, resulted in the birth of more militant Tamil nationalism, which by 1983, the year of the worst anti-Tamil program in Sri Lanka’s history, came to be dominated by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).40

The Sinhala oppression of Tamil liberties was carried to the extent that Sinhalese was the only authorized state language; in addition, those who resided in rural areas were denied the ability to vote in national elections. Reminiscent of General Franco and his tyrannical regime’s restrictions toward the Basque population, the actions of the Sinhalese government motivated a mass exodus of Tamils to seek refuge as Diasporas in India. Shockingly cruel antagonism by the Sinhalese command of the state’s armed forces would initiate transnational attention and fervently organized the Tamil’s desire for retribution. In the face of the Sinhalese supremacy dominating nearly three quarters of the population, the Tamil minority began to mount a violent crusade for absolute independence, bolstered by a methodically vicious policy that the Tamil Tigers and the LTTE employed to wage war in order regain their rights that were severely restricted.

The educated Tamil assembly of young students became the backbone of the revolutionary movement to overcome the barrier that prevented advancement for “coveted white-collar jobs in the public sector.”41 Initially, the Tamil and LTTE rallying call was profoundly championed by the exiled communities within India and looked upon with favorable judgment from other principled secessionist supporters. The campaign


developed by LTTE became reminiscent of ruthless fundamentalism seen in other parts of the world, bearing witness to the “gruesome effectiveness” of terrorist measures. As the unwavering hostilities intensified over the next two decades, “more than seventy thousand people have been killed so far, a further 1.6 million have been displaced, and the Sri Lankan government is blamed for the disappearance of sixty thousand more.”

The LTTE is credited with nearly half of the committed acts of suicide terrorism from 1980-2003 worldwide, with 30-40% of those carried out by women. By means of the immense losses being sustained by both divisions since the commencement of the civil war in Sri Lanka, interference became necessary to try to decelerate the bloodshed.

Initially maintaining an impartial status within the conflict, India entered to offer diplomatic solutions to what was perceived as an internal Sri Lankan dilemma. For four years (1987-1990), India engaged in maintaining a military and political agenda in Sri Lanka to act as mediator between the groups, and protect the Tamil communities within Indian borders. The Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was dispatched to provide food and aid to the devastated areas of the island in addition to encouraging a peace settlement between all participating groups to induce a calming effect to the conflict.

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The arrangement sponsored by the IPKF held the following stipulations:

The agreement contained merger of North and East provinces with adequate devolution of power, cease-fire in north-east, returning back of Tamil refugees from India, review of Sri Lankan policy towards external forces in the region, sending of Indian peace keeping force to compel tigers to accept the Agreement.\(^{45}\)

Despite the fact that these accords provided some pacification of tensions between the players, it wasn’t without controversy. The Sri Lankan government claimed that the Indian forces were supplying the Tamils with weapons and biased support within negotiations, while the Indian government wanted to maneuver Sri Lankan management away from receiving direction from Western assistance, whereas the LTTE began to realize the IPKF became their “deadly enemy” as attacks on Tamil opposition mounted.\(^{46}\) This would be enough to persuade the Indian government to pull its peacekeeping forces from Sri Lanka and curtail further attempts to interfere.

As the near uninhibited violence raged between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan armed forces, it wasn’t until 2002 that Norway attempted to bring reconciliation to the hostile struggle. Involving the concentration of an exiled Tamil community, the LTTE was able to effectively gain significant achievements in swaying the opinion of Norwegian politicians to act within Sri Lanka. This would secure the signatures of an official ceasefire between the Sri Lankan authority and the LTTE, to bring about the


Memorandum of Understanding. Nevertheless, the involvement of Norway was not without controversy as a result of the international perceptions that it is “too lax on terrorism and holds a general sympathetic attitude towards non-state actors using armed means to pursue political aims.” Moreover, “this is due to its liberal policies and history of being restrictive in extraditing alleged terrorists.” Violence persisted as the LTTE would eventually abandon the peace negotiations, owing to Sri Lankan rigidity and lack of adherence to the grant of concessions terms, in addition to a ban of the LTTE’s attendance at a U.S.-led relief summit.

Atrocities continued to escalate in the course of the 2006 failed peace talks in Geneva. Within two years of this the Sri Lankan government dismantled the ceasefire agreement of 2002 and commenced a large-scale military offensive, leading to the acknowledged downfall of the Tamil Tigers on May 17, 2009. “The government rejected the last ditch call for a ceasefire, saying that the thousands of civilians trapped in the war zone all had escaped to safety and there was no longer any reason to delay the flushout.”


Despite this statement, specialist in International Law and Professor at the University of Illinois College of Law, Francis Boyle stressed:

Tamils are undergoing unspeakable hardship, and the monstrosity is only matched by the Nazis terror on Jews. The 1948 Genocide Convention and the 1949 Geneva Conventions obligate the United Nations to engage in Sri Lanka’s conflict and seek resolution…. the urgent need for the UN and the International Community to intervene and save the Tamil people held by the Sri Lanka Government in the several internment camps. 50

The forceful exclusion of the Tamil population and their representatives from the political arena is a crucial example of how a conflict can remain intractable. “Sri Lanka illustrates what can go wrong when elected governments in a multiethnic country indentify with the majority community.” 51 The torment and aggression that the Sinhalese demonstrated after independence developed a self-righteous orientation with a biased political intelligentsia, thus preventing many state-supported outlets for resolution.

A multiplicity of conflicts share common characteristics relating to religiously promoted ethnic disproportion as with the Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamil groups. The intensification of a centuries-old religious argument that became lengthened within the confines of a modern violent conflict has been the root of this intractable case. “Even where religion appears to be irrelevant to ethnonational conflict, there may be religious resonances to that conflict.” Furthermore, “for example, the Basque conflict with the Spanish centre took its most acute form in the mid-twentieth century with the conflict of


(anticlerical) Basque socialists against clericalist Francoists.”

Despite the fact of the Basque defiance of authority, the Spanish religious oppression and persecution aided the social dynamics that boiled over in the Basque region and formed the basis for ETA in 1959. “The collaboration of the Church and Franco regime (Basque language was forbidden inside seminaries and other Church institutions with the help of the Church) created dissatisfaction among many young priests in the Basque region. In 1960, many of them signed a petition denouncing the cultural oppression of the Basque people.”

In applying the lessons of Sri Lanka to the Basque conflict, it can be argued that change from within is unlikely when the oppressed are a minority and the oppressors a majority. There is little ability for the oppressed to seek changes constitutionally that might begin peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Basque political forum has been vying for a greater representative position within the Spanish parliament, though granted an autonomous system with regards to greater rights being offered. When the minority within these conflicts is constitutionally left without opportunity to seek an outcome with interest to resolving the issues, there is little room for finding the middle ground. “The LTTE wanted the negotiations to proceed in two stages, first the restoration of normalcy and creation of a peaceful environment and after that talks for a peaceful, political solution.”

The Tamil political division has to surmount this obstacle even to begin to


53 Nilay Çubuk Kaya and Aykan Erdemi, Social Dynamics of Global Terrorism and Prevention Policies (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2008), 82.

discover an outcome that will become lasting and find a balance for the two groups for a shared island.

The discouraged position that a dissident minority can be placed in when the government has the ability to maintain control of authority and jurisdiction over the discourse of ending intractability plays a significant role in many aspects. “Peace psychology does not fail to stress to what extent political economies which accentuate social inequalities both instigate and facilitate xenophobic sentiments and other forms of intolerance.”\textsuperscript{55} It can be argued that persecuted minorities trapped between violence and a dominating political obstruction would find validation for their shared fundamentalist traits. In addition to the debilitating characteristics that have previously been mentioned in the shared intractability of these conflicts, outside intervention, thought fraught with difficulty, may be all the more important. “The atmosphere of an intractable conflict may be charged or indifferent, hopeful or fatalistic, but it will certainly bear the marks of a long, entrenched fight and many previous attempts at reconciliation. The mediator will have to deal with attitudes and conditions created by the intractable nature of the conflict as well as those created by the conflict itself.”\textsuperscript{56} Furthermore it is stated:

The interventionist position, or more generally the human rights tradition where the interventionist position is anchored, tends to see oppression and violence against minorities as basically apolitical brutality. Minorities, according to this view, are targeted not because of conflicts over divisible objects, but for having the “wrong” identity, which itself is the consequence of exclusivist, racist ideologies.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56} Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, Pamela R. Aall, \textit{Taming Intractable Conflicts: Mediation in the Hardest Cases} (Washington, DC: United Institute of Peace, 2004), 73.
Intervention within intractable conflicts can reveal strategies and allow for dialogue with outside influences with consideration to providing aid toward ending the conflict. In the most recent attempts for reconciliation between the Basques and Spain, international intercession has prevented this conflict from following the path of others that have utilized this strategy.

