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Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain

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We had fed the heart on fantasie
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love . . .

—W. B. Yeats, "Meditations in Time of Civil War"

CRENSHAW, Martha (ed), 1995, *Terrorism in Context*,

The Pennsylvania State Un. Press

Spain differs from all other Western democracies, not only in the strength of its peripheral nationalisms but also in the level of violence associated with center-periphery conflicts. Among Western countries, only in Northern Ireland have deaths due to terrorist acts associated with ethnic conflicts surpassed those in Spain. Euzkadi ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, or ETA) has not been the only terrorist organization in Spain. Other Basque radical separatist organizations, as well as right-wing counter-ETA terrorist groups, have been responsible for over one hundred deaths in the last decade and a half. ETA, however, has been the primary terrorist actor between 1968 and 1992. It has also been the main object of police repression during those twenty-four years,

with more than 100 ETA militants killed, more than 20,000 arrested, and more than 600 imprisoned in Spain and 700 in France in 1992 alone.

ETA was founded in 1959 by a coalition of radical youth groups, one of which had split from the historic Basque Nationalist Party. Its primary aims from the beginning have been Basque independence and recuperation of Basque culture and language. These objectives continue to be at the center of ETA's ideological program, the five-point KAS Alternative, which it set forth in the mid-1970s as the minimum conditions to be met by the Spanish state in exchange for ETA's abandonment of political violence. Most of the five points are radical nationalist demands. The first of these is reform of the 1978 Spanish constitution to accept the right of self-determination; a second is the assertion of the territorial integrity of all Basque provinces in Spain, which means the revision of the 1979 Basque Autonomy Statute to allow for the incorporation of Navarra into the Basque Autonomous Community; a third is the demand for the institutional predominance of Euskera (the Basque language); the fourth point calls for the unconditional amnesty for all political prisoners and the withdrawal of all Spanish police and armed forces from Basque soil. The last refers to the conditions of labor and expresses solidarity with the working class. Apart from this, no other mention is made of leftist ideological principles.

ETA's strategy of armed struggle was adopted in 1962, but in the 1960s and early 1970s ETA engaged in only sporadic acts of violence against the authoritarian and ultra-Spanish nationalist Francoist regime. The most dramatic and consequential of these was the assassination in 1973 of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco, heir apparent of Franco, an event that helped to bring about the demise of the authoritarian regime. After Franco's death in 1975, ETA violence increased dramatically, particularly during the transition to democracy and the granting of regional autonomy to the three Basque provinces (Alava, Guipúzcoa, and Vizcaya) in 1979–80 (see Fig. 10.1). Of the more than six hundred deaths attributable to ETA between 1968 and 1991, about 93 percent occurred after Franco's death; about 27 percent took place in 1979 and 1980 alone, during which time the Basque Autonomy Statute was being negotiated and elections to the first Basque regional government were being held. Thus, despite the rebirth of democracy in Spain and the achievement of autonomy for the Basque region, ETA continued to act as though "nothing had changed."

But things had changed. Civil liberties were restored, political competition became legitimate, autonomous trade unions were permitted, and open expression of ethnic nationalist sentiments—even of demands for territorial independence of ethnically distinct regional populations—was

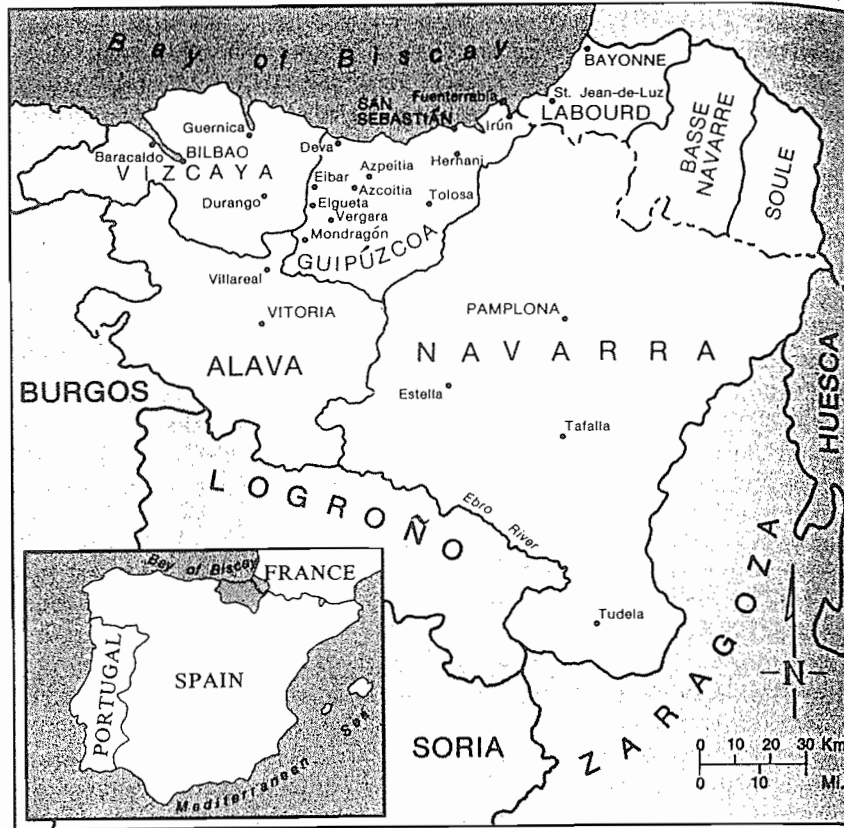


Fig. 10.1. The Basque region

allowed. Why then did ETA violence not only persist but escalate after the restoration of democracy? Was this part of its original plan? Did political and social circumstances in the Basque Country make possible a continuation of ETA's activities? Or "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?"¹

The endurance of ETA in the context of the rebirth of Spanish democracy and the granting of autonomy to the Basque Country presents an interesting puzzle. Why did the armed struggle go on, and what were

1. Peter Merkl, "Approaches to the Study of Political Violence," in *Political Violence and Terror: Motifs and Motivations*, ed. Peter Merkl (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 3.

the effects of ETA violence on the new democracy and on Basque society and politics? We address these two questions by analyzing (1) the sources of ETA violence at different points in time; (2) changes in the nature, structure, and strategies of ETA as a separatist terrorist organization; and (3) the various effects of ETA in the context of Spanish democracy and Basque autonomy.

First, however, we should specify the geopolitical limits of our research. According to Basque nationalists, Euskadi—the Basque Country, or the Basque nation—is composed of seven territories or provinces: four in Spain and three in France. Thus conceived, Euskadi has about 2,900,000 inhabitants living in an area of 20,644 square kilometers. But this notion of the Basque Country, which originated in the late nineteenth century, conflicts with a more complex reality (see Fig. 10.1). On the administrative level, the three French provinces (8.2 percent of the whole Basque population and 14.3 percent of its territory) are little districts of the larger so-called Pyrenees Atlantiques region. The four Spanish provinces are presently divided into two autonomous, or self-governing, regions, each having different social structures, institutions, and party systems: on the one hand, there is the unprovincial autonomous community of Navarra with 17.6 percent of the Basque population and 50.5 percent of the territory; and on the other, there are the three provinces of Alava, Guipúzcoa, and Vizcaya, which make up the autonomous community of the Basque Country, or Euskadi. Neither Navarra nor Euskadi, it is important to note, is ethnically homogeneous. In the latter, about thirty percent of the population were born outside of the region and an additional 11 percent are first-generation Basques. The frame of reference for our analysis is the Basque Autonomous Community, in which Basque nationalist parties are dominant and ETA has drawn most of its militants, focused most of its violent activities, and received its greatest popular support.

SOURCES OF ETA VIOLENCE

No one can say for certain why separatist political violence occurs in one setting and not in another. Why, for example, in the Basque Country and not in Catalonia? Why in Northern Ireland and not in Scotland? The decision by individuals to engage in violence or to join a terrorist organization is a contingent one. Moreover, it is difficult in complex settings to isolate cause from effect. Once violence does take place, the effects of such violence may themselves become causes of violence at a

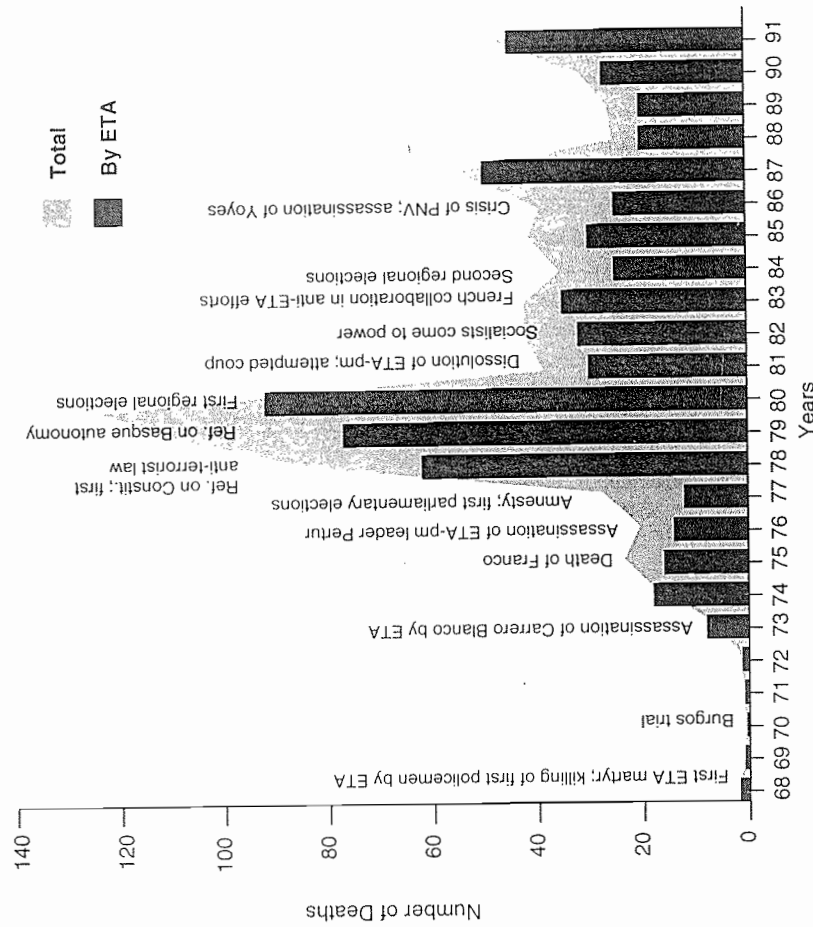


Fig. 10.2. Number of deaths in terrorist actions in Spain, 1968–1991

later time. Yet it is possible to explain why such individual choices are more apt to be made in certain societies than in others, and why violence, should it occur, is more likely to be viewed sympathetically than negatively by politically significant segments of the population.

Explanations of Basque nationalism and of ETA violence, in particular, focus on the interaction of several distinct, but related, characteristics of the Basque Country and of its relation to the Spanish state.² These range from structural characteristics, to the cognitive, evaluative, and affective orientations of different groups involved in a center-periphery conflict, to the ideological views and personal motivations of those who choose to engage in violence rather than pursue more “normal” political activities.

No effort is made here to present a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the causes of ETA violence. Instead, after briefly discussing the socioeconomic underpinnings of Basque nationalism, we focus primarily on what we consider to be the most direct, general explanatory factor: the political and cultural context of ETA violence during both the Franco and post-Franco eras.

The Socioeconomic Context of Basque Nationalism

Basque nationalism, as an ideology and movement, emerged in the 1890s largely as a result of various social developments associated with rapid industrialization. During the course of its economic transformation, traditional Basque society, founded on small-scale agriculture and commerce, was changed to a society based on mining, heavy industry, shipbuilding, and banking. Between 1842 and 1868, industrialization was first localized in the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa³ where the resultant dramatic

2. The literature on Basque nationalism is extensive. Excellent studies include Javier Cercuera, *Orígenes, ideología y organización del nacionalismo vasco* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1979); Antonio Elorza, *Ideologías del nacionalismo vasco* (Madrid: Guardarrama, 1978); Eugenio Ibarzabal, *Cincuenta años de nacionalismo vasco (1928–1978)* (San Sebastián: Ediciones Vascas, 1978); Juan J. Linz, “Early State Building and Late Peripheral Nationalisms Against the State: The Case of Spain,” in *Building States and Nations*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), 32–116; Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975); and Alfonso Pérez-Agote, *La reproducción del nacionalismo: El caso vasco* (Madrid: CIS, 1984). For studies of ETA, see Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents: ETA, 1952–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); José M. Garmendía, *Historia de ETA*, 2 vols. (San Sebastián: Haranburu, 1979); Gurutz Jáuregui, *Ideología y estrategia política de ETA (1963–1987)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1981); John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988); and Joseba Zulaika, *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1988).

3. Manuel González Portilla, *La formación de la sociedad capitalista en el País Vasco, 1876–1913*, 2 vols. (San Sebastián: Haranburu, 1981).

growth in population size and urbanization provided favorable conditions for the later rise of Basque nationalism.

Two other developments associated with industrialization were also of great importance for Basque ethnic mobilization. Industrialization created a different system of social stratification in which a new class of Basque industrialists and financiers became dominant and were soon incorporated into the Spanish oligarchy. Efforts by this group to integrate the Basque provinces economically and politically with Spain provoked intense hostility from the traditional petite bourgeoisie.⁴ In addition to the emergence of a new financial and industrial oligarchy, a working class also developed, as thousands of farmers from impoverished areas of Spain moved to urban areas in the Basque Country. With the rise of this new immigrant working class, Spanish trade unions and anticlerical leftist parties became major social and political protagonists in the Basque Country. These changes in class formation and their political expression posed serious threats to the socioeconomic and political status of the traditional urban middle class and to the hegemony of Catholic and rural Basque culture. It was among these segments of society that Basque nationalism developed and flourished.

Another period of rapid social and economic transformation occurred during the so-called economic boom between 1960 and 1975.⁵ The population of Euskadi increased by 44 percent, and this time all three provinces experienced growth. Once again, immigration from other parts of Spain was an important factor contributing to population growth (40 percent in the 1950s and 48 percent in the 1960s). By 1975 only 51 percent of those living in the three provinces were natives born of Basque parentage; 8 percent were of mixed parentage; 11 percent were first-generation Basques; and 30 percent had been born in other parts of Spain. Sixty percent and 40 percent of residents of urban and metropolitan areas, respectively, had some Basque ancestry; this compares with 85 percent of the rural population.⁶

As a result of this "second" industrial revolution, the active population in Euskadi increased by 25.2 percent between 1960 and 1975; the increase in Spain as a whole was only 9 percent. The sectoral distribution of this expanding work force once again radically altered Basque society and had important implications for Basque nationalism in the late Franco

4. Corcuera, *Origenes*.

5. Milagros García Crespo, Roberto Velasco, and Arantza Mendizábel, "La economía vasca durante el franquismo," in *La gran enciclopedia vasca* (Bilbao: 1981).

6. Luis C. Nuñez, *La sociedad vasca actual* (San Sebastián: Txertoa, 1977).

period and the transition to democracy. The native Basque population became increasingly middle-class and urban, and in time the political and social influence of this nationalist bourgeoisie supplanted that of the Basque, but Spanish-oriented, oligarchy. The nationalist movement itself became increasingly interclassist.

The immigrant proletariat remained a distinct, but increasingly substantial, segment of Basque society.⁷ Rather than undermine ethnic solidarity, these major social and economic changes helped to promote it. They did so not only through the creation of modern infrastructures for ethnic mobilization but also by the very threat they posed to the declining, but increasingly idealized, traditional Basque culture.⁸ Indeed, during the 1950s and 1960s it was primarily traditional institutions, like the church and family, that sustained ethnic solidarity.⁹

The transition to democracy coincided with an economic crisis in Spain. Because the Basque Country was a region of early industrialization and heavy industry, this economic crisis was felt most acutely in Euskadi. Policies of industrial restructuring, combined with ETA actions against Basque industrialists (in the form of assassinations, kidnappings, and the imposition of a system of "revolutionary taxation"), resulted in high levels of unemployment, particularly among the young (see Table 10.1). This provided additional fertile ground for complaints about economic exploitation of the Basque Country by Madrid, as well as for recruitment of new ETA members.