The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Continuing the retrospective examination of comparable cases in the search for workable formula for ending the Basque conflict, I turn to the multifaceted clash that has ensnared Bosnia-Herzegovina within the confines of intractability. These conflicts can be strong-willed and resistant to outside influence, though in this case the use of cross-national involvement came to the assistance of preventing further egregious bloodshed. The dissonance in this region is intricate within the confines of its complex history, creating a web of deep-felt emotions contained by the varied group’s distinctiveness.

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The basis of this conflict and the degree to which the global community played a role can be outlined briefly:

The collapse of communism, and with it the collapse of the remaining multinational states of Europe, was not followed by the victory of liberal democracy and the legitimation of new civil states. Instead, older, historical identities—religion, ethnicity, national identity, and even region—reemerged as bases of political mobilization and claims to statehood, and clashed with the state in almost all those areas where the existing or emerging state did not correspond to the identities of mobilizing groups. This produced a conflict between international norms of state sovereignty and territorial integrity on the one hand, and the power and violence of appeals to ethnicity as a basis of state formation on the other. Much of the story of Bosnia is the story of how the international community attempted, but failed, to reconcile the conflict between these mutually exclusive principles of state formation.58

Intervention can be a tool to find ways to bring two opposing sides to the negotiation table through acceptance of outside perspective. However, there can be problematic outcomes if the roles and desires of those drawn in aren’t accepted.

Surrounded by a territorial conflict that would become a hotbed of violence and ethnic persecution, the history of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a highly contested divergence of shifting powers and borders. In a dramatic scene that would be the spark for World War I, the assassination of Austria’s Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo by a young Serb nationalist opposed to Habsburg rule would ignite what would later become the Bosnian conflict.59 As Austria declared war on Serbia, Muslims and Croats began to mount attacks against their neighbors. The conclusion of the war led to the inclusion of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes


that favored the capability to preside over their new acquisition of territory. “The political representatives of the Bosnian Serbs had a heavy orientation toward Belgrade and claimed not infrequently that both Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Muslims were ‘Serb.’ This, along with attacks on Islamic cultural objects, poisoned the atmosphere between Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia.”60 In the 1930’s the now-defunct Kingdom of Yugoslavia held the majority within the territory and banned or disrupted anything that was not subservient to Serb demands for political obedience.

The Bosnian Croats began to feel the strains of the Serb regime. Through the Second World War, Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by the pro-Hitler Croatian semi-independent state that participated in the horrors of the Holocaust.61 The postwar Yugoslav constitution of 1946 reconstructed Yugoslavia as a federation of constituent republics including Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Vojvodina, and Macedonia.62 For the following decades, the defining group identities of the Serbs, Croats and Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered economic and political decline. To this extent, ministerial responsibilities were positioned among the three nationalist divisions that did little to alleviate the growing tension. Driven by the fall of Communist power in Western Europe in 1990, the ethnic administrations were now in disarray and the distribution of authority created problems amongst the republics. Instigated by reason

60 Matthew J. Gibney and Randall Hansen, Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the Present (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2005), 190.


of the highest civil unrest between the republics, multifaceted wars erupted that would involve many shockingly cruel acts that were coupled with the interceding attempts by the United Nations to maintain stability.

The Yugoslav government began by entering the new Croatian state with a military force to maintain a presence in the exiled Serb community, along with creating a micro Serbian republic within Croatia known as Krajina. Further analysis of the Croatian role in which the ever-changing cultural territory concludes:

In the second of 1991, the armed incidents between Croats and Serbs deteriorated into open armed conflict and led to expulsion of over 80,000 ethnic Croats from the region. In the summer of 1995 Croatia regained full military and political control over the entire Croatian territory, with the exception of the region of Eastern Slavonia, where the United Nations had assumed transitional authority. In 1996 Croatia joined the Council of Europe and ratified the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and the additional protocols 1997.

The complex war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a conflict that was fought on many different fronts. Political clashes as well with armed violence were “largely between Serbs on one side, and Croats and Muslims on the other side. But they were also fought between Muslims and Croats within Bosnia, and between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia.” The cycles of alliances, broken treaties and retaliation required the counsel of the international community to provide the power to influence a change in the conflict’s trajectory. It became apparent that external involvement was

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63 Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, Claiming Ownership in Postwar Croatia: The Dynamics of Property Relations and Ethnic Conflict in the Knin Region (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), 2.


needed to retract the swirling succession of terror that was being inflicted on civilian population and further human atrocities.

The catalyst in the Bosnian war occurred on July 6, 1995 after the UN-protected safe haven of Srebrenica was stormed by Bosnian Serbs forces to commence a massacre of thousands of Bosnian Muslim refugees. Additionally, “the Bosnian government made no serious effort to defend the town and appeared unconcerned that it might be captured.” These proceedings led to fanatical reprisals and battles by the Bosnian army to sustain a bloody advance toward expelling the Serb population and forces from within their territory. The Clinton administration and the United States Government began to get involved to impede additional human catastrophe, as intervention became paramount to the continued safety of the entangled ethnic communities. The resulting degree of devastation was extensive, but opened the door to settlement:

When the tide of war turned decisively in 1995, and Serbs fled toward Serbia from their enclaves in Croatia and Bosnia, the outlines of a peace settlement came into view. Croatia was now the biggest winner, and Bosnia was still the biggest loser, with Serbia somewhere in between. But all three states had managed, more or less, to “cleanse” their territories of unwelcome intruders. This, in one of the great ironies of history, made possible the peace accords of Dayton, Ohio.

The following peace negotiations allowed for the presidents of the three regions to reach a settlement in the company of officials from the world community, on whose continued supervision it depended. “While the mechanisms specified in Dayton have been established, they have been sustained chiefly through the involvement of the international

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community, and through the coordination of the Office of the High Representative, established by Dayton.\textsuperscript{68}

Within the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) was established to aid in the rebuilding of the political structure between the three actors. The United Nations instituted this position for the purpose of "giving guidance to and coordinating the activities of the civilian organizations and agencies involved in assisting the parties to implement the Peace Agreement."\textsuperscript{69}

Additionally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would provide a military presence to ensure stability and security during the embryonic stages of reconciliation. In brief:

(a) From December 1995-December 1996: Operation Joint Endeavor in which the Implementation Force (IFOR), known as the Peace and Implementation Force, had a major task to implement peace; and

(b) From December 1996-December 2004: Operation Joint Guard/Operation Joint Force in which the Stabilization Force (SFOR) had a role in stabilizing peace.\textsuperscript{70}

The intervention in the Bosnian conflict aimed to balance the multifaceted political and military resources that each player possessed in their continued attacks on one another. "Power was not employed to win the Bosnian conflict outright or to achieve definitive settlement of disputes before or during negotiations. Rather, the bombing and subsequent


occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by 60,000 NATO ground troops had two key objectives: to prevent a resumption of the fighting and ethnic cleansing, and to formalize the creation of a Muslim-dominated multiethnic Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

Involvement by the international community came at a point when the conflict had reached a peak of ferocity that could no longer allow the world to remain idle as the events unfolded. NATO’s preservation of settlements and organized military actions was the largest armed forces operation in Europe since the end of the Second World War. This would inspire advancement toward “stopping the war which had already caused enormous human and material losses, and displaced and left homeless nearly half of the population of the area and thus left huge scars in the flesh of a multiethnic, multi-confessional and multicultural society.”

When considering the path that led the United States to make its decision to intervene into the Bosnian conflict, the differing concepts of mediation should be considered. Sensitivity toward those involved and appropriate respect for their emotional discord become necessary to use a communication-facilitation guiding principle. In this consideration, the act of entering a conflict as an intermediary is not to actively suppress the organized assembly into forced settlement of their dispute. More accurately, “a mediator acts in a fairly passive role, largely as a channel of communication, or go-


73 Hanna Slavik, Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy (Malta: DiploFoundation, 2004), 337.
between, for the parties, exhibiting little control over the process or substance of mediation.\textsuperscript{74} In this methodology, the influence of the United States involvement was vital to “contain the conflict” and “foster its resolution” through maintaining the troops to provide aid and be a regulator for further human atrocities.\textsuperscript{75} On November 27, 1995, President Clinton claimed:

I decided that American ground troops should not fight a war in Bosnia because the United States could not force peace on Bosnia’s warring ethnic groups, the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. Instead, America has worked with our European allies in searching for peace, stopping the war from spreading, and easing the suffering of the Bosnian people… I refuse to send American troops to fight a war in Bosnia, but I believe we must help to secure the Bosnian peace.\textsuperscript{76}

This strategy and approach taken by the United States in cooperation with other participating countries allowed for the advancement of reconciliation within this conflict. As time was given toward healing ethnic divisions, progressive steps were taken in the region to allow for open elections that saw nationalist politicians gain the ability to work within an amenable environment. By 2005, the Bosnian War Crimes Chamber was commenced to uphold justice for those who were “responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and genocide,” and to hold these trials within the Bosnian State.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{74}Zeev Maoz, \textit{Multiple Paths to Knowledge in International Relations: Methodology in the Study of Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution} (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 260.


The initiation of mediation that was utilized in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina has seen significant achievement in the compromise of the ethnic partition that had inflamed cultural friction and confrontation in the 1990’s. Conversely, the present political condition is still unstable and requires the supervision of the European Union (EU) to guide further advancement for the pragmatic platform on which Bosnia can see positive development. “Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, the fundamental problem remains that there exists no consensus among Bosnia’s political elites, be they Serb, Croat or Bosniak, regarding the future of the state.” However, “further inaction or procrastination could have wider ranging consequences for Bosnia, for Southeast Europe and for the EU.”78 The issue of stagnation in the attempt of an interventionist strategy carries a massive burden if the third party is unable to sustain active engagement, especially if the parties remain uncooperative.

The sociology of groups with different ethnic, religious, or political backgrounds within one society alludes to their various perceptions of reality. The premise or outright policy that minority groups within a society should maintain cultural differences, but share overall political and economic power is just one of the factors that entraps intractability. The conflicts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Basque Country are intertwined with the restrictions of an ethno-political disparity that is based within territorial as well with administrative friction. “The sacred nuclei of ‘civilizations’ are perceived as mutually opposed, and therefore the cultures that spring from these nuclei must necessarily be in conflict. The alternate view—that such conflict means a betrayal and a

denial of the true nature of these nuclei—is ignored.” This is to say, when minority groups that are at odds with an authoritative majority that has placed them at a disadvantage through political contest, it produces further divergence from any path of reconstruction. Understanding of the original reasons why the dissonance began is lost as the conflict continues to grow with violent strength and repressive political action. The core of both of these conflicts has become overshadowed by their intractability, underscoring the need to address the grievances of the distressed minority.

The Case of Palestine and Israel

Four years before the Dayton Agreement and subsequent General Framework Agreement for Peace in 1995, the United States tried to facilitate peace negotiations of another intractable conflict with corresponding elements. “Because of the unique alliance between the United States and many Arab states forged in the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker III believed that heightened American influence in the immediate postwar environment boded well for a new attempt at bringing the Arabs and Israelis together to resolve their differences.”

The Israel-Palestine conflict had been stagnated with a comprehensive and bloodstained dispute for decades, resulting in full-scale regional wars between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The long history and unyielding intensification of the conflict has plagued the numerous attempts at peaceful resolution. “Compounding the situation in the Israeli-

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Palestinian case is the difficulty entailed in the fact that one of the actors involved is a state and the other is not.”

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deep historical roots. Both sides see themselves as victims of history, and each blames the other for the continued contention. The shared attachment to the experience of victimization by both Israel and Palestine originates from political transgressions of the British Empire and their influence on the geographical makeup of the Middle East in the first half of the twentieth century. In what became known as the Balfour Declaration, a letter written on November 2, 1917 by the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour would ignite the British Zionist Federation to seek a country to be considered “the” Jewish “national home.” Balfour wrote:

> His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

This proposal came with the allegation that it was compensation to the European Zionists for their role to providing the British with information of the United States Armed Forces in the summer of 1917. It is believed by historians that German Zionists covertly seized a telegram dispatched by the German foreign minister detailing the American preparations

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to join the Allied war effort, thus “the Balfour Declaration became the secret means of paying back the Zionists.”

After the conclusion of the First World War, the British began to revise the governing power of its administration within its vast sphere of influence. The territory of Palestine, which became an acquisition of the British from the fallen Ottoman Empire in the Anglo-French Settlement in 1918, would become the source of resentment by both the Palestinians and Israelis generating the conflict today. The Mandate for Palestine from the League of Nations in 1922 was a move by the British to divide the territory that the Zionists believed was assured to them in the much larger province of Transjordan (known today as Jordan). “The goal of the mandate authority was to lead the Palestinian territory to full independence within a relatively short period of time. But the double promise of a Jewish homeland on the one hand and the preservation of the rights of the Palestinians proved eventually to be inconsistent, thus causing the British Mandatory Power to play a numbers game with regard to Jewish immigration.”

King George V and British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin held a summit with the Prime Ministers of all the territories within the British Empire to entrust the assertion that each member of the Commonwealth acknowledged the “moral obligation” to each other and the Crown. “The new treaty guidelines were tantamount to a complete revision

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of the former practice of subordinating dominion interests to those of Great Britain. The imperial conference thus broke new ground in the continuing trend of dominion nationalism, culminating in the Imperial Conference of 1926. As a consequence of this symposium, the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee, coincidentally presided over by the now former Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour, created an official order titled after its director, which implied “a massive about-face with regard to British policy in Palestine.” This meant that the British had now committed administrative support to a Jewish homeland and essentially opened the doors for the Zionist movement to redistribute within the former state of Palestine. The contradictions of opposing formal agreements additionally proposes:

The Balfour Declaration was soon recognized for what it really was; not a ‘moral obligation’ but another piece of World War I wartime expediency. Thus it was swiftly dropped as the British sought to build bridges and mend fences with the Arab Middle East. The Zionists were naturally appalled by what they saw as this betrayal, yet unlike the Arabs, the Jewish strategists realized that they were playing a long-term game.

The Palestinians and Jewish settlers began to intensify their territorial friction during the period of the British Mandate in Palestine due to the rate of immigration, which was at its height. This was mainly due to the anti-Semitism that was developing within Europe as a new global confrontation began to take shape. “A period of self-defence and ‘illegal’ immigration followed; this activity was intensified during World

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War II, when the Jews of Palestine strove to save as many Jews as possible from the Holocaust…. By the end of the war, the Jewish population of Palestine had risen to 500,000 while the Palestinian Arabs were one million. The resurgence of Jewish national aspirations after the war was opposed by the British, whose vacillation further encouraged Arab opposition.\textsuperscript{89} In turn, the rehabilitated Jewish desire for political independence would lead to their excessive devotion to seeking separation from their English guardianship. The British Mandate was thus withdrawn and the direction of the disconcerting crisis in Palestine was dispensed to the newly formed United Nations.