Table 10.1. Unemployment rates in Basque provinces by age, 1988 (in percentages)

Age (yrs.)	Alava	Guipúzcoa	Vizcaya	Euskadi
16-24	37.4	43.2	50.5	46.5
25-34	18.8	20.0	27.4	24.0

SOURCE: Instituto Vasco de Estadística (Basque Institute of Statistics), *Encuesta de Población Activa* (Study of the active population).

7. For discussion of these changes, see Francisco J. Llera, "Procesos estructurales de sociedad vasca," in *Estructuras sociales y cuestión nacional en España*, ed. Francesc Hernández and Francesc Mercadé (Barcelona: Ariel, 1986), 58-185.

8. Estimates of the Euskera-speaking population in the Basque region vary, but most agree that by 1970 about 20 percent of the Basque population were Euskera speakers, down from about 40 percent in the 1930s. The proportion of the population who speak Euskera has grown somewhat since the establishment of regional autonomy. According to census data, in 1986 about 25 percent were Euskera speakers.

9. Jesus Arpal, *La sociedad tradicional en el País Vasco* (San Sebastián: Haranburu, 1979), and Zulaika, *Basque Violence*.

The Political Context

The political relation between the Spanish state and the Basque provinces has historically been a conflictual one. Although Spain was an "early" state, "the political, social and cultural integration of its territorial components—nation building—was not fully accomplished."¹⁰ Several provinces (including those of the Basque Country and Catalonia) had for lengthy periods of time enjoyed considerable political autonomy from Madrid. This in turn allowed regional minority cultures and languages (like Euskera and Catalan) to persist despite efforts by the center to promote a single Spanish (or Castilian) language and national identity.

To preserve their traditional culture and historic political rights (the *fueros*), Basques figured prominently in the two nineteenth-century Carlist struggles against liberal and centralist governments in Madrid. The Carlists were defeated, and seven hundred years after they were first established, the Basques lost their *fueros* in 1876. The Basques' struggle against centralism and their ultimate defeat coincided with the dramatic changes associated with industrialization. Thus, in the late nineteenth century numerous segments of Basque society perceived threats to their collective identity coming both from Madrid and from new groups within the Basque Country itself. It was at this time that Basque nationalism as an ideology and a movement arose.

The Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) was founded in 1892 by Sabino Arana, and it participated in elections for the first time in 1895. Initially, Basque nationalism, as formulated by Sabino Arana, was extremely ethnocentric. It revolved around the reconstruction of a collective identity based on the Basque language, racial distinctiveness, ultra-Catholicism, and a xenophobic rejection of everything Spanish (including the Castilian-speaking immigrants in the Basque Country).¹¹ The political objectives of Basque nationalism, however, were less clear. After Arana's death in 1903, three different political models crystallized within the nationalist camp: the "possibilism" of those who believed that the Spanish state would reestablish Basque provincial government under the *fueros*; the "regionalism" (autonomy) of the *euskalherriakos*; and the separatism of the *aberrianos* (patriots).¹² All three models coexisted uneasily within the PNV, and conflicts among their proponents were a source of numerous schisms and the founding of smaller nationalist parties. Such differences over long-term objectives, as well as over how to achieve them,

10. Linz, "Early State Building," 33.

11. Juan Aranzadi, *Milenarismo vasco* (Madrid: Taurus, 1981), and Corcuera, *Origenes*.

12. Antonio Elorza, "La herencia sabiniana hasta 1936," in *Nacionalismo y socialismo en Euskadi*, ed. Colectivo (Bilbao: IPES, 1984), 117.

have persisted to this day both within the PNV and between it and other nationalist groups.

Just as the civil war was about to erupt, the Second Republic granted political autonomy to the Basque provinces. Basque nationalists, despite their religious and conservative views, allied themselves with the Republican forces against Franco. Once again they were on the losing side. Franco branded Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa "traitorous provinces"¹³ and, in the process of creating a highly centralized regime, abrogated the last vestiges of their autonomy, the *conciertos económicos*.¹⁴

In order to eradicate Basque distinctiveness once and for all and to create "a single personality, Spanish,"¹⁵ the Francoist regime engaged in physical and symbolic repression of any outward manifestation of Basque cultural and political identity. As a result, Basques, and particularly nationalists, came to view their territory as suffering "military occupation" by an illegitimate Spanish state. Thus, the duality of "us" (Basques) versus "them" (Spain) became even further entrenched as a part of Basque political and cultural reality.¹⁶

The fact that intensely felt ethnic sentiments and political interests could not be expressed through legitimate channels led to growing frustration among younger Basques. This frustration was fueled by the passivity of both the PNV government in exile and of older nationalists in Spain. Younger Basque nationalists, such as those who founded or later joined ETA, sought new, more radical ways both to oppose the Francoist regime and to express their ethnic identity. Occupation and war, together with defense of Euskera, became the central pillars of the post-civil war nationalist discourse among younger Basques.

Direct experience of repression and violence did not subside in the Basque Country even as the Francoist regime during its last decade became less harsh and effective in its attempts to exercise control over society (see tables 10.2 and 10.3). Between 1956 and 1975, the Franco regime declared twelve states of exception. Five of these affected all of Spain, including the Basque Country. One was declared in Asturias only. The remainder were singularly directed toward the Basque provinces of

13. Alava sided with Franco during the civil war.

14. These were tax administration procedures that were established for Navarra and the three Basque provinces following the First Carlist War. They allowed Euskadi both to assess and to collect all tax revenues, including those which were to be remitted to the central government.

15. Quoted in Robert P. Clark, "Language and Politics in Spain's Basque Provinces," *Western European Politics* 4 (January 1981): 93.

16. Gregorio Moran, *Los Españoles que dejaron de serlo* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1982); Jáuregui, *Ideología*; and Pérez-Agote, *La reproducción del nacionalismo*, 16.

Table 10.2. People detained by police in Euskadi, 1968–1987

Year	Detained	Year	Detained
1968	434	1978	287
1969	?	1979	561
1970	831	1980	2,140
1971	?	1981	1,300
1972	616	1982	1,261
1973	572	1983	1,157
1974	1,116	1984	1,879
1975	4,625	1985	1,118
1976	?	1986	990
1977	Amnesty	1987	601

SOURCE: *Egin* (1988): 163.

Guipúzcoa or Vizcaya or both (as well as Asturias in one instance). “An estimated 8,500 Basques were directly affected during these states of exception either through arrest, imprisonment, and torture or by fleeing into exile to avoid the police or vigilante groups.”¹⁷ Given that the Basque population was small, the likelihood was great, even if one had not had direct experience with the violence of Spanish security forces, that one knew of a friend or family member who had had such experience. “Most people in the Basque Country saw the violence of [both branches of ETA] as much less of a threat than the behavior of the security forces, who in 1974–75 alone killed 22 people. . . . Such incidents provoked demonstrations and renewed brutality by the police when dispersing them. They also inspired a steady flow of recruits to ETA.”¹⁸

As Tables 10.2 and 10.3 show, the pattern of ETA and counter-ETA violence, of mass demonstrations and indiscriminate repression of Basque protesters, did not subside even after Franco’s death in 1975 and during the transition to democracy.¹⁹ This pattern of ongoing violent confrontation had a number of effects that help to account for the persistence of ETA. It confirmed to many ETA activists the effectiveness of its strategy of action-repression-action. It lent credibility among many nationalists to ETA’s view that even with the demise of the Francoist regime and uncertain progress toward regional autonomy, “nothing had changed”—at least for the Basque Country. And it ensured ETA’s continued ability to draw new recruits to its ranks.

Once the transition to democracy was initiated, Basque nationalist

17. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 241.

18. Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*, 161.

19. *Ibid.*, 197, 206–7, and 231.

Table 10.3. People killed by police, died in jail, or executed, 1968–1988

Year	Basques or in the B.C.			Event
	Of ETA	Other	Rest of Spain	
1968	1	—	?	ETA’s first martyr
1969	2	3	?	First assassination by ETA
1970	—	3	?	Burgos trial
1971	—	—	?	
1972	4	—	?	
1973	4	—	?	Assassination of Carrero Blanco
1974	4	—	?	
1975	8	12	14	Death of Franco
1976	3	13	16	
1977	4	8	27	Amnesty / first election
1978	12	4	20	Ref. on constitution
1979	6	10	35	Ref. on autonomy
1980	9	—	25	First regional election
1981	6	—	9	Dissolution of ETA-pm
1982	5	2	—	PSOE in power
1983	—	—	—	
1984	11	—	—	
1985	2	—	—	
1986	6	—	—	Crisis of PNV
1987	1	—	—	
1988	3	—	—	

SOURCES: Andrés Casinello, “ETA y el problema vasco,” in *Terrorismo internacional*, ed. Salustiano del Campo (Madrid: Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales, 1984), 265–308; Miguel Castells, *Radiografía de un modelo represivo* (San Sebastián: Ediciones Vascas, 1982), 38; *Egin* (1977–88); José L. Pinuel, *El terrorismo en la transición española* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 1986); and Spanish Ministry of Interior, reports on the results of antiterrorist activities of security forces.

unity weakened as a proliferating number of groups vied for electoral support and sought legitimacy as the singular and most effective representative of the Basque people. This provided opportunities for competitive outbidding and for the branding of some groups by others as traitors to the nationalist cause. In the context of ongoing violence, such rivalries within the nationalist camp also encouraged a further radicalization of the political climate in Euskadi and a far higher level of mass mobilization than elsewhere in Spain. At the same time, “years of political indoctrination within the strictly . . . dual scheme of antagonism to Madrid could not be easily shed when a more elaborate context, with different options on the Basque side, emerged.”²⁰ Thus, despite increased pluralism,

20. Zulaika, *Basque Violence*, 186.

whenever difficulties were encountered in the process of autonomy, all nationalist groups continued to perceive the Basque Country as the victim and Madrid as the oppressor. These tendencies, too, provided fertile ground for ETA's persistence after Franco's death.

Finally, one must take into account as an explanation of its persistence after Franco ETA's own conception of the political struggle in which it was engaged. As early as 1964 ETA made an explicit distinction between its own objectives and those of the broader anti-Francoist movement of which it was an important part: "The anti-Franquistas struggle against Franco as though Spanish oppression of the Basque Country did not exist. We struggle against Spanish oppression as though Franco did not exist."²¹ Moreover, if ETA violence had proved to be effective in helping to bring about democratization and had been viewed as a legitimate strategy by others, why then would violence not be an equally effective and justifiable way to achieve independence?

The Cultural Context: A Culture of Violence

Post-civil war generations of Basques grew up in a climate of physical and symbolic violence and repression, in which all things Basque were labeled by the authorities as "traitorous" and as falling within the realm of social transgression. This climate was reinforced by the transmission from older to younger generations of historical memories of earlier periods of violence against the Basque Country, as had taken place during the Carlist and civil wars. The choice made by a segment of the Basque community to engage in violence against the violence of the "occupying forces" of the Spanish state—a choice understood, if not wholly supported, by others—contributed further to the rise of a "culture of violence" in Euskadi.²² This culture of violence, we argue, is the most direct explanation of ETA terrorism and its endurance.

The importance of collective memory of oppression, especially if it is sustained by direct experience over successive generations, cannot be underestimated. Such memory

21. Luciano Rincón, *ETA (1974-1984)* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1985), 186. Translated by Goldie Shabad, as are all subsequent translations, unless otherwise noted.

22. The term "culture of violence" as used here refers solely to political violence. It by no means suggests either that criminal violence was and is more widespread in the Basque Country than elsewhere in Spain or that criminality is viewed with greater tolerance by Basques than others. See Francisco J. Llera, "Violencia y sobrevaloración de la lengua: Conflicto simbólico en el País Vasco," in *Comportamiento electoral y nacionalismo en Cataluña, Galicia y País Vasco*, ed. José Pérez Vilarino (Santiago: Universidad de Santiago, 1987), 157-86.

creates a shared understanding from which oppressors . . . are forever excluded. It transforms experiences into traditions, as the sons learn to see themselves in the fathers, to discover the earlier in the later, as the many stories of the many generations are made into the single story of the struggle to survive, and are sanctified. . . . Because it abolishes time and dissolves place, collective memory is an instrument of continuity. . . . In the memory of oppression, oppression outlives itself. The scar does the work of the wound.²³

This collective memory of oppression, reinforced by daily experience of attacks upon Basque language and identity, consolidated the idea central to early Basque nationalism of two fundamentally conflicting social, political, and symbolic realities: that of the ethnic "we" of the Basque Country and of the patriot versus that of the Spanish "they" of Madrid and of the traitor to the patriotic cause.

Furthermore, by placing all expressions of Basque identity into the category of social transgression, the Francoist regime helped to make the formerly impermissible—including violence—permissible. More important, it made the resort to violence, in the minds of many Basques, a morally justifiable response: "If the situation is to be defined in terms of violence, there is already an ever present institutional violence; any response to it, even pacifism, is violence. Violence, therefore, is the basic agent of social change; and whoever refused to participate in it lacks personal commitment."²⁴

The idea of a collective identity based on these dualities was supported and reproduced throughout the Franco period by a dense network of interpersonal relations (especially the *cuadrilla*) and informal organizations (dance groups, mountaineering clubs, cooking and eating circles, and so forth) at the local level.²⁵ These came to constitute a virtual underground society, sustained by its own norms, myths, and symbols, that was distinct from and opposed to the "legitimate," public domain imposed on the Basque Country by the violence of the Spanish state.

Within this underground society, violence as a response to oppression by the Spanish state was legitimated and made sacral by religious symbolism and by the active support of the lower clergy. As has been noted in many studies of ETA, in the late 1950s and early 1960s many

23. *New Republic*, 5 June 1989, 20.

24. Zulaika, *Basque Violence*, 55.

25. Ander Gurrutxaga, *El código nacionalista vasco durante el Franquismo* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1985), 311.

Catholic groups and ETA in rural or semiurban communities were indistinguishable as organizations, and many small religious groups were subsequently transformed into ETA cells.²⁶ Many ETA activists of the 1950s and 1960s made explicit connections between their resistance to institutional repression and Christian models of sacrifice and martyrdom: to be an *etarra* was to lead an exemplary life.²⁷ As the anthropologist Joseba Zulaika states in his study of Basque violence in the village of Itziar, "In situations in which the very survival of the historical and cultural frames of reference are at stake (and this is how most Basques perceive their fate), the defense of that identity may present itself as the ultimate sacrament."²⁸ Thus, traditional religious ideas of morality and salvation were transferred to the secular domain of the nationalist cause, including the path of violence, and in the process armed struggle itself became sanctified and ritualized.²⁹

With the sacralization of armed struggle on behalf of Basque identity, violence was no longer viewed simply as a political strategy or as just one part of the larger conflict between "us" and "them." Rather, by the end of the Franco period and particularly for generations socialized in the 1960s and 1970s, violence had become a central reference point of Basque social and political reality, one that was made dramatically manifest by direct experience with actual incidents of violence.

The symbolic universe that had developed during the Francoist period, in which all things Basque were overdramatized and political violence was turned into messianic struggle,³⁰ could not be so easily transformed and "rationalized" once the Francoist regime came to an end and democracy was restored. Such a symbolic universe and its particular forms of ritual political behavior were highly resistant to adaptation to changes of the political environment. "After having experienced for twenty-five years a political education in which ritual performance and martyrdom were essential for patriotic self-defense, a change in attitudes is tantamount to an epistemological change affecting the very premises on which political order and personal identity are founded."³¹

This was all the more true for ETA activists. For them, the adoption

26. *Ibid.*, 284 and Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*.

27. Zulaika, *Basque Violence*, 55 and 66.

28. *Ibid.*, 286.

29. Gilbert Durand, "Structure religieuse de la transgression," in *Violence et Transgression*, ed. Michel Maffesoli and André Bruston (Paris: Anthropos, 1979), 23–24.

30. Andrés Ortiz Osés and F. K. Mayr, *El inconsciente colectivo vasco* (San Sebastián: Txertoa, 1982); Jon Juaristi, *El linaje de Aitor: La invención de la tradición vasca* (Madrid: Taurus, 1987); and Aranzadi, *Milenarismo vasco*.