The passing of the Palestinian territory to the UN became fraught with failure to cooperate, as the Jewish population contended for nonalignment to its new administration and Arab neighbors while still vying for the right to choose their own form of government. “In the ensuing melee, Zionist organization and will proved decisive, even after five Arab countries sent in forces to support the Palestinians against the new state of Israel, which declared its independence on May 14, 1948.”\textsuperscript{90} The next day marked the beginning of the Arab-Israeli War, which would turn civil hostility into a fight for competition by means of dividing the territory amongst the Arab realm. The bitter rivalry would culminate with the 1949 Armistice Agreements, which would establish the border between Israeli captured territories and its neighbors, known as the Green Line.\textsuperscript{91} Israel

\textsuperscript{89} Mordecai Shreiber, \textit{The Shengold Jewish Encyclopedia} (Rockville: Shreiber Publishing, 2003), 135.


now occupied nearly all but a quarter of the original geographic area outlined by the British Mandate, displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees. The unresolved regions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were each sequestered by the Jordanian political authority and controlled by Egyptian military command. The overwhelming amount of Palestinians forced from their provincial property became the focal point of resentment and a political agenda.

With the violent and emotive foundation for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict bound, the setting for prejudiced discord and intractability found its base for progression. Dr. Grace Feuerverger, a professor of Multicultural Perspectives and Identity at the University of Toronto thoughtfully stated, “There is no justice in all this mess. I see it as a sick twist of fate that the Palestinians became indirect victims of the Nazis too.” The feelings of betrayal, discrimination, and vengeance would be the driving force in the desire to restore perceptions of self-control and self-worth that had been traumatized by the means of preceding events committed by both communities.

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Consequently, the resulting effect is further emphasized:

After the unsuccessful effort of the Arab states to crush newborn Israel, war followed war. Israel’s victories resulted in large Palestinian population under its rule. Unable to count upon the Arab states, the leaders of the movement for a Palestine homeland turned to terrorist methods and announced their aim—the destruction of Israel. Violence was met with violence as the Israeli military force in the occupied territories stepped up its repressive measures, while the conservative Israeli governments intensified the effort to colonize the Palestinian lands with Jewish settlements. These policies produced a widespread grassroots uprising, the intifada, the most serious threat to Israeli rule in the territories.94

The Palestinians would put in operative command a nationalist response and form the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, as the representative political and militant institution with the objective of an independent state.95 As multifaceted violence raged, the PLO sought to regain territory that had been established by the British Mandate, and political initiatives decisively sought autonomy from Israel.

The proposal for a two-state balance was envisioned as a result of a belief that the claim would put in place concessions necessary to set the political future of the Palestinians within their own control and provide the ability for resolution compromises with Israel. The PLO became the singular lawful representative for the Palestine manifestation with an “observer” status that was recognized by the United Nations in 1974, though participation was limited.96 Regardless of the fact that the PLO was recognized by the United States and Israel as a terrorist entity, it mounted its first attempt at compromise with Israel through nonviolent resistance to Israeli aggression in an effort

95 James M. Lutze and Brenda J. Lutz, Global Terrorism (Abington: Routledge, 2004), 107.
to gain support from the international community. Known as the first “intifada,” the plan of action provided new leadership to those living within the occupied Palestinian territories and countered the unequaled strength of Israeli military strategies within the view of world human rights organizations. On November 15, 1988, the PLO, in the defense of its perceived homeland and devoted nationalist identity, formally declared the establishment of the “State of Palestine.” While it has been accepted as a country by the Arab states and their agencies, the legitimacy of this act has been in contention elsewhere since its pronouncement. “Neither the ‘State of Palestine’ nor the PLO, however, has been admitted to membership in the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies (including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)).”

Rallying the Arab community around the Palestinian efforts toward independence, these new formations forsake the use of terrorism and claimed to acknowledge Israel’s right to legality. Publically, then-Chairman of the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Yasser Arafat confirmed in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly the same year that their administration encouraged “the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to live in peace and security, including the state of Palestine, Israel and other neighbors.” With this statement being assumed to encourage the approval of the western hemisphere, the situation within the region was still a breeding ground for guerrilla warfare and terroristic attacks. Whilst understanding the roots of mutual contention, a new method to bring peace between Palestine and Israel

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was required; therefore a different requisite became the coordinated plan to encourage negotiations. “This resolution, later dubbed the land-for-peace formula, formed the basis of peace talks between Egypt and Israel at Camp David (1979), which returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. Land-for-peace was also the basis for the Madrid peace talks (1991) and the Oslo Accords (1993) between the Palestinians and Israel.”99 Accompanied by the second Camp David convention (2000), the Palestinian Authority rejected any renewed peace settlement with Israel that culminated in the stalemate due to discrepancies on Israel’s behalf toward security resolutions at the Taba Summit (2001).100 This was in part due to the shifting of power within the Israeli authority of influential leaders that sought settlement of the agreement, yet were replaced with “a member of Likud (a right-wing and liberal party) who opposed Oslo and refused to resume the negotiations.”101

The frustration and fatigue that emanates from the seemingly never-ending political discourse of protracted conflicts would conceivably become the source for violent retaliation. The Palestinian and Israeli conflict depicts a situation where fighting continues as a standoff remains within the political forum, disallowing progression toward new solutions to break the cycle of terrorist attacks. Much in the same way both the PNV party along with Batasuna continuingly try to negotiate with the Spanish establishment to find resolutions in their pursuits to further reestablish Basque


competency, the feelings of disappointment spill over into the actions performed by ETA. This concept evokes the theory that these terrorist measures are implemented due to the belief there is no other option, “because they do not have the means to discuss their political goals openly and fairly.”102 The ability for open discussion between the political entities of the involved players, in congruence with the members belonging to the dissident militias will aid to heal the fracture between concession and retaliation. It is with this crucial element that intractable conflicts can find equilibrium between calming the emotional agitation of the minority and pacifying the elite levels of the authority to soothe the transition from armed resistance to peaceful negotiations.

Closing Thoughts

The anthology of peace accords, agreements and deals brokered between Israel and the Palestinians leave fundamental cultural elements that have yet to be wholly repaired. This conflict has remained intractable in the face of international intervention and third-party mediation strategies, as the two players still reserve deeply emotional resentment for each other. On the surface, at least, group psychology is mainly about the people’s way of thinking, language and response, during which time groups have endured whole life cycles of shared confrontation. This principle can be caused by strong feelings, as new generations inherit both collective memories along with social identities that invigorate and perpetuate the friction. Leading to the cyclical way in which innocent youth are persuaded to join activist groups, convincing new levels of dissonant and disillusioned ranks of young members adds to the continued strength of activist groups.

102 George Fink, Stress of War, Conflict and Disaster (Oxford: Elsevier, 2010), 556.
Thus, the strong-willed and resistant issues of the conflict remain protracted without resolve by the unbroken discord. As a result, the question must be asked: is there a possibility for any form of a change in attitude if Israel facilitates peace with the Palestinians? For that reason, peace should have the ability to overcome, in the face of the considerable social barriers that limit reconciliation.

Accepting the ethically appropriate perspective in the circumstances of the obstinate Basque conflict will certainly be a monumental task, in comparison with any that have been discussed here or otherwise. The essential aspect that may unshackle the reasoning process within the Arab conflict, or the discord between Israel and Palestinians, comes down to changing the angle of the narrator and the position of the observer.

“Although we do think that conflicts are about disagreements, resources, or trade, we also believe that psychological determinants contribute greatly to their evolvement, maintenance, and management.”

It is the approach to the way of thinking of the Basque community that requires alteration as much as the Spanish societal structure. Striving to mend the beliefs that affect the Basque attitude toward their difference may in time shape their perception of balance between the forces of emotional stability and collective acceptance. Furthermore, the Spanish identity will modify to allow the Basque community to fold into the national social fiber to await the achievement toward a state of balance.

Respecting the relevance of environmental and psychological factors surrounded by the impression of victimization that is entrenched within the intractable paradigm,

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there must be an approach to free both sides from this perpetual disconnection. To overcome these barriers it may be necessary “to teach the other that they are worthy and valuable as a people, sharing the universal desire for security, identity and respect.”

Creating a model that forms a basis to bring together the fragmented line of reasoning in the human mind and soul of these case studies involves further victories beyond the battlefield or political arena. One recurring theme that ensnares these conflicts is the use and conceptualization of violence. This significant theme works as legitimization for revenge on both parties, and strengthens a believed target ideology. The bearing of violence in relation to intractable principles is a resort “to incapacitate the other so as to impose one’s own goals,” consequently supporting the emblematic “us” vs. “them” code of morality. Interpreting the principles within intractability will aid the intellectual assertion of the effect of moral values on the conduct of those in power for these examples as well with supporting the individual experiencing them.

Conforming to the justifiable standards for intractability contained by the divergence between the Basque and Spanish comparative struggle of power, tied with the accountability of the global community has deep-rooted this situation devoid of a solution. That is to say, these case studies provide historic correspondence with contemporary conclusive statements toward the hindrances and varied accomplishments


105 Robert Imre, T. Brian Mooney, Benjamin Clarke, Responding to Terrorism: Political, Philosophical and Legal Perspectives (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008), 59.

that have swayed the course of these conflicts. It becomes possible to insist that, at present, a method for a peace movement may lead this violent view of nationalism to be altered. The origins of these conflicts are not unalike, as are the conforming devotion toward fighting for what is worthy of unbreakable determination toward a groups belief system. In harmony with the Basque incentive, the dominant main feature that lays claim to these sustained movements is the self-attachment to their perceived homeland. Therefore, with the aim of cultural defense, “territory lends continuity and stability to armed resistance and legitimates it much more than any ideology can.”\textsuperscript{107}

The variation important to evolutionary success within the Basque context requires a comprehensive methodology, which will enfold all the elements that have been discussed above. By providing a review of the techniques that both exposed weakness as well as evidence of significant achievements in the case studies, a workable resolution could be hypothesized. In the Basque case, emphasis on inevitable nationalist agitation caused by strong feelings from both sides will demand exceptional awareness in comparison to the serious political discourse that is essential. I believe intractable conflicts hold the ability for reaching an answer to subsiding the symptoms that give up the claim that peace can be recognized. The enduring narrative does not have to repeat the undertaking of sacrifice and loss when determining the future of the people that have been endlessly wounded by the very nature of conflict. Promise of recovery from dissension and gaining breath in a new life uninhibited by the restraint on freedom, is an article of faith that every individual should be granted.

\textsuperscript{107} Jeffrey Ivan Victoroff, \textit{Tangled Roots: Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism} (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2006), 136.
CHAPTER 6
TOWARD RESOLUTION OF THE BASQUE CONFLICT

The creation of new methods to break the cycle of challenging disputes in the midst of intractability necessitates connections between moral principles. Grasping the beliefs influencing groups who fervently exchange blows helps make relevant judgments. As we saw in the four case studies, the specifics of cultural division -- linguistic, spiritual, and racial devotion to native territory -- lead to a comprehension of their inner importance. As previously stated, any positive resolution for Basque unrest demands a comprehensive analysis that embraces all of the characteristics that have been formerly underlined. In addition to formulating a diplomatic ideology for the cessation of violence, the analysis must also survey the essential gains made in parallel conflicts: the unrest in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine and Israel in many ways reflect the strife in Basque Country. The result of such an analysis will provide a foundation for an effective resolution of the intractability between the Basque people and the Spanish state.

The abstract model forming the basis for this thinking is represented by a “liberal framework in terms of which these rational conflicts occur.”¹ The unrelenting development of intractable conflicts is mainly the effect of contention within territorial demographics, and the resulting ethno-political torment that further traps the dispute. A

¹ Kriesberg, Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation, 23.
belief in ownership of a regional territory becomes an effective natural motivation toward intercultural relationships that can become distorted by societal structures. An understanding that group mentality involves an innate sense of belonging provides insight into how nationalistic movements are rationalized and how they leverage personal conviction to maintain their ethnic identities and customs. A further interpretation of this theory expresses relational association:

On of the most important functions of a group, according to social psychology, is that it provides feedback to individuals regarding the “correctness” of their opinions, beliefs, and actions. From this perspective, “being right” is one of the more highly valued consequences for most people.²

The recognition of these group-instilled convictions will aid in dealing with the inevitable firmness of purpose in conflicts and their attendant intolerance. Perpetuating the manner in which nationalist views fail to conform to morality or justice is just as much an offence of the dissident agitators as it is of those who hold authoritative capacity. Healing the damage will require awareness in dealing with the nature of being. “Men’s violence towards their refusal to be identified with something speaks volumes for the importance with which men hold their own identity…. Such a process of identity is about permanence, for only permanence and consistency can serve an identity with a sense of belonging.”³ Repairing the Basque assessment of their status and worth within

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Spanish society will require replacing value and relevance with interest in state-held attitudes regarding the definition of “Basqueness.” The challenge in viewing the Basque predicament is that there is more than one defining trait for the Basques’ measure of self-identity.

To craft a resolution strategy, the barriers and restricted acceptance of ethnic division need to be addressed first in order to facilitate social reconciliation. While at the outset this may be a massive undertaking, it is in the Basques’ interest to reduce the emotional group perception of social mistreatment. The basis of my system of resolution is founded on “drawing on social identity theory’s distinction between in-group favoritism and out-group hostility.”

This theory outlines the ways in which the ethnic “out-group” subject to discrimination perceives that they do not belong to the society within which they are contained. Thus, this perceived imbalance of justness toward the organized hierarchy must first be put forward to the relevant elites of the minority group.

To examine the ways the majority creates and maintains their advantage over a deprived minority is to first consider the relevant facts and evidence before making further decisions. A marginalized group's lack of competitive ability is an attribute of intractability that justifies the power by the superior group. This is to say, there can be a link with the motivation to protect the rights and advantages enjoyed by the “in-group” that maintains their decisive position of governance. Similarly, the disadvantages of the

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minority would lead to a potentially destabilizing identification with prejudice and inequality. Logical by meaning alone, the suppression of a minority group can dramatically be transformed into an attack on their perceived ethnic self-identity. This proposition has been valuably further articulated:

Self-images constructed by elites in each country through the support of national myths are promoted among its own citizens and other nations. Those that are chosen and enforced are final products of an active process of reality construction that addresses both the elite’s and public’s needs to maintain self-esteem.5

This details “how political elites who classify conflicts as ethnic use this classification as a justification to commit violence against out-groups.”6 It is therefore essential to focus on the beliefs motivating the majority to oppress portions of ethnic groups in order to maintain their “in-group” value and worth within the societal composition.

The history of the Basques’ has been besieged by elements that have embedded their culture within the folds of strict and demanding state governments. From the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) that divided their country, to the centralized and dictatorial authority of Francisco Franco (1939-1975), the Basque people have existed under the imposing domination of a majority power. In order to formulate a purely Spanish identity, Franco created a system of restrictive, authoritarian control that demanded strict obedience from all aspects of Spain’s culture. The result of his efforts was “that all


linguistic, political, and ideological differences inside Spain had been successfully neutralized or suppressed.” By destroying the deep-rooted linchpins of Basque identity, the state placed this minority in psychological restraint.

The primary way to restore the fragmented esteem of the Basque population is acceptance by a Spanish society programmed by abuses legitimized by Spanish politics. The leading component that will contribute to the growth of a solution-based agenda is the breaking of communal barriers and the freeing of both sides from permanent disconnection. “Social policies and institutionalized reforms are essential in post-conflict countries. However, they will achieve little in the way of reconstruction, even less in the way of development and, certainly, no lasting peace, without social reconstruction.” In short, the Spanish and Basque communities must divest themselves of the restrictive psychological fears that have been instilled by terrorism. Exploitation and violence are attempts at legitimization, which flow from a sense of victimhood. As seen in the Palestinian and Israeli case, “both parties to the conflict should be treated as more or less equal in power as well as in guilt and justice.” In this way, acts of retaliation lose their justification and are severed from the driving ideology.

7 Eugenia Afinoguénova and Jaume Marti-Olivella, Spain is (Still) Different: Tourism and Discourse in Spanish Identity (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2008), xii.

8 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Economic and Social Survey 2008: Overcoming Economic Insecurity (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2008), 130.