31. Zulaika, *Basque Violence*, 339.

of a flexible and more moderate stance would have been equivalent to "concession and defeat" and would have "trivialized the torture and death endured by the martyrs to ETA's cause."³² The private, but politicized, underground society, which had developed in response to repression and which sustained and reproduced a reformulated Basque collective identity and symbolic universe, also could not be so easily dismantled or rationalized to fit the new public realm of pluralist democracy.

Thus, the culture of violence and its social underpinnings persisted well after their *raison d'être* had disappeared, and continued to serve as a context in which ETA could draw new recruits and mobilize public support.

ETA AS AN ORGANIZATION

Post-civil war generations of Basques inherited a dual legacy of nationalism and violence from their elders. This legacy was in time internalized and reformulated in direct response to physical and symbolic repression by the Francoist dictatorship. Moreover, because of the regime's high degree of centralism, ultra-Spanish nationalism, and suppression of any overt manifestation of Basque identity, for many younger Basques the Spanish state itself became synonymous with authoritarianism.³³

In this context of suppressed nationalism and of physical and symbolic violence, a student organization (Eusko Ikasle Alkartasuna, or Basque Student Solidarity) was founded in the late 1940s at the Catholic University of Deusto in Bilbao. Its purpose was to promote Basque identity and, in particular, the Basque language, Euskera.³⁴ Student activists were arrested by the Spanish police in 1950, but two years later a new group, Ekin, was formed. Two other groups of young people joined this new organization in 1953 and 1954. The first was a segment of Herri Gaztedi (Catholic Country Youth) located in the high valleys of Guipúzcoa.³⁵ The second was a radicalized segment of Euzko Gaztedi del Interior (EGI, the youth section of the Basque Nationalist Party), which had

32. *Ibid.*, 349.

33. Francisco J. Llera, "Legitimation Crisis and Atrophy of the Nation-State in Spain: The Basque Case" (paper presented at the Eleventh World Congress of Sociology, New Delhi, 1986).

34. Ibarzabal, *Cincuenta años*, 359.

35. Pablo Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno contestatario del clero vasco: 1940–1975* (San Sebastián: Elka, 1981), 265.

become frustrated with the conservatism and passivity of older generations of nationalists.

ETA was founded in 1959 by a coalition of these radical youth groups. From its inception, ETA asserted claims for the independence and reunification of the seven Basque provinces, the defense of Basque identity and language, the struggle against police repression and military occupation of the Basque Country by the Spanish state, and solidarity with workers' demands.³⁶

These principles have remained constant throughout ETA's history. Despite recurrent internal conflicts over the primacy of the nationalist or the class struggle and a socioeconomic program couched in vague leftist rhetoric, ETA has been first and foremost a separatist organization. What has changed over time, depending on constraints imposed by police action, the political environment, outcomes of internal disputes, and the ideas of persons occupying leadership positions, have been its ideological emphases, strategies, organizational structure, membership characteristics, and targets of violence. These changes, in turn, have led to further internal divisions and outright schisms. Thus, the history of ETA has been one of crises, schisms, and change.

A Brief History of ETA

Due to the need to establish a solid basis for the break with and radical criticism of traditional and moderate Basque nationalism, represented by the PNV, and to position itself at the forefront of the Basque nationalist struggle, ETA's most active period of theoretical and political discourse occurred between 1959 and its first assembly in 1962.³⁷ The first assembly's principles defined the organization as a "Basque revolutionary movement of national liberation," thus signaling the adoption of a strategy designed to provoke a climate of insurgency against the regime. At the same time, ETA's socioeconomic program was ambiguous and interclassist and was expressed in populist and antioligarchic rhetoric. This vague opening to leftist ideologies was to create a major source of ongoing division within ETA over its ideological self-definition as an ethnonationalist versus leftist movement.

After these initial efforts to articulate a program and strategy, more-concrete guidelines came from outside the organization with the publication in 1963 of *Vasconia* by Federico Krutwig. In addition to arguing for independence as the prime objective, Krutwig stressed an extreme

36. Garmendia, *Historia de ETA*.

37. *Documentos "Y,"* 18 vols. (San Sebastián: Hordago, 1979).

version of the ethnolinguistic definition of Basque identity, gave new meaning to Sabino Arana's idea of "occupation" by identifying it with colonialism, and outlined a revolutionary strategy modeled on Third World struggles for decolonialization.³⁸ Krutwig's application of the model of colonialism to the Basque Country, in particular, served to legitimate ETA's subsequent leap from nonviolent resistance to the Francoist regime to revolutionary warfare against the Spanish state. In 1963 ETA held its second assembly, during which the notion of colonialism and certain Marxist tenets were incorporated into ETA ideology.³⁹

In 1963 ETA made its first contacts with the Spanish Communist party and suffered the consequences of police repression in the aftermath of a series of workers' strikes. Due in part to these events, ETA's third assembly held in 1964 resulted in a qualitative change in its ideological formulations, a change that was to have significant political consequences. It was at this assembly that ETA approved "Insurrection in Euskadi," a document written in exile in France for the political education of its militants.⁴⁰ It was at this meeting, too, that the strategy of armed struggle began to take on sacral overtones and to be sublimated into the idea of messianic liberation led by a vanguard of the enlightened.⁴¹ The example set by the burgeoning workers' movement, the influx of militant workers to ETA, and the patchwork of different ideological tendencies in the organization led to the fourth assembly in 1964.

The assembly's "Letter to the Intellectuals"⁴² was ETA's first attempt to organize a leftist nationalist movement and to define a strategy based on the principle of action-repression-action, aimed at capitalizing on increasing popular and labor mobilization against the regime. Efforts by the PNV shortly thereafter to mobilize support in Guernica to celebrate Aberri Eguna (Homeland Day) provoked ETA to make its own appeal to the Basque people for the creation of a Basque Nationalist Front.⁴³ In its call for unity, ETA combined the two basic principles of its ideological and strategic program, namely, the struggles for national and social liberation.

With ETA's growth after 1964, three distinct, but often overlapping, tendencies emerged within the organization.⁴⁴ The first, promoted by the founders of ETA in exile in France, stressed ethnolinguistic principles

38. F. Sarraih de Ihartza (Federico Krutwig), *Vasconia* (Buenos Aires: Norbait, 1963).

39. *Documentos "Y"* 2:433.

40. *Ibid.* 3:21, 127. Jáuregui, *Ideología*, 225-37.

41. Aranzadi, *Milenarismo vasco*, 400.

42. *Documentos "Y"* 3:507.

43. *Ibid.*, 199.

44. Federico Krutwig, *Vasconia y la nueva Europa* (Baiona: Elkar, 1978), 58.

and was virulently anti-Spanish. The second had as its model anticolonial struggles and emphasized the importance of guerrilla warfare. The third was proworker in its ideological thrust. French actions against the first group and police repression in Spain against the second resulted in the dominance of the third faction in 1965 and 1966. This group replaced the strategy of national liberation with that of "class struggle," to be based on Marxist-Leninist principles and collaboration with the burgeoning workers' movement (including "Spanish forces" both in Euskadi and Spain as a whole). However, a fragile coalition of the first two tendencies decided to convene the fifth assembly in late 1966⁴⁵ to denounce this new strategy, which they viewed as a betrayal of ETA as a nationalist movement and the result of "Spanish" infiltration of the organization.⁴⁶ In response, the proworker faction declared that the fifth assembly was fraudulent and withdrew from it. Members of this faction were then expelled from the organization in early 1967.⁴⁷

Among the new leadership, younger, "anticolonialist" elements, who considered themselves Marxists, were in a majority. As a consequence, many of the founders of ETA, alleging continued "Spanish" influence among the newly dominant group, left the organization following the second part of the fifth assembly held in March 1967.⁴⁸ Thus, 1967 marked a period of generational succession within ETA, the ideological implications of which were contradictory emphases on Marxist class struggle and national liberation, combined with a strategy of insurrection modeled after Third World anti-imperialist guerrilla warfare.⁴⁹ This was also the period when the principle of action-repression-action began to be put into effect. ETA militants increased in number, as did the frequency of successful violent actions.⁵⁰ In 1968 the first ETA militant was killed, and in response, ETA assassinated its first policeman. Both events aroused considerable popular support for ETA in the Basque Country.

As a consequence of increasing terrorist actions and growing worker militance, the regime declared four states of exception between 1967 and 1969, which were felt particularly harshly in the Basque Country. Due to successful police action against ETA, most of the top leaders were imprisoned, and ETA faced the prospect of imminent breakup. ETA had

45. *Documentos "Y"* 5:173.

46. *Branka* (San Sebastián: Ediciones Vascas, 1979).

47. Jáuregui, *Ideología*, 311–58.

48. Patxo Unzueta, *Los nietos de la IRA: Nacionalismo y violencia en el País Vasco* (Madrid: El País/Aguilar, 1988), 102.

49. K. de Zumbeltz [J. L. Zalbide], *Hacia una estrategia revolucionaria vasca* (Ciboure: Hordago, 1975).

50. Federico de Arteaga, *ETA y el proceso de Burgos* (Madrid: Aguado, 1971), 345–50.

to restructure its leadership and reconsider its strategy. The dispersion in exile or imprisonment of ETA leaders resulted in the emergence of a new set of leaders from ETA's workers' front in Bilbao, as well as in the reappearance of disparate tendencies within the organization. ETA's new leaders proposed that a new workers' party be formed and that mass action, mobilized by a broad interclassist national front, take priority over armed struggle. Meanwhile, many exiled ETA activists formed "Red Cells" to study Marxism and to formulate a strategy for combining nationalism and socialism that would be less reliant on Basque nationalism's traditional basis of support among the petite bourgeoisie. Another group of so-called *milis*, supporters of colonialist theses, advocated the pursuit of the armed struggle to the extreme. And a fourth group of proviolence activists did not accept the new leadership at all.

Outside the organization per se was a fifth tendency, that of the ethnolinguists and founders of ETA, now involved in the journal *Branka* and in the Association for Refugee Aid led by another exiled ETA founder, Telesforo de Monzón. With their radical ethnolinguistic nationalism, these outside groups played an important role in supporting, both theoretically and politically, the "militarists" within ETA.

The sixth assembly was convened in 1970 to resolve these differences.⁵¹ Instead, it resulted in even sharper divisions, and ultimately ETA split apart once again. Those who had been active in the Red Cells and who supported the creation of a revolutionary workers' party resigned from ETA and formed a separate organization. Those who advocated armed struggle on behalf of radical nationalism refused to give their support to the decisions made by the sixth assembly and sharply criticized the leadership for having abandoned nationalism and for having come under the influence of Spanish Communist groups. Those who supported ETA's leadership took on the name ETA-VI, to distinguish themselves from their radical nationalist critics who dubbed themselves ETA-V.

In December 1970, shortly after these splits occurred, the Burgos trial was held, involving sixteen ETA militants.⁵² The trial was one of the most significant events in ETA's history. For the first time, massive demonstrations, strikes, and occupations of churches in Euskadi took place in support of ETA's demands and its prisoners.⁵³ Indeed, by the

51. Garmendia, *Historia de ETA* 2:98.

52. The Burgos trial resulted in the commutation of six death penalties and a total of five hundred years of imprisonment for those convicted. For accounts and analyses of the trial, see Gisèle Halimi, *Le procès de Burgos* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); Lurra, *Burgos: Juicio a un pueblo* (San Sebastián: Hordago, 1978); and Kepa Solaberri, *El proceso de Euskadi en Burgos* (Paris: Ruedo Iberico, 1971).

53. Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*, 92–94.

early 1970s ETA came to be at the forefront of the resistance movement against the authoritarian regime. Not only did many political groups in the opposition applaud, at least implicitly, ETA's strategy of armed struggle, but several also supported certain of its political objectives. Even historic parties with strong centralist traditions, like the Socialist and Communist parties, included in their manifestos and programs the right to self-determination of culturally distinct regions and the incorporation of Navarra into the Basque Country.

ETA-VI, in particular, viewed the outpouring of public support during the Burgos trial as a vindication of its strategy of forming a mass movement based on the combined goals of national and social liberation. And for a short period of time it was more successful than its rival in drawing new members. After the Burgos trial, however, police repression against ETA intensified, and many of ETA-VI's leaders went into exile, making it difficult for the leadership to remain in close touch with activists in Spain. Moreover, its de-emphasis of armed struggle and vacillation on crucial questions, such as the status of Euskera and Basque independence, also began to hinder the recruitment of new militants to ETA-VI. By 1972, a majority faction within ETA-VI decided to abandon the organization and to unite with the Trotskyite Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, a group active throughout Spain.

Although ETA-V was in the early 1970s far weaker than ETA-VI, the radical nationalism of the former, coupled with its emphasis on armed struggle, was "to prove, in the long run, more in tune with ETA's traditional social base than was ETA-VI's Marxism."⁵⁴ Moreover, compared with its rival, ETA-V was perceived by other Basque nationalist groups as being a much more acceptable member of a populist "national front." The number of ETA-V activists grew considerably with the incorporation in 1972 of many radicalized members of the PNV's youth group, EGI. As ETA-V became stronger, it decided to hold an assembly in September 1973 to endorse its leadership and the decision to reorganize into four fronts, among which the military front would be dominant. It was the leaders of the military front who, without consulting others, decided on the assassination, rather than the kidnapping, of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco.

The successful assassination of the prime minister in December 1973 showed the regime to be vulnerable to attack and helped to precipitate the demise of Francoism. It also provoked a new crisis within ETA-V (henceforth ETA). The disaffected within the subordinated workers' front broke from the organization in May 1974 and founded the first

54. Ibid., 129.

radical *abertzale* (patriotic) party, the Langille Abertzale Iraultzalean Alderdia (Patriotic Revolutionary Workers Party, or LAIA). ETA itself then divided into two factions: the first consisted of the leaders in France, who defended the priority and autonomy of armed struggle; and the second, of activists in Spain, who wished to combine military and political strategies in the context of high levels of mass mobilization. In late 1974 a definitive split occurred between these two factions. In its "manifesto," ETA-militar (ETA-m) appealed to mass organizations to form a "popular front for independence" in order to prepare for the final stage of the struggle against the dictatorship. But at the same time, it stressed the primacy and autonomy of the militarist leadership of the movement.⁵⁵ ETA-politico militar (ETA-pm) opted for a unified leadership combining political and military struggle against the regime. Despite these differences, both organizations had the same political objectives (independence, monolingualism for the Basque Country, and socialism) and the same basic strategy of popular revolution.

The end of the Franco regime in 1975 and the onset of democratization caught ETA without having resolved its internal conflicts over the relation between political and armed struggle and the organizational and functional role of the militarist branch of the organization. The battle between the militarist (ETA-m) and politico-militarist (ETA-pm) wings intensified. Among a growing number of ETA-pm leaders and militants, the use of violence was viewed primarily as a means to achieve certain goals—the release of ETA prisoners, for example. Now that the political environment had begun to change, other means to achieve these goals could complement, if not replace altogether, armed struggle. ETA-pm sought to participate in the political process, to enter into negotiations with the Spanish state, and, at the same time, to escalate its use of violence in order to bargain from a position of strength. For ETA-m leaders and their supporters, however, terrorism had by this time acquired a logic of its own and had assumed a more expressive than instrumental role. Hence, acts of violence were to continue irrespective of changes in the political environment, which in any case were thought to be illusory. The military faction rejected the process of political reform because it expected that reform would fail, thus making way for a prerevolutionary climate and *ruptura*.

ETA-pm decided at its seventh assembly to foster political organizations in order to create a leftist mass party to compete in the newly emergent pluralistic environment. This conformed to ETA-pm's thesis of "splitting," which argued for the dependence of the military leadership

55. Garmendía, *Historia de ETA* 2:181.

on the legal, political leadership and for the possible dissolution of the military branch in the long run. Already in 1974, ETA-pm had created a new nationalist trade union, Langille Abertzalean Batzordea (Patriotic Workers Council, or LAB), and in 1976 it founded a new *abertzale* Marxist-Leninist party, Euskal Iraultzale Alderdia (Basque Revolutionary Party, or EIA).