From the outset, focus on the violence within the conflict is essential for the creation of a disarmament strategy based on ethical standards and morality. Adjustments within the text of a treaty or settlement require measures designed to ensure the equal alignment of both sides when making peace negotiations. Trust and firm assurances must be brokered regarding the resolutions to disagreements. With regard to the Northern Ireland case, inconsistent decommissioning policies in The Good Friday Agreement led to a lack of commitment, “instead of focusing on a long-term process of mutual confidence-building aimed at unionist and republican grass roots and dissidents.” Additionally, “Blair’s policy was often no more than an exercise in brinksmanship and damage limitation, characterized by an inability to delegate, and driven by his desire to get the UK devolution project off the ground.”

The faithfulness of the Basque and Spanish authorities will require compliance with a formal decommissioning strategy for dissident groups. Without this premise, the nature of cyclical retaliation will resume when discussions begin to break down and tempers flare in the face of stagnation. Deviation from this essential foundation “acts as a kind of mental contagion, blocking the visibility of non-violent alternatives, excusing and diffusing responsibility for otherwise proscribed violence.”

The Basque peace process must begin with a public statement and an official pronouncement of obligatory cessation.

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of armed action. In order for the legitimized Basque Socialist Party to come to the negotiation table, there must be a condition that there will be no violence from the unified Basque front. In a previous attempt to support ETA’s political wing, the failure of Batasuna to participate in the peace process and the resulting bombing of the Madrid airport ended the peace process. “The outcome of the process initiated in 2006 (with the ceasefire declaration and the decision of the Spanish government to initiate a dialogue with ETA) was a severe blow to many who had hoped for a negotiated resolution to the Basque problem.”

The importance of remembering the past while looking toward the progression of the peace process necessitates simultaneous awareness and foresight. “The opening of negotiations can be a catalyst for the decline or end of terrorist groups, potentially engendering a range of effects.” At the same time, “despite the successful negotiated outcomes that can result between the major parties, a common effect of political processes is the splintering of groups into factions that support the negotiations (or their outcome) and those that do not.” The ability to envision possible future problems or obstacles is critical when acknowledging the existence and validity of the militant influence on the proceedings. The formulation of a logical plan that includes successive ETA splinter groups will disengage terrorist factions. From a consideration of the events

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13 Brown, Coté, Jr., Lynn-Jones, Contending with Terrorism: Roots, Strategies, and Responses, 395.
that led to the rift between the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA, this strategy resulted in "inoperable" conditions in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{14}

Issuing a ceasefire declaration at the outset of a formal negotiation between all political factions is only the first step. As other actors are introduced to the negotiation framework, logical arguments and evidence can be presented. “Intractable conflicts can be explained in terms of capacities of reasoning to admit contrary conclusions and by the empirical fact that individuals do arrive at different conclusions on contrary though locally rational rules and criteria.”\textsuperscript{15} As delegations are chosen to act on behalf of the French and Spanish authorities, further legal decisions concerning repercussions of breaking the treaty will legitimize increasingly trust-based participation. From the French position, there is a more developed understanding of the present circumstances due to the value placed on extreme French patriotism. When compared to their southern Spanish neighbors, Basque nationalism is considerably less significant in France, owing to the measure of participation in the conflict. By contrast, the condition of French ethno-devotion “may consider other marks of Basqueness as more important, such as Basque descent for some or, now increasingly for others, active concern with grassroots cultural and economic development.”\textsuperscript{16} It is important to note that the French government

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{15} Kriesberg, Northrup, Thorson, \textit{Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation}, 24.
\end{itemize}
authority does not formally recognize Basque language and nationality. Nevertheless, the
interest in a movement for radicalized separatism lies specifically in the Spanish territory.

The French delegation ought to empower an official as a facilitator to encourage
the Basque and Spanish authorities to foster solutions for bringing peace to their
neighboring region. Mediation strategies must be considered as a means to ensure
ongoing, sound decisions as representatives “relinquish some control over the process
and thus increase the level of uncertainty regarding a desired outcome.” In addition,
“given the inherent uncertainty involved in conflict management, the anticipated benefits
of a settlement or accommodation have to exceed the expectation of costs by a
considerable margin or else mediation will simply not take place.”17 With respect to
volatile leaders and representatives who can trigger spontaneous divergences between
policy and actual practice within the confines of mediatory connections, both procedural
and directive strategies should be encouraged. As witnessed in the Palestine-Israeli case,
“peace treaties based on the suppression of ‘generalisable interests’ will require excessive
amounts of force to implement them, they will be unjust and unstable.”18

The use of a directive design will help steer the subject matter and practical value
of those issues that each party determines as their critical to their objectives. The ensuing
contract between the actors would ensure adherence to punctuality, reliability and

17 Jacob Bercovitch and Scott Sigmund Gartner, *International Conflict Mediation: New

18 Deiniol Jones, *Cosmopolitan Mediation?: Conflict Resolution and the Oslo Accords*
(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 105.
regularity that thoroughly affect procedural control. History has demonstrated the necessity of a structured and supported system for achieving objectives:

On the eve of a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel found itself, in complete contradiction in which to the prediction of its leaders, in a violent confrontation in which arms given by Israel to the Palestinian Authority were being used against Israeli soldiers and civilians. While these events revealed the depth of Arab hostility, they also demonstrated the urgent need to change the situation and allow Arab aspirations fair and reasonable expression even if the immediate result was not definitive end of the conflict.\textsuperscript{19}

Public policymaking that is nondiscriminatory and based on discussion among all stakeholders produces mutually agreed-upon impacts and helps ensure positive outcomes.

While I advocate for a strong mediation strategy to smooth the progress of negotiations between the Spanish and Basque governments, I do not imply that there ought to be a full and overconfident intervention by an international group of actors. This conflict has developed from particular circumstances and is rooted within Spain. The emphasis should be on the authorities of both sides leading and facilitating a recovery process. Therefore, the focus should remain on a campaign to improve the Basque and Spanish connection.

The notion that internal compromise is central to resolution has been underscored in this way:

In this respect the question is not only whether political elites might change their discourse, it is also whether their capacity to convince their support base will finally lead to a practice of pluralism instead of a rhetoric device. The reintroduction of power-sharing in Euskadi (Basque Country) would require relearning democracy by the political class at state, regional and local levels and by the communities.\(^\text{20}\)

Keeping the focus and encouragement on Basque and Spanish cooperation will produce lasting results by documenting the new policy that has been fostered and enacted by the formerly warring groups. “Final results of mediation may be embodied in such instruments as an agreement, a protocol, a declaration, a communiqué, an exchange of letters or a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ signed or certified by a mediator or mediators.”\(^\text{21}\)

By way of illustration, consider Sri Lanka: an unwelcomed international presence was the source of distrust in the mediatory stratagems utilized within the Sri Lankan settlement process. “The Indian troops were viewed suspiciously by most Sri Lankans, and India’s police action had made its neighbors in South Asia uneasy.”\(^\text{22}\) As India pulled out of Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese and Tamils were left with greater differences and an inability to find consistent agreements. Subsequently, Norway was successful in creating

\(^{20}\) Beck, “The Basque Power-sharing Experience: from a Destructive to a Constructive conflict?,” 80.


the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) to oversee the negotiations and make inquiries into any infringements. As a result, “the SLMM was an excellent tool, but critically flawed, since it lacked any enforcement mechanism to impose accountability on any party violating the ceasefire.”23 Thus in this case, outside intervention hindered a strong solution-based framework between the Sinhalese and Tamil and led to further violent behavior. Based on this, I believe that accountability should rest with the Spanish and Basque representatives who are attempting to reach agreement through discussion and compromise.

Conflict resolution theories offer many different approaches to breaking cycles of intractability, and I therefore disagree with the argument that every intractable conflict can be solved with of a standard set of rules and codes of behavior. For instance, the case of Northern Ireland is widely seen as being a model to emulate. However, the Basque conflict is an altogether different situation from that religious-supported conflict as well as its other circumstances. Any application of the "Northern Ireland model" necessitates the following assumptions:

First, coexistence is the desirable outcome for communities in the conflict with each other. Secondly, democratic approaches are more desirable than non-democratic approaches. Thirdly, compromise is seen as positive. And finally nationalism is generally seen as negative.24


I, however, support the concept that, “effective mediation depends not only on the mediator’s knowledge of conflict and conflict management, but also on his or her prestige and authority, originality of ideas, access to resources, and ability to act unobtrusively.”