This party was but one of several radical nationalist groups formed at this time. In 1974 a split of the Basque movement ENBATA (The Wind) in France gave rise to a new party, Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (Popular Socialist Party, or HAS), which converged in 1975 with Euskal Alderdi Sozialista (the Basque Socialist Party, or EAS) to form a new revolutionary *abertzale* socialist organization. Eusko Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (Basque Popular Socialist Party, or EHAS), led by Santi Brouard.⁵⁶ Another group, Herriko Alderdi Sozialista Iraultzalea (Popular Revolutionary Socialist Party), arose out of this split as well, but aligned itself with ETA-m and later became the core of the antisystem coalition Herri Batasuna. Several of the founders of ETA, now associated with the journal *Branka*, together with a splinter group of the historic nationalist trade union Eusko Langileen Alkartasuna-Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos (Basque Workers Solidarity, or ELA-STV), created a new social democratic patriotic party, Euskal Sozialista Biltzarrea (Basque Socialist Assembly, or ESB), in 1976. Euskadiko Sozialista Elkartze Indarra (Socialist Unification of Euskadi, or ESEI), another moderate socialist party of young professionals, was founded in the same year.

Amid this growing political fragmentation within the nationalist camp, the desire to restore some semblance of unity, the need for continued popular mobilization, and the struggle over ETA's legacy gave rise in 1975 to Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista (Socialist Patriotic Coordinator, or KAS). KAS was established for the purpose of creating a united patriotic socialist coalition,⁵⁷ and was composed of both ETAs, LAIA, LAB, Langille Abertzale Komiteak (Patriotic Workers Committee, or LAK), HAS, EAS, and Eusko Langileen Indarra (Force of the Basque Workers, or ELI). At the end of 1976, KAS approved the so-called KAS Alternative, whose origin was ETA-pm's manifesto of eight points for the Aberri Eguna of 1975. The alternative program, composed primarily of radical nationalist demands, was later set forth by ETA-m as its primary condition for entering into negotiations with the Spanish state.

Both ETA-m and ETA-pm rejected the Reform Law of 1976 and the

56. Santi Brouard was later assassinated in 1984 by the anti-ETA terrorist group GAL (Grupos Anti-terroristas de Liberación).

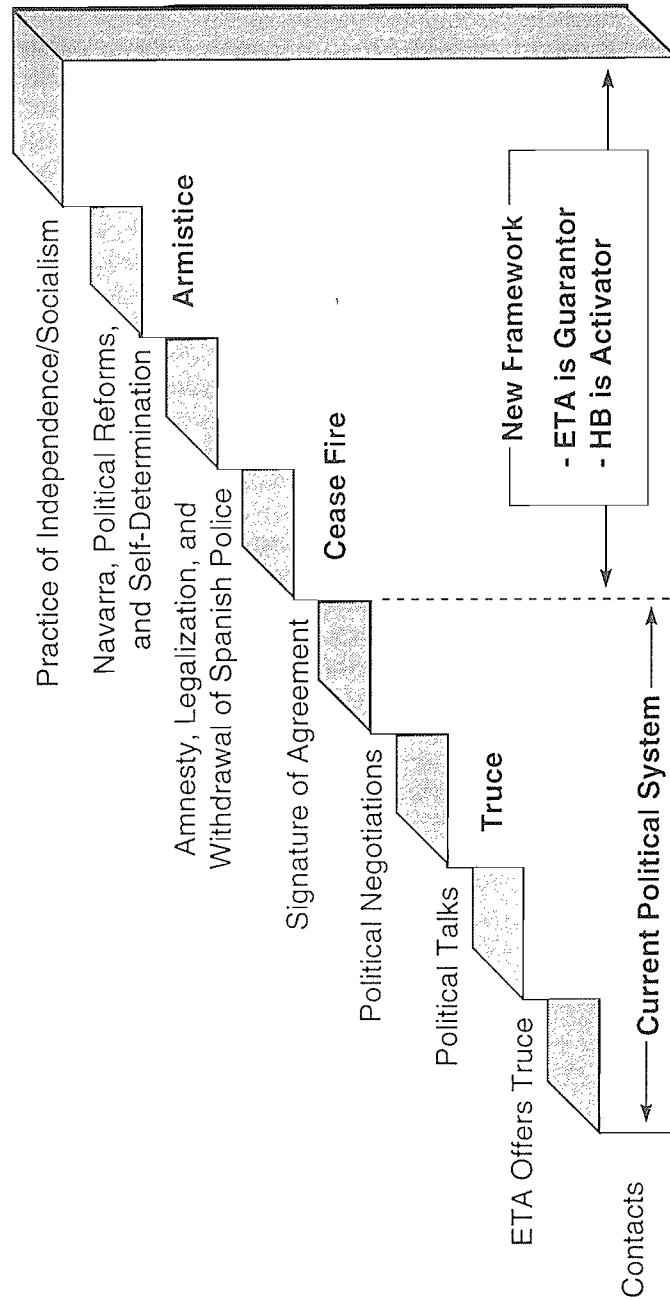
57. Naxto Arregi, *Memorias del KAS, 1975-1978* (San Sebastián: Haranburu, 1981), 49.

1978 Spanish constitution and continued to engage in violence. But by 1979-80, during the time of the establishment of the Basque Autonomous Community, ETA-pm had come to accept the primacy of political action and the leadership role of Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE), a coalition comprised of EIA and factions of the Basque Communist party, HASI, Acción Nacional Vasca (Basque National Action, or ANV), and ESEI. In 1981, shortly after the attempted coup d'état by a segment of the military, ETA-pm was dissolved, and those members who wished to continue the armed struggle joined ETA-m. Since that time, EE evolved into a Basque socialist party, participated actively in the institutionalization of Basque governmental bodies, and in January 1993 merged with the Basque branch of the Socialist party. It also served in the early 1980s as a mediator between former members of ETA-pm and the Spanish government in implementing the policy of social reinsertion, whereby persons not guilty of violent acts could be reintegrated into society without penalty.

The disbanding of ETA-pm in 1981 left ETA-m as the primary terrorist actor and resulted in a sharp reduction of violent actions. ETA-m and its affiliated political group, Herri Batasuna (a coalition formed in 1978 consisting of HASI, other mass organizations of KAS, and parts of LAIA, ESB, and ANV), continued to perceive the new Spanish democracy as Francoism in disguise and, despite Basque autonomy, to hold fast to the view of an ongoing war between the Spanish state and the Basque Country. Conceiving of itself as an authentic "people's army," ETA's strategy has been to bring about an "armistice," through negotiations, in which the Spanish government would accept the political conditions set forth by the KAS Alternative. In the interim, ETA's objectives have been to delegitimize existing political institutions established by both the Spanish constitution and the Basque Autonomy Statute and to gain legitimacy for itself as the true and only representative of the Basque people. To achieve these objectives, ETA has sought, through its network of organizations of the Basque Movement of National Liberation (MVLN), constantly to mobilize its supporters and public opinion. But as recent internal ETA documents reveal, violence is to accompany mass mobilizations until ETA's ultimate objectives are achieved (see Fig. 10.3).⁵⁸

Since 1981 ETA-m has evolved into a secret army composed of small cells of three- to five-member commandos with direct connections to the military leadership in France. The military leadership is at the apex of an extensive and complex social movement (MVLN) that divides the

58. KAS, "Political Negotiations" (1988, photocopy).



Source: Internal document of Herri Batasuna, 1988

Fig. 10.3. The negotiating strategy of ETA for the 1990s

tasks of political mobilization among “legal” organizations. KAS is at the second echelon in the line of command, in which the main political party (HASI), the trade union (LAB), the youth organization (JARRAI), prisoners’ support groups (proamnesty committees), and popular committees (ASK) come together. All of these, moreover, are part of Herri Batasuna, which competes in elections but which does not participate in representative institutions above the local level. Finally, at the periphery of ETA is a network of specialized organizations having to do with religious matters, education, the promotion of the Basque language, mass media, ecology, women, drugs, students, children, international solidarity, and prisoners and refugees.

As internal documents of KAS meetings reveal, ETA’s leadership is directly involved in important decisions taken by the organizations associated with it. HASI has had three leadership successions since its founding in 1977, and ETA intervention was always decisive. A historical member of ETA’s executive committee was the second candidate on Herri Batasuna’s list for the first European Community elections in Spain, and a significant number of the coalition’s candidates for local or regional bodies have been imprisoned *etarras*. Since the military leadership of ETA believes that a war is being fought between the Basque people and the Spanish state, it brooks no criticism of its decisions and strategies. A psychological climate of fear and threat surrounds those who dissent, particularly in moments of crisis. The assassinations of Pertur, leader of ETA-pm, in 1976 and of Yoyes, who accepted the government’s offer of social reinsertion, in 1986 underscore the credibility of threats against “betrayals” or criticism from within. Expulsions, dismissals from leadership positions, and silence have been the penalties for dissent by lesser figures within ETA and its affiliated associations.

Despite these efforts by ETA’s military leadership to stifle debate and dissent, the adoption by the Spanish government in 1984 of the policy of social reinsertion and the hope among some ETA members that talks between the leadership and the Spanish government would lead to an end to the armed struggle gave rise in the 1980s to new conflicts within the organization. The main division has been between the most radicalized and violent members (active leaders and prisoners in France and prisoners in Spain accused of killings) and those who have grown weary of the struggle and have the possibility of returning to a normal life in Euskadi (the deported, refugees, and prisoners untainted by violent acts). Moreover, the imprisonment or exile from France of many top leaders and the ensuing problems of communication with rank-and-file members and affiliated groups have undermined the cohesion among organizations of KAS, particularly between those which demand more

political autonomy for their actions (HASI and a part of Herri Batasuna) and those which advocate strict commitment to ETA's leadership (proamnesty committees, most of Herri Batasuna, JARRAI, and LAB).

ETA's three-decade-long history has been marked by conflict, crisis, and change (see Fig. 10.4). Most of its assemblies have been contested, protracted, or duplicated by a disaffected or expelled segment of the organization. None of ETA's leaders has enjoyed legitimacy for any extended period of time, and if not because of imprisonment or exile, succession to top positions has tended to occur by way of a coup d'état.

Throughout its history, the sources of ETA's factionalism and instability have been intense conflicts over four main issues: the priority to be given to national versus social liberation; the emphasis to be placed on mass political activity and, after Franco's death, on participation in democratic institutions versus armed struggle, and how best to reconcile these two strategies; the relation between the political and military branches of the organization and the degree of autonomy to be permitted to the latter; and, finally, the desirability of links with "Spanish" political forces. Divisions over these issues have never clearly demarcated one group from another. Rather, depending on time and circumstances, views on these issues have overlapped in different ways and have thus resulted in unstable and temporary coalitions among ETA factions. But differences over ideology and strategy have not been the sole sources of internal conflict and instability. Power struggles among leaders have played their part as well, and divisions among the rank and file have often been determined less by differences over ideology and strategy than by friendship patterns and personal ties to one or another leader.

The assumption by ETA of leftist ideologies and discourse at different moments in its history was primarily the result of changing contextual circumstances and was used as a means to incorporate new social sectors and issues into the nationalist movement.⁵⁹ The accretion of such ambiguous leftist discourse gave ETA an increasingly populist image. But at every critical moment for the organization, the old guard of radical nationalists eventually triumphed and guaranteed that orthodoxy would prevail. Language and Spanish occupation of the Basque Country remained the prime elements of ETA's symbolic capital, the main sources of the legitimacy accorded its violent struggle and of the effectiveness of its mobilization efforts.

With the growing "militarization" of ETA in the 1980s and its reduction to a more hard-core violent nucleus, internal conflicts have tended to

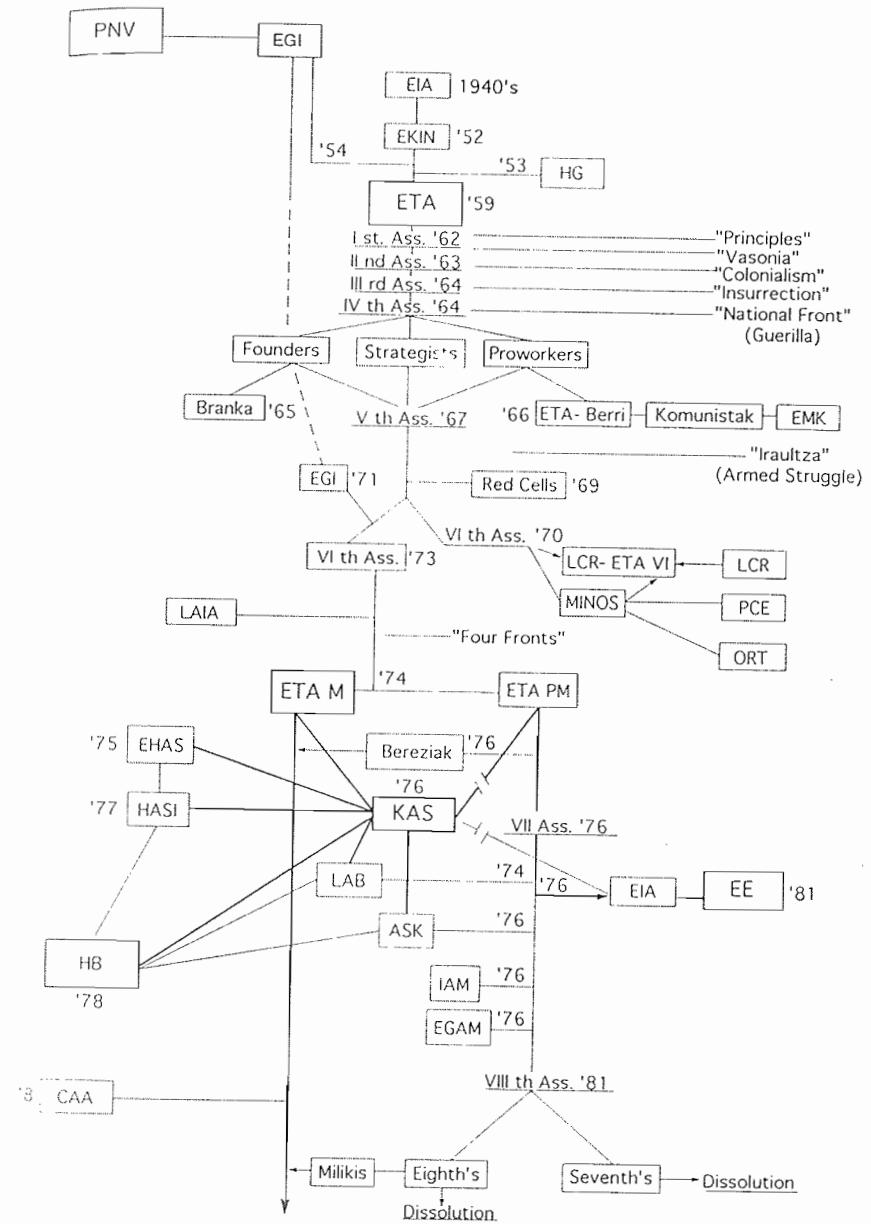


Fig. 10.4. Organizational development of ETA and Patriotic Left, 1952–1982

59. Luigi Bruni, *Historia política de una lucha armada* (Bilbao: Txalaparta, 1987), and Pedro Ibarra, *La evolución estratégica de ETA (1963–1987)* (Donostia: Kriselu, 1987).

focus on how to respond to actions taken by the Spanish state and other political forces in the Basque Country. As its numbers have dwindled and its ability to broaden its base of support has declined, internal debate over goals and strategies has lessened considerably. Its primary aim has become the very survival of the organization itself.

Leaders and Members

As Robert Clark has pointed out, it is difficult to characterize ETA membership because there are several categories, levels, and functions of ETA activists, as well as "moments" in the gradual incorporation of *etarras* into the organization.⁶⁰

The *liberados*, or *ilegales*, are the leaders and are characterized by their highest decision-making status, their full-time involvement in the organization, and their commitment to the use of violence. Leaders, moreover, are well known to the police. The second rank is composed of the *legales*, who are not known to the police, who lead a normal life and are employed outside the organization, and who have a variable commitment to ETA. Depending on their function, the *legales* are grouped into three different categories. The first are the *enlaces* (or links), who engage in communication activities; the second are the *buzones*, who serve as drop points for material for and from the organization; and the third category is composed of the *informativos*, who are responsible for intelligence gathering. In the third tier are supporters of ETA, whose function is to prepare and supply logistical support for the activities of the other groups by providing them with transportation, food, clothing, documentation, shelter, and so forth. These three layers also represent successive phases of recruitment and commitment to the organization; individuals may move up after they have completed a period of probation in local cells and have gained the approval of top people responsible for recruitment.