Because relevant environmental and psychological factors are surrounded by an ingrained sense of victimization and oppression, effective social institutions need to be included in the ongoing political discourse. What is needed is an approach that places reconciliation at the working class or civil level of the society--one that repairs past egregious actions and strained emotions while at the same time giving confidence to the elitist “in-group.” ETA was born out of nationalist desire to challenge perceived oppression via extremist actions. “There is a climate of ostracism and an underlying ethnic ideology that turns an important sector of the population into second-class citizens. Likewise, Basque society and its language, symbols and attitudes are impregnated with nationalism, which is reinforced through channels of socialization contaminated by nationalist views.” For this reason, any lasting solution to the Basque conflict requires that the Spanish and Basque communities sacrifice their enduring emotionalism and make mutual allowances for their respective social beliefs.

Through the encouragement of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, both Spain and the Basque governments can put into practice institutional agendas aimed

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at supporting the civil populations of both communities. For example, instituted by the Basque city of Bilbao in 1991, the Office for Aid to Victims of Offenses (A.V.D.) intends “to give information, juridical advice, emotional support and assistance to the victims of crime in order to help them avoid or remedy the problems derivated of the victimization.”

To further repair the divided social order, Spanish organizations such as the Paz Y Cooperacion (Peace and Co-operation) promote disarmament, human rights and sustainable development through peace and education. These entities are vital to breaking the cycles of inherited prejudices. Efforts to work through affiliated organizations and peace networks will help heal disrupted communities by providing for economic activities, local development and sustainable peace initiatives.

The fluctuating boundaries of political mobilization, socio-economic survival, and ethno-cultural stability are as important to study as the attempted solutions. Frustrations associated with the terrorism that has left Spain and the Basque Autonomous Community anguished must be examined. The temperament of individuals trapped within a terrorist mentality is also something that must be studied: “Are members of terrorist organizations, once assembled, like the sorcerer’s apprentice, who, unwilling to be dismissed when the job is done, continues the violence?” Dr. Jerrold Post, the Director of

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the Political Psychology Program and Professor of Psychiatry, Political Psychology and International Affairs in Washington D.C., additionally asserts:

I would suggest that when an alienated, isolated individual has joined a group and has had the pulsating excitement of taking action for the group’s cause, to succeed in accomplishing the cause may be threatening, for that would mean losing one’s connection with the very group that made one feel alive and vital. Perhaps this explains why the nationalist-separatist causes are so persistent.29

Understanding the basis of the psycho-social devices that enlist Basque youth to fight for an autonomous community will hone encouragement strategies that will advance solutions to this problem.

In the midst of the political gains found in the collaboration between the Basque and Spanish political communities, supported by NGO’s attempts at fostering healthy activity, further advances can be made to escape the “us versus them” frame of mind. By way of assessing “the importance of understanding one’s own narratives, as well as, the narratives of one’s adversary to break the hold that collective memories of past-atrocities have on the current perceptions of victimhood.”30 The intricate history of the Basque conflict is fraught with interconnected and exaggerated feelings that have compounded the intractability. The armed fighting between groups has had serious civic ramifications, as the dispute has been carried over a long period of time. It will, in consequence, require that time be the determining factor if the difficult process of resolving it is to create


30 Daniel M. Mayton, Nonviolence and Peace Psychology (Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), 118.
lasting results. “Sustainable peace requires ending the cycle of impunity as well as building an inclusive political community and governance framework. At this propitious moment, Basque society and the Spanish state are again on the verge of entering a new peaceful era.
CHAPTER 7
CLOSING THOUGHTS

The violent struggle for Basque identity and autonomy remain deep-rooted within the Spanish culture and political infrastructure. My study of the defining characteristics of conflict intractability has provided elements of a possible resolution to the Basque case. However, these lessons cannot be wholly applicable to this case, as the motives that underlie the Basque-Spanish divisions require further reflection. As on scholar put it, the commonly ascribed causes of civil conflict, “such as ancient hatreds and rivalries, religious differences, or economic deprivation or exploitation, the kinds of factors generally thought to have generated violent and seemingly intractable ethnic conflict… do not apply to the Basque Country. The struggle for Basque independence is a relatively new phenomenon.”¹ This is not intended to declare that the lessons acquired from the other case studies are devoid of providing insight; rather, it is an appeal to recognize that the ultimate keys to understanding and resolving such conflicts reside within and between the divided communities.

My intent in this thesis was to provide a critical examination of the historical events and ethical issues embedded in the long-running Basque conflict. Its internal contradictions have encouraged the cyclical incompatibility of the Spanish and Basque communities through the processing of repressive ideologies unique to each. I believe that the respective ethos of Basque and Spanish cultures held onto feelings of prejudice and aversion for decades and now reside within all elite levels of Spanish society. The

¹ Encarnación, Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship, 96.
protracted social fractures have perpetuated mutual resentment and hindered repair of the incompatibility. As seen in the case of other intractable conflicts, the legitimization of violence is rationalized by continuing impressions of victimhood. The need for revenge by both parties reinforces a system of social beliefs that calls for retaliatory action as a response to individual threats or a perceived withdrawal of security to a group.\(^2\) Put differently, the patterns of intractability expose the fluctuating boundaries of political mobilization, socioeconomic survival and ethno-cultural stability for each case. It is my opinion that entrenched psychological factors inherent in the configuration of intractable conflicts, primarily the sense of victimization, needs to be addressed in any resolution strategy.

In viewing the Basque situation as an intractable conflict, compromise can be seen as both psychologically malicious and politically immoral. Attempting to provide justification toward this basis of argument, the characteristics that formed Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine and Israel validate the ways in which social disparities can persist indefinitely. Transformations of ethno-cultural and ethno-political disharmonies require many different measures to reverse their consequences. In the example of Sri Lanka, I believe that trust is a component that became severely unsupported as international peacekeepers disappointed both the Tamil and Sinhalese groups. The psychologically unstable process of resolution without the facility of trust voided “independent efforts to engage with and ultimately transform the conflicting

perceptions” with either of the participating actors. As the Sinhalese majority benefited from the capacity to maintain the upper hand in the power struggle within their society, the Tamils were consigned to uncompromising state-enforced prejudice. Through political exclusion and ethnic repression the Tamil community saw that violent retaliation was the only means of expressing their discontent with the nationalized division between the two groups. As a case of “structural violence,” Sri Lanka illustrates that “political repression, and psychological alienation, often is unnoticed and works slowly to erode humanistic values and impoverish human lives.”

The cultural design of such cruel suppression that exasperates the conditions of the trapped minority is a major component of the intractability of the Basque conflict. The resentment that the Basque community has held over the centuries from the inception of the Spanish state has been retained to this present day. Nationalism on both sides of the ethnic cultural and political spectrum has led to aggressive policies that have entrenched the emotive response to the efforts by either actor to find a way out of the contention. The militarized brutality of the Sri Lanka case should encourage the assembly within Spain to steer away from the former disharmony and find the means to break down these psychological barriers. If the Basque-Spanish leadership has the intent on repairing the discord within the conflict, then incorporative social strategies should first be applied.

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I believe that if the Spanish authority implemented grassroots campaigns within both the Basque and Spanish communities, collaborative efforts would yield significant social change. With the delegation of the Basque Autonomous Community, the incentives for continued armed struggle have been significantly lessened by the freedoms that have been returned by the central government. At present within Spain, the ability for self-rule in cooperation with the central government is a “phenomenon” that places unique legal importance on the regional separation of power. These regulations are “currently deemed as second or third generation laws or codes which have been revised several times and which combine respect for historic tradition with the modernization of inheritance law.”\(^5\) The legal recognition of autonomy within the Basque region should allow the parties greater scope to negotiate further accommodation in social reconstruction.

Considering the amount of Basque culture that has been restored and is flourishing within the autonomous community, new generations of Basques’ will grow within an atmosphere of acceptance along with pride. The framework of the BAC incorporates the ability to practice Basque traditions including the use of their unique language alongside Spanish. Allowing citizens the right to choose schools and universities taught in the native Euskera empowers the ethnic traditions to maintain a healthy prominence within their way of life. As seen through the Northern Ireland case, only cooperation can lead to cultural healing and individual group recovery.