It is obviously not easy to determine the exact size of a clandestine organization such as ETA. Gathering data from different sources, Clark estimated that membership has ranged from a low of 6 to 70 during the first years of ETA's history, to between 200 and 600 during the 1960s, to between 100 and 400 in the 1970s, to about 500 in 1981.⁶¹ More recent calculations by the Spanish police indicated the existence of twenty operative commandos in 1984 with around ninety activists. Nine commandos were *ilegales* (four in Guipúzcoa, two in Vizcaya, and one each in

Alava, Navarra, and Madrid). The other eleven were *legales*. Spanish police calculated that by the end of 1988 the overall number had declined to fewer than fifty active members.

Fragmentary information from police records or from indirect and secondary sources also provides some data about the social characteristics of ETA members and the changes that have taken place in this regard during the last decade. All sources point to the Basque origin of more than 80 percent of ETA members during the 1960s and 1970s. The percentage born of immigrant parents increased slightly in the 1980s. But there was a significant difference between the ethnic origins of historic *liberados* in jail during 1980–81 and of those arrested during the same years (73 percent versus 56 percent of Basque parentage), thus suggesting a significant increase (from 15 percent to 23 percent) of *etarras* coming from an immigrant background.⁶² Moreover, data from police records show that the most violent terrorists between 1983 and 1988 were immigrants who had joined ETA after 1982: Juan Toledo, 29 years of age, accused of 17 killings; Antonio Troitino, 31, accused of 32 assassinations; Domingo Troitino, 33, of 24; and Ramón Caride, aged 44, accused of 27 deaths. These figures indicate that the above individuals were in charge or were members of commandos responsible for more than 70 percent of all ETA killings between 1983 and 1988.⁶³

The socioeconomic characteristics of ETA members have also changed somewhat over time. In the 1960s and 1970s, 90 percent of *etarras* were men; in the 1980s, however, male numbers declined to about 80 percent.⁶⁴ In the 1960s, 44 percent of *etarras* were drawn from the working class, 40 percent from the middle class, and 14 percent from the farm population.⁶⁵ But many of these had experienced some degree of upward mobility: 47 percent were students, 18 percent were members of the working and middle class, and 16 percent could be categorized as belonging to the upper class. During the 1970s the proportions of ETA members from the lower (34.3 percent) and middle (45.6 percent) classes increased, while those who had upper-class origins declined, as did those who were students (11.4 percent).⁶⁶ The unemployed (8.6 percent) appeared among

62. Spanish Ministry of the Interior, report on the results of antiterrorist activities of security forces, 1982.

63. *Tiempo*, 5 May 1989.

64. See the diary of Maria Dolores González Katarain, "'Yoyes,' . . . the First Woman Leader of ETA in the 1970s," in *Yoyes: Desde su ventana*, ed. Elixabete Garmendia, Gloria González Catarain, Ana González Catarain, July Garmendia, and Juanjo Dorransoro (Iruña: Garrasi, 1987).

65. Unzueta, *Los nietos de la IRA*, 181.

66. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 145.

60. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 142.

61. *Ibid.*, 220–22.

ETA's ranks for the first time. Data for the 1980s show a similar social profile: 2 percent were from the upper class, 42.8 percent from the middle class, and 33 percent from the working class; 15.8 percent were students; and 6.4 percent were unemployed.⁶⁷

In all three decades of ETA's history, those from urban areas constituted about 70 percent of its membership. However, comparison of the geographical origins of ETA members in the 1980s⁶⁸ with those in the 1960s⁶⁹ reveals some changes. ETA activists from Bilbao and its surrounding area decreased from 38 to 26 percent. During the same period those from the San Sebastian area increased from 16 to 20 percent, as did the numbers drawn from Vitoria in Alava (from 2 to 5 percent) and from Pamplona in Navarra (from 0 to 7 percent). The proportion of *etarras* from rural and semiurban areas of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya remained steady at 19 percent and 15 percent, respectively, while those from comparable areas in Alava increased by 5 percent and in Navarra by 3 percent.

Data about ETA prisoners and about militants arrested by the police show a slight decline in the mean age of recruitment of ETA members from 27.8 years of age in 1980–81, to 26.5 in 1985–87, to 26.2 in 1988. (This, in turn, suggests an aging of those who are still active in the organization.) The age distribution of those joining ETA, as revealed by recent police files, shows that between 1985 and 1987, 12.7 percent of ETA members were 20 years of age or younger; 31.5 percent were between 25 and 29 years of age; 10.2 percent were between 30 and 35; and 11.3 percent were 36 years of age and older. Comparable figures for 1988 were 21 percent (20 years of age and younger), 22.8 percent (25–29), 8.7 percent (30–35), and 15.6 percent (36 years and older).

In sum, a few changes can be noted, particularly in the 1980s, in the socioeconomic characteristics of ETA members. There were more *etarras* of mixed Basque or immigrant backgrounds, more who were unemployed, and more women, indicating a change in the circumstances and motivations leading to involvement in ETA. Moreover, more *etarras* in the 1980s than in the previous two decades joined at an earlier age and were drawn from traditionally weaker strongholds of Basque nationalism, such as Alava and Navarra. Nonetheless, the overwhelming proportion of ETA members continued to be Basque males in their twenties and thirties from urban areas of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.

67. Spanish Ministry of the Interior, reports on antiterrorist activities, 1982 and 1988.

68. *Ibid.*, 1989.

69. Unzueta, *Los nietos del la IRA*, 177.

Kinds and Targets of Violence

During the more than thirty years of its existence, ETA has been responsible for more than five hundred assassinations, more than one thousand injuries, sixty kidnappings, innumerable bombings, armed assaults, and robberies, and an extended regime of "revolutionary taxation." Table 10.4 shows the annual distribution of mortalities attributed to ETA, as well as to others. ETA has been responsible for more than 70 percent of all people killed in terrorist actions in Spain during the last twenty years. As Table 10.5 shows, the majority of its victims have been police and military officers, a clear reflection of ETA's objective of making manifest the Spanish occupation of the Basque Country and the war of the Basque people against the Spanish state.

Table 10.4. People killed in terrorist actions, 1968–1991

	By ETA	By Extreme Right	By GAL	By Other*	Total
1968	2	—	—	—	2
1969	1	—	—	—	1
1970	—	—	—	—	—
1971	—	—	—	1	1
1972	1	—	—	1	2
1973	7	—	—	1	8
1974	19	—	—	—	19
1975	16	—	—	10	26
1976	15	3	—	3	21
1977	12	6	—	10	28
1978	64	8	—	13	85
1979	78	22	—	11	111
1980	93	29	—	2	124
1981	30	4	—	4	38
1982	31	1	—	12	44
1983	34	—	2	8	44
1984	24	—	9	—	33
1985	31	—	11	1	43
1986	24	—	2	15	41
1987	49	—	1	8	58
1988	19	—	—	15	24
1989	19	1	—	5	25
1990	25	—	—	5	30
1991	45	—	—	7	52
Total	639	74	25	132	860

SOURCE: See table 10.3.

*Including activists dead in terrorist or police actions.

Table 10.5. Classification of ETA's mortal victims, 1968–1991 (in percentages)

	Percent
Police	45.1
Military officers	13.0
Citizens	34.9
ETA members	3.9
Local politicians	2.0
Industrialists	1.0
National politicians	0.1

SOURCE: Spanish Ministry of the Interior, reports on antiterrorist activities.

A second type of ETA violence has been kidnapping. Sixty have occurred since 1970 (Table 10.6). Most of these were perpetrated against Basque industrialists in order to raise funds for ETA's activities, as well as to influence public opinion. Six of those kidnapped were eventually killed (one military officer, the chief engineer of a Basque nuclear plant under construction, a member of a well-known Basque family, and three

Table 10.6 Kidnappings by ETA, 1970–1991

	No. of Kidnappings
1970	1
1971	—
1972	1 (assassinated)
1973	1
1974	4 (2 assassinated)
1975	—
1976	—
1977	1 (assassinated)
1978	4
1979	13
1980	10
1981	6 (1 assassinated)
1982	6
1983	6 (1 assassinated)
1984	—
1985	3
1986	2
1987	1
1988	1
1989	1
1990	—
1991	—

SOURCE: Contemporary press reports.

other industrialists), eight were injured, and four were rescued by the police. Kidnappings have also served as a way to coerce thousands of other Basque industrialists and professionals into paying a sizable annual "revolutionary tax" to the organization.

Basque industrialists were also the target of nearly five hundred attacks (bombings, sabotage, robberies, and armed assaults) between 1972 and 1983.⁷⁰ The second prime targets of attack have been banks, firms in crisis or in the midst of strikes, and, since France's decision in the late 1980s to cooperate with Spanish anti-ETA efforts, French firms.

In recent years there has been a qualitative change in the kind of violence practiced by ETA. Violent actions have been more indiscriminate and fatal, more frequently directed against collective targets (e.g., supermarkets, police headquarters), more often staged in the largest Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza), and more sophisticated in the use of weapons. One can only speculate, but such changes tending toward more extreme, albeit less frequent, violent activities may have been the result of a loss of support for ETA among the Basque public in the late 1980s and hence the result of the erosion of the ties between ETA and the community it purports to represent.⁷¹

The International Dimension

The international dimension of ETA violence has been apparent in three areas: first, the role played by France as a refuge and center of operations for ETA members since the early 1960s; second, international connections between terrorist and revolutionary groups in Europe and Third World countries to obtain arms, training, and support; and third, as has been described earlier, the borrowing of foreign models to define strategy and to achieve legitimacy, thereby "internationalizing" the Basque struggle.

The Basque Country has an extended border with France that is difficult to control. Moreover, Basques live on both sides of the border, and French Basques have a long tradition of solidarity with, and giving refuge to, exiles from Spain, particularly after the civil war. The so-called French sanctuary was an important resource for ETA for a number of reasons. For much of the time, ETA's leadership was in exile in France; French sanctuary helped to legitimate the Basque struggle against the Franco regime; and it provided the opportunity for ideological education for some of ETA's leaders.

70. *Deia*, 6 June 1983.

71. Remarks made by Michel Wieviorka at the Conference on Terrorism in Context, 8–10 June 1989, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.

The French government arrested several ETA activists, including members of the executive committee, for the first time in 1964 and began its policy of banishment from the Basque provinces in France. However, by that time most Basque refugees had achieved residence status and were protected in their activities. After the assassination of Carrero Blanco in 1973, the French government slowly began to change its policy toward ETA. In 1974 it banned all separatist organizations; in 1976 it made more difficult the achievement of resident status; and in 1977 it initiated a policy of preventive detention. A major contributor to the change in French policy was the increase in violence in France on the part of Iparretarrak, the most active of French Basque groups. At the same time, right-wing counterterrorist organizations (GAL, the Apostolic Anticommunist Alliance [AAA], and so forth) began their operations in the Basque French provinces. They were responsible for more than sixty violent actions between 1975 and 1982, in which nearly one hundred people were killed, most of them ETA members.

The increase in violence on French soil, the approval of the Spanish constitution in 1978 and the Basque Autonomy Statute in 1979, and the entry of Spain into the Common Market and NATO all led to the French government's adoption in the 1980s of a much harsher anti-ETA policy. As a result, most members of ETA's executive committee have either been jailed or deported by the French government, and between 1986 and 1988, French authorities turned over two hundred captured *etarras* to the Spanish government. This radical departure in French policy has severely constrained ETA's ability to carry out frequent actions and has exacerbated internal organizational problems of coordination and communication.

As for ETA's connections to other terrorist organizations, some members have been given training in Third World socialist countries, such as Yemen, Algeria, Libya, and Cuba. Available data suggest that ETA's arms come from the Middle East, and some of its funds have been provided by the Libyan government. Purchase of weapons, mostly from Communist Czechoslovakia and the former Soviet Union, was coordinated with other European terrorist groups. Since the 1970s, the closest and most continuous links with foreign terrorist organizations have been with the IRA.

The international dimension of ETA violence has also been reflected in its various efforts to ally itself ideologically with and to model its strategy on Third World anticolonial insurgent movements. As it turned out, these foreign models were largely inapplicable to Basque society. ETA was never able to create a broad-based insurrection movement or to engage in full-scale guerrilla warfare. Nonetheless, the adoption of

anticolonial models of armed struggle in the early 1960s had significant repercussions for ETA and for Basque nationalism and society. It was a significant ideological factor contributing to ETA's decision to engage in violent activities and therefore served as a major source of internal conflict and schisms.

AFTER FRANCO: THE PERSISTENCE OF ETA VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECTS

The effects of ETA and its violent activities during the latter part of the Franco era are easily discernible. ETA's assassination of Franco's heir apparent, Carrero Blanco, in 1973 showed the regime to be vulnerable and contributed to the demise of authoritarian rule. More important, ETA was instrumental in fomenting and mobilizing demands for regional autonomy, as well as the desire for outright independence among a significant minority of Basques. ETA also helped to perpetuate the "culture of violence" that would later serve as an obstacle to democratic consolidation in the Basque Country. ETA thereby ensured that the "Basque question" and that of center-periphery relations more generally would be at the forefront of the political agenda once the Spanish transition to democracy had begun.

The persistence of ETA and its dramatic escalation of violence during the transition and the period of negotiations over the Basque Autonomy Statute and elections to the Basque regional government (1977-80) had equally significant effects on Spanish democracy and, in particular, on Basque politics, society, and economy. Although the causal role of terrorism is "difficult to distinguish from those of other phenomena," because "its effects are diffused and modified over time,"⁷² one can say with certainty that ETA violence and the counterviolence of state authorities in the first years of democratic rebirth posed one of the most serious challenges to the new regime. Spanish democracy has withstood that challenge and is widely regarded as having achieved consolidation. Although a great deal of ambiguity continues to surround the degree of support given by the state to right-wing anti-ETA terrorist groups, such as GAL, and much criticism has been leveled against the government for the alleged torture of ETA prisoners by the police, the new regime did

72. Martha Crenshaw, "Introduction: Reflections on the Effects of Terrorism," in *Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 6.

not succumb to state-sponsored terrorism in order to combat ETA. Nonetheless, by raising serious doubts about the legitimacy of the new regime among both Basques and ultra-Spanish nationalist groups (particularly within the military), ETA violence jeopardized the transition to democracy and slowed considerably the process of democratic consolidation in the Basque Country.

The purposes of ETA violence after Franco's death remained, in a very general sense, the same as before. While Franco was alive, ETA sought to delegitimize the Francoist regime, to expand and mobilize the Basque nationalist community, and to show both the repressiveness of the Spanish state and the ineffectiveness of such repression in the face of growing violent and nonviolent opposition to the regime. Despite redemocratization and the granting of autonomy to Euskadi, the fundamental aims of ETA's violence continued to be mobilization of the Basque public behind its goal of national liberation and the delegitimation of now democratic (including newly established Basque) political institutions. In short, ETA continued to engage in violence as part of its larger political struggle against the state in order to persuade the public to see the world in its own terms and to thereby gain the public's allegiance.⁷³

ETA sought to achieve its goals by affecting—in different and often contradictory ways—the attitudes and behavior of a multiple set of target groups or audiences. Apart from seeking to instill fear in the classes of individuals who were the principal victims of ETA violence, its symbolic or psychological effects were directed toward the manipulation of the attitudes and behavior of six principal audiences: the Spanish government, from which it sought both to wring concessions and to provoke a repressive response against Euskadi; the military, in whose eyes it wanted to make the democratic regime look weak and ineffective; Spanish public opinion, which ETA sought to polarize; the Basque public and particularly the nationalist community, whose support ETA wanted to mobilize; Basque governmental institutions and political parties, which ETA wanted to portray as betrayers of the nationalist cause and from which at the same time it wanted to gain support; and, finally, ETA supporters and activists (including those in rival groups claiming ETA's legacy), among whom it wanted to maintain solidarity and commitment to the struggle and to infuse with a sense of self-esteem and power. To borrow Ian Lustick's terminology, ETA violence was at one and the same time both solipsistic and other-directed.⁷⁴

73. Alex Schmid, "Goals and Objectives of International Terrorism," in *Current Perspectives on International Terrorism*, ed. Robert O. Slater and Michael Stohl (London: Macmillan, 1988), 48, and Martha Crenshaw, "The Subjective Reality of the Terrorist," in *ibid.*, 12.