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The circumstances within Northern Ireland portray how the Protestant and Catholic communities are struggling to reframe their identities and relationships. “Catholics and Anglicans alike are beginning to view one another as members of the same Christian tradition, although social segregation and violence has ensured that these groups still view one another with great suspicion.”\textsuperscript{6} I feel that while the state of affairs within Northern Ireland has become less of hotbed for retaliation when compared to the other case studies, it remains an unresolved conflict in that the two communities have still not yet come together in complete peace. Repairing the elements of intractability that have beleaguered the Basque discord as well with the other cases “entails a domestication of political conflict whereby disagreement is conducted within established parameters that do not have a resolution or rational consensus as their overarching objective.”\textsuperscript{7} I believe that Northern Ireland shows the necessity for innovative programs aimed at mending its psychological underpinnings.

Reconstructing the set of social beliefs and ideologies that enable intractability is crucial. The Basque set of circumstances is narrowly dissimilar from the other cases, as both the Spanish and Basque authorities have nearly settled the conflict. Through the institutional cooperation of the Basque Autonomous Community and the Spanish government, the foundations are in place to lead this dispute to a new peaceful chapter of development. However, it is my opinion that the resolution strategy must be formed on the micro level in congruence with the advances on the political stage. By doing so, the


\textsuperscript{7} Hayward, O’Donnell, \textit{Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution: Debating Peace in Northern Ireland}, 213.
complete repair of the societal norms of the Spanish-Basque narrative of opposition can change to foster a new sequence of achievements to bring the two communities together. Additionally, this will bring about a process that will facilitate a formal settlement. The depth and complexity of this task is formidable, as noted below:

The conflict is not just between ETA and the Spanish state; many contending political forces and groups are involved, with constantly shifting agendas and priorities. As many as two dozen identifiable groups have a stake in negotiations with ETA; many of them can affect the outcome of negotiations in ways consonant with their own interests. These groups fit into four categories: ETA itself, with all of its factions, members in prison or in exile, and their families; other Basque groups, including the Basque autonomous regional government and the political parties and media associated with it; the Spanish government and its associated political parties and media; and international groups, including governments of other nations and organizations such as Amnesty International and Interpol.8

In order to navigate through the final stages of the peace process, I believe that mediation throughout the many levels of the conflict is essential. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, external intervention and mediation via Office of the High Representative created channels to facilitate communication and negotiation between the contestants.9 Therefore active mediation between all the participating divisions within the Basque conflict will afford impartial attention to the representing delegates along with an even balance of privileges, rights, statuses, and opportunities.

While the political climate within Bosnia-Herzegovina is still volatile, the advance since the cessation of fighting has been a monumental victory for the international strategy. I feel that the recent peace talks in the regional Basque capital of

San Sebastian will only benefit from additional collaborative efforts by all the actors and international collaborators adding expert skill or knowledge. To implement these goals further within Spain, an enduring legislative coalition should be maintained in order to provide a solid support network for the two sides that is not subject to change. From this political alliance a combination of planned actions can be made to introduce popular social campaigns to promote tolerance and acceptance of both Spanish and Basque civil society, in addition to international groups that have proficiency in maintaining peace arrangements. An office that may be situated in both Madrid and the Basque political capital of Bilbao would aid balanced implementation of the peace agreement and partnered representation by both Spanish and Basque officials. I believe that a structured approach for a resolution strategy would offer the individuals of all levels of Basque and Spanish society the opportunity to seek aid in avoiding or managing disputes of all levels through pragmatic nonviolence procedures.

The struggle for the Basque nation to have its own governing power and representation within Spain and the European community has been an arduous journey due to the many institutional setbacks. This understandably frustrating and emotional saga has endured hardships that justifiably produced a devoted nationalistic movement. The language and customs of the Basque community have remained a constant source of support and motivation for a minority being incorporated into the Spanish state. “What the Basque Country exhibited is one human group still anchored in the collective project of its native community.” Additionally, the Spanish sought to “deprive people of their cultural unity and coherence, without which they would allegedly be left with no sense of
purpose or direction.” The further repair to the cultural identity of the Basque population is important to allow for their inclusion within the folds of Spanish societal structure as a whole. Despite advances in linguistic institutions and the lawful acceptance of cultural practices, added educational instruction should be supplied to the youth in all areas of Spain about the history of the conflict. This would be an additional aid to breaking the cycle of the collective prejudiced expression of dissimilarity that can be responsible for intractability.

The Palestinian-Israeli case is an evocative account of the ensnaring ingredients that prolong feelings of victimization and retaliatory efforts to maintain a moral discernment of their actions. The dynamic nature of this case is formed by ideological, religious and political dynamics that extensively fostered an inter-community discord between the two groups. By focusing on the specific issues that plague these two groups, the even marginal improvements made by the Camp David Agreement of March 26, 1979, helped to encourage negotiations between the leaders of Palestine and Israel. Therefore, it was “only a partial agreement between two countries and did not touch upon all the complexities of the Middle East conflict constellation.” Applying this principle to the Basque case would provide awareness and concentration on the specific issues relating to their tension.

When ETA is recognizable by the international community and the Spanish authority after a formal agreement of a cessation of violence, steps toward final resolution

10 Charles Westin, et al., Identity Processes and Dynamics in Multi-Ethnic Europe (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 109.

can be applied. Many advances in this conflict have surpassed roadblocks that have hindered the other cases within the pattern of obstinate contention, though further emphasis is essential to motivate Basque nationalists in the direction of suspending hostilities. At present, further realization of peace between Israelis and Palestinians is blocked by “overblown dreams in favor of a negotiated settlement.” Additionally, “the fate of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism are interdependent, although many on both sides refuse to recognize this.”\textsuperscript{12} The Basque-Spanish civil populations and their authoritative elites are interested in advancing peace negotiations, and the recent official declaration from ETA is an encouraging signal for the future.

In reviewing these parallel case studies, I was able to gain a more complete understanding of elements that manufacture an ethno-cultural dispute into an intractable conflict. The historical interpretation of intractable conflicts by the many experts in the field of peace and conflict studies assisted in creating a specific proposal for strategies to aid the conflict in Spain. In turn, I feel that the Basque case can contribute to further evaluation of intractable conflicts through the similarity of shared traits, the interplaying uniqueness of the group-identity and of Basque shared beliefs and values. Certain dissimilar facets of the conflict are the “socio-economic condition of the Basque society and the high level of autonomy they are enjoying.”\textsuperscript{13} These elements set the Basque circumstances apart, as does ETA and the violent influence that affects the repair of the social rift, hindering current attempts to end the conflict. The outcome of this controversy


\textsuperscript{13} Stefan Vedder, \textit{Leadership and Political Risk Taking - A Comparative Analysis between Northern Ireland and the Basque Country} (Nordestedt: GRIN Verlag, 2010), 36.
will be known by the efforts of political and clandestine groups currently trying to find a path to reconciliation.

The Basque-Spanish conflict is also notable in that it includes the emotional concessions that the Basque community has endured with two countries that enclose its deep and vibrant culture. The advances in recent decades to ameliorate the discontent felt by both the Spanish and Basque populations are testament to the desires that are present to turn the sequence of intractability to an improved relationship. Owing to my analysis of the root causes of intractable conflicts, the history of successes in addition to the failures to alter the course of these conflicts, I believe that today we have a greater ability to repair the multifaceted damage. “A long-term historical approach may be helpful for contextualizing the varied and diverse effects of social constructs such as nation or ethnicity upon ‘ethnic conflicts,’ according to the political and cultural factors present in each temporal period.” Conversely, “it would help to recognize that the internal conflicts of past societies were as complex as the present ones, and do not always require the latter to be correctly understood.” The diverse qualities of discord seemingly without resolution can use the same contextual exploration, as well as the participation of leaders having knowledge gained from experience to find a way out of intractability. It is my estimation that these advances are currently being undertaken within the Basque and Spanish communities and that we may see a positive outcome.

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