74. See Chapter 12 in this volume.

To what extent, then, did the persistence and, indeed, escalation of ETA violence in the aftermath of Franco's death achieve their intended effects? What impact did these "audiences," in turn, have on the course of ETA violence? Explanations of the effects of ETA violence after the demise of the Francoist regime lie in a complex and dynamic interplay among four major factors, which together define the opportunity structure in which ETA operated:⁷⁵ ETA's embeddedness in an open, pluralistic political environment, in which numerous nationalist groups competed for support and legitimacy and in which more moderate Basque forces gained dominance; the degree of weakness or instability of the dominant political coalition at a given moment; the degree of popular support for ETA; and the effectiveness of the government's response to violence. The ways in which these four factors interacted differed over time.

The Effects of ETA Violence During the Transition Period: 1975–1981

This period was one of remarkable institutional change in Spain. A reform law was enacted in 1976 that, among other things, permitted the formation of political parties. In 1977 elections for the constituent Cortes were held, and in 1978 a new constitution was ratified. This 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 state would be based. In the autumn of 1979 Euskadi (and Catalonia) regained autonomy, which they had lost as a result of Franco's victory in the civil war, and elections for the Basque parliament were held in March 1980. In that same year, the Spanish government restored to the Basque provinces of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya the *conciertos económicos* (the system of tax privileges) that had been abrogated by Franco in 1937. The transition came to an end in the aftermath of an aborted coup d'état on 28 February 1981 by segments of the military who were provoked to act, in large part, by escalating ETA violence and the concessions made by the central government to demands for regional autonomy.

As significant and fast paced as these changes were, the transition period from beginning to end was marked by great uncertainty over its

75. The concept "political opportunity structure" has been used by others to account for the emergence of different varieties of collective action. It is also helpful, we would argue, in explaining outcomes of collective action, including political violence. See Sidney Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest* (Occasional Paper no. 21, Cornell University, Center for International Studies, 1989), 32–39.

eventual outcome and how different segments of Spanish society might respond to each turn of events. Moreover, the "dominant coalitions" resulting from the 1977 and 1979 parliamentary elections were minority UCD (center-right) governments, which were dependent on other political parties not only for legislative support but, more importantly, for broad-based acceptance of the constitution and of the restructuring of the centralized state toward *un estado de las autonomías* (a state of the autonomies). Many factors contributed to the uncertain and precarious nature of the transition. Not least of these was the level of polarization of opinion and intensification of demands for autonomy in Euskadi and Catalonia, set amid ongoing mass mobilizations and increasing ETA violence and counterviolence by the state.

In 1977 opinion in Spain as a whole was rather divided with regard to the question of the structure of the state: 46 percent stated a preference for the status quo, a highly centralized state; 45 percent favored either a limited or an extensive degree of regional autonomy; only 3 percent agreed to the notion of independence for certain regional populations.⁷⁶ By spring 1979, after two years of heated political debate, considerable media attention paid to the issue, and increasing ETA violence, Spanish public opinion had grown more favorably disposed toward autonomy (56 percent) and far less inclined toward centralism (30 percent).⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, public opinion in the Basque Country with regard to the structure of the state showed a strikingly different pattern. In 1977, 45 percent of Basques favored limited autonomy, another 18 percent preferred more extensive regional self-government, and 16 percent declared themselves for independence. Preference for a highly centralized state was a distinctly minority view.⁷⁸ Two years later, shortly after the ratification of the constitution, one out of every five Basques favored independence, and those preferring autonomy had declined to a bare majority of 54 percent. Thus, whereas in Spain as a whole preferences for a limited degree of autonomy became more widespread during the transition, in Euskadi opinion became more polarized and extreme.⁷⁹

76. Juan J. Linz, Manuel Gómez-Reino, Francisco Andrés Orizo, and Darío Vila, *Informe sociológico sobre el cambio político en España, 1975-1981* (Madrid: Fundación FOESSA, 1981), 24.

77. The 1979 data reported here come from a spring postelection survey of 5,439 Spaniards that was part of a collaborative research project by Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad. Respondents in Euskadi were oversampled to allow for detailed analyses of regional attitudes and behavior.

78. Juan J. Linz, *Conflicto en Euskadi* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1986), 101; see also Francisco J. Llera, "Continuidad y cambio en la política vasca: Notas sobre identidades sociales y cultura política" (Paper presented at the 1989 Annual Meeting of the Asociación Española de Ciencia Política, Gerona, 16-18 March 1989).

79. The continued support for nationalist goals notwithstanding, increased separatist

Basque opinions toward ETA also stood in sharp contrast to views held by the Spanish population as a whole (see Table 10.7). Less than 20 percent of Basque respondents in 1978 and 1979 surveys, for example, described ETA terrorists as "crazy" or as "common criminals." And only one out of three regarded them as "manipulated by others." Instead, almost half of Basques saw *etarras* either as "patriots" or "idealists." The Spanish public held a far less benign view of ETA terrorists. (It should be noted, however, that at least in 1978 a near majority took what might be regarded as a rather neutral stance by depicting them as "manipulated by others.") As can be seen in Table 10.8, Basques were also far more inclined than was the Spanish public in 1979 to lay responsibility for violence on the government (whether of then prime minister Adolfo Suárez or Franco). In accord with such differences in their images of terrorists and in their perceptions of those culpable for violence, Basques were also more likely in 1979 than were Spaniards as a whole to opt for negotiations as the preferred means of ending violence (see Table 10.9).

Clearly, no consensus existed among Basques during the transition period over either the issue of autonomy or the question of political violence. Indeed, with regard to the former, Basque public opinion was by 1979 quite polarized. Still, despite increasing violence or perhaps because of it, support for nationalist goals was high and had in a short

Table 10.7. Images of ETA terrorists (in percentages)

	Euskadi Respondents			Spain Respondents		
	1978 ^a	1979 ^b	1982 ^b	1978 ^a	1979 ^b	1982 ^b
Terrorists are						
Patriots	13	15	16	4	6	2
Idealists	35	32	38	17	17	11
Manipulated by others	34	38	32	47	46	31
Crazy	11	9	29	18	17	32
Common criminals	7	10	29	21	30	58

^aSOURCE: Juan J. Linz, *Conflicto en Euskadi* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1986), 627-28.

^bSOURCES: Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, 1979 survey; Gunther, Linz, Montero, Puhle, Sani, and Shabad, 1982 survey.

NOTE: Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.

terrorist violence in Euskadi is in conformity with similar trends elsewhere, as reported in Christopher Hewitt, "Terrorism and Public Opinion: A Five-Country Study" (Paper presented at the 1989 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Ga., 31 August-3 September 1989).

Table 10.8. Who is responsible for political violence? (1979, in percentages)

	Euskadi Respondents	Spain Respondents
Regional groups	11	16
Extreme leftist groups	37	41
Extreme rightist groups	46	44
Government	49	28
Police	29	3
Students, youth	8	7
Franco regime	50	29

SOURCE: Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, 1979 survey.

NOTE: Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.

Table 10.9. What should be done to eliminate violence? (1979, in percentages)

	Euskadi Respondents	Spain Respondents
Accept terrorist demands	3	2
Negotiate with ETA	43	20
Maintain order, within the law	37	48
War on terrorism	3	15
Military rule	1	5
NA	13	10
N	929	5,439

SOURCE: Gunther, Sani, and Shabad, 1979 survey.

NOTE: Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.

period of time moved in a more radical direction. Moreover, a significant segment of the Basque public, including those who supported more-moderate stances and parties, saw ETA in a positive light, responded to ETA's view that a war was being waged against the Basque people, and shared ETA's strategy of entering into negotiations with the Spanish state. The patterns of opinion were quite different in Spain as a whole. But perhaps most noteworthy about Spanish public opinion during this period was the apparent failure of ETA violence to move it either in the direction of conciliation or in the direction of repression. Either shift would have fit with ETA's strategy. Instead, a near majority of Spaniards opted for "maintaining order, within the law," as the best way to deal with political violence. This choice boded well for an ultimately successful transition.

Basque public opinion was reflected in the outcomes of the 1977 and 1979 parliamentary elections and was mirrored (and shaped) by the views

and behavior of Basque nationalist elites.⁸⁰ In the 1977 parliamentary election, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) obtained a plurality of the votes cast in the Basque provinces of Alava, Guipúzcoa, and Vizcaya; and it, together with Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE), then associated with ETA-pm, received a total of 34 percent. Basque nationalist parties became increasingly dominant between the 1977 and 1979 general elections; their proportion of the vote grew from 34 percent to 51 percent. Although the PNV garnered a majority of votes going to nationalist parties and a plurality of the total votes cast in Euskadi in both 1977 and 1979, support for the more extreme nationalist groups increased substantially during this period. In particular, Herri Batasuna, which for the first time fielded candidates, obtained 15 percent of the vote. This trend was even more apparent in the outcome of the first election in 1980 to the Basque parliament.⁸¹

Thus, neither in the two Spanish general elections held during the transition nor in the 1980 parliamentary election in Euskadi did a single Basque party emerge with a hegemonic position within the Basque nationalist camp, let alone with a credible claim to be the singular representative of the Basque people. Hence, in Euskadi, not only did Basque nationalist parties compete with Spanish political forces (particularly the Spanish Socialist party), but increasingly, Basque nationalist parties vied among themselves for popular support. Basque nationalism is unique in this regard. In other Western democracies in which micronationalist movements exist, indeed in Catalonia as well, only one major party has emerged to represent the interests of the ethnic minority or regional group.

The existence of multiple contenders (including ETA) for the support of the Basque nationalist community established complex relations among them, ones that were characterized by both intense conflict and dependence. During the transition, this was manifest in the rhetoric and behavior of the historic PNV, the most moderate of Basque nationalist groups. Although the PNV did not obtain a majority of the total votes cast in Euskadi in the 1977 and 1979 general elections, its plurality position meant that it would be the main representative of Basque nationalism during the constituent process and in negotiations over the autonomy statute. In both instances, PNV representatives took extremely divisive stands and behaved in ways threatening to a success-

80. Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad, *Spain After Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 351-66.

81. For a discussion of these trends, see Francisco J. Llera, *Postfranquismo y fuerzas políticas en Euskadi* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1985).

ful outcome. During the constituent process, for example, the PNV justified its demands for home rule on the basis of the *fueros*. According to Basque nationalists, these rights could not be granted (and hence could not be constrained) by any Spanish constitution, since they had historic precedence over the constituent process itself. In opposition to the way in which the draft constitution recognized the *fueros*, the PNV walked out of the Cortes during the vote on the constitution and recommended to its supporters that they actively abstain from the 1978 constitutional referendum.

Both EE and Herri Batasuna advocated outright rejection of the constitution. Consequently, only 45.5 percent of Basques voted in the constitutional referendum (which compares with a level of turnout of 67.7 percent throughout Spain). Only 31.3 percent of eligible Basque voters, in contrast to 59.4 percent of eligible Spanish voters, endorsed the constitution, and 23.8 percent voted no. Much was and continues to be made by ETA and Herri Batasuna of the illegitimacy of the constitution in light of the failure of the Basque people to give it their approval during the referendum.

The stridency of PNV rhetoric and its rancorous behavior during this decisive phase of the transition were due, in part, to its adherence to traditional elements of PNV ideology. But they were also attributable to the PNV's vulnerability to challenge by more radical or separatist forces, both parliamentary and extraparliamentary. For fear of losing credibility and support, the PNV could not appear to be too moderate or too conciliatory toward the "agents of the Spanish state." The PNV had little recourse, when confronted by pressure from the more extremist elements, other than to adapt its style of discourse and behavior.

Thus, already at this crucial point in the transition, one can see the effects of ETA violence, of sympathy for ETA among a sizable minority of Basques, of the strong presence of Herri Batasuna as an antisystem political rival, on the most moderate Basque nationalist group.⁸² A dynamic of competitive "outbidding" was established between the PNV and the more extreme groups, which, in turn, militated against the adoption of pragmatic stances toward center-periphery issues and exacerbated polarization of public opinion in the Basque Country. It also intensified feelings of hostility and distrust between Basques and non-Basques, between Basques and the central government, and between Basque parties and Spanish parties of the Left and Center-Right, thus

82. See Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank, "Political Parties and the Formation of Terrorist Groups," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2, no. 2 (1990): 125-44.

making conflicts over center-periphery relations more difficult to resolve.⁸³

Apart from the dynamic of competitive outbidding, ETA violence and Herri Batasuna's presence reinforced and brought to the surface once again the PNV's longstanding ambivalence regarding the Basque Country's relation to the Spanish state. One PNV elite interviewed in 1978 frankly stated that the party's long-range goal was "to reunify the Basque provinces so that we can join our brothers in France."⁸⁴ A member of the Euskadi Buru Batzar (the top organ of the PNV) affirmed this point in another interview: "The Basque nation consists of four Spanish provinces and three French provinces. We are very much aware, however, of the slight possibility of uniting this territory in the short term. Nevertheless, we are in the long run still in favor of this unification." Nonetheless, he went on to say, "we are not *independentistas*."

The PNV's ambivalence was also reflected in its stance toward ETA. A party official, when asked about terrorism in an interview in Guipúzcoa in 1979, angrily replied, "I remember perfectly French patriots who fought against Petain. . . . Then, they were called terrorists. Well, the Vichy government spoke of terrorists. Today they are patriots. . . . Everything is very relative. They speak of the terrorism of ETA, but I would never speak of ETA terrorism." Another said in a 1978 interview, "We must bear in mind that ETA was born out of the violence of the Franco regime, but this very clearly is not a sufficient excuse for their present acts." Nevertheless, "as long as the Spanish state does not take effective and clear steps designed toward reversing discrimination against Basque culture, it will be very difficult for us to explain to ETA why they should lay down their guns."

The combination of ETA violence and the PNV's ambivalence with regard to both its ultimate objectives and ETA had a number of consequences. First, the central government was forced to grant greater concessions to Basque nationalists than Spanish political elites had initially been willing to make. To have done otherwise would have threatened the legitimacy and future stability of the new democracy.⁸⁵ Thus,

83. Goldie Shabad, "After Autonomy: The Dynamics of Regionalism in Spain" in *The Politics of Democratic Spain*, ed. Stanley G. Payne (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1986), 111-180; Goldie Shabad, "Creating the State of the Autonomies," in *Electoral Change and Democratic Stability in Spain*, ed. Richard Gunther and Goldie Shabad (in progress); and Goldie Shabad, "Still the Exception: Democratization and Ethnic Nationalism in the Basque Country," in *ibid*.

84. As part of two larger research projects in which Shabad was coprincipal investigator, 203 interviews with national- and provincial-level party elites were conducted in 1978, 1979, 1981, and 1983. This statement was translated by Richard Gunther.

85. Shabad, "Creating the State of the Autonomies."

the PNV's politics, coupled with ETA violence, achieved, at least for the PNV, a great deal of what it wanted with regard to Basque autonomy. Second, even after the approval of the Basque Autonomy Statute in autumn 1979 and the establishment of a PNV-led Basque government in 1980, the PNV continued to complain either that the autonomy statute was inadequate or that Madrid was being extremely recalcitrant in transferring decision-making powers to Basque authorities. These complaints served not only to undermine further the legitimacy of the Spanish state in the eyes of the Basque public but also to weaken the legitimacy of the newly established institutions of the Basque Autonomous Community. And finally, such complaints by the PNV about the persistence of a "centralist" mentality among Spanish political elites lent credence to ETA's claim that even with regional autonomy, "nothing had changed," and provided justification, however implicit, for ETA's continued use of violence.

In sum, the various effects described above bear out the argument made by Peter Merkl about the multiple opportunities for both conflict and tacit collusion between moderate and extremist nationalist groups, particularly in the context of a relatively weak political coalition in the center and intense and polarized public opinion in the periphery:

We can easily imagine a game of pretense, for example, in which the moderates and extremists appear to be in pitched competition for popular support when, in fact, there may be collusion underneath. The two can use one another to expand their appeal to the public. The moderates, moreover, can use their illegal accomplices as a battering ram to make their own demands seem more reasonable, while the extremists use the refusal to grant the moderates' demands as the perfect excuse for extreme actions. . . . The moderates can maintain and conserve advances and concessions won for the nation by the extremists because the moderates are already playing a legitimate and recognized role.⁸⁶

Two further effects of ETA violence (and counter-ETA violence by the state) during the transition should be noted. ETA violence created a climate of fear in the Basque Country that led, in turn, to a "spiral of silence," especially among supporters of Spanish political parties.⁸⁷ In response to a 1979 survey question that asked about the level of fear of active political involvement in their community, Spanish Socialist and

86. Merkl, "Political Violence," 29–30.

87. Linz, *Conflicto en Euskadi*, 16–17, and *Cambio* 16, 11 May 1987.

center-right party voters were far more likely than Basque nationalist party supporters to say that there was "some" or "a great deal" of fear. As a consequence, would-be supporters of the Socialist party, the center-right UCD, and the right-wing Popular Alliance were more likely than other party sympathizers to abstain during the 1977 and 1979 elections, thus contributing to the electoral successes of Basque nationalist parties.

ETA violence did not, however, promote passivity on the part of some elements of the Spanish military. Since military and police officers were the principal targets of ETA assassinations, concessions by the government to Basque nationalist demands heightened perceptions in some quarters that the Spanish government was weak in its dealings with "separatists." For many of the "ultraloyalist" elements of the military, democracy had come to mean the dismemberment of Spain itself. As the Francoist newspaper *El Alcázar* (read by many army officers) ominously announced on the eve of Basque and Catalan autonomy referenda in autumn 1979, "Today it is decided whether Spain should exist or commit suicide."⁸⁸ Neither enamored with the new democracy nor willing to accept what in their eyes would soon become an *España rota* (broken Spain), some segments of the military staged an unsuccessful coup on 23 February 1981.

In sum, the dynamics of the transition in the Basque Country were characterized, in large part, by a "dialectic of rocks, clubs and tear gas,"⁸⁹ of ETA violence and counter-ETA violence, and of mutual recriminations among political groups. Although regional autonomy was achieved, the manner in which it was obtained exacted a considerable toll on the new Spanish democracy and especially on the Basque Country itself. "By their counterexample, the Basque provinces prove that the process of transformation that occurred in Spain was not inevitable."⁹⁰

After Autonomy: PNV Dominance in Basque Politics

In the period between 1981 and 1985, during which time the PNV controlled Basque autonomous institutions and a majority Socialist government came to power in Madrid, the level of ETA violence declined dramatically. To a certain extent, this drop in violent actions was due to the dissolution of ETA-pm in early 1981. But the fact that the democratic regime had survived the coup, that dominant, single-party governments

88. *New York Times*, 26 October 1979.

89. Richard Gunther, *Politics and Culture in Spain* (Ann Arbor: Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1988), 36.

90. Edward Malefakis, "Spain and Its Francoist Heritage," in *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, ed. John H. Herz (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 224.

were in place in both Madrid and Vitoria, and that institutionalization of Basque regional bodies had begun all provided a less favorable political environment for continued high levels of ETA(-m) violence. Nonetheless, terrorist activities persisted at a level well above that of the late Franco period and continued to have a negative impact on Basque society and on the democratic regime. However, the effects of political violence in this period were somewhat different from that during the transition, particularly with regard to public opinion.

By 1982, according to survey data,⁹¹ the Spanish public had become far more unfavorable in its perceptions of ETA militants (see Table 10.7). Moreover, 74 percent of all Spaniards in the 1982 survey, many more than the 62 percent in 1979, placed themselves at the most negative position on an eleven-point "feeling thermometer" measuring the degree of sympathy or hostility toward ETA; only 3 percent in 1982 were either neutral or positive. The pattern of preferences regarding the structure of the state, however, remained virtually identical to that of 1979. Growing abhorrence of ETA violence in the aftermath of the attempted coup was not translated into a desire to return to the centralized state of the Franco regime.

Basque public opinion, once again, exhibited markedly different patterns, although in certain instances a convergence of views can be discerned. Basque attitudes toward autonomy versus independence remained remarkably stable and polarized in the years immediately following the granting of autonomy. Approximately one out of every four Basques favored independence, and support for autonomy increased by only 3 percent. At the same time, like all Spaniards, the Basque public also grew more hostile toward ETA between 1979 and 1982. Those placing themselves on the negative side of the feeling thermometer measuring sympathy or hostility toward ETA rose from 53 percent to 82 percent (see Fig. 10.5). The mean self-placement of PNV and EE voters (but not of Herri Batasuna supporters) also became more negative. Moreover, as the data in Table 10.7 show, about three times as many Basques in 1982 than in 1979 were inclined to label *etarras* as "crazy" or as "common criminals." A similar shift took place in the images of ETA terrorists held by PNV and EE sympathizers. What is equally apparent from these various data, however, is the persistence of strongly pro-ETA views held by a sizable number of Basques (reflected in the stability

91. The 1982 data come from an autumn postelection survey of 5,463 Spaniards that was part of a collaborative research project by Richard Gunther, Juan Linz, José Ramón Montero, Hans-Jürgen Puhle, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad. Respondents in Euskadi were oversampled to allow for detailed data analysis.

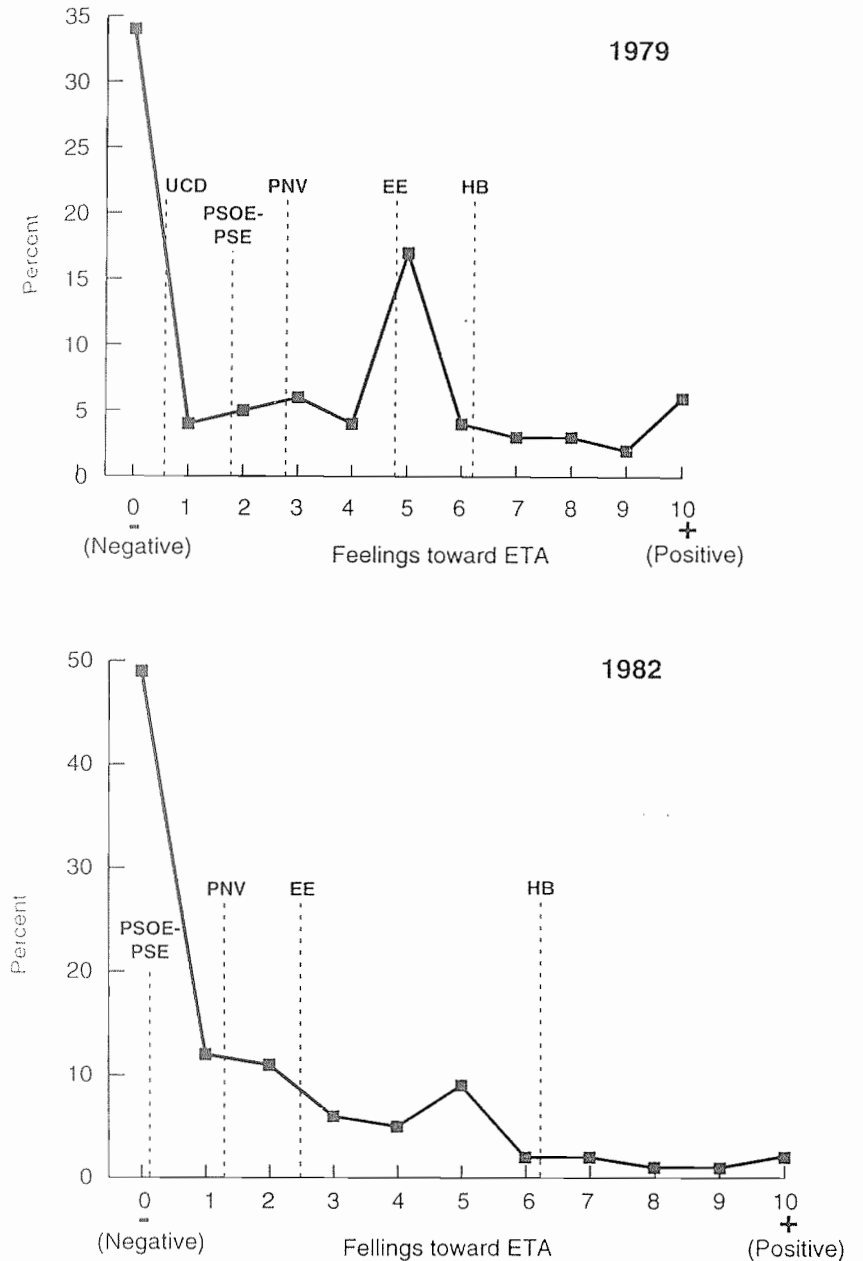


Fig. 10.5. Sympathy/hostility toward ETA among Basques, and mean self-placement of partisan groups on feeling thermometer, 1979 and 1982

of electoral support for Herri Batasuna), as well as the continuing feelings of ambivalence or sympathy toward ETA among a significant minority of moderate Basque nationalists.

A survey conducted in 1985 showed that the Basque public continued to be conflicted in its opinions. On the one hand, 76 percent of all respondents said that the immediate abandonment of the armed struggle by ETA would be a positive step toward improving the situation in Euskadi. In response to another question, only 16 percent believed that ETA should continue to exist. On the other hand, only 40 percent of those interviewed rejected outright the five-point KAS Alternative of ETA and Herri Batasuna as a basis for negotiations with the Spanish state; only 36 percent favored French collaboration with the Spanish government to combat ETA; and 63 percent favored negotiations between the central government and ETA.⁹² Thus, although the percentage of the Basque population expressing unequivocal support for ETA was by this time a small minority, it was, nonetheless, sufficient for the "terrorists to feel themselves supported in their actions. This is what is so serious and at the root of the whole problem of violence, that there are still to be found nuclei that defended its existence."⁹³

Although during this period PNV and EE leaders repeatedly made public announcements against the use of violence, more often than not their actions and their public statements showed the effects of the ongoing scenario of overt conflict and tacit collusion. This was reflected in moderate nationalist party leaders' continuing ambivalence about the relation of the Basque Country to Spain, the legitimacy of the constitution, and ETA. Complaints about the inadequacies of the autonomy statute and about the pace of transfers of authority from Madrid persisted.

A high-ranking PNV leader, when asked in a 1983 interview whether the full realization of the autonomy statute would satisfy nationalist aspirations, replied, "I believe so. . . . If we enter into the realm of feelings, I would say that my people are *independentistas*, and the thesis of my party is to form a Basque state. Well, this happens many times. I also have the desire to be rich instead of living on a salary. . . . so I think people here are very, very realistic. . . . I don't have the temptation to form a Basque state." He went on to remark, however, that "if I were to say today that I am Spanish, that I renounce Basque independence, I would immediately be kicked out of my party." An internal PNV document made clear that there had been no renunciation of the goal of

92. *Cambio* 16, 8 July 1985, 27.

93. *Ibid.*, 28.

independence and that should the defense of (Basque) national identity require it, the PNV would not vacillate in assuming its responsibility for achieving it.⁹⁴ In 1985 Jesus Intxausti, former president of the PNV, proclaimed, "I want independence as much as Herri Batasuna does."⁹⁵ Whether or not this was the true goal of the PNV, statements such as these served a purpose. As a Basque Socialist party leader commented about the *victimismo* of the PNV government in a 1983 interview, "The PNV always ups the ante for electoral purposes. Despite what happens, it always claims to be under the heel of Madrid, the one that is oppressed."

Little change was also exhibited in the PNV's ambivalence toward ETA and in its reluctance to condemn ETA violence publicly, despite growing hostility among Basques as a whole. Time and time again between 1981 and 1985 the PNV-led Basque government strongly criticized the various efforts of the central government to combat ETA. The PNV government responded negatively, for example, to extraditions by foreign governments of suspected ETA members. Garaikoetxea, then head of the Basque regional government, criticized the use of such a strategy and asserted that the Spanish government had fallen into the temptation to "go to the extreme" in its struggle against ETA. The PNV government during this time also showed great reluctance to cooperate fully with the central government's use of police measures to combat ETA. As PNV senator Joseba Eloségui said during a conference on political violence and terrorism held in autumn 1984, "The fathers of ETA members belong to the PNV, and they propose that the *peneuvista* father denounce his *etarra* son to the Guardia Civil. . . . Before doing that, we are obligated . . . to resort to political measures."⁹⁶ Apart from the psychological truth revealed by this statement, ETA still remained useful to the PNV as a means to wrest further concessions from the central government or to quicken the pace of transfers of decision-making authority.

Not surprisingly, Socialist leaders, both in Euskadi and in Madrid, responded harshly to PNV criticisms of the central government's antiterrorist actions. One Basque Socialist leader accused Garaikoetxea of a lack of loyalty to the constitution.⁹⁷ Damboranea, another prominent Basque Socialist leader who had been extremely outspoken in his opposition to Basque nationalism, said that the ambiguous posture of the PNV

94. *El País*, 11 February 1985, 15.

95. *Cambio* 16, 15 April 1985, 23.

96. *Cambio* 16, 5 November 1984, 23.

97. *El País*, 23 July 1984, 1.

is "one of the major difficulties in the pacification of Euskadi." He added that the PNV's attitude is an "inadmissible gesture of disloyalty against Spanish democracy. . . . The PNV fears the end of ETA and is disposed to make it more difficult to bring it about."⁹⁸

Damboranea nicely summed up the complex interaction between the PNV and ETA. The PNV "cannot dare to condemn the convent [ETA] because they are orthodox; it cannot renounce *posibilismo* because that is its salvation. As a consequence, its ambiguity persists: ambiguity in its behavior, ambiguity in its words, and in its strategy. . . . It wants at one and the same time to be with the constitution and with ETA."⁹⁹

The continued strength of Herri Batasuna—now even more antisystem than before¹⁰⁰—ongoing ETA violence, vituperative relations between the PNV and the Socialist party, and escalating tensions between the Basque government and Madrid all poisoned the political climate in Euskadi and gave rise to disturbing tendencies during this period. One rarely, if ever, for example, heard the word *Spain* spoken by a Basque nationalist. The rejection of the idea of Spain was reflected in the so-called war of the flags that broke out in the summer of 1983 and again in 1984. The *guerra de las banderas* was precipitated in some instances by the refusal of Basque nationalist-controlled local governments to fly the Spanish flag alongside the *ikurriña* (the Basque emblem) and, in other cases, by the seizing and removal of the Spanish flag by Herri Batasuna sympathizers. The rationale for such behavior was provided by a leader of Herri Batasuna in a 1983 interview: "The Spanish flag is the same as under Franco. It is a symbol of torturers, of those who have repressed us all our lives. It shows us that nothing has changed. But now they ask us to love it, respect it." Tensions produced by the war of the flags were not confined to Euskadi. An editorial in *Diario 16*, a Madrid daily, warned, "Don't we realize that the 'military malaise' could be back with us in a few months if things in the Basque Country keep going on like this."¹⁰¹ Indeed, it was during this period that many presumed ETA members were themselves assassinated, both in Spain and France, in what came to be called the dirty war (*la guerra sucia*). Although little is known about Grupos Anti-terroristas de Liberación (GAL), those who were primarily responsible for such acts, it is widely believed that members of Spanish security forces were involved.

In sum, the continued polarization of Basque society and ambivalence

98. *Ibid.*, 2, 21.

99. Ricardo García Damboranea, *La encrucijada vasca* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1985), 105.

100. Shabad, "After Autonomy," 145–46.

101. *New York Times*, 22 August 1983.

of moderate Basque nationalists, in the context of a deteriorating economy, were in large measure both the consequences of ongoing ETA violence and the sources of its endurance. In the words of a former Socialist minister of the interior, "Something paradoxical has occurred in the Basque Country. In these moments, it is the corner of Spain that is most remote from democratic principles practiced in Europe. Today, all of Spain looks like Europe, except the Basque Country. It is the corner in which intolerance, fanaticism, and violence are most entrenched. . . . They are the ones who today represent the old Spaniard, the Spaniard that we wish no longer existed—the intolerant Spaniard, fanatic."¹⁰²

This period began to come to a close in late 1984 and early 1985. After the victory of the PNV in the February 1984 regional elections, in which its electoral support increased by 4 percent over that received in 1980, the party was rent by severe internal conflicts. These led in December 1984 to the resignation of Garaikoetxea as head of government and to his replacement by José Antonio Ardanza. In exchange for Socialist assurances to support certain PNV legislative initiatives in the regional parliament, the PNV and the PSOE pledged their "willingness to uphold the constitution, the statute of autonomy, and other related laws, as well as decisions handed down by the courts."¹⁰³ In addition, both parties agreed to cooperate in the struggle against terrorism. The pact thus obligated the Basque government to support more openly and unambiguously than heretofore Spanish constitutional arrangements and to oppose more vigorously separatist violence. The pact signaled a turning point in the dynamic of confrontation between the PNV and Basque Socialists and between the Basque and central governments. It also made possible the swifter resolution of conflicts over remaining transfers of authority to Euskadi.

In March 1985 the Basque government for the first time explicitly and publicly condemned ETA. This was precipitated by the assassination of the chief of the Autonomous Basque Police (Ertzantza). This first violent attack by ETA against institutions and persons of the Basque government was widely supposed to have been its response to involvement by the Ertzantza in antiterrorist efforts. In an unanimous motion, the Basque parliament demanded that the terrorists put down their arms and asked the Basque people to make no concessions to those who kill or who are their accomplices.

102. *El País*, 8 August 1983, 15.

103. *El País*, 21 January 1985, 12. For an analysis of the significance of these events, see Francisco J. Llera, "Euskadi '86: La encrucijada de la transición," *Cuadernos de Alzate* 4 (1986): 52–63, and *idem*, "Crisis en Euskadi en los procesos electorales de 1986," *Revista de Derecho Político* 25 (1987): 35–74.

The End of ETA?

Between the early and late 1980s, Basque public opinion became more negative toward ETA and separatist violence. A survey conducted in 1987 found that the number of Basques holding positive images of *etarras* had declined since the early 1980s, especially among supporters of the PNV and EE as well as of the Socialist party. Moreover, 80 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "violence is no longer necessary to achieve political objectives." Still, almost one out of four respondents in that same survey viewed *etarras* as "patriots" or "idealists," and another 34 percent were unwilling to state their opinion. A Basque government study, conducted in November 1987 by Juan Linz and Francisco J. Llera, found that a slight majority of all Basque respondents (but a far more substantial majority of nationalists) agreed with the inclusion of the various points of the KAS Alternative in negotiations between the Spanish government and ETA.¹⁰⁴ Only a small minority expressed disapproval. For example, 63 percent of all respondents agreed that a referendum on self-determination should be a point of discussion between the two sides. Hence, despite the discernible decline in pro-ETA sentiments, a politically significant minority of Basques in the late 1980s appeared still to be indeterminate in their opinions and open, therefore, to influence either by ETA or by prosystem forces.

Nonetheless, from 1985 on ETA found itself operating in a markedly different, less hospitable political environment. The leadership of the PNV and EE (the latter by this time far more moderate in its nationalism than before) became increasingly explicit and vehement in their condemnation of ETA violence. Moreover, tensions within the PNV led to a schism in 1986 and culminated in the formation of a new political party, Eusko Alkartasuna (EA), headed by Garaikoetxea. The Basque nationalist camp became even more fragmented than before, since four parties now competed for popular support. As a consequence, the PNV did not win a legislative majority in the November 1986 regional elections, and after a protracted period of negotiations, a governmental coalition was formed by the PNV and Basque Socialists. Hence, opportunities for the PNV to engage in openly ambivalent and conflictual behavior became more constrained. Furthermore, with the increased fragmentation of the Basque nationalist community, the PNV, EE, and EA became more preoccupied with interparty rivalries and protecting their own positions than with their implicit or explicit relation to ETA.

104. Francisco J. Llera, "Continuidad y cambio en la política vasca," table 8.

The uncertainty and potential instability surrounding both the periods of internal PNV conflicts and the formation of the PNV-Socialist governing coalition were marked by increases in ETA violence, particularly in 1987. However, the rise in the number of deaths caused by ETA during 1985 and again in 1987 was less the result of more frequent actions than of a few "spectacular" incidents of indiscriminate violence in which numerous civilians were killed. Overall, the organization's ability to inflict sustained and high levels of damage and to affect the behavior of moderate Basque nationalists had deteriorated.

In addition, the multipronged strategy of the Socialist government in Madrid to combat ETA violence proved increasingly successful. Police actions met with greater results, and cooperation by the French government led to the capture, imprisonment, or deportation of a significant number of ETA leaders. The policy of "social reinsertion," which allows individual ETA militants who repudiate armed struggle to be reinserted into Basque society, also served to reduce the ranks of ETA members to its more hard-core elements. As has already been noted, the possibility of social reinsertion also opened serious divisions within ETA and the MLVN over what response should be taken toward this policy. The reaction of the most militarist elements was clearly demonstrated in the 1986 ETA assassination of a former ETA leader, Yoyes. But this action resulted in even further dissension between hard- and soft-line ETA activists and sympathizers. Finally, the decision to allow the Autonomous Basque Police to collaborate with state security forces in antiterrorist activities also brought about a more favorable political climate in Euskadi in which to combat ETA.

As a consequence of these positive developments, the central government began openly to pursue another of its strategies for bringing an end to ETA violence. Madrid acknowledged publicly for the first time in August 1987 that it was engaging in negotiations, or "talks" (as it prefers to call them), with ETA. As a government spokesman said, "There have been, there are, and there will be dialogues with ETA."¹⁰⁵ In response to the government's reversal of its long-held public opposition to such talks, ETA quickly published its own communiqué in which it rejected the government's demand for a cessation of violent activities as a precondition for discussion, and instead declared that a truce could only occur at the end of negotiations, which were to be based on the KAS Alternative and conducted with the "real powers" (*poderes fácticos*) of the state, namely, the military and the oligarchy.

Nonetheless, a number of significant events transpired in quick succes-

105. *Cambio* 16, 9 November 1987, 36.

sion in late 1987 and early 1988 that gave reason for optimism that ETA violence might soon come to an end. On 10 November 1987 all political parties represented in the Cortes (including the PNV and EE) signed the Pacto de Estado against terrorism, thereby providing the government with a consensus for its differentiated policies toward ETA. The response of ETA to the signing of this agreement was a violent action the following day in Zaragoza in which eleven persons, including some children, were killed. Talks with the exiled leader of ETA were immediately halted. In mid-December of that year, however, the government declared that it would resume discussions if a truce with ETA were declared. An even more significant turning point was reached in Basque politics on 12 January 1988. After difficult negotiations, all parties in Euskadi, with the exception of Herri Batasuna, signed an historic agreement of their own against violence and for the "pacification and normalization" of the Basque Country. Shortly thereafter, ETA offered a truce if the government would resume talks. Moreover, ETA dropped its insistence that only its own five-point KAS Alternative serve as a basis of discussion, and it agreed, for the first time, to allow the participation of political-party representatives in talks. In mid-February 1988, by which time ETA actions had ceased for almost three months, the government said it was disposed to reinstate contacts with exiled ETA leaders.

These events led the Basque public to be more optimistic than before about the possibility of a cessation of violence. According to a February 1988 survey conducted by Spain's Center of Sociological Investigations, two-thirds of all respondents in Euskadi believed that ETA's situation had deteriorated in the past few years. Fifty-six percent claimed that it was "very" or "somewhat likely" that negotiations would bring an end to ETA terrorism. (In Spain as a whole, however, only 29 percent were similarly confident.) Moreover, when asked about ETA's motivations for offering a truce, 40 percent agreed with the statement that its offer was "sincere and showed ETA's willingness to negotiate." In contrast, smaller percentages expressed a cynical view: only 18 percent agreed with the notion that "ETA doesn't really want peace, and its offer of a truce is a manipulation of public opinion"; 21 percent concurred with the statement that ETA only wanted "to gain time in order to reorganize itself." The kidnapping by ETA of a Basque industrialist in late February 1988, however, once again brought an abrupt halt to the resumption of talks and undermined expectations for an end to violence in the near future. It took over a year (March 1989) for discussions between the government and ETA to resume, but these too ended in failure. Increasing frustration with ongoing, albeit diminished, ETA violence and dashed

hopes that this time the "talks of Algiers" might bear fruit had a clear and decisive impact on Basque public opinion. Massive anti-ETA demonstrations, involving hundreds of thousands of people and supporters of all political parties (other than Herri Batasuna), were held in Euskadi in March 1989. For the first time, these demonstrations overshadowed the ever-present "antirepression" pro-ETA disturbances.

ETA's behavior in the late 1980s was reflective of its changed circumstances. On the one hand, the willingness of ETA to cast aside its conditions regarding talks with the Spanish state indicated that the organization's leadership had come to realize that ETA's position had deteriorated in terms of its ability to recruit new members, to carry out sustained effective actions, and to enlarge, let alone maintain, its degree of popular support. Thus, it was best to "negotiate" while ETA could still do some damage and extract some concessions from the state. But along with this changed stance toward talks, what the simultaneous acts of violence and abrupt withdrawal from negotiations also suggested was that ETA had become increasingly divided between hard-line and moderate elements. It was with the latter that the government pursued its discussions.

What might such talks accomplish were they to take place? Most likely, ETA would be reduced to its most violent core, a group of militants concerned primarily with the very survival of the organization. And although electoral support for Herri Batasuna might not decline substantially, ETA sympathizers in Euskadi would most likely be reduced to a politically insignificant minority. ETA violence would not cease were these developments to occur; however, its impact on democratic consolidation and especially on Basque society and politics would be far less grave.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no single explanation of ETA violence and its persistence after the rebirth of Spanish democracy. As we have argued, various characteristics of Basque society, but especially the "culture of violence" that developed during the Francoist years, facilitated the decision made by certain individuals to engage in terrorist activities on behalf of the Basque nationalist cause. These characteristics, like historical memories of repression, the perceived severity of the threat to Basque culture and language, the idealization of traditional Basque society, and the culture of violence legitimated by religious symbolism and sustained by local-

level social structures, also help to explain why separatist violence was more probable in Euskadi than in Catalonia.¹⁰⁶

Once ETA was formed and the choice was made in the early 1960s to pursue the armed struggle, both the internal dynamics characteristic of clandestine organizations and a supportive "underground society" at the local level helped to perpetuate ETA violence after Franco's death. The uncertainty of the outcome of the transition, the continued exercise of violence by state authorities in Euskadi during the years immediately following Franco's death, the polarization and radicalism of Basque public opinion, and the relations among Basque nationalist groups account for ETA's endurance as well. Finally, one cannot dismiss as an explanation ETA's own proclaimed objective, which was not the end of authoritarian rule but independence for Euskadi.

All this is not to say that ETA violence was inevitable or that it remains so. The audiences to whom violence is directed have an impact on terrorist organizations. Their responses—particularly those of the government, the "public" that the organization purports to represent, and rank-and-file members—constitute part of the changing context in which terrorists operate. Effective responses by the government (whether in terms of political or police measures), declining popular support for political violence, and disunity within ETA and its affiliated organizations—all of which occurred in the Basque Country in the late 1980s—make it difficult to continue to engage in terrorism. Although hard-core militants may remain active, their number and overall impact are likely to diminish.

What can be concluded about the effects of ETA violence? Two primary goals of terrorist organizations, whether they be ideologically left or right, religious or nationalist, are to undermine the legitimacy and the stability of the existing regime. How effective such organizations are in achieving these goals depends on a number of factors. One of these is the nature of the regime itself, although the impact of regime type is itself conditioned by other variables. Authoritarian regimes, such as Francoist

106. It should be noted that we have not argued here that the extent of Francoist repression in the early years of the dictatorship, as indicated by number of violent deaths or political prisoners or even degree of economic exploitation, was greater in the Basque Country (or Catalonia) than elsewhere in Spain. For an argument that this was in fact not the case, see Andrés de Blas Guerrero, "El problema nacional-regional español en la transición," in *La transición democrática española*, ed. José Felix Tezanos, Ramón Cotarelo, and Andrés de Blas (Madrid: Editorial Sistema, 1989), 607 n. 8. This point is, of course, the subject of much debate and polemics. Our argument here is simply that the subjective response to repression was different in the Basque Country than elsewhere and that it was this subjective response that led to a favorable climate for the emergence and persistence of ETA.

Spain, are by their very nature far less inhibited by legal and normative constraints from countering the violence directed against them. Moreover, clandestine organizations have fewer opportunities, particularly in more repressive periods, to get their message across to their intended targets and to acquire essential resources such as militants, weapons, funds, safe houses, and so on. But at the same time, grievances provoked by repression of class interests or of religious and ethnic sentiments may foster growing and increasingly radical popular discontent with existing rule. This, in turn, provides a favorable climate for oppositional violence.

Democratic regimes, on the other hand, have a greater ability to lay claims to legitimacy and loyalty. They provide opportunities for voicing demands and expressing dissent through peaceful means. But should political violence occur, democratic governments, unlike authoritarian regimes, are faced with an unenviable choice. They may choose to act within the boundaries set by the constitution—and risk failure and being made to appear ineffective in the eyes of the public and the military—or they may resort to extralegal means to combat threats to the regime; this would not only undermine democratic rule itself but also provoke that segment of society in whose name the terrorist organization acts. Either extreme—failure of democratic means, or state violence—may achieve the terrorist organization's goals of delegitimation and instability.

The choices made by democratic governments for countering political violence are conditioned by a number of factors. One, of course, is the particular mix of values of governing elites themselves, their assessments of the circumstances they face and of the likely outcomes of differing strategies, and their perceptions of the pressures placed on them from rival political elites. These normative, cognitive, and affective orientations may, in turn, be influenced by other variables, such as the actual scope and frequency of violence wreaked by antisystem forces and the patterns of opinion of various segments of the population.

Another factor, which we have emphasized here and which differentiates democratic from authoritarian regimes and hence their possible responses to political violence, is the embeddedness of terrorist organizations in a pluralistic political environment. The interaction between the terrorist group and more moderate "alegal" or prosystem political forces that also represent the relevant social group may have an effect on public opinion, the severity of political violence, and ultimately the decisions made by governing elites on how to combat terrorism. We have argued here that it is too simplistic to view the interaction between these two kinds of groups as one of rivalry alone. Although it is true that the existence of legal channels for the expression of group interests may

undercut frustration and support for organizations like ETA, the presence of extremist groups willing to use violence may be implicitly encouraged and overtly manipulated by more moderate forces to strengthen their bargaining position vis-à-vis the state. The relationship between the two, therefore, is apt to be one of conflict and collusion, and both types of interaction potentially serve the interests and objectives of each group.

Thus, there is a complex array of factors that determine the effectiveness of oppositional violence at any given time and under a particular type of political rule. It is difficult to say, based on the Spanish case alone, whether terrorism is more effective under authoritarian or democratic rule. The Francoist regime did not end because of ETA, nor did democracy fail to consolidate because of ETA violence. At the same time, ETA violence did hasten the demise of Francoism, if only through its assassination of the dictator's heir apparent, Carrero Blanco. And it did jeopardize the transition to democracy by reinforcing or provoking hostility to the evolving rules of the game in two different quarters. Basque nationalists refused to endorse the constitution and only gave it "backward" and ambiguous legitimacy through subsequent support of the autonomy statute. And a segment of the military came very close to toppling democratic rule in its February 1981 coup attempt. Although ETA activities did not lead to the destruction of democracy, they did help to change the rules of the game in another way. As Basque nationalist leaders have argued, without the constant pressure exerted by ETA violence, political elites in Madrid may not have felt as impelled to grant concessions to demands for Basque autonomy and for a fundamental restructuring of the centralized state. Ironically, without such concessions, democratic consolidation may not have been possible.

To say that ETA did not prevent democratic consolidation is not to conclude that ETA had no serious negative consequences. But these were primarily confined to the Basque Country. The persistence of ETA after Franco's death helped to sustain a culture of violence and, in so doing, placed major obstacles to the evolution of more rational and secular patterns of social and political interaction. It polarized and radicalized public opinion in Euskadi and called into question the legitimacy of the new regime. And it significantly affected the behavior of other, more moderate nationalist groups, thus making the resolution of center-periphery conflicts more difficult to achieve.¹⁰⁷

Given these negative effects, it is fortuitous that separatist violence

did not occur in other ethnically distinct regions of Spain, such as Catalonia and Galicia. Had it spread to other areas and not been confined primarily to the Basque Country, Spanish democracy might have been stillborn.

107. Goldie Shabad, "Still the Exception? Democratization and Ethnic Nationalism in the Basque Country," in *Electoral Change*, ed. Gunther and Shabad